St. Richard's Primary School, 31 April 1947.

Dear Mr. Brannan,

The Matthews family have been searching for generations to find the records of their ancestors. In your capacity as the Director of Records, we have written to you regarding a possible connection with the Matthews family. We believe that our research indicates a link between the Matthews family and the Brannan family. Our ancestors may have been related through marriage or shared a common ancestor.

Please consider this information and let us know if you have any records that could provide further insight into our family history.

Sincerely,

The Matthews Family

---

Title of Thesis: "The Matthews Family: A Genealogical Study"

Statement: "I have consulted this thesis and agree not to copy or closely paraphrase it in whole or in part without written acknowledgement of the author; and to make proper written acknowledgement for any assistance which I have obtained from it."

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I, [Name], hereby declare that I have consulted the thesis titled "The Matthews Family: A Genealogical Study" and agree not to copy or closely paraphrase it in whole or in part without written acknowledgement of the author; and to make proper written acknowledgement for any assistance which I have obtained from it.

[Signature]

[Date]
B. H. WISE

AN OXFORD LIBERAL IN THE PROSTRATE PARTY
OF NEW SOUTH WALES

Thesis submitted for the Degree of Master of Arts,
Department of History,
University of Sydney,

J. A. Ryan
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Abbreviations

The following abbreviations have been used:

New South Wales Parliamentary Debates • • • • • • • • • • • • M.S.W.P.D.
Historical Studies Australia and New Zealand • • • • • • H.S.A.N.Z.
Royal Australian Historical Society, Journal and Proceedings • • • • • • • • R.A.H.S.J.A.P.
Sydney Morning Herald • • • • • • • • • • • • text, the "Herald" footnote, S.M.H.
Daily Telegraph • • • • • • • • • • • • text, the "Telegraph" footnote, D.T.
Parkes Correspondence • • • • • • • • • • • • P.C.
Pike Correspondence • • • • • • • • • • • • W.C.
Pike Memoirs • • • • • • • • • • • • W.M.
Mitchell Library • • • • • • • • • • • • M.L.

Special Note: The historian who has written most in the field covered by this study is Dr. M.J. Martin. Because frequent references are made to his work, and to avoid confusion, it has been found convenient to use the following key to various articles and unpublished works he has written:


"B" The Emergence of Political Parties in N.S.W. during the 1890's, unpublished typescript, A.N.U.


"K" Faction Politics and the Education Question, ibid.

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The numbering of page 110 has been omitted.
Introduction

I first became interested in the career of B.R. Wise when I was encouraged to follow up a remark made to me by Dr. C.H. Correy that Wise "had sat at the feet of Sidney Webb". From this I was led on to his speech made when introducing the Industrial Arbitration Act in the N.S.W. Legislative Assembly in 1900. I was very impressed by this speech, both as a lucid explanation of its provisions and purposes, but even more so by the statement of principles by which its author defended the right and duty of the state to interfere in the economic life of an industrial society. I was also struck by another quality of Wise's speech - a more personal one - for expressed here was a strong personal faith and a justification of the man's political beliefs and actions covering his whole career in New South Wales politics:

"I have, in effect", he said, "merely been quoting words of my own that I first made public in 1887, and repeated in 1890. But as I recall very vividly the scorn and denunciation which fell about my ears for uttering what I thought then, as I think now, were the simplest of economic truisms, I entertain some fear that there may be persons even now who think them as startling as they thought them then."

The claim of loyalty to principle made here by Wise was so strongly at variance with a reputation for insincerity and instability which I had also encountered that I resolved to seek further for an answer to such an apparent contradiction. The result is the thesis here set forth.

We might look first at the well established tradition about Wise which has found a place in Australian history. Without making any deep historical soundings, one can gather a general picture of the man from the usual sources, for there can be found in obituaries, biographical dictionaries, and in the published memoirs of certain contemporaries, a fair degree of unanimity that Wise was one of those "brilliant failures" who never realized the destiny for which his talents and

1. B.R. Wise, Industrial Arbitration Act of New South Wales: speech in moving the second reading of the Bill in the Legislative Assembly, July, 1900. (Published as a pamphlet.)
opportunities gave promise. All attest to the brilliance of his intellect, his academic standing, his polished oratory, his personal graces and forensic ability, but his political career, one may judge, was a disappointing failure.

Great things were expected of this talented young Australian who had passed along the select way of Rugby and Oxford, gathering academic distinction and athletic renown. He was called to the Bar at Middle Temple but, forsaking his London opportunities, he returned to his native Sydney where he arrived, "trailing clouds of glory", in 1883. By 1887 his star seemed set for political fame and honour, for in that year, at the age of twenty-nine, he became the youngest Attorney-General ever to hold office in New South Wales, and enjoyed the patronage of that doyen of politicians, Sir Henry Parkes. By 1895, however, his star had fallen, and his political fortune had reached its nadir. Virtually ostracized by the FreeTrade Party, with whom he had cast his lot, condemned by the Labour Party, and without an idea in common with the Protectionist Party, Wise found himself in a political no-man's land and henceforth, in the words of one reviewer, "ploughed a lonely furrow" in New South Wales political history.

While there is general agreement that Wise was a failure, there is not the same agreement about the reasons why. One explanation is that Wise was a political thinker ahead of his time, and he couldn't adjust to the commonplace and slow-moving process of political change. Less complimentary is the opinion that he was a political adventurer - something of a dilettante "with a facile talent for political abstractions". But the heart of the matter would seem to lie in political inconsistency, a weakness which is summed up by the oft-quoted reference to the "bottle-ended Mr. Wise". The origin of this sobriquet is attributed to an aside made by Parkes in the Assembly. Just when it was made is not known. Piddington, although he was never in the Assembly with Parkes or Wise.
recalls the incident, and quotes Parkes thus:

"There goes my young friend, Mr. Bernhard Wise. 'He's a most brilliant young fellow, but he can't stay in one place. Why! he can't even sit still in the 'Cuse, he's always changing his seat. I never could understand it till one day I noticed him crossing the floor in a short jacket with his 'ands in his pockets. Then I saw that he's bottle-ended...""

This quip, composed allegedly by the man to whom Wise was to give the most unswerving friendship and loyalty, has passed into legend as a kind of capsule character sketch of Wise, made even more explicit in some sources by an explanation of how the soda bottles of the day lacked equilibrium and wobbled because of a rounded base. Wherever his name is mentioned this anecdote seems to be recalled; it is quoted in the pages of Deakin, Garran, and Piddington, in the histories of Evatt and Fitshardings, and even M.H. Green in his brief treatment of Wise in his "Survey of Australian Literature" feels the legend is worth recording. The suggestion is thus well established that with Wise political inconsistency is a fundamental weakness.

Once we pass from these sources and take a look at contemporary opinion, darker suggestions about Wise emerge, for accusations of political dishonesty and treachery are to be found, not only in the press, but among his own colleagues. No great catalogue of sins is necessary, for Wise committed the greatest sin - he deserted his party. When in 1895 he joined in an attack on his own Free Trade Party leader, G.H. Reid, at a time when the Labour Party was supporting Reid, Wise reaped the full harvest of scorn and denunciation which is reserved for the renegade in Australian politics. He was condemned as a "traitor", "the Judas of the party", and his own leader, George Reid, declared in the Assembly that he would rather have a black snake crawling over him than accept the support of such a false friend.

In the 'nineties, more so perhaps than at any other period, political
defection involved deep bitterness and relentless criticism. Political interest
was intense in this decade—the two older New South Wales parties had just
achieved some clear definition based on fiscal policies, and the Labour Party had
entered political life as an unashamedly working-class party. Loyalty to free
trade and to protection became a matter of high principle, and the introduction
of a loyalty pledge was a vital issue among Labour men. Severe economic hardship
was felt during the early depression years of the 'nineties, and in 1894, when
unemployment had reached its highest figure, a sharp edge was given to political
feeling and class tensions became more strained. Trade-unionists, deeply involved
in industrial conflicts, invoked as an ideal the loyalty symbolized by Lawson's
"mateship". Other loyalties were also called forth—sectarianism, never
quiescent for long, rose to the surface, involving strong religious loyalties, and
a very emotional expression of Australian nationalism, which manifested itself in
the late 'eighties, drew forth strong sentiments of loyalty, both to the native
homeland, on the one hand, and to England and the Queen on the other.

Those familiar with the hard-hitting journalism of this period and the
fierce personal conflicts in the Assembly will know that most prominent political
figures had to undergo their ordeal of fire. Such prominent men as Barton, Reid,
Cook, Holman, and Hughes all passed through their political storms and went on to
occupy the highest offices of state and commonwealth. But with Wise, the stain
of his political infidelity seemed to remain with him to blight his whole career;
and the mark of dishonour has been written into history when other aspects of his
political career have been forgotten. The reason for this would seem to be that
Wise, as well as deserting his party, also betrayed a great cause—the cause of
the masses. In his early career he had won favour as a friend of democracy and
an advocate for social justice, and he had even spoken out against his own class interests on questions of social and economic reform. Thus, when his attack came on a government pledged to a reform programme, he was condemned not only for his "chameleon-like" politics, but for the greater sin of apostasy. The high hopes which had earlier been held for him by the working class now gave way to angry abuse from the radical press. Not only did they rend his political character; slurring references were also made to his social and professional connections, his English background, and they condemned the arrogance and deception of a young aristocrat who, whilst pretending to be a liberal and a democrat, was now discovered to be in the tory camp - which, they averred, was his natural home.

Wise did return to the Assembly again in 1898, but not as a member of the FreeTrade Party. Though he always maintained that he was a free-trader, his association in the Lyne-See government with former protectionist opponents, in the eyes of his critics, set the seal on a career of political inconstancy. Though the fiscal issue had almost ceased to have further meaning in state politics with the onset of federation, and although the Labour Party had also switched its support to this government, Wise was dubbed a "turn-coat". Since leaving the FreeTrade Party, he had joined with Barton in the struggle for federation, preferring, as he put it, "nationhood to provincial politics", but neither his outstanding work for federal union as a delegate of the Convention of 1898, nor his association with liberal reform legislation as a minister of the government, could redeem him, or return him to favour in some quarters of public opinion. Typical of the survival of this distrust of Wise is a review of his career in John Norton's radical "Truth", in January, 1901. Though Wise at this time was engaged in the defence of his Arbitration Act before the strong criticism of some very powerful interests, and although trade-unionism and the Labour Party were strongly in
support of its provisions, suspicions of the motives of Wise still predominated in this section of the press. Entitled "B.R. Wise - A Study", the "Truth" article denounces Wise as a "sophist and calculator" - "the Cassius of the Free Trade Party" - "a man with a conscience of a thousand several tongues":

"But for his hollowness and insincerity (Wise) might today have been leading the most prominent and vigorous political party this country has seen. . . . From being an advocate of the most advanced political principles, from preaching doctrines which made the hairs of his political and social associates stand on end 'like quills upon the resolute porcupine'. . . . from doing these things and many others B.R. Wise has gradually but surely degenerated until to-day none in the land are so poor as to do him reverence."

Calling upon the poet Dryden, "Truth" delivered its final judgment:

"A man so various that he seemed to be
Not one but all mankind's epitome."

Another journal reflecting radical working-class opinion said Wise's interest in arbitration was not genuine. His purpose was to let the legal profession in to batter on the workers' problems:

"Such a measure as this evolved out of the gigantic brain of Bernhard Ringrose Wise, capitalist - lawyer - politician, will hamper the workers."

This appositive, capitalist - lawyer - politician, reflects another problem for Wise. In a period when men were so very conscious of the class divisions in society, Wise's education, social background and professional position rendered it more difficult for him to be accepted as one sharing common ideals and political aims with men outside his class.

Though Wise did achieve the high office of Attorney-General and Minister for Justice in state politics he suffered many disappointments and the disrepute attached to his party desertion seemed to dog him at every turn. The greatest disappointment of his career was his defeat by the local Labour-supported farmer, Tom Brown, when he contested the seat of Camoblas for the first Federal Parliament.

As a supporter of Barton, with whom he had worked so earnestly throughout the

whole federal campaign, Wise ran into all the old cries of "deserter" and "traitor to free trade" at the election, since Barton supported a federal tariff. In 1904 Wise was freely tipped both here and in England as Australia's first high Commissioner. He had the support of Barton and Deakin, and the Labour Prime Minister, Watson, had informed the N.S.W. Cabinet that he intended to make the appointment. But there were forces against him still, including the Free Trade leader, Reid. Writing to a friend in England, Wise spoke of the personal and political animosity against him, and the opposition of Reid. Reid won the election of 1904, became Prime Minister, and Wise's appointment was never made. Even in 1913 his past would seem to be haunting him still.

Three appointments were to be made to the High Court and Wise's claim, as a senior K.C., and strong supporter of the federal system, was considered to be the highest. But the Prime Minister was W.M. Hughes, the Labour man who had condemned him so bitterly in 1895, and as an anti-Federalist had attacked Wise's motives and class instincts during the federal campaign.

In a controversial appointment Hughes passed over Wise and other leading constitutional lawyers and appointed two relatively inexperienced men, one of whom was A.B. Piddington, a free-trader and opponent of Wise, whom Hughes had joined in a strong campaign against the Constitution Bill in 1898.

Wise left political life in New South Wales in 1904 when, after filling the post of Acting-Premier, the premiership passed to Sir Thomas Waddell on the resignation of Sir John See. Waddell would not go through with the work Wise had

1. W.M., p. 197.
2. Wise to C.N. Jackson, 22.9.1904, W.C.
3. The two appointments of Piddington and Power raised a storm of protest and both the New South Wales and Victorian Bars refused to offer congratulations to the two new judges on the ground that their qualifications were inferior. Wise had been recommended to Hughes by Sir John Gordon and was one of the men the "Bulletin" said "stood out like beacons for the post". See these citations and discussion in "William Morris Hughes" by L.F. Fitshardings, pp. 273-9.
4. A number of reasons were advanced for Wise's non-appointment to the premiership - the possibility of an imminent appointment as High Commissioner, fear among conservative ministers for their posts if Wise was appointed, division in the (over)
begun for a large-scale reform of local government and Wise resigned his office, feeling that "there was no place left for a man of democratic opinion - except in the ranks of Labour." But for many reasons these ranks were closed to him.

Thus at the age of forty-six, at what should have been the height of his political career, Wise left political life a disappointed man, and went to England for an extended period. Though he had legislative achievement to show for two terms of office, and his work for federation had gained recognition, a strong sense of failure lived with him. "My failure in Sydney has been so complete", he wrote in memoirs addressed to his son in 1914; and the remainder of his life was devoted to his professional work, both here and at the English Bar until 1915. In this year he was appointed Agent-General for New South Wales in England by the Labour premier, W.A. Holman, long an admirer of Wise's great ability, and after a strenuous period of war-time service Wise died in office in London on 15th September, 1916.

Here then, in brief, is the story of unfulfilled promise and the tradition of failure with which we associate the name of B.R.Wise. In most assessments involving the kind of partisan judgments we have quoted here, a balance can be found by the historian, and this is so in Wise's case. There were many men in his time who recognised in Wise not only a man of exceptional ability but a man with ideals and a genuine political vocation. In his correspondence can be found letters from intelligent and open-minded men, expressing not only an understanding of Wise's politics, but an admiration for his courage and sincerity. Following his defeat at the federal elections, genuine regret and anger is expressed in letters from men from other states, such as Deakin, Henry Bourke Higgins, Inglis
Clark, E.J. Way, and George Leake at the circumstances of Wise's rejection and the New South Wales set against him. It is apparent also that Wise influenced many New South Wales liberals, and regardless of party feeling there were men who dis-associated themselves completely from the prejudices against him and, acknowledging the sincerity of his aims, continued to look to him for intellectual leadership.

James Ashton, an advanced liberal free-trader, declared Wise to be "the most cultivated democrat in the House... a man against whom a well substantiated charge of inconsistency in principle has never been made". T.J. Hobbéwhite, journalist, poet, and reformer, though at first sceptical, later acknowledged Wise's whole political course of action to be vindicated by the unfolding of events, while W.A. Helman, in quite a remarkable tribute, admitted that he came into the Assembly as a bitter political opponent of Mr. Wise and his views,

"...but by the mere force of the most brilliant intellect that I have seen displayed on the benches of this House I was converted, not into political servitude, but to a recognition of E.R. Wise as the man born to be the intellectual leader of his generation... He was a man who was not only a model for all public men to follow, but a man who devoted his brilliant talents to the ideals of what he believed the State should be." 3

History, however, has dealt very unkindly with Wise. Deakin's history, written on the spot and without the perspective of time, has given us a portrait which, although typically brilliant, has little interpretation of the man's place in New South Wales politics. It is, however, a balanced picture, and testifies to Wise's contribution to the federal cause. But A.B. Piddington, another contemporary, writing in 1929, has delivered a very harsh judgment. In what is otherwise a pleasantly anecdotal ramble through the political world of his day, Piddington lets himself go on Wise. He attributes to him very unattractive personal traits - a strong vein of vindictiveness, narcissistic vanity, and speaks of his tisome

personal prejudices. He brings up the class snobbery of Wise by referring to his Oxford superiority and aristocratic associations and habits — and even mocks his appearance: "as handsome as the ever young Apollo", and "beautiful as an army of banners until you saw the curious insincerity in his blue eyes". Wise's political actions, he says, were motivated by an anti-Reid obsession, and he speaks of the contempt in which Wise was held by Parkes. To his "bottle-endedness" Piddington adds political dishonesty and speaks of Wise "revelling in political intrigue". The circumstances of Wise's betrayal of his party are revived. Though Piddington was not a member of the Assembly at the time of Parkes' censure on the Reid government, he gives a first-hand account:

"For days, while the debate went on, Wise was flitting up and down stairways and chattering in corridors, without a word of loyalty to his leader or the promises he had given to his constituents."

The reader is given the "Judas" reference verbatim:

"Mr. Alf Edden, a great-hearted simple man, was developing the theme of political roguery when a voice interjected, 'Who's Judas?'; and every eye turned to Wise, sitting next but one to Parkes."

Not one of Wise's achievements is mentioned; his federation efforts are belittled, and Piddington even attempts to reduce his reputation as a lawyer by asserting that "neither Judges nor Counsel could rely on him". In all, even allowing for Piddington's literary extravagance, this is a very strong denigration of Wise's character and political reputation. From a man of liberal outlook and legal training one might expect an objective judgment, but in fact practically everything Piddington writes of Wise can be called into question. What little evidence he offers is faulty and misleading, and many of his assertions have no foundation whatever in fact, e.g., the Parkes correspondence extending over the whole period of the relations of the two men show that Parkes held Wise, not in contempt, but in the highest esteem. Wise's efforts in the Federal Convention are dismissed as
more "palmary sophism", but, in the opinion of such men as Deakin and Garran, Wise's speeches were regarded as among the most outstanding in the whole Convention. Piddington's statement that Wise with his aristocratic leaning was working towards some upper-class house of Australian gentry is so completely at odds with the impulses of the man's whole political life that it is not worth considering. Nor can his attempt to undermine Wise's standing at the Bar by anecdotes about his political flirtations be taken seriously; Wise's repute is well established by contemporaries and is attested by many men more eminent in law than Piddington.

Piddington won his seat on the Assembly as a member of Reid's Free Trade Party at the election of 1895 when party bitterness about Wise was at its strongest. It would appear that this early political antagonism, further developed by Piddington's stand as a New South Wales protagonist during the federal campaign, and strengthened perhaps by personal rivalry, implanted within him an abiding hostility to Wise, for his account seems charged with prejudice. Piddington even denies to Wise the final honour as his successor as Agent-General, for he falsely remarks that "the call of London was too strong and he returned to die, at the age of fifty-eight".

One could put aside Piddington's picture of Wise as that of a contemporary too involved in the events of the day to be objective. But unfortunately it seems to have been accepted by other historians. L.F. Crisp, who looks upon

1. See H.R. Garran, "Proserper the Commonwealth", p. 114. Telegrams from Deakin and Fysh to Mrs. Wise during the Melbourne Convention accord Wise's speech the highest praise. See uncatologued Wise MSS., act 394, N.L.
2. See Wise correspondence for letters from Justice Windyer, Foster, Way, Griffith, Inglis Clark, Long, Innes and legal opinion regarding his action as Attorney-General in the Friedman case.
3. The foregoing extracts from Piddington are found in "Warshful Masters" pp. 131-9. It would be charitable to think that Piddington had forgotten Wise's appointment as Agent-General, though it is difficult to imagine that a man who himself held high public office at the time would not remember - especially in such a period as World War I when Wise's activities were so prominently reported, as was his death in office. If he did know but felt it not worth recording, then the remark, as it stands, is quite a reflection on Wise's service. The Sydney Morning Herald report (over)
Piddington as one of the genuine liberals of federation, classifies Wise as one of the ultra-conservatives, and although his classification turns upon constitutional issues, he leaves no doubt that by a "real conservative" he means one allied to the interests of the wealthy and propertied class - the "big men", working to secure a constitution in which vested interests would be sacrosanct. Nothing could be further from the truth about Wise.

More recently, L.F. Fitzhardinge, in a brief sketch of Wise, continues the tradition of Wise the plotter, and attributes his failure to "conceit, a passion for intrigue, and a curious instability of character which prevented him from reaching his goal either in law or in politics". Piddington's legend of Parke and the soda bottle is here again repeated and Fitzhardinge also thinks it somehow revelatory of the man to quote Piddington's observation about "the curious insincerity in his blue eyes". For all this kind of history is worth, one might just as well quote an Oxford contemporary that Wise had the "frankest blue eyes he had ever seen in a man".

Other glancing blows are struck at Wise by historians. Cyril Pearl refers to the "unscrupulous Wise", but characteristically gives no inkling as to how he arrives at this judgment. W.G. McDunn, in building a defence for Reid's federal performances, refers to "the petty jealousies and prejudices of Wise", remarking that his name is a "byword for inconsistency and political opportunism". (from 11) from London following Wise's death: "The newspapers pay a tribute to Mr. Wise's activities since he became Agent-General. .. He was quietly working with two colleagues drawing up a proposed Imperial Constitution at the time of his death... Mr. Wise was at the Australian camp on Salisbury Plain on Monday and Tuesday, chatting with many soldiers... The news of his death shocked Salisbury". E.M.H., 21.9.1916.

3. "Vanity Fair", 13.2.1902. The comment is from an Oxford acquaintance at the time of Wise's expected appointment as High Commissioner.
The basis for this judgment, one deduces, is Wise's opposition to Reid. Thus the tradition is handed on and becomes more of a byword.

However, it is H. V. Evatt, the biographer of Holman, who sets the tradition of Wise firmly in the pages of Australian history. Here is the judgment of the historian well removed from the controversies which swept about Wise's contemporaries. With his own great judicial attainments and democratic sympathies, Evatt would seem well fitted to interpret the politics of such a man as Wise who, like himself held very advanced political ideas. But it is Evatt who delivers the final indictment of Wise as an unprincipled political opportunist. His view of the political life of the period follows that of Fitzpatrick and others who see nothing progressive in the middle-class non-labour parties and identify politicians of this class with the interests of the wealthy. He does, however, acclaim George Reid "a great premier", and in turn designates Wise the chief enemy of the Labour-supported premier in his efforts to pursue a liberal policy of social reform:

"Chief intriguer against Reid was B. K. Wise. Wise was one of the most remarkable men in the public life of Australia. He had abandoned his early free-trade principles to pursue a policy of political opportunism. Unfortunately, he seemed constitutionally unable to seize the best opportunity. He stuck to Parkes after Parkes had irretrievably ruined his chances of returning to power. He refused an opportunity of joining Reid, although he had originally nominated Reid as leader of the Free Trade Party in succession to Parkes . . . As handsome in appearance as Holman, Wise, though never quite succeeding in getting what he wanted, seemed always to be detected in trying to do so . . . Reid owed nothing whatever to Wise but Wise bitterly resented, not only Reid's record term in office, but his taking over complete possession of the Federal movement in N.S.W. Wise was not trusted by the public, and he suffered defeat from every electorate which returned him to Parliament - usually for one parliament only. He turned from Parkes to Reid, from Reid to Parkes, and from Parkes to Barton, with such ease and jauntiness that Parkes said he was fundamentally incapable even of sitting upright."

Here is a fairly faithful reproduction of the picture created by John Morton, and the idea of Wise as a scheming politician, deeply involved in party intrigues, is

lent further strength when Evatt remarks in another place how Wise, Parkes, and Barton, "enraged beyond mere words" by Reid's sudden support of the federal cause, "set trap after trap with the object of throwing Reid out of office". Wise's own version of these events is dismissed by Evatt as "a melodramatic history in which Reid was the villain, and the dashing part of the juvenile lead was assigned by fate to B.R. Wise".

In his famous defence of Captain Bligh against a well established historical tradition about the man, Evatt makes the remark:

"I suppose that it would be intolerable if the judgments of history had to be pronounced by trained lawyers rather than by persons unskilled in the actual science of legal investigation. But the historian who is not trained in such art and science labours under a considerable handicap in reaching sound conclusions upon matters such as we have been discussing." (How the tradition about Bligh's overbearing and autocratic manner could be accepted by historians without proper evidence.)

When one looks for these judicial qualities in Evatt's interpretation of Wise, however, they are sadly missing, for he, in his turn, accepts the tradition without evidence. His whole picture is so seriously distorted, and so riddled with errors of fact and opinion that its value as an historical judgment is practically nil. Typical of the damaging errors of fact is the statement that Wise "suffered defeat from every electorate which returned him to Parliament - usually for one parliament only". It is not a finicky emphasis on factual detail to point this out, as the whole tradition of Wise's instability is implied in the statement. But the facts are that, from the time he entered parliament in 1887, until he left the Free Trade Party in 1895, Wise contested six elections - all in the one constituency of South Sydney, and he was defeated twice.

1. Ibid., p. 70.
2. Ibid., p. 119.
4. The Electoral Act, 1893, broke up the old multi-member divisions of South Sydney in 1894 and 1895. The only other electorate he represented was Ashfield, from which he was returned in 1895. Records of Electoral Office, Sydney. N.S.W. Parliamentary Record.
The statement about his switches from one leader to another is wrong in every particular. Wise at no time withdrew his allegiance to Parkes as leader; it was Parkes who resigned from leadership in 1891. At the time of Wise's alleged switch from Parkes to Barton, Parkes was dead. And as for the plots and traps - the plotters were not even on the same side at the time; Parkes and Wise both stood apart from Barton's Federal League, and it was the issue of financial reform policy that brought Wise and Reid into conflict in 1895, as both men had placed financial reform ahead of Parkes' federation policy at the 1894 election. It is rather strange that this verdict should come from Evatt whose own political career, in some respects, is not dissimilar to Wise's. It is also ironic that his own hero, Holman, should have believed in Wise and have freely acknowledged his influence, not only on his own career but on the future political life of the state. Holman gives to Wise the credit for the introduction of arbitration in New South Wales, and he accords to him a place in the federal movement ahead of both Parkes and Barton:

"There is hardly anything in our public life which we have to consider to-day (1916) that cannot be traced back to (his) brilliant mind and clear foresight ... Amongst all the champions of the parliamentary life of Australia at the time, B.H. Wise ... held undisputed supremacy as the foremost debater, foremost thinker, and foremost public man in the life of New South Wales."

Holman also acknowledges his own personal debt to Wise:

"There are probably no men in the public life of the State who are under a deeper debt of personal gratitude than myself ... If I have attained any position of distinction it is due to the help, the definite tangible help, which I received from the Attorney-General of fifteen years ago."

Making all due allowances for the usual kindly dispositions towards a recently deceased public figure, Holman's estimate of Wise is quite a remarkable tribute and would be known, one would expect, to his biographer. What does emerge clearly is a problem of interpretation.

1. Tribute to Wise in N.S.W. Legislative Assembly, op. cit.
There can be found, in more specialized studies of this period, references to Wise which indicate that his significance has been recognized by other historians. Nevertheless, it is in the published histories of this period, and especially that of H.V. Evatt, that Wise has been reduced to the level of a shifty political opportunist. I believe this verdict to be false, hence one of the aims of this thesis is to redress such a wrong, and to find for Wise a more worthy place in Australian history. At a distance of seventy years, I believe a more balanced view of the man and his politics can be gained than that open to his contemporaries, and it is also my belief that, in perspective, Wise will appear, not as the unstable and unprincipled politician, but as a man displaying a greater measure of consistency to principle than can be found in either political party with which he was associated.

But this study is intended to be something more than an essay in political rehabilitation, for it is also my opinion that Wise represents one of the most significant political thinkers in New South Wales history, and that he has been sadly neglected. All recognize the 'nineties as formative years in Australian political history, and a special importance has been given to those men who influenced the political parties in this transitional period. I think it can be shown that Wise was one of the most interesting political thinkers of his time, for he was a politician with a well established political philosophy which


was formed and shaped in a European environment and transplanted here at a time when most accepted ideas were being challenged in the face of social and economic changes. At a period when prescriptions of all kinds for a new ordering of society were to be heard, when many reformers embraced theories of socialism, and when radical nationalism had a rich flavour, Wise's represents an interesting bridge between Australian political life and English political thought. Before coming back to the colony, he had become steeped in the philosophy of New Liberalism at Oxford, and was strongly influenced by such thinkers as T.H. Green and Arnold Toynbee. At a time when the word "liberalism" meant many things to many men, Wise's concept was clearly defined and it derived from the most advanced philosophy of liberalism. It was in fact the very philosophy of liberalism which 1 Evatt defines as the advanced liberal thought in Australia in 1915.

The 'nineties are gradually being filled in with biographical studies, and we are gaining a much broader picture of the ideas and influences on the men of this time. The early view that the vitality of the period came from the visionary idealists and aggressive nationalists like Lane, Lawson, and Furnbry, has given way to a more realistic picture, as also has the notion that the seminal thinkers were the pragmatic "Socialistes Sans Doctrines" like Holman and Hughes and Spence, who charted the course of social progress by adapting socialist theory to tactics. Bode Haim has given us a picture of other men, such as Watson, who were laying the Labour Party foundations in a less spectacular way, and P.J. O'Farrell's study of Holland has opened up the other side of the radical socialist picture.

But only part of the story is to be found in the radical sphere. Bruce Mansfield's study of O'Sullivan shows us an Australian democrat in a non-Labour setting, and O'Sullivan's Irish Catholicism and Anglo-Saxon loyalties extend the

horizon beyond isolationist nationalism. All of these men typify the spirit of change which characterizes the 'nineties; but along with these new ideas there is also a survival of old institutions - of which the most powerful is the individualist politician. Men of the old order like Parkes and Gibbs cannot be written off as they were by earlier historians as surviving fossils of a past age. Though Martin's biography of Parkes is not yet published, in these studies he has given us, there is no question of the dominant influence of Parkes on the political life of the period, and his work is a reminder, and a healthy one, that personality is always a force in political history. It is in this widening picture of the political life of the 'nineties that this study takes its place. And in one sense it is quite a special place, for unlike all these self-made and self-educated men, Wise is an academic with the complete intellectual background, who had the preparation for political life which is even yet regarded as the classical training for the House of Commons. Not only were his ideas shaped in a European setting, but he was an avid student and writer and remained in the stream of overseas thought. Wise's attempt to transplant his English-nurtured ideas; to adapt his philosophy to the moulds of thought in colonial politics; and to provide a theory, a set of principles and a reform programme for the Free Trade Party, gives to this study of his political career a special interest. As another facet of the political life of the 'nineties, it will supplement the work of Tony Cahill in setting the intellectual and cosmopolitan Cardinal Moran into the life of the period.

When Professor Ada Briggs came to Australia in 1960 to observe the progress of Australian historical studies, the two areas of our history which she remarked were still relatively blank were the elements of urban social and political history, and the gallery of political biographies. From this point of view the study of Wise also has interest, for Wise is truly a city man, with city interests,
and his politics derive from the influence of the city. He does not conform to
the stereotype created by Ruscel Ward, there is no talk of the gum leaves about
him, nor does he find his values in "mateship", or an egalitarian philosophy.
Yet he is truly Australian, and his loyalty to Australia is as strong as that of
most radical nationalists. The idea that the historian must carry his swag out-
back to find the centre of nineteenth-century Australian life will, I suggest, as
the urban frontier expands, prove to be just as much a legend as the Australian
legend itself.

The tradition of inconsistency and disloyalty attached to Wise is
founded on the manner and circumstances of his desertion of the FreeTrade Party,
but there can be found in the judgment of his critics no analysis of the ideas of
the man, or the basic difference in aims and policy which were involved in his
conflict with the Reid government. There are, however, other loyalties involved
in the study of Wise - intellectual and personal loyalties; this is not simply a
loyalty to the party leader, but loyalty to his own principles of free-trade
liberalism; it is not a simple question of deserting a leader, but also involved
is fidelity to personal obligations. As in most studies of political conflict,
behind the political issues are ethical and moral issues.

In emphasizing the ideas of Wise, we are not necessarily committed to the
Collingwood philosophy that all history is the history of thought, for history is
also made by human decisions which are not always consciously arrived at, but
usually involve complex human factors. In this sense, this study of Wise is also
a human history. From one viewpoint, we can see his decisions as the result of
objective experiences, but it is also clear that when he is making political
judgments involving loyalty, strong personal pressures are one acting - external

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1. See Ruscel Ward, "The Australian Legend".
influences involving others and influences from within reflecting the man's own character. Personal relationships are involved; there is a complex association with Parkes which we must try and understand, and the interplay of psychological forces in his relationship with Reid must be recognized. One must also face the problem as to how well we can get to know the man himself, and acknowledge the difficulties inherent in any attempt to explain the motives and well-springs of action from limited source material. Wise has left a wealth of political writings from which we can gather ample evidence of his ideas and purposes. In his correspondence and memoirs, there are also personal revelations and introspective glimpses of the man's nature, but many questions are left unanswered. We are tantalized by such remarks as "I will dine with you to-night", and "I will be with you at 5.30" (Wise to Parkes), during the crisis of 1895; while the reactions of the man to letters of admiration and abuse, to warnings of friends, or entreaties not to go back on those who believe in him, all must remain unknown.

There are those who, like Henry Mayer, think that any historical study based on an understanding of human behaviour is useless; that such a question as whether or not a politician is sincere is posed in such hopelessly vague terms that it can make no contribution to political analysis. I take a different view for, whilst recognizing the limitations, I believe that in the backward view history can be written in human terms. By re-thinking the thoughts of the man across a span of seventy years, and with an appreciation of the environment in which he lived - by using in effect Collingwood's idea of the imagination - I believe one can approach the truth. From the ideas, hopes, and purposes which B.A. Wise expressed in writing, from his decisions and actions seen in the full public view and in the privacy of his personal relationships, and from the values and ideals he continued to emphasize throughout his political life, I believe a
valid historical judgment can be delivered about Wise.

The approach in this thesis is not biographical; rather is it a study developed about a central problem - the problem of a man with a well established political philosophy in a political party without one. The method and treatment will thus be quite different from the biographical approach as the details of Wise's life are selected with relevance to the political problem posed by his career, and our view of the man will perform be impressionistic. I have selected for detailed treatment the years 1887-95, as these years cover his career in the FreeTrade Party. Within this period one can trace the unfolding of his ideas and also his association with Henry Parkes. This is also the period of his career in which his reputation for instability and insincerity is established. But in approaching the question of consistency with a man's ideas, one cannot stop at any one point in time, for his political philosophy is an unfolding one and must be seen over a period. Hence we must at times go beyond the period in which the problem is contained, and see the man and his ideas in continuity. The organization of the study, then, follows the following pattern:

Part 1. The early influences shaping Wise's ideas and outlook.

Part 2. The man in the political setting of New South Wales - his social environment and personal relations.

Part 3. The ideas making up his political philosophy. His liberalism and his nationalism.

Part 4. His career in the FreeTrade Party set against the events of the period.
"You must take into account my Rugby training and the political ideas which were current among young men in the early Eighties. The traditional ethos of Rugby descending from the headmastership of Dr. Arnold was not religion or culture, but the duty of social service, and this through the teaching of your grandfather who was one of Arnold's favourite pupils, had been the ethos of our home long before we entered the School. It seemed natural, therefore, to us who were imbued with the idea of duty to the public, that the field for its exercise should be the country to which we were so much indebted; and I cannot remember when this notion did not possess my mind."

There is a natural tendency when one encounters the ideas of a man which are daringly non-conformist in his society to seek for influences, and to attempt to find origins. Whilst one must acknowledge that a man can construct a body of political beliefs and arrive at a philosophy by a purely intellectual process, more usually certain predispositions can be discovered in his background and environment, and influences found in his associations. This is so with B.R.Wise. He has acknowledged direct sources for many of his ideas, but other formative influences in shaping his outlook can be found in his family background, education, and early life experiences.

We might first look at the family background. Bernhard Ringrose Wise was born on February 10th, 1858, in the parish of Newtown, in Sydney. He was the second son of Edward Wise, a judge of the Supreme Court of New South Wales, and his mother was the daughter of John Smith, an officer of the Royal Navy. His parents had a record of their ancestry going back for several generations, and on both sides "they were of a roving turn so that we had no fixed home centre. Many of them were in the Navy."

It was, however, an interesting pedigree, tracing back along one line

1. W.M., p. 73. B.R.Wise is explaining to his son his reasons for returning to Australia.
2. ibid., p. 1.
to the Bishop of Gloucester, who was buried in his own Cathedral Chapel in 1624, and including in his mother's line artists, scholars, and physicians, some of whom had won renown. A great grandfather, Henry Smith, was physician to Peter III and Catherine III at St. Petersburg and, when he refused to certify that Peter's death was natural, fled Russia to England and became royal physician to the Prince of Wales. Wise was not indifferent to his background, and looked to this "long succession of gentle ancestors" as evidence that his family had staying-power.

In the colonial society of mid-century New South Wales, such lineage was aristocratic, and the social position of young Wise was made even more secure by a marriage relation to one of Sydney's eminent families, the Mannings, the elder sister of Judge Wise having married William Montague Manning, Supreme Court Judge, and later Chancellor of Sydney University. Thus by birth and connection B.R. Wise was destined to occupy a prominent social position in the colony and, even though by the time he re-entered Sydney society such marks of social distinction had largely given way before more economic symbols, Wise always wore the badge of an aristocrat, and indeed expressed some pride that he was not of the "nouveaux riches".

It is interesting, first, to glance at the career of Judge Edward Wise, for young Bernhard was to follow very closely in his father's footsteps; footsteps which passed along the halls of Rugby School, and subsequently led on to the Bar at Middle Temple, where he was called in 1844. After eleven years of legal practice in England, Edward Wise emigrated to New South Wales, where he quickly established himself as a leading jurist. Within two years of his arrival he was recommended to the premier, Sir J.A. Donaldson, for the position of Solicitor-

1. ibid., pp. 1-19.
2. ibid., p. 19.
General, and, after taking his seat in the Legislative Council in February, 1857, was appointed to that office in the Parker ministry. Two years later, he became Attorney-General in the Forster government, and in so doing laid down the pattern of a career in law and politics which was to be followed in almost identical sequence by his then one-year-old son. The political career of Edward Wise lasted only three years, for he resigned from the Council early in 1860 to take up an appointment as Puisne Judge of the Supreme Court of New South Wales. Unfortunately, the young Bernard was to be denied the close personal influence which his father may have had upon his development, for in 1865 ill health overtook the judge and, while on a trip to Melbourne, he died at the relatively young age of forty-seven.

For Wise his father was just a dim personality. "I can barely recall him as a quiet, grave, almost stern, man of slight build with iron-grey hair, who often read to us, and would at times play cricket on the lawn of Edgecliffe House." He remembers him going off in a landau, flanked by armed troopers, to try a bushranger. The year is 1862. A final memory which remained with him was "of the same landau, unescorted, driving away a sad, clean-shaven, grey-faced man, whom, as he bid us 'be good', and obedient to the nurse, some instinct told us we should never see again. Later came news of his death in Melbourne." Wise was seven years old when his father died, and it would be unreal to suggest that any strong impression would be made on him at such an early age. However, he recalls some childhood impressions which suggest a family atmosphere of mid-Victorian seriousness. "To be good" was then the counsel of perfection.

Night and morning we said prayers... The duties, which we owed to others, were kept before us constantly; and an early recollection is the making of lists for

1. Details of the public career of Judge Wise can be found in: The N.S.W. Parliamentary Record; The Dictionary of Australian Biography (1855-92), Philip Home; The Dictionary of Australian Biography, Vol. II, Percival Stone.
the wounded of the American Civil War and the giving up of sugar in our tea in order not to use a product of the Slave States." Evidently Wise knew responsibility even at this early age, for he remarked, later in life, that he could never remember the time when he had no responsibility.

Though he was not in agreement with such precepts for a child's upbringing, Wise, nevertheless, came to respect and admire the ideal of service and the spirit of dedication exemplified in his father's life, for Judge Wise was one of those truly dedicated men. How earnestly he devoted himself to his public duties we may gather from a letter to Parkes, written by Manning soon after the death of his brother-in-law:

"Judge Wise undoubtedly died of overtaxation of the brain in the performance of his duties. He was zealous and indefatigable in his work and although subject like others to some failings, was undoubtedly entitled to a very large measure of public esteem."2

With this sense of duty went a social conscience, for Edward Wise, in the eleven years he spent in the colony, devoted himself to schemes of educational and social reform. Lamenting his untimely death, The "Herald", in an editorial, said:

"The interest of Justice Wise in the welfare of the working classes was perhaps the strongest peculiarity of his mind and character. It was impossible to be in his company long without discerning that he had some project for their benefit. . . Many a time we have heard him enter warmly into various projects for amending the habits of the humbler classes, and securing for them healthful homes. . . He threw himself heart and soul into their promotion, and it was a matter of great regret that his official position precluded him from more personal and direct exertion."3

From this encompass we also gather that Judge Wise was a man of "unsullied character, of unscrupulous integrity and uprightness. . . He was not a man to be warped in his course by any sentiments of personal regard. . . He looked upon himself as bound, not only to avoid anything like partiality, or the fair suspicion

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1. ibid., p. 15.
2. 17.11.1865, P.E.O. Vol. 24, p. 70.
3. S.M.H., 30.9.1865.
of corruption, but to secure the triumph of Justice." Such rare qualities in a man prompted the editor to pose "a dreary question: To what hands will the judicial authority be next confided? God help a country whose judges are partisans or tools." These were high standards to place before a son following in his father's footsteps, and Wise was often to be reminded of his father's reputation and character by former friends and associates when he returned to take up his own public career. Wise thus inherited a very honourable name in New South Wales public life, and as the only one of four sons to return to take up his father's career, he would obviously feel a strong desire and responsibility to preserve it. That pride in his family name did weigh strongly with him we can judge from a scene in the Assembly when he felt that honour to be impugned. It is, I believe, the only highly emotional scene in which Wise was involved in his many years in Parliament; for he almost invariably kept a tight rein on his feelings when under attack or when subjected to personal criticism. This occasion was in January, 1889, when John McElhone, "an unseath fragment of a former barbaric age projected into this Assembly by some political accident", alleged that Wise was keeping a baby farm in the country. When Wise rose and called upon him to formulate a charge he repeated it: Wise responded passionately:

"There are some charges that are absolutely dishonourable to one who has pride in his family and who hopes he may leave behind an honourable name (cheers). I say it is an absolute dishonour to have to reply to such a charge. I do not reply to it but know how to meet it if made outside (cheers). Old as that man is, Sir, I would lay the horsewhip across his shoulders if he said words like that outside."

1. Ibid.
2. Typical is a letter from Justice Foster, enclosing a letter from the elder Wise which he felt his son may like to have. Foster pays a high tribute to the work and sincerity of Edward Wise. (Wise uncatalogued MSS. Box 1). Men such as Parke, Windeney, and Manning who knew the father well took a special interest in the career of his son.
3. This description is by Frank Cotton. Cited by A.W. Martin, "A", p. 141.
McElhone then withdrew, but in such a manner as to add further to Wise's anger, and amid "disorder and sensation" Wise walked to the door challenging the member for the Upper Hunter to come out. "Mr. McElhone, however, remained in his seat."

References which Wise made to his father's work from the election platform strengthen the idea that he identified himself with the aims and ideals of his father's public life.

Thus the first possible influence on the career of B.R. Wise which we might observe is that in his father's life and work he may have found something of a model for his own. Though the direct influence is missing, Wise would be constantly coming upon reminders of his father — his grave, a commemorative window in St. Andrew's Cathedral, his collection of papers in the public library, his judgments in the court, and personal testimonials from contemporaries — so that, far removed from the rest of his family, the memory of his father's life may have become something of a personal inspiration. With this in mind, if we accept as true the charges of political insincerity, political dishonesty, and the self-seeking of the "unscrupulous Wise", they are in such sharp contrast with the personal integrity, public spirit, and scrupulous honesty attributed to his father that we have a sense of a very sad falling away from the moral and ethical standards so clearly established as a guide. But this judgment is implicit in the thesis and will be reserved for the conclusion.

We might next look briefly at some common interests and a similar outlook held by the elder and younger Wise which give rise to a further suggestion of influence. In the first place Wise may have been inspired to emulate his father by choosing law for a career — the only son to do so — and although he was admitted to the English Bar, his decision to follow his career in New South Wales may well have been influenced by a desire to work in the Courts where his father had won such a high position. But such a family sequence is not unusual in the professions, and...
it is when we look beyond this vocational pattern that the similarities become more interesting.

There were many interests common to the two men. The manuscript file on Edward Wise in the Mitchell Library is only slight, but the glimpses we get show him to be a man of learning and culture. In letters to N.D. Stenhouse, one of the prominent literary men of the colony, we are introduced to a man of cultivated taste, and patron of Australian art and literature. In one letter he is writing of a poetry reading tour in the country and of his enthusiasm for John Clare's poetry; in another he is inviting Stenhouse to dinner to meet an artist from London who had been working on a bust of W.C. Wentworth, and there are a number of letters pertaining to offers made and purchases of manuscripts and papers of interest to Australian history. It is evident that during his years in New South Wales, Edward Wise developed a very great interest in Australia, and in the Mitchell Library there is a valuable collection of Australiana numbering about 1000 volumes which he bequeathed to the state.

That B.R. Wise would have followed like cultural interests is natural enough, for one can assume that these special interests of the father would be perpetuated in the home, and with the literary and artistic traditions in his mother's family, Wise would have grown up in such an atmosphere from early childhood. He recalls hours spent browsing in his father's library and had gained, at the age of seven, a nodding acquaintance with most of the volumes on the shelves. "I cannot remember the time when I was unable to read and, according to family tradition, taught myself by listening to my brother's lessons at the age of four."

3. The grandfather was one of Charles Lamb's circle, and a brother, Bernhard Smith, after whom Wise was named, was in his youth an artist associate of Holman Hunt, Millais, and Rossetti. W.M. pp. 5, 8.
4. ibid., p. 16.
Haryatt's novels, Dr. Smith's History of Greece, and "Punch" made lasting impressions from his early childhood reading.

These interests Wise carried with him throughout his life, and, like his father, he was a patron and friend of poet and artist in his own time. He held a very prominent place in the cultural life of Sydney and his interests were many and varied. We find him, for example, lecturing on Newman, whom he greatly admired, reminiscing in the press on Stevenson, whom he entertained during his Sydney visit, and there are letters from poets such as Thomas Hobbes and Sydney Jephcott thanking Wise for critical comments on their literary efforts, and from Mungo McCallum, discussing the literary future of Le Gay Brereton. Deakin described him as "a man of letters, all his tastes are literary", and he also remarked upon Wise's love and knowledge of art. He was a trustee of the National Gallery and took keen interest in the work of the new school of painting which was emerging about this time with a distinctive Australian quality in landscape work. He gave to this "struggling school his generous sympathy" and followed the work of Lambert and Streeton when they went to London. The development of a distinctively Australian culture was a subject on which Wise spoke feelingly for he recognized in the work of these Australian artists its real beginnings. His best thoughts on this are found in a speech to the Art Society. An extract suggests his approach:

"They might speak of Australian wool and Australian gold; and some enthusiastic persons wished for an "Australian Religion", but, in Art, the ignoble mark of Australia must never appear. A really national school of Art could not originate in deliberate and self-conscious efforts, but must be the spontaneous outcome of the environment; in which the Artist lived. Australian character -

1. Catholic Press, 15.12.1897
2. S. Jephcott to Wise, 5.2.1884, uncatalogued MS. File, M.L. Hobbeswhite letters in W.C.
4. "The Federal Story"
6. Writing to Parkes from London, Wise laments the fact that the style of Lambert and Streeton does not seem to have transplanted "Lambert's spontaneity is missing and Streeton has not the distances he revels in".
istics would enter into a picture of themselves, if it was painted by a true
and trained Australian Artist; for no man of artistic perception could live in
this country without being stirred by its natural features and the possibil-
ities which it offered to human effort. The first great picture of Austra-
lían life - that which would express the habits of thought and natural features
of our Country - would be probably painted by an Australian, not because there
was any inherent virtue in being born in Australia, but because men were affect-
ed most by the scenery and conditions of their own country. Just as a Scotch-
man loved the purple bleakness of his misty hills and the Daneman saw beauty
in his straight canals, so there was an enchantment in Australian scenery -
in its desolate grandeur and its lofty skies - of which an Australian born
would be the first to read the spell. For probably it was only given to her
own children fully to understand her teaching and appreciate her subjective
charm."

With these ideas it is natural to find Wise actively interested in education, esp-
specially its cultural content, and he saw in the cultivation of art and its appreci-
ation one of the worthy aims of Australian education. He frequently spoke of the
dreary, soulless existence of working men condemned to work as industrial drudges
and deprived of all contact with cultural experiences, and advocated free libraries,
subsidized theatres and public concerts, while he decried the narrowness of "a prof-
cient system" which would "stifle imagination and appreciation". As this sug-
est, he was prepared to be critical, and in an address to teachers he spoke of the
dangers of an imbred departmental system, and counselled a broader educational ex-
perience for teachers in state schools: "Teachers whose minds have been quickened
by culture can do much to awaken a sense of beauty in their pupils and to save Aus-
tralia from becoming a Democracy without Art - which is disorder." He holds the
same consistent view on university education, and clearly has Newman's idea of a
university and applies it to Sydney. We find him concerned about the narrow tech-

ical emphasis in the University of Sydney's law courses and offering Sir W.C.

1. Extract, speech to a gathering of the Art Society. Newspaper cuttings, Vol. 2,
p. 645.

2. See his published address: The Case for Labour, 1890, p. 3.

3. Free Trade and Wages, p. 28.

4. Extract from speech delivered at a conference of school teachers, Sydney, July,
1901. See also his comments in the Commonwealth of Australia - Practice and Ideals
of Education, p. 86 et seq.
Windeyer, the Vice-Chancellor, suggestions for changes. In many other aspects we can view Wise in the same role as that of his father. As an historian, his own interest in Australian history goes without saying, and it is interesting to discover that there is something of a direct link between the two men in the Public Library of N.S.W., as each in his own way had a part to play in its development. When Justice Wise bequeathed his special collection, it was on the condition that it would be part of a free Public Library, as little was being done at the time to preserve such historical material. This undoubtedly influenced the government, and the first free Public Library was established four years after Wise's death (1869). It was thirty years later when, as Attorney-General, B.R. Wise took another important step in bringing this project of a National Library into existence, for he secured the passage of a bill to constitute the trustees of the Library into a Corporation. It was, when Acting-Premier in 1904, that he took another important step by setting aside land in the Domain as a site for the present building to enable the Trustees to receive and house the great collection under the conditions offered by David Scott Mitchell. There is something of historical fulfilment in the idea that this thesis, which attempts to place B.R. Wise in clearer light in Australian history, should depend on a large degree on manuscripts and documents belonging to this Library which stands in some degree as testimony of the public spirit of Wise and his father. From these interests we can gain a picture of Wise interested and active in the cultural life of Sydney. It is only a natural consequence that he would seek in the city the company of men and women who would share such interests, and in the circumstances of Australian life at the time, these associations would generally be found among educated men who would, in turn, almost of necessity, be drawn from Wise to Windeyer, 6.11.1884, W.C.
2. Wise was one of the earliest members of the Australian Historical Society, J.A.H.I.S., Vol. 47, part 6, p. 325.
the wealthier class of Sydney society. Whether or not we accept Russell Ward’s stereotype of the Australian that he is sceptical about the value of intellectual and cultural pursuits generally, where such pursuits appear to be the preserve of a socially exclusive group, as it was in Wise’s day, it is not hard to understand how an impression would be created with Wise of social hauteur and snobbery. When he came among men in the street in a working-class constituency at election time, thees of “snob” and “toff” were frequently thrown at him, and political enemies were to taunt him with his English education, and his “refined” and cultivated tastes. As we have noticed, Wise, although his outlook was strongly Australian, was prepared to speak out and be critical, and in doing so he offended many of his more sensitive compatriots and he was often identified with the prototype of superior gentlemen-type Englishman which Purphy brought to life in his characterization of Willoughby. (This problem will be reserved for discussion in a later chapter.) In reality, however, it is an Australian outlook rather than any sentimental nostalgia for England that most distinguished Wise’s national feeling, and this perhaps more than any other single characteristic might be traced to his early family life in Sydney.

There are many instances of transplanted loyalties among English immigrants of the last century and this is illustrated in the case of Edward Wise, for he soon formed an attachment to his adopted land. It seems he followed Manning out in the hopes of improving his financial condition, for he had heavy family commitments in England which made a continual pressure on slender resources. It is highly improbable that he was caught up in the gold fever of fellow migrants in 1851 or 1854, and we don’t know if he had any prior interest in Australian life, but, once he was settled, his new interests began immediately. He became immersed in the study of its history and social problems, and active patron of its cultural development, and within two years a representative of its political life. Whether he experi-

1. Wise’s mother followed two years later and they were married on her arrival. A brother of Edward, G.F. Wise, also settled in New South Wales after coming out as an immigration agent.
enced any of John Dunmore Lang's feeling for the freedom of the Golden Lands. We cannot say, but it is not unreasonable to suggest that the strongly marked national sentiment of B.A. Wise could be traced back through family inheritance to the Australianism of his father. We will reserve the discussion of the nationalism of Wise to a later chapter, but here we might simply note one or those feelings for his native country which drew him back after eighteen years' absence.

Wise always had a yearning to return to Sydney; the loveliness of sea and sky, he says, remained always with him, as did a remembrance of his life in Edgecliff House overlooking Double Bay.

"We lived there four years; and in that time the sea entered my blood, so that I feel the 'Welsh' of the Swiss for his mountains if I am a month without a sight of it. . . You must remember that Sydney was my native place which drew me to itself by the mysterious tie of birth, and was idealized in my imagination." Secondly I owed everything to the generosity of New South Wales; because without the pension, which Parliament had voted to our mother in recognition of our father's service, we could not have been educated."

He then goes on to speak of the spirit of duty in the service of his own country which possessed him. "I cannot remember when this notion did not possess my mind," and he speaks of a sense of mission to return and devote himself to the cause of Australian progress.

"At Oxford I admit to some wavering, influenced by the charm of antiquity and the banter of friends. Browning's 'Paracelsus' also gave me glimpses of the truth that 'to be' is as important as 'to do'. . . but I put these misgivings from me, as a saint puts away the temptations of the devil; and nothing seriously disturbed my confidence. I do not think my determination would have altered even if I had been elected to an All Souls Fellowship."

There are many emotions and thoughts involved here but, as well as the nostalgia of the native born, Wise's feeling that his destiny lay in Australia is, I feel, directly related to the heritage left by the father, and in one sense his political ambitions might be seen as a continuation of his father's work.

1. Lang's book 'Freedom and Independence for the Golden Lands of Australia' was published in the year after Wise's arrival.
2. ibid., p. 14, pp. 72-3.
3. ibid., pp. 74-5.
Finally, as this study is concerned with the ideas and political philosophy of E.R. Wise, we might see if there can be found, in his father’s thought, antecedents for that political radicalism which distinguished Wise’s outlook from his earliest student days at Oxford. A bridge between the ideas of the two men can be built, but whether the link is direct, or whether it is merely a coincidence of viewpoint by two men studying the same problems is not an easy question. Although Wise remarks upon having read his father’s published work on the "Law of Riot and Unlawful Assembly", and undoubtedly his father’s papers would be available to him, there is no direct acknowledgement. However, a knowledge that his father held very definite and advanced ideas for his own day on social reform would inevitably interest Wise once his own ideas began to take shape.

It is quite obvious that Edward Wise was very concerned about the social question before he left England. He had spent eleven years as a travelling magistrate on the western circuit in England, in which position he would have been able to observe at close range the grim social consequences of the industrial changes in England. In those years of trade depression - the hungry forties - with consequent unemployment and a serious food famine in Ireland, Wise would have seen at first hand the problems of poverty and of poor law relief and work-house administration under the Poor Law Commission set up in 1834. He would also have been a witness to the growing agitation over the price of bread conducted by the Anti Corn Law League, and the mass discontent, which took political form in the Chartist movement, would have brought Wise into close contact with the social problems of urban overcrowding and its relation to the causes of crime. From these conditions Wise gained his material for his treatise on the law of riot. There is evidence that Edward Wise was associated with English social reformers; he was personally involved in an investigation of depressed housing in London and he brought with him to the colony

1 Wise was also editor of the "Law of the Court of the Queen’s Bench". See Manwells, Dictionary of Australian Biography, 1992.
Lectures by Shaftesbury, Reports by Chadwick, and many publications of the Board of Health. We find him offering this material to Parkes in a letter congratulating him on the setting up of an enquiry into the state of working conditions in Sydney, and expressing his concern that the government were not "in the least impressed with the importance of these subjects".

It is the evidence which Wise presents to this Committee which best reveals his ideas on the social problem. In his opinion, conditions in Sydney were worse than in London, and he presents examples of shocking living conditions which he had gathered on nightly tours of inspection with an inspector of police. We gain an impression of the extent of his work in the cause of social reform in New South Wales, lectures on health, housing and other problems of urban life, circulation of books and the preparation of legislation in the form of a "Lodging House Bill". He tells of his efforts in 1856 to get the Philosophical Society interested in a survey of Sydney's social conditions and of his work for the "Ragged Schools Movement" and the Home Visiting and Relief Society. Whether the humanitarian impulse of Edward Wise was part of his Christian view of life, or whether it was partly inspired by the apathy of the Churches to the welfare of the working classes in Industrial England, it is quite certain that his thinking bore no trace of the narrow evangelistic view that poverty was the mark of a weak or bad character or that the moral welfare of the "humble" classes was a first priority.

1. See evidence Wise submitted to the "Select Committee on the Condition of the Working Classes of the Metropolis", Votes and Proceedings of Legislative Assembly, 1859-60, Vol. IV. The Reports of the Board of Health constitute some of the basic evidence used by the Hammonds in "The Bleak Age".
4. ibid., p. 1412.
5. See E.S. Inglis.
improvement must precede their intellectual and moral development", he tells the Committee. . . "intemperance and immorality are a consequence of social evils rather than discomfort a consequence of intemperance."

Wise, however, was looking beyond benevolent agencies to remedy these social evils. Unlike so many of his own generation in England who accepted the individualist philosophy and followed Cobden's dictum that men should look not to parliament, but only to themselves, Wise believed the government could, and should, make a positive contribution to the security and happiness of the unfortunate and underprivileged. His point of view is summed up in the final statement he makes to the Parkes committee:

Parkes: "What I want to elicit from you is whether this (social conditions of the working classes) is not a question in which all have substantial interest?"

Wise: "Unquestionably all have; but the higher class can avoid the evil without legislation, by expenditure and removal, whereas the working classes have not much leisure and from the necessities of their position are subject to the evils I have referred to in a far greater degree; and it appears to me to be the duty of the State to take care that they are protected for the benefit of all. The rich ultimately pay for distress and poverty. Directly or indirectly the support of distress will fall upon the rich."

On another point relating to the general question of responsibility in a free society, Edward Wise rejects unqualified laissez-faire liberalism when he puts to the Committee the view that good standard working-class houses should be the responsibility of employers to provide. Apropos of this he remarked: "that the interests of employer and employee are identical is a truth becoming daily more recognized."

Though we cannot piece together these few ideas into a body of political beliefs, there is sufficient here for us to recognize that Judge Wise was in advance of many of his own class in his approach to the social problems of his day. There can be found no sharp break between these ideas of the father, and those expressed

1. ibid., 1414, p. 1435.
2. ibid.
by his son, and it is quite remarkable how often we encounter B. R. Wise saying the same thing, often in very much the same words. The harmony of interests of employer and employee, emphasized by Edward Wise is fundamental to B. R. Wise's view of trade unionism, and he practically repeats his father's words when he states this to be the basic principle, underlying his Arbitration Bill, when he introduces it into the Assembly forty years later. He can also be found expressing his father's concern for the moral degradation of people forced to live out their lives in sordid conditions, and rejects, as his father did, all suggestions that their moral welfare is unassociated with their physical environment, or that poverty can be cured by working on the morals of the poor. "Thrift", he maintained in one lecture, "can brutalize a man as much as drink."

There is no continuity of religious belief with the two men. Edward Wise was a practising Anglican, but for B. R. Wise "no dogma nailed his faith", and he held to an agnostic view. This however had no bearing on the humanitarian impulse shared by both men, for B. R. Wise also involved himself in social welfare work. He filled a similar role in giving lectures and classes to working men; he was very interested in prisoner rehabilitation and child offenders' welfare, and was the founder of the "Association for Assisting Discharged Prisoners".

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1., 2. Freestade and Wages, p. 29. His views on poverty will be discussed in a later chapter.
3. This is confirmed by his son, Mr. Anthony Foster Wise in correspondence with the author.
4. In a letter to Parkes he refers to his work with the Chippendale Relief Committee. "I go four times a week... for I am pledged to keep (it) in working order as far as I can do." 5.7.92, P., C., Vol. 42, p. 294.
5. See First Annual Report 20.6.1902. Wise was one of the prominent men in what was something of a movement in child welfare in the years 1900-5. He framed the State Children's Bill which was an attempt to get the state to face the problem of juvenile crime as a social problem and to set up a Children's Court and special institutions for detention other than the gaol. The Bill twice passed Council but failed to pass the Assembly. The Act of 1905, passed by the Wade government, was acknowledged to be almost identical with the Wise Bill. N.S.W. P.D., Vol. XVIII, 2nd. series, p. 521.
But it is the common belief in the role of the state to take action to
alleviate social distress, and the rejection of the Individualist view of society
that most clearly ties the ideas of the two men together. This is one of the bas-
ic tenets of B.R. Wise's liberal philosophy and, by the time his ideas had matured, all
traces of laissez-faire liberalism had gone. There was in the philosophy of B.R.
Wise more than his father would have dreamed of, for it involved basic changes in
the structure and working of a capitalist society, and embraced issues such as
preference to trade unionists and compulsory arbitration which had hardly reached
the surface of discussion in his father's day. B.R. Wise also saw through to the
welfare state and envisaged the state accepting responsibility, not only for the
material welfare of its citizens, but also relieving what he called the "dreadful
dreariness of life for the working classes", by the provision of such amenities as
libraries, theatres, and educational facilities. Wise's political philosophy took
shape in Oxford and dominant influences were the ideas of T.H. Green and Arnold Toyn-
bee. It is not suggested that the ideas of Edward Wise, even if they were well
known, could be compared to the impact made by these advanced thinkers. But what
we can assume, I think, is that in following so closely the pattern of his father's
life Wise would have been interested to know what were the intellectual prints he
was following, and the knowledge that his father was interested in these problems
and thought in this way might well have oriented his own thought in the direction it
was to travel.

This then is the sum of the argument about the influence of Edward Wise
on the interests, outlook, and ideas of B.R. Wise. We have noted the close simi-
larities in the public lives of the two men, some common interests and ideals, and a
rather striking affinity of thought on certain questions. Whilst much might be put
down to coincidence, we might also find here some explanation for the radicalism of
1. Freerade and Wagee, 1884, p. 29.
a young student which manifested itself in an adventurous challenge to the conventional viewpoints of his own group, especially in the strongly conservative Oxford which Wise entered in the eighteen-seventies.

Finally in this chapter we might look to some early experiences in the life of B.R. Wise which may have helped to mould future attitudes and political development. Like most reformers, Wise was moved by a strong sense of injustice. He recognized its existence quite early, and also that it was inherent in the structure of his society. His attempts to establish the true nature of this inequality in his writings, and his efforts to alter its condition by political action, represent the mainsprings of his social reform policy in New South Wales. He has put it this way:

"So long as there are any who are forced by external circumstances in whose ordering they have no voice . . . to start the struggle for existence handicapped or weakened in the power of self-improvement by any alterable condition of society . . . then it becomes the duty of the State to establish conditions of real freedom."

It must be remembered that at the time Wise was writing there was real poverty to be found in his society, and for many it was a crushing condition. Without security of any kind such as unemployment benefits, health or accident compensation; without old age or invalid pensions to offset misfortune; and often untrained and illiterate many people faced the prospect of living out their days in destitute circumstances and with little hope of improvement. Although Wise viewed this situation from a vantage point above, as one of the privileged class, he was strongly gripped by what he felt to be glaring injustices - that the lowest-paid worker or unemployed labourer should pay the same taxation as the man of wealth; that competitive cheap labour should force down the wages of a wage-earner and breadwinner; that workers' organizations should not be recognized in law and that their efforts to win better

1. Industrial Freedom, p. 158.
conditions should be so strongly opposed by powerful and wealthy interests. These were some of the issues on which Wise was to advocate government action in establishing more just and equitable conditions. Though Wise's political philosophy is based on very abstract principles, the origins of his quest for social justice may well be found in the circumstances of his own early life. Poverty is always relative, but when his father died it seems clear that Wise's mother found herself in very reduced circumstances. Manning's letter to Parkes concerning a pension for the widow gives an indication of the position:

"I have looked into the affairs of the family and find that the provision left by the judge will be very small... scarcely 200 a year."

He says that a pension will be all-important to Mrs. Wise, "left with four children (with another coming) and being suddenly deprived of support." This request evidently received favourable support, for in the Supplementary Estimates for that year there was included a pension of 200 p.a. for Mrs. Maria Bate Wise, at the rate of 200 p.a. Soon after the father's death, the mother took the family to Victoria where they spent six months running wild on an uncle's farm near Kyneton, where the youngest of the family was born - until the time came to cross the sea to that England of which we had been told so much. Maria Wise, with her family of four young boys and baby daughter, had probably decided that it would be better to face the problems ahead in England where there were relatives. Accordingly they set out on the ship Lincolnshire early in 1866, and on arrival in England went first to the Isle of Wight to stay temporarily with two of Edward Wise's sisters, and then in September, 1866, settled at Leeds "where we had our first experience of a terraced house, and first realized that we were poor". Bernhard and his elder brother Edward attended the Grammar School at Leeds and he recalls how "our home-made clothes annoyed us to ridicule and bullying". This was an unsettled period, since the mother had determined to try and keep up a long Wise family tradition of a Rugby education for the sons - a tradition.

2. N.S.W.P.B., 1865-6, vol. 2, p. 95: Supplement to Schedule B. This amount continued to be shown in the Annual Estimates until 1892, after which there is no further mention of it.
ition which went right back to the foundation of the school by Laurence Sheriff in 1587.

Before passing on to Wise's Rugby experience we might record two impressions from this period of his life which were strongly stamped upon his mind. They are revealing, both as a guide to future attitudes, and for glimpses they give of the sensitive nature of the young Wise. His own words require no commentary:

"For some weeks we were in lodgings at St. Kilda awaiting the departure of the ship Lincolnshire. There I first felt the reality of sin; and I wonder often whether children of a later time, who are not, as was the custom then, familiarised with the idea of it, would have suffered my agony of remorse and shame. It was a comparatively trivial sin - the theft of two pears from a fruitier's cart on a very hot day; but the consciousness of guilt, with the fear of detection, and I can never even now, enter a Criminal Court, without reflecting what slight accidents may differentiate the prisoner from the Judge. The child of one class will be whipped or cautioned if he break the law; the undisciplined child of poor parents, for whom greater allowance should be made, is sent to a Reformatory for the same offence, and started on a life of crime - so unevenly does Justice press upon the rich and the poor!"

He remembered two incidents on the voyage. He saw a midshipman fall overboard;

"...and I can still see him in the ship's wake, with pitiful outstretched hands and a look of terror in his eyes...

Another incident which made a deep impression, was the ill-treatment (so it seemed to a child) of one of the sailors - a man with a red beard and face like a bird of prey - by the Chief Mate. It was my first glimpse of the mystery of injustice."

Of his years at Rugby, Wise writes in detail and with strong feeling.

He spent almost ten years there, during seven and a half of which he was a student in the Big School. They were unhappy years, in which he felt the loneliness of an outcast and the full force of schoolboy snobbery. Here he disciplined himself in the exercise of self control, and an application to study; and his success is a measure of his determination and self-realisation; and a justification of the self-sacrifice of his mother "whose life was wrapped in ours". His outstanding abilities also came to the fore.

I. Regarding this incident Wise remarks: the legislation I introduced in 1903 dealing with Neglected Children and Juvenile Offenders was a tardy amends to my conscience for this old transgression." W.M. p. 22.
The mother's purpose in moving to Rugby was that the boys might qualify
by residence for admission to the school as "Foundationers" at very low fees, which
were remitted altogether in favour of those who obtained a scholarship. Boarders'
school fees were beyond her means and it appears that she may have taken some em-
ployment in the school to supplement her modest income of £260 a year (this included
the pension). Although all four boys were admitted on the Foundation, and three of
them won scholarships, Wise remarks that they could not have lived in Rugby on the
family income. "It is a constant marvel to me how my mother contrived to bring up
five children on her small income and give us every year at least a month's holiday.
We lived plainly but were not stinted." But in the eyes of the school boarders the
poverty of a town man was not a virtue, and Wise recounts instances of the persec-
ution of himself and his brothers, both in the preparatory school to which they
first attended, and later in the Big School. He tells how he was tortured with his
fingers in the pegholes of a tripod blackboard which was stretched apart until "in
excruciating agony I promised in future to bring the potato, and was released almost
fainting". (Town boys had to make obeisance to the House boys by bringing daily a
potato which was roasted during the morning interval. Wise had revolted and had
arrived this morning potato-less).

When, with his brother Edward, Wise entered the Big School in January,
1870, he met the full force of blind, unreasoning social prejudice. He tells how,
as a "town lout", he belonged to a pariah class. He was not bullied physically -
1. Rugby when founded in 1867 was intended for the instruction of children of the
locality. Thus boys resident in the town were entitled to go "in the foundation".
This still applied to those with two years' residence in 1867 when the Wise family
moved to the town, but the large enrolment of "town" boys had dwindled about this
time to a small and despised minority, as the educated people of small means who
once came to Rugby in numbers had fallen off because it became known that the Com-
missioners were preparing to repeal the concession. See Wise, pp. 34-5.
2. This is the opinion of the present archivist at Rugby from information entered
in the school register. I am obliged to Mr. N.G. Hermiston for this and other in-
formation concerning Wise's period in Rugby.
3. Bernhard and his older brother Edward entered together in 1870, to be followed
by Thomas Arnold in 1873 and Alexander in 1879. Admission Register, Rugby School.
4. Ibid., p. 73.
"this was ‘bad form’ at Rugby in our day, and would have given a welcome opportunity of retaliation", but the cruelty was mental and thereby more difficult to combat.

"The Town’ had dwindled to an insignificant handful, who, unable owing to their paucity of numbers, to provide games for themselves and excluded by the rigid laws of schoolboy etiquette from sharing in the games of any other 'House', lived in despised isolation outside the main stream of school life. . . . (We) were regarded as unpleasant vermin. Boys who met a 'Town' boy in the street crossed to the other side of the road holding their noses lest 'the wind should come between him and their nobility', and groups dispersed as he approached. 'House' boys at whose homes he stayed in the holidays would beg him not to notice them in Term time; and, when they came to a meal or to call, would watch to enter unobserved or sneak out guiltily by the back-gate; and he knew too well the risk they ran to feel resentment at such insults. If in addition a 'Town' bore the brand of poverty in old, ill-fitting clothes, grievous indeed was his misery and shame! The most eager and ambitious could not help becoming self-centred and mistrustful. Boys individually may be right enough; but boys in the lump are fiends."

This social segregation and his exclusion from the normal life of the school embittered Wise's whole recollections of Rugby. It also, perhaps, provided an additional spur to achievement for his record was quite notable. He quickly moved to the top of his classes and although he failed to gain an Exhibition, he gained in the knowledge of his own capacity for concentrated work.

"I always feel great satisfaction that, although I knew success to be impossible, (he had chosen history - 100 marks - as an alternative to Greek verse - 300 marks); I worked 12 hours a day all through my last term, just as if I had a chance; and I have never since had to work so hard continuously."

He also enjoyed athletic success and in his sixth form was invited to move into a "House", to help restore its fallen prestige and discipline. He soon became its head, a position "which proved a rare training in self-reliance and administration".

One remark is illuminating; he mentions how his authority in the House was aided by a mask of indifference - a mask which by now was probably part of a self-defensive apparatus. Later in life this same apparent indifference to personal attacks and press criticism is a mark of his political character, but in reality behind the mask is a very sensitive nature, which we will find revealed in his correspondence with Parkes.
One other aspect of Wise's reaction to the prejudice he found at Rugby was a desire to seek seclusion and cut himself off from contact with those around him. At school, "the refuge for the sensitive and suffering" he found in the Arnold Library, to enter which "was to experience the peace of the cloister, to be safe from the world, and master of oneself". He speaks of the great peace which fell upon the troubled soul when that heavy door banged to on the Western side.

"In summer there was coolness, and in winter a blazing fire, and, best of all, human speech with others of like tastes, which made even a 'town' boy feel that he shared in the corporate life of a great School."

Here he came to browse and to read when the Houses from which he was excluded were at sport, and here his reading interests and literary experience broadened as he moved on to Thackeray and Fielding and through the olive-green, morocco-bound classics of the Delphin edition. In these library hours was awakened his great interest in "questions of the day" which he followed in the "Cornhill" and "Fortnightly Review". Here perhaps was the beginnings of his interest in politics, an interest which many years later he was to describe "as almost the religion of my life". These glimpses into the life of the schoolboy help us to gain a more sympathetic understanding of the man when we come to observe him in his society in New South Wales. To many he appeared aloof and superior and, ironically, a 'snob', and in the words of a friend he found it difficult to get the ear of democracy. With this background we can also better understand the exclusive nature of his friendship with Parkes, for Parkes not only shared mutual interests, but recognized his qualities and offered him guidance, which, despite his independence and self-reliance, Wise often felt the need.

When the day came for Wise to leave Rugby he did so with a feeling of relief and emancipation. He won a presentation worth £90 p.a. for five years at Queen's College Oxford, and this gave him entry into a new world, and closed the

1. Address in Reply to Governor's speech, Legislative Council Proceedings, 24.8.04.
chapter on ten dark years. His bitter feelings were not softened by the years and in 1914 he still speaks of his adolescence with strong emotion:

"It is so much a habit to tell boys that their school days are the happiest they will ever know that it almost argues some defect of nature to assert the contrary... Yet I can truthfully say that those seven years were, from their beginning to their end, a period of unbroken misery... I doubt if any boy, of any force of character or peculiarity of temperament - whether this be good or bad - ever knows happiness until he exchanges school for the freedom of a University."

In the freedom of the University, Wise was to mature and his latent abilities were to come to full flowering, but before we pass on to this period of his life brief mention must be made of the Rugby ethos which he had absorbed during these years. From Arnold, the famous headmaster, had come the distinctive values which were put before generations of Rugby men in the years following his headmastership - the ideals of social service, of duty and truth, which Arnold had insculptured were the guiding lights for Edward Wise, who was one of Arnold's favourite pupils. Wise recalls that these had been the ideals in the home long before he entered the School, and although he had little respect for Dr. Hayman, a reactionary headmaster appointed during his senior years, Arnold's spirit was resident in Rugby, and the ideals of the home were reinforced during Wise's term. How strongly Wise was imbued with the Arnold spirit we can judge from his own recollection that the spirit of duty had been constantly before him as long as he could remember.

"How seriously I entertained this is revealed by a commonplace book which I kept at school into which was copied this passage from Masrini:

'Life is a Mission; duty therefore its highest law. When once you have conceived your Mission, fulfil it with all your...'

and, underneath I wrote, in all sincerity of youth (I was then 17)

'And what is my mission? - to bring about in Australia the Union of the Colonies, the establishment of Free Trade, and the settlement of the Land Question..."

1. W.M. p. 33. All references from Wise's Memoirs in the foregoing pages are to be found in pages 14-51.
2. There is a sympathetic letter from Arnold to Edward Wise, cited evidently because it typifies the Arnold spirit, in Dean Stanley's "Life of Dr. Arnold". Wise had been prevented by a serious illness from proceeding to the University. ibid., p. 11.
3. ibid., p. 74.
It is quite probable that these strongly felt ideas drew him towards Arnold Toynbee in Oxford, where he had before him a near-perfect model of idealistic service and altruism of an exceptional kind, and Wise was to be further influenced by Toynbee.

When he returned to New South Wales, Wise frequently refers to this ideal of duty to society in his political speeches, when, for instance, he is speaking of Union leadership at an Intercolonial Trade Union Conference, and although his political motives were often questioned, and he was charged with insincerity, it must be allowed, until such charges are proven, that Wise was motivated by such ideals in his political life. A personal ambition for prestige and power does not explain his career – as we shall see he had these opportunities – and his professional interests were often sacrificed to his public work.

The interesting point here is, that at Rugby Wise imbibed the spirit, which formed a distinctive part of the training of the governing elite in most of the Public Schools of England in this period. The product was a man trained in "the gracious, honest and responsible exercise of power... and conscious of the dignity and importance of government. In political terms these qualities produced party discipline, a considerable sense of public responsibility and agreed ideas of fair play and proper behaviour that were not always comprehensible to those brought up outside the system." Whereas in England these Public School nurseries of the Victorian era produced the political leadership of the nation for the next two generations, it is important to recognize that in New South Wales Wise, almost alone among his fellow politicians had received this training, and in a very remarkable degree he typified the qualities here described.

Thus we conclude this chapter concerning the influence of family background, and the impact of early experiences on the future outlook of B.H. Wise, and we will now pass on to his life in Oxford.

Chapter II

"Oxford holds her place in our hearts because she does not mistake eccentricity for genius, or think that a man gains in self-respect by forgetting his manners. And then, she is at once the inspirer and tutor of Democracy. In truth, we were fortunate in being at Oxford in a time of intellectual ferment when mid-Victorian conventions were breaking up, and all received ideas were in the melting-pot. While in politics, the rival views of Gladstone and Disraeli on the Eastern Question were transformed by the genius of the former into a moral conflict between the forces of good and evil. The lesson then learnt, that politics do involve questions of right and wrong, and are not mere expediences, has not been effaced."

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In Oxford Wise spread his wings. The new-found freedom, the feeling of independence and equality, and the intellectual stimulation provided an atmosphere and environment in which his talents rapidly developed and his political interests quickened and matured. He entered Queen’s, one of Oxford’s oldest colleges, in the spring of 1877 and took possession of a suite of rooms which opened through one window to a view of Magdalen Tower, and the other looked down the High, "their height and dignity not inaptly symbolizing the larger life of Oxford". He recalls his first day in College with vividness, remarking how it all bore "testimony to one’s new independence, a sense of which was never dulled by familiarity". In the Dean of Queen’s College, the philosopher Grove, Wise found also the friendship and guidance which, as a young boy heavily laden with responsibility, he probably often felt the need. He speaks of this friendship as one of his most prized possessions and it lasted until Grove’s death in 1906. Again we can see Wise attracted to the idealist as Grove was evidently the model tutor, "sinking all his interests and ambitions in a single-minded devotion to the small community of graduates and undergraduates over which he ruled as Dean".

Wise’s four years in Oxford were marked by some striking personal achieve-
2. Ibid., p. 51.
3. When Wise’s son went to Oxford, Grove arranged that he occupy the same rooms in Queen’s as his father had done.
4. Ibid., p. 65.
ments and he was to enjoy the prestige of being one of the leading figures in Oxford. His academic record was quite outstanding. He chose the School of Law in preference to Greats - a decision he was to regret later because, he said, it deprived him of the basic philosophic apparatus with which to test his political ideas - but it is evident that his intellectual interests were widely distributed. In his first year he achieved the distinction of being the Cobden Prizeman, an award of £60 given by the Cobden Club for the best essay on some subject connected with political economy. Wise's essay on "Facts and Fallacies of Modern Protection" is quite a seasoned work for a university freshman, and indicates his maturity at this stage. Two years later he was proxime for the Lethean history prize, a national award, for which he received a Queen's medal. Meanwhile he was accepted for the Honour School of Jurisprudence, from which he graduated first class in 1880. With this record Wise was permitted to stay up at Oxford for a fourth year on scholarship to read for the History School without examination, so rounding off a very notable academic performance. Of the quality of his mind there could be no doubt. Mr. Justice Gordon, a fellow Oxonian, made the remark of Wise that he "was possessed of the most brilliant intellectual qualifications - indeed the most brilliant I have ever met".

Academic success alone, however, would not have won for Wise any special place in the memory of his contemporaries, for brilliant students are never rare at Oxford; but when to these scholastic honours are added his achievements in other fields - as an athlete and debater - Wise's prominence as a leading figure in Oxford can be better appreciated. In athletics he won considerable renown. In his first year he was selected as third string pacemaker in the mile event against Cambridge, but he won the event by twenty yards, and thus achieved immediate fame. This was

1. Details can be found in the Cobden Club Report of 1913. The published essay is in the Mitchell Library.
2. His subject was "Christina of Sweden".
followed by a win in the National title which he continued to hold until 1881, and so established himself as the leading mile runner of his day in England. He also took an active part in athletic organization, and as President of the University Athletic Association chaired the conference of all national athletic bodies which established the Amateur Athletic Association in 1880, and Wise became the first president of this now famous body. (His flair for political organization is revealed in his account of the management of this conference).

Wise's greatest distinction at Oxford, however, was to be won as a debater in the Oxford Union. To be elected President of the Union "is the greatest honour that an Oxford man can attain and it is awarded with great good sense and justice." Accordingly, his election to the Presidency in 1880 was a tribute to his ability as a speaker and to his personality and prestige in the Union. Moreover this distinction was achieved in one of the Union's golden periods, for as president Wise joined a celebrated company, the four names immediately preceding his in the records being Henry Asquith, Alfred Milner, Thomas Raleigh, St. John Broderick, and immediately following is the Hon. George Curzon. It is quite likely that his uncle, G.R. Wise, was not exaggerating when he wrote to Parkes about this time: "I hear from many of his fellow Collegians that Bernard Wise is considered the best public debater in Oxford". As President of the Union, President of the University Athletic Club, and graduating with a "First", the year 1880 was indeed Wise's "annus mirabilis."

1. All delegates were invited to Oxford, given a good dinner, and then given copies of resolutions proposed and even a proposed set of rules. In this way the Oxford delegates carried the meeting and ensured the successful inauguration of the A.A.A. W.M., pp. 66-7. Details of Wise's career in Oxford can be found in Australian Biographical Dictionaries and The Times, London, 21.9.1916.
As his range of interests suggests, Wise entered fully into the life of Oxford and savoured its every hour. In the political Palmerston Club, of which he also became president, in the social gatherings, room meetings, and in the corporate life of the College to which he was very attached, Wise tasted the full flavour of student life, and a lighter and happier personality emerges. Following the segregation of Rugby he was doubly appreciative of the many friendships he formed and his complete acceptance by all.

"You will hardly understand my glad surprise at being accepted as an equal in such society... each day discovered some new charm and quickened some fresh interest. Gaiety, wit, enthusiasm tempered by good manners, insatiable intellectual curiosity, and with all this, health, success and the exuberance of youth - do you wonder that I prize the memory of my Oxford days?"

There was also a great variety of ideas and stimulation in Oxford at this time, as the University was going through one of its transitional periods. These were the years when many accepted beliefs and assumptions were beginning to break down before the social analysis of younger minds who could see the Industrial Revolution in clearer perspective, and the changes which came out of Oxford were part of a general climate of change. England was experiencing the impact of the forces of nationalism and liberalism which had been such powerful influences on the Continent, Irish nationalism was a vital issue, and liberalism was at work with democratic advances in franchise extensions and secret ballot legislation, while factory legislation, trade union bills and an education act, as well as the growth of the working class cooperative movement, marked the continual interplay of social and political change which accompanied technological advance. At the same time the impact of Darwinism was being felt most strongly in the fields of scientific and religious thought. All these changes bore in upon the life of the universities and created, in Oxford especially, a strong intellectual ferment. Wise has recalled this atmosphere, remarking that "all received ideas were in the melting pot".  

1. W.M., p. 56.
Oxford as an institution, however, remained strongly conservative – the Anglican tradition, Tory politics and the class structure were still strongly entrenched in the 1870's – but the challenges were getting stronger, and democratic advances were being made. Dissenters were admitted to the M.A. degree in 1871 and in 1879 the first two women's colleges were opened, although they were born into a very sceptical family. Among the dons, John Ruskin, T.H. Green, Mark Pattison and Arnold Toynbee were advancing new concepts in art, philosophy and political economy, and among Wise's contemporaries were students who were later to reflect the new spirit in various fields – Oscar Wilde the literary aesthete, Graham Walker, the Fabian, Bernard Bosanquet and J.A. Hobson in philosophy, and E.T. Cook in journalism. It is in such an atmosphere that we can see the radicalism of Wise emerging so clearly.

As our main concern is with Wise's political development in Oxford, it is his career in the Union that holds most interest. To appreciate the training Wise received in this "forcible house of political talent" and the stamp it placed upon him, a word or two about the place of the Union in Oxford life and its character as an institution is necessary. The Oxford Union is first and foremost a debating society. It was established in 1825 as the Oxford Union Society and ever since it has jealously guarded its independence and special status as the centre of University political life. Of all the societies in Oxford, the Union is the most renowned and influential, and the current of thought in the Union is generally interpreted as a reflection of the political thought in the university itself. It has long had the name of being a preparatory school for the House of Commons, and office in the Union has often been a first step on the political stairway, which, for men such as Gladstone and Asquith led on to the Prime Ministership, and for such as Milner and Curzon to top positions in the Civil Service, administering the Empire. "Without
the Union", said Lord Carson, speaking at a Centenary Banquet, "the University would be but a ghostly and pallid phantom of its real self."

The Union attracts the politically minded section of the University, and gives to these students a training in political procedure and experience in a parliamentary atmosphere. The new Union Hall which was opened during Wise's membership is in fact larger than the House of Commons, and there is close simulation of the protocol of the Parliamentary Chamber in the Thursday night debates. Elaborate procedure is followed: the officers and paper speakers wear evening dress, the President leads in the speakers and visitors, and parliamentary tradition—such as not referring to members by name—is followed. Gladstone remained "the ex-president from Christ College". ("The Union", remarks Longmate, "is of all things parochial, and in its eyes Mr. Gladstone's term as President was the summit of his political career.") For a speaker to make his mark in the Union, he must have real merit, for office is highly valued and keenly contested. As Wise tells us: "no audience is at once more critical or more tolerant... The officer who holds his own in such a battle is not likely to lose his head before any audience in later life".

We can gather from the Records of the Union that Wise was active in the Union quite soon after his arrival. A new member normally waits some time to take in tradition and procedure before testing himself on the floor, and then, if he is politically ambitious, seeks election to minor offices where his ability is tested in question time. The record shows that Wise was speaking in debate in his first term, and in the first debate of his second term he is one of the paper speakers defending the motion that "Churchyards should be open to Dissenters". He then follows a recognised initiation course, serving on the Standing Committee (1878), and then gaining election to office as sub-librarian (1879). He served as secret-

2. N.Longmate, op. cit., p. 117.
3. B.A.Wise, Reminiscences of Oxford Union, Union Book of 1902, Sydney Univ., p. 205-
ary briefly, and then the entry for March 4, 1880, announced that Mr.B. Wise had been nominated for the office of President. The presidential debate is one of the highlights of the Oxford year and has general interest extending beyond the Society, for it attracts prominent visitors and distinguished Alumni. The speakers in the debate are candidates for office and the debate is traditionally featured by an enthusiastic, yet restrained attack upon each other and on the distinguished guest of the evening, while the topic is usually a challenge to some conventional concept, accepted policy or contemporary mode of thought. Although set speeches are demanded they are liberally sprinkled with a wealth of impertinence, and "display the brilliant plumage of verbal wit". The election of Wise as president is evidence enough of his accomplishments as a speaker, and the training he had received in the art and style of political debate.

Another characteristic of the Union as described by Wise was its "rigid and inexorable orthodoxy". Of all the institutionalists in Oxford it probably reflect-ed most strongly the traditional conservatism of the university. Wise has given us this picture of its conservative character:

"Then how decided the Society has always been in its opinions! The House of Lords might give way before the inroads of Democracy; but the temper of the Union was unbroken and its courage undismayed... Others might play with reform and palter with Democracy, but the Union stood unaltered in the ancient ways - the uncompromising enemy of liberalism; the undaunted friend of the Church; the accurate exponent of the thoughts of the British aristocracy!"

In the very nature of student life it was inevitable that radicals and reformers would appear to attack these iron-clad traditions, but to do so successfully in the Union required rare ability, and never more so than when Wise was at Oxford.

1. Records of the Union, Oxford University. I am indebted to Mr. John Owen of Oxford for doing this research on my behalf.
2. D.F. Karaka, op. cit., p. 10. This tradition is happily still a characteristic feature of the Union for it can still debate with great spirit such motions: "That Guy Fawkes raised the level of Parliamentary Life";
"That in the opinion of this House Columbus went too far";
"That this House prefers to travel with its back to the engine".
4. ibid.
for in attacking Tory politics and enshrined tradition, the 'Radicals' were then opposed to the combined intelligence and talents of one of the Union's most brilliant groups in its history - the group led by the Hon. George Nathaniel Curzon which had its life in the aristocratic Canning Club, the real centre of conservatism in the university. But it was those Radicals who ventured to attack these foundation concepts of the English establishment who gave the life blood to Union politics. And, it would appear, that just as Curzon emerged as the conservative leader, Wise was the leading spirit in the radical group. It was not just a strongly expressed opposition in Union debates to national conservative politics that distinguished Wise's radicalism, but within the confined sphere of university life itself he also displayed his non-conformity. One can, I think, gain the best impression of the nature and extent of Wise's radicalism by setting it against the traditional conservatism represented by George Curzon.

The early careers of Wise and Curzon make an interesting comparison. Though from different backgrounds, both came up to Oxford about the same time. Intelligent and gifted students, both followed similar interests, and both were politically very mature. Both achieved considerable renown as undergraduates - history prize winners, both graduated with scholastic honours, and both succeeded to the highest position in university student political life, President of the Union. Obviously both young men looked to a political future, and although their careers diverged upon leaving Oxford, both realised parliamentary ambitions within a year of each other at a remarkably early age; Curzon entered the House of Commons in 1886 and Wise in the following year was elected to the N.S.W. Assembly. But when it came to ideas, the two young politicians were sharply opposed on almost every political issue.

1. Commenting on Wise's election to president in 1886, John Owen, who had followed Wise's career through the records of the Union, writes: "It was a great tribute, especially in view of the fact that he was the undoubted leader of the Radical faction." Letter to author, 1.1.1959.
Curzon had the complete conservative background. From an unbroken line of 800 years of family residence in the great mansion at Kedleston in Derbyshire, he came through Eton to Balliol, and although there was no wealth behind the family at this time, he represents the very best traditions of his class. He was the quintessence of Victorian Oxford - gifted, well-bred, educated in the classical tradition; and his political ideas were derived from the very basic concepts of the ruling class of England. At Oxford his conservatism developed into a clear set of political ideas and concepts which he was later to expound as "The Conservatism of Young Oxford". Like Disraeli, he believed that some amelioration of the condition of the lower orders of society was necessary, but he stood firm against any far-reaching change. His biographer has thus summarized his outlook:

"The Monarchy, the Estates of the realm, the Established Church - institutions which had 'raised England from a collection of petty princedomities to a great Power whose fame overshadowed the world' - must be sedulously guarded and preserved. Social revolution involving a war of classes, 'of the landed and moneyed interests, of aristocracy and democracy, of the rich and the poor, of the landlord and the tenant' was fraught only with disaster."

If, as it seems quite true to say, Curzon had gathered within his person and outlook the very best qualities and characteristics of the Oxford man, in reverse it would also seem quite true to say that Curzon saw in Oxford the institutional expression of the best qualities and characteristics of the nation. For him Conservatism meant Oxford and he didn't want to see it change. The Anglican tradition was part of its history, the education of the leisure classes was a national responsibility, and the admission of women he opposed strongly because it represented the beginning of a process of disintegration. As we have seen, Wise also had a strong feeling for Oxford, but he did not link its virtues with an unchanging character and he met these basic concepts of Curzon head on in debate in the Union.

3. ibid., p. 49.
In the sphere of national politics Curzon and Wise each took up his stand as supporter of Disraeli and Gladstone; within the walls it was hallowed tradition against radical faction.

Wise's political career in Oxford might be said to have begun on his first day, for one of the events he recalls is his enrolment in the Union Society. After this the Union was the centre of his interests but he seems to have happily avoided the too deep entanglement with Union politics which, it was generally said, cost Curzon his first-class degree. His first recorded speech is in his first term, opposing a motion condemning the Liberal Party, but his real emergence as a radical came in his second term when a debate on the land question in the Union prompted him to invite Joseph Arch, the Warwickshire peasant agitator, to come to Oxford and address an invited group of undergraduates in Wise's rooms. Arch had already begun the organization of the agricultural labourers which was seriously to disturb the landowners and parsonry, and Wise had been very impressed with his eloquence and sincerity when he heard him speak at Rugby. His invitation was accepted by the politically minded set and the event no doubt helped to establish Wise as a figure in the Union. It also brought him into contact with E.T. Cook, a fellow radical thinker who was to become his closest Oxford associate, and in turn his brother-in-law.

From the beginning of 1876, Wise's name appears with regular frequency in the Union records and we can trace the extent of his radicalism by a selection of his speeches. Always does he appear to be taking the unorthodox and anti-conservative viewpoint, and almost without exception is he with the minority opinion. First we might take note of his standpoint on domestic issues, which it seems aroused the greatest furor in the Union and often distinguished most clearly the outlook of an Oxford politician:

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Jan. 3, 1879  Opposed the motion: "This House condemns the action of the House of Lords in adopting Lord Harrowby's motion for open- ing churchyards to the dissenters." Carried 50 - 38.

Oct. 23, 1879. Wise seconded the motion: "That in the opinion of this House, the establishment of a new college in Oxford, analogous in status to Keble College, but unplugged to the support of distinct theological dogma, would be an unmixed advantage to this University." Lost 96 - 19.

(Keble College was founded ten years earlier as a memorial to Rev. John Keble of Oxford Movement fame. This motion represented an attack on the exclusive class composition of Oxford, as Keble College was for men of restricted means, but it also represented an attack on the Anglican tradition as the College had a strong Church of England.)

Nov. 7, 1879. Supported the motion: "That 1's Union Society's library be thrown open to the (women) students of Sommerville and Lady Margaret Hall Colleges, until their own libraries be established." Inoffensive as it appears it evidently created a first class row in the Union and revolved around the general question of women's place in Oxford. The motion was proposed by E.T. Cress and opposed by Carson. Ronaldshay remarks that this was the only debate of first class importance on which Carson suffered defeat. In fact he didn't; it was a subsequent poll of members that reversed the decision of the debate.) Lost 170 - 143.

Jan. 22, 1880. Moved the motion: "That all legislation affecting the observance of Sunday ought to be repealed." Lost 39 - 28.1

On issues of national politics Wise showed himself to be an unflinching supporter of Gladstone and progressive liberalism, and stood strongly opposed to the foreign policy of Disraeli. This was a period of great political interest and the conflict between the policies and personalities of the two national leaders in the Commons was re-enacted in the Union. The aggressive imperialism promoted by Disraeli's success in the Suez Canal venture in 1875 and highlighted by the proclamation of Queen Victoria as Empress of India in 1877, found no sympathetic response from Wise; rather did it arouse his vehement opposition, and support for the principle of national independence. He strongly opposed Disraeli's Turkish policy and took his stand on Home Rule for Ireland. The range of Wise's views and the consistency of his policy are clearly revealed in the debates on national policy.

1. Records of the Oxford Union.
The following selection is representative:

**Feb. 21, 1878.** Opposition to the motion: "That the conduct of Mr. Gladstone during the last eighteen months and especially in the last three weeks has been morally and politically indefensible." Carried 31 - 5.

**May 2, 1878.** Opposition to the motion: "That unless the Russian demands are speedily and wholly withdrawn, the honour and interests of England render war inevitable and justifiable." Carried 31 - 5.

**Oct. 28, 1878.** Government for the motion: "That this House condemns the Anglo-Turkish Convention as prejudicial to the honour and interests of England." Lost 35 - 70.

**Nov. 21, 1878.** Wise moved the motion: "That the Imperial policy of Lord Beaconsfield's Cabinet has neither established English honour nor checked Russian aggression." Lost 48 - 85.

**Nov. 28, 1878.** Opposition to the motion: "That Trades Unions are the cause of the present stagnation of trade as well as being injurious to their membership." Carried 34 - 14.

**May 1, 1879.** Government speaker on the motion: "That this House regards with apprehension the revival of personal rule by Lord Beaconsfield. An amendment "that in the opinion of this House Lord Beaconsfield has in no way contributed to the revival of personal rule" was finally carried after one of the longest debates on record in the Union.

**May 15, 1879.** Wise moved the motion: "That this House no longer considers the Ministers worthy of confidence and thinks they should take an early opportunity of appealing to the country." Lost 42-52.

**June 30, 1879.** Wise spoke against the motion moved by Curzon: "That this House condemns the policy pursued by the Opposition towards H.M. Government with reference to the war in Afghanistan." Carried 60 - 39.

In 1880, the year in which Wise and Curzon both held office as president, political activity in the Union and in the political clubs was most intense. It was the year of the general election and in the city of Oxford itself there was heightened interest in the fight by Sir William Harcourt, the Home Secretary, for his seat, and then following his defeat the election petition and trial to which it gave rise. The stimulant for university political interest was so strong that a penalty of £5 was decreed against any undergraduate found taking part in a polit-
ical meeting. But in the Union these events were the very zest of life for the politically minded students. When Curzon was reprimanded by Professor Ruskin for his political activity: "What in the Devil's name have you to do either with Mr. Disraeli or Mr. Gladstone? You are students at the University and have no more business with politics than you have with rat-catching!", He made the answer that, as politics were merely a synonym for contemporary history, education demanded of a man that he should take an intelligent interest in it.

At all events, whether education demanded it or not, when Curzon moved in the Union "that this House views with sincere regret the results of the General Election", the Hall was crammed to suffocation, it being estimated that more than a thousand people were present. The debate was twice adjourned, but there was really no question that the strong wine of radicalism had intoxicated the Union, or that it had been influenced by Gladstone's emotional appeal, for Curzon's motion was carried by the large majority of 115. "These days of intense political activity", recalled Herbert Morrah, "were the days of joy... It was glorious to dish the Radicals." For the conservatives in the Union at this time their days of joy were many, as Curzon is reported never to have been on the losing side of a major debate. Wise, by contrast, was never to be found with the majority on any issue questioning Tory ascendency in politics or the security of the Establishment.

The election of 1880 made a deep impression on Wise, and left him with an enduring admiration and respect for Gladstone's political principles. He refers to it as "the greatest moral uprising of our time. Mr. Gladstone's fervour lifted the question at issue, above the facts, into transcendental regions of morality: whether what was wrong in private affairs could be right in public affairs; whether a nation could be made great by lying, theft, greed, boasting, and cunning - so that it

is the literal truth that, had Lord Beaconsfield won, many generous spirits would have felt that the sun of righteousness had set for ever." Unhappily for Wise, in view of his great support for Gladstone’s policies, when the Prime Minister visited Oxford the following year at Easter, Wise was absent in France, and he thus missed presiding at the Dinner given to Gladstone by the Palmerston Club. “Who can say what might have come from meeting Mr. Gladstone in such favourable circumstances?” he commented.

Of all issues, there was one in particular that most clearly segregated the Radicals in Wise’s time in the Union. This was “the terrible question” of Irish Home Rule. “It seemed to many,” recalls H.A. Morrah, “that to believe in the national cause for Ireland was foolish; more, it was treasonable.” Wise did believe in Home Rule, and in his role as the leading Radical it was probably characteristic that he should flout conservative prejudice by proposing that the Irish M.P. for Galway, Mr. T.P. O’Connor, should address the Union on the question. He relates how his proposal aroused vehement discussion and that the principal opposer of the motion was George Curzon. This political heresy was to have more serious consequences for him, for it was indirectly to be the cause of his losing a Fellowship at All Soul’s College. Here is his own version of the incident:

“In 1880 I was selected by the Examiners for a fellowship at All Soul’s. Their decision was told to the Provost of Queen’s on a Wednesday, and that evening he invited me to the Common Room to receive the congratulations of the College. On the next morning statutory approval of the whole body of Fellows had to be obtained, which was usually a mere formality. On this occasion, however, it was not until 5 o’clock in the afternoon that the announcement was made that the election had gone in favor of Mr. Farrar of Balliol; and the same evening I learnt from Mr. Leach, himself a fellow of All Souls, who was Cook’s brother-in-law, the reason of my rejection. “Tell Wise”, he said to Cook, “next time he goes up for All Soul’s, not to write letters to the Times.” Utterly bewildered by this mysterious warning, I went at once to the Union Reading Room and found that the Dublin correspondent of the Times, had published that morning with sarcastic comments, a quite private letter, which I had

1. H.M., p. 60.
2. ibid., p. 68.
written to Mr. T.P. O'Connor, inviting him as a prominent Land Leaguer, to take part in a Debate at the Union, and be my guest during his stay in Oxford. This had been read at a formal meeting of the Land League, and hailed by the Members as proof that Young Oxford was upon their side! It is true that I had written sympathetically and not marked my letter "Confidential": but what boy would think that a letter, which, by its tenor was so manifestly private, would be read in public as a manifesto?... The affair made some stir at the time. Professor Thorold Rogers either asked a question, or told me he would ask one if I wished (I forget which) about it in the House of Commons; and John Morley wrote congratulating me on my escape from the ratat-superific of seven years freedom from the necessity to work, which would have been given by the income of 300 a year for that period and the attraction of rooms always at my disposal, without charge, in the most beautiful of Colleges. I do not know but that he was right!1

Although Wise stayed up another year on scholarship after graduation, his undergraduate life came to an end in the summer term of 1880, when he left College and took rooms outside in company with his friend E.T. Cook. These had been three fruitful years, and at this point we might attempt to summarize their significance for his later political career. First, we can say that the Union provided him with a rare political experience. Here his political talents were highly developed and he was trained in constitutional procedures and the civilized arts of debate. Here too he acquired a concept of the high status of political life, and there developed within him, if unconsciously, a veneration for the institution of Parliament, and of democratic proceedings. To him Oxford was "at once the inspirer and tutor of Democracy". These advantages could be said to hold as well for Macquarie St., as for Whitehall, and undoubtedly they helped Wise gain an early entry into the Legislative Assembly of New South Wales, and rapid promotion to Cabinet. But this training also placed its distinctive impress upon him, as a politician, and in the rough and tumble of the Colonial Assembly he was distinguished as something of a curiosity. Wise always maintained a lofty tone of debate, and his style and manner, as well as his "Oxford" accent and sense of parliamentary propriety, carried a suggestion of superiority among local self-made men and frequently exposed him to taunts and ridicule. Local radicals found it difficult to reconcile Wise's ideas with his soph-

1. W.M., pp.75-8.
2. See above, charter heading.
islation and his educated manner, which for many represented the hallmark of class
privilege; many couldn't, and distrusted him accordingly.

Second, Wise, in this period, linked himself completely to the liberal policies of
Gladstone. He found a party to which he could become attached and a leader who
inspired him. The principles of Gladstone's politics Wise adopted as his own gradu-
te and he was often to invoke the name of the great liberal leader when explaining
the purposes and justification of his own political efforts. The absence of these
conditions - a unified party with a clearly defined policy and issues based on set
principles which transcended faction politics - was to create great problems for
Wise in the political arena of New South Wales. But throughout his political life
Gladstone remained the model, inspiring Wise always to seek firm guiding principles
for his policies and legislative proposals. Once these were established he was
prepared, as he later advised Carruthers, "to trust to the larger impulses of his
nature and leave the petty tricks of vote catching to others". How enduring were
these Gladstonian principles we can judge from a letter to Deakin written many years
later. He begins:

"My Dear Deakin,

Among the many striking lessons for all of us, in Gladstone's life,
there is one which - as we all must readily appreciate those which are for
other people - I have been much struck with as a lesson for you at the present
moment. It is the steadiness with which he pressed upon an unwilling and uni-
formed Cabinet, his own large and just perception of the magnitude of the Irish
Land Question." 2

I think it can be truly said that the lesson Wise took from Gladstone could also be
drawn from his own efforts to force upon the Free Trade Party a policy of direct tax-
ation.

Third, Wise, as a radical politician, in the Union had to adapt himself to the ex-
perience of being in the minority on all political issues. This helped to develop

1. Wise to Carruthers, 30.8.1904, W.G. This advice Wise offered Carruthers on
his becoming premier.

2. 30.1.1903, W.G.
an independence of view, and his election as president undoubtedly gave him confidence in his own powers of advocacy, and in his ability to think for himself. It also accustomed him to the experience of “standing out” against popular opinion and resisting the pressure of the majority, an experience with which he had already become familiar at Rugby. In the liberality of an Oxford education the espousal of an unpopular cause occasioned no bitterness or party rancour — rather did it cultivate respect. Colonial politics was not such a gentleman’s affair, and, although Wise won admirers by demonstrating these same qualities of detached and independent thought, he was also to experience the bitterness of party warfare, and his non-conformity, interpreted as disloyalty, earned him obloquy as well.

Finally, this was a period in which many influences were at work in the development of Wise’s ideas. The discussion of his political philosophy we will leave until a later chapter, but here we might simply note the indications of that radicalism which was to colour his mature political ideas when he returned to New South Wales. Taken broadly one cannot say that his Oxford ideas (or what we can judge them to be) were any more advanced than those held by an “advanced liberal” of the time; it is the setting in which the ideas are formed which is the interesting thing. In Oxford Wise was clearly a Radical, and his radicalism was tested against a very strong and well defended set of political principles representing the force of conservatism. The force of conservatism, though deriving from different interests, was also strong in the colonial society Wise entered in the eighteen-eighties, and he once more confronted strongly held ideas and powerful interests, “shrinking”, as Deakin remarks, “from no radical proposal except those that seemed to impair parliamentary...

1 Wise and Carson, for example, remained on close terms of friendship throughout their lives. When Viceroy of India, Carson invited Wise to be his guest at the Durbar, and it was as a result of this friendship that the Indian troops came to Sydney for the Commonwealth celebrations. W.M., p. 61.
development". It so happened that Wise was also greeted by a strong colonial mixture of political radicalism which had its origins in a working-class opinion and an extreme expression of Australian nationalism. It is a paradox that, during his career, he was to be identified with this radicalism by conservative opinion, and with conservatism by some organs of radical opinion.

There is one other influence from Wise's Oxford days which we should mention before leaving this phase of his career, and that is his association with Arnold Toynbee, which became quite close during his post-graduate year. Just when the association began Wise doesn't say, but it appears that Toynbee was among those who accepted Wise's invitation to hear Joseph Arch. Toynbee had returned to Oxford as a fellow of Balliol College and a tutor in political economy and Wise would soon have come to know Toynbee's ideas because of his own interest in political economy. He would also have been attracted by Toynbee's social reform ideas. "The air was charged with ideas of social reform which bore fruit in University Settlements, Extension Lectures... and an active interest in all schemes for the amelioration of social conditions." Once he came to know Toynbee personally, Wise no doubt felt the strong personal attraction which this extraordinarily dedicated reformer had for all his close associates. Alfred Milner speaks of the spell Toynbee cast upon him, and tells us that "to his immediate friends the man himself was so much more than all his doctrines", and Wise also spoke of himself as one of those "who trace no small portion of their better selves to the influence of his luminous enthusiasm".

"Arnold the Apostle" he was known among his friends. The most striking thing about

2. Wise mentions Toynbee as one of the brilliant Balliol set, most of whom came along to hear Arch. W.M., p. 54.
5. Introduction to "Industrial Freedom", p. vi.
working man: "he was on fire with the idea of a great improvement in their material condition, not indeed as an end in itself, but as opening up possibilities of a larger life". One of his strong beliefs was the role he felt that university men could play in informing the minds of working men and helping them to best direct their political endeavours. In so doing, he felt a bridge might be built across the barriers of class. This became something of a mission, for Toynbee was convinced that, once the sincerity and disinterestedness of the scholar was recognized by the working class, they would not only accept instruction but would be eager to learn, and Wise was witness to Toynbee's own great efforts in this regard, for in 1880 began the public lectures to large audiences in the north of England and in London by Toynbee which were quite remarkable for the response they received.

Partly as an answer to the paradox which he saw to be so wasteful - that of the trained political thinker with practically no influence on the course of public opinion - Toynbee gathered together a group of young men in Oxford. Wise was one of this group and he has told us how "twice a term during three years, alternately in Oxford and London, we met regularly for the purpose of reading and critically essay on some selected question of politics or sociology." Another of the group, F.C. Montague, has described the broad aims and methods of "The Society", as it was known to its members:

"Each member was to select for his special study some principal department of politics, but all were to work in concert and to maintain... a general level of sympathy and information. When they had matured their views they were to take part in forming public opinion by writing, or by speaking, as best suited each man's talent and opportunities - 'to put forth our opinions when we get a chance and not expect anyone else to mind them.' Toynbee was throughout the guiding and animating spirit... 'So penetrating was his earnestness, so thorough his dialectic, that the faculties of all who listened to him were strained to the utmost. All were forced to ask themselves what they really believed.

3. The members of this group were: W. Bruce, E.T. Cook, P.L. Gell, J.A. Hamilton, Alfred Wilmar, F.C. Montague, D.O. Ritchie, J.P. Rodgers, Arnold Toynbee, B.R. Wise. All were tutors or post-graduate students in Oxford when the society was formed.
Toynbee's own zeal in this missionary work, and his other social welfare projects, placed a tremendous strain on his weak physical constitution and Wise felt the shock and deep sense of loss which all his friends experienced at his breakdown and tragic death in 1883. To many of his friends their work for social reform and improvement became something of a memorial to this remarkable man. Toynbee's influence on Wise was very strong, as it was on all his close associates, for he was undoubtedly one of the most sincere and idealistic spirits of his generation - a man whose "purity, truthfulness and unrivalled loftiness of soul marked him as one of the noblest men of his day".

There are many reflections of Toynbee in Wise's work in New South Wales. The very first letter he wrote to the press is in support of a University Extension System, and he soon became involved, as Toynbee had done in Whitechapel, with a scheme for the self-improvement of the working man. Together with the Rector of St. James, himself an Oxford man, Wise helped to found a "Workman's Club", and for a time he taught and lectured here. This club continued a struggling existence for five years before it folded up, and Wise had to accept the fact that such a scheme was unsuited to Australian conditions. Following the pattern set by Toynbee, he gave many public addresses directed to working-class audiences in which he attempted to put before his hearers a summary of opinions of leading thinkers.

In 1884, a year after his arrival, Wise delivered an address in the School of Arts which was based upon a paper he had prepared in collaboration with Toynbee on the attitude of the working classes to free trade. It was published as a pamphlet and dedicated to Toynbee. In the following year, when he addressed the

4. "To the Memory of Arnold Toynbee Who Suggested This Work and Gave to It All Its Value by His Teaching and Criticism," "Free Trade and Wages", Sydney, 1884.
Intercollegial Trades Union Congress in Sydney on the subject of "Industrial Remuneration", he explained his presence before the delegates by quoting Toynbee's words: "a student who is not devoid of the interest and passion of a citizen ought to be able to contribute something towards the solution of industrial questions". These early talks to working-class audiences, he remarks to his son, "show how little my ideas were those of the wealthy squatters and importers who then directed the policy of New South Wales. They also show, at what an early date I had formed those "Labour" views, to which, in after years, I have tried consistently to give effect. ... I mention this because my enemies have declared so often that my faith in Trade Unionism was a sudden and not disinterested conversion". One can observe Wise at practically any point in his political career attempting to influence opinion in the direction of contemporary ideas. I think it can be said of him that among politicians in New South Wales his was one of the best informed minds on social and industrial questions. But in no sense was he a side-lines academic, and with a confidence in his own impartiality he saw every reason why he should "utter the best reflections he could make on the way in which things were going, or the way in which he thought they should go".

The similarity in ideas of Wise and Toynbee we will reserve for discussion in the chapter on Wise's political philosophy. The point we might observe here is that, as a member of this advanced group of thinkers, Wise gained a further valuable experience in shaping his ideas and political principles. Although his mind may have been oriented towards these interests by earlier influences, Wise's later concern with the welfare of the working class and the achievement of better conditions of industrial life can be related directly to the influence of Arnold Toynbee.

3. Wise is here citing the words of a fellow-student, Bernard Bosanquet, "Industrial Freedom", preface, p. viii.
failed to gain the All Souls' fellowship, he set himself for the Bar and began to
read in the chambers of a Mr. Byrne. During the next two years he broadened his
social and intellectual life, for London evidently offered many opportunities. He
went to France to coach the son of Admiral Maxse, and following this acquaintance
also visited the United States with a colleague to inspect a cotton plantation,
on an island off the coast of Georgia. The plantation was not bought but it was an
educational holiday "and we returned - having cabled for money to Admiral Maxse,
first class by the Alaska, which was the greyhound of that day". There were liter-
ary acquaintances and prospects in London, for he says that John Morley had asked
him to help with his "Life of Cobden" and George Meredith was his proposer for the
Garrick Club. Political opportunities also opened up. He prepared a report on
French local taxation for Joseph Chamberlain and he had given speeches at the Eighty
Club which had helped to make his name known in political circles. This was part
of the process by which a young man with political ambitions brought himself before
party leaders, for Leonard Morley tells us how Carson, at this same time, was busily
engaged in "cleaning his quills - cultivating party chieftains and haunting polit-
ical clubs till Balfour could assure him 'tis done, and you will be elected".

But Wise's sights were not on the Commons, and throughout these two years his resolve
to return to Sydney did not weaken. The decision, however, was not easily made.
His mother was never reconciled to the idea of return, and tried hard to dissuade
him. "You do not know", she often said, "how small Australia is!" She urged,
also, the prospects London offered, which indeed were very good."

His personal decision to quit family and friends and return to the scene
of his father's work was made even more difficult when Wise became engaged to be
married to Lilian Baird. His wife-to-be was the third daughter of John Foster

1. ibid., p. 71
2. ibid., p. 79.
4. ibid., p. 77.
Baird of Northumberland, the descendent of an old established family whose ancestors was the Fosse of Bamboor Castle, Northumberland, beheaded for high treason after the Jacobite rising of 1715. The family name had been changed to Baird so that the father might inherit the estate of Bowmont Hill, and although a barrister by profession, the family of six daughters spent long periods of residence on the Continent. It was an interesting and cultivated family that Wise was now to join, the father was something of a playwright and literary man, and the girls were a very talented group and had received an interesting education which, for Lilian, was mostly continental. It was to be quite a distinguished family circle, for among Wise's future brothers-in-law were E.T. Cook, his friend and later editor of the London "Daily News", two university men, Professor Threlfall, and A.L. Smith, master of Balliol College, and H.B. Irving, son of the famous theatrical figure who married the youngest sister, Dorothea, herself a well known actress at that time. Wise must have had many reservations in asking Lilian Baird to leave her own family, and the refinements of English life, to share his future career in Australia, but evidently she was prepared to do so, for almost immediately after he was admitted to the Bar of Middle Temple in 1883, Wise set out to return to his native place in Sydney, with a marriage planned just as soon as he was settled and able to set up a home. Wise was married on 1st April, 1884, in Melbourne soon after his wife had landed there. All things considered, it was a very strong pull which drew Wise back to New South Wales, and full significance must be given to his own expressed reason - that it was a sense of destiny which he had always felt to play a part in the development of his own native country.

As we picture the young Wise on the ship heading for Australia in 1883, his future would seem to be overhung with a bright nimbus. At the age of twenty-five he already had some striking achievements behind him. In the full vigour of life, Details of the Baird family background can be found in "A.L. Smith-Master of Balliol" by Mary Smith (the eldest sister). Laurence Irving has references to the family in the biography of his grandfather, "Henry Irving", and Wise includes details in his memoirs, p. 1,2.
youthful health, with an array of natural gifts, and a mind nurtured by education and travel, he might well appear to have the world at this feet. To his other gifts it would seem that he was also endowed with a winning personality, striking good looks and fine physical bearing. One of his bitter enemies has given this brief etching: "He was the beau-ideal - tall, straight, lithe, active with a springiness of step which indicates athletic training and agility - a striking face with 1 flashing eyes never in repose". Deakin describes him "as a moustached and beardless Cupid with a rich soft voice and perfect enunciation", And W.H.Hughes, never an admirer, speaks of "his great personal charm". In all we might agree that he was "the favourite of the Gods".

Looking at the calm surface of the Indian Ocean as he approached Australia in 1883, Wise may well have seen his own course charted through such smooth waters, but there were submerged reefs and shoals ahead, and problems to be faced, for which Oxford had not prepared him. It is these problems which we will take up in our next chapter.

PART 2.

Chapter III

"And so I landed in Sydney in 1883, eager, confident, and confiding, not realizing that I was coming among men who viewed life through different eyes, and hardly understood my estimates of men and acts."

"Rash youngsters like yourself, educated abroad, who, presuming to have all knowledge arrive just out of knickerbockers to teach your grandmothers how to suck eggs."

In England the educational background and political training which Wise had experienced would have been regarded as a classical apprenticeship for the House of Commons. It might then be expected that in the Legislative Assembly of New South Wales, which was modelled on the constitutional forms and procedures of the "Mother of Parliaments", it would serve him just as well, but this assumes that the norms of political life in the two countries were much the same. In fact, however, they were not; and it is in the differences, that the problems for Wise lay.

That Wise should enter political life in New South Wales would seem a most natural course. There is as it were a strong political undercurrent drawing him towards the hussings, and the problem to be faced would seem to be just when he could afford to enter political life rather than any question that this is what he would finally do. But, unlike Corson, who could decide from the outset that his destiny lay with the Conservative Party, and identify himself with its fundamental policies, there was no party corresponding to the English liberal Party to which Wise could attach himself. As soon as he took stock of the political situation in the colony Wise faced his first problem, for not only was there an absence of a clearly defined two-party system, there were no parties at all in any true sense of the word.

In the Assembly, representatives attached themselves to groups clustered about three or four prominent faction leaders, and government at any time depended

1. E.I., p. 80.
on some alliance or coalition between two or more such groups. The opposition was formed by the remainder, until such time as the combination forming the government broke up or an opposition leader was able to attract sufficient numbers of votes for the government to lose its majority. The faction leaders, Sir John Robertson, Sir Henry Parkes, Sir Alexander Stuart, Sir Patrick Jennings, and G.R. Dibbs were all old men well practised in the arts and strategies of faction politics, and each had his own network of supporters and election managers. In these conditions, politics were highly individualistic and localism was very strong. It was a belief in the sturdy independence of the locally elected representative to represent his electors untrammeled by party allegiance, that characterized the liberalism of many colonial politicians, a notion strikingly in contrast to Wise’s conception of a liberal “party” man. Had Wise thought of entering politics at once, the prospects of joining one of these groups lacking in firm leadership and discipline must surely have dismayed him.

Another aspect of these colonial politics which disturbed Wise and many fellow-colonists as well was the manner in which the affairs of the country were conducted in parliament. The high seriousness of political debate which Wise may have fondly imagined distinguished life in the legislative chambers of a democracy was sadly missing from the “Macquarie Street bear-garden”, as it was less respect fully known. The very nature of these faction-type politics made for disruptive proceedings. Much time was spent in political manoeuvring, log-rolling, and can- rious opposition, and personal enmities and long-standing feuds often reduced the level of debate to that of a futile faction-fight. In these conditions it was almost impossible for a government to plan a long-term legislative programme, and the emphasis in government came to be more on administration than legislation.

Changes of government were frequent - it was abnormal for a government to run a full
three-year term - and in the quick changes of ministry the Assembly came to bear a closer resemblance to the French Chamber in Paris than it did to the Commons. Of Dibbs, Parkes once remarked that he lived "when in the murky shades of Opposition, with votes of censure hung round his neck like Chinese lanterns"; but Parkes had his own disruptive record, and all ministries existed in an uneasy state of insecurity, while frequent dissolutions meant that much of the time and energy of members was taken up in elections which also proved a drain on their financial resources.

The great issues of British politics which Wise had debated in the Union were conspicuously missing from discussions in the Assembly. There were, however, some very important issues in the colony at this time - the whole question of the land, its ownership, settlement, and its use in the best interests of the people, was an issue on which a clear line of policy was called for; government revenue also involved some major policy questions as the revenue from land sales, long the staple of government finance, was beginning to fall off, and tariff policy was involved in any taxation proposals, and also with the question of intercolonial trade; the nature of the Imperial connection was an issue on which a political party might shape policy as the colony's immigration and defence policies were closely tied to it, and the Sudan Expedition and Pacific annexations raised new problems; there was a further extension of the principle of democracy involved in such issues as local government, one-man-one-vote, payment of members, and electoral reform to achieve single member constituencies and single day elections; and also involved were many issues bearing on the role and function of the state - railway ownership and development, land alienation, education, and such matters as regulation of Industry, health laws and the eight-hour day. But little policy was framed by the

1. From February, 1875, to December, 1877, for example, four different ministries were in office. N.S.W. Parliamentary Record, p. 271-2.
faction groups, and all too often the debate in the House turned on the local issues of roads and bridges nature, on the mysteries of estimates in the budget (no cash budget was presented at any specified date), and charge and counter-charge of corruption, inefficiency and preferential treatment to local interests. There were strong country-city rivalries, which, along with the sectarian question, and the many personal conflicts intruded into the most innocent-looking question, e.g., the matter of free train passes for school children involved the House in heated discussion which occupied its time for days on end. Also, it should be observed that, although twelve parliaments had met since 1856, constitutional forms and practice were still in a state of evolution and many very unusual incidents took place at times, even at vice-regal level.

In these circumstances there was little progressive legislation enacted and the reaction in the community varied from a general cynicism to strong protests from many quarters about the unhealthy condition of political life. Wise was one to express his concern. During the first three years we can observe him taking a stand on a number of the larger political issues of colonial life, but there was little temptation for him to seek election to parliament. In an address sponsored by the Trades and Labour Council in August, 1885, Wise called on trade unionists to take an interest in political affairs and to seek legislation requiring elementary

1. One example: when in 1879 the Chief-Justice, Sir Alfred Stephen, was appointed Lieutenant-Governor, he made a strong request to Parkes, the Premier, that he retain his seat in the Legislative Council, during his period of Vice-regal duty. To Parkes the idea of a man acting in the dual capacity as Representative of the Crown administering the government, and a member of parliament, was repugnant to his conception "of the theory as well as the usage of responsible government". When Stephen persisted, Parkes delivered the ultimatum: "if you continue to be a member of the Legislative Council when you are sworn in to-morrow your first act as Governor must be to accept my resignation as minister". (Parkes to Stephen, 19.3.1879, R.G. Vol. 34, pp. 341-4.) Other examples can be cited: the appointment of Legislative Councillors by a defeated government; long adjournments convenient to the government without prorogation; carrying forward large financial deficits without any statement of accounts.

2. For some examples of his early political viewpoints we may cite:

"The Influence of Free-trade on Wages", Public address, Aug. 4, 1884.

"History and Principles of Trade Unionism", public address, Aug. 4, 1885.
laws of health and decency in every factory and workroom. "Political divisions", he said, were becoming "mere religious feuds and we are entitled to look to trade unions for the creation of a healthier spirit".

In the twelfth parliament which began its life in November, 1885, political life reached its lowest ebb for many years. The parliament lasted only fourteen months but in that time four changes of government took place as, in turn, Stuart, Dibbs, Robertson and Jennings led patchwork ministries, and the government of Jennings finally collapsed from internal dissension, while the electorate was treated to a public ministerial controversy and disclosures regarding the details of the budget. The "Herald" commented on the "muddled bewilderment" of such a state of affairs when a ministry with a large majority which had not been defeated on a question of policy "had just abandoned their seats" and left the leader of the opposition to carry on the government, even though the temper of the House was against him. It pointed to the confusion and the effect on commerce and industry which this chaotic situation had brought about; it condemned the low tone of parliamentary life, the waste of time, and the scenes of disorder and violence which had made the last Assembly "the worst in the colony's history". "It would be hard to find any Parliament since representative government began, that managed to turn out so little solid work, or that made more noise about it." The last rites over the dead parliament were pronounced in a few brief words: "It would be a happy thing for the country if it could be said with the assurance of true prophecy 'We shall never look upon their like again.'" But this was to be the end of an era and the election

"An Australian Appeal to English Democracy", published article, McMillan's magazine, Aug., 1885.
"An Australian View of 'Oceana'", published article, ibid., Aug., 1886.
2. S.M.H., 13.1.1887, et seq.
3. ibid., 27.1.87.
that followed marked the beginning of something of a new order, for Parkes fought the election on the fiscal issue and formed a party following only from those who accepted his policy of free trade, while the opposition gathered under the banner of protection. Thus a semblance of a two-party system came to New South Wales political life and, for the first time since the education question dominated politics, a major issue was put before all the electors. The circumstances which led Wise to seek election at this time, and his relationship with Parkes will be discussed elsewhere, but here it is important to recognize the level of development which political life had reached when Wise entered the Assembly in 1887.

The leap forward at 1887 has, I think, been exaggerated, for, despite the emergence of party forms, and the new spirit infused into political life by the pre-eminence of the tariff question, it would be unrealistic to imagine that there was not a carry over into the party era of many of the characteristics of faction politics. The "parties" continued to be led by two of the old faction leaders for the next five years, and much of the spirit of the old house lived on in personal conflicts and disruptive tactics, while the fiscal issue itself proved to be very deceptive in affecting a division of political opinion on many of the important issues, such as divided the English parties. Many problems were to confront Wise in this situation. In joining the Parkes party he became entangled inevitably in personal conflicts for Parkes was the oldest and most controversial figure in the colony's political history and, although Wise tried to keep above the faction feud, he finally got caught up in one of the most bitter and relentless quarrels of Parkes' life. Nor did the spirit and tone of debate change greatly in the years after 1887. Despite the hope expressed the the "Herald" - that the new men elected in 1887 would raise the tone of the House, and prove to be capable of controlling themselves as well as the country - in some ways the House got worse, and the same journal in 1895 was still complaining of the dry rot in the parliamentary system.
and the perversion of its forms, rules, and privileges. "When day after day of 
debate consists of a wilderness of words and tedious repetition preparatory 
to a futile division, the Country has a right to say that its institutions 
are being brought into contempt." Later still it was comparing the House 
with a bullock team which seemed not to be able to move without a very copious use 
of bad language, and despising the disorder and "abusive epithets thrown back and 
forth like schoolboys". The absence of the restraining traditions and the con-
stitutional procedures of English politics represented quite a problem of adjustment 
for Wise, and he was never comfortable in the party wrestling matches into which 
debate often degenerated. More serious, however, was the difficulty in elevating 
an issue which he felt to be of real importance above this party spirit. In this, 
as we shall see, he was to suffer great frustration when, for example, an issue such 
as direct taxation became the vehicle of party strategy and manoeuvre.

But of all the characteristics of colonial politics that which was to 
create the greatest problem for Wise was the class composition of the N.S.W. Parlia-
ment. Until the advent of the Labour Party it could be truly said that parliament 
was unrepresentative. Before the introduction of payment of members in 1889, it 
was very difficult for a working-class man to become a member of parliament. One 
or two men were elected before this time with some financial support from trade 
unions; there were also a number of small businessmen, farmers and journalists 
without vested interests but with sufficient means to follow a political career, 
but in the main the Assembly, and more particularly the Council, comprised men of 
the land-owning, commercial, and professional classes. It was undeniable that 
strong economic interests were represented in the legislature. The idea that par-
liament was a closed preserve for men of wealth and education was strongly expressed 

by the organs of working-class opinion and the English tradition of a governing 

1. ibid., 5.3.1895. 
2. ibid., 26.2.1895. 
3. ibid., 10.7.1895.
class, with preferential access to the higher reaches of politics, found little acceptance by Australian democratic opinion. There were one or two men such as Parkes who could be classified as professional politicians but they bore little resemblance to members of the English governing class, and did little to alter the opinion, which was widespread, that the main concern of politicians in the N.S.W. Legislature was to safeguard the interests of the wealthy.

The great problem for Wise, in a class-conscious community, was to reconcile his radical and reformist ideas with his social position and professional status. As this problem is related to the whole question of social class which so troubled colonial society towards the end of the century, some understanding of this wider question is a necessary background to any interpretation of Wise's political career.

When Wise re-entered the Australian community there existed some well-established class attitudes which were historic legacies from convicts and emancipists, landless immigrants and unsuccessful gold-seekers on the one side, and "exclusive", squatters, and men of the professional and business world on the other. During the period of his political career these attitudes were strengthened by special economic conditions and political circumstances. Towards the end of the 'eighties' the growing strength of trade unionism and increased industrial conflict accentuated class differences, and the emergence of the Labour Party in 1891 set a strong horizontal class party into the very structure of political life. The ideological background to these events was marked by an upsurge of radical nationalism and widespread interest in theories of socialism, both of which emphasized an ideal. The economic conditions of the early 'nineties - widespread strikes, financial weakness and then collapse, and a deep depression extending over the early years of the decade brought about severe unemployment and restricted standards of

1. See Rüssel Ward, "The Australian Legend".
living. In 1894 the unemployed in Sydney numbered at least 20,000 and drought in the country was adding to the number. "Processions of unemployed traversing the streets were a miserable spectacle to which Sydney was treated daily. These exhibitions became an offense to the general population and there was an insistent demand that the government should do something to get the unemployed out of sight."

In these circumstances it is not hard to understand how deep resentment would be felt about the security and good living of the privileged class, not is it hard to understand how the well-to-do were able to live very comfortably at this time. There was no income tax in New South Wales, all the licences, permits and rates which hedge our lives about were almost unknown, and as yet few inroads had been made into private property-holders' assets while goods and labour were cheap, especially during the years of economic depression when coachmen, gardeners, tutors and domestic servants were part of the establishment in the larger homes. This is the period which Collis describes as the "golden age of the middle classes. . .(when) a man whose income rose to £600 lived in a two-storey house in a pleasant suburb, and employed one or two servants, usually two". There were also many outward signs of wealth and social display in this late Victorian period which were sharply etched on the mind of the working class in the depression. The gay and fashionable governor, Lord Carrington (1885-1890), brought Sydney society right out, and at the race meetings, balls, banquets, and Governor's parties the "humdrum classes" were treated to quite an display of elegant dressing and Victorian style as guests.

2. Ibid., p. 2019 et seq.
3. E.H. Collis, "Last Years", p. 114. By comparison with this figure of 400 working-class income fell somewhere in the range of 150-250 p.a. A scale of daily wages drawn up by a Government Board of Reference in 1894 as a basis for wages in future contracts in Sydney and Newcastle shows a range from:

- masons: 10/-
- carpenters: 8/-
- workmen: 6/- per day
- bricklayers: 9/-
- painters: 7/6

(ibid., p. 2027)

Because of unemployment, however, Coglan reports that in 1894 carpenters, for example, were accepting work at 3/- and 4/- per day (p. 2019). Elsewhere he estimates that agricultural workers were receiving as little as 10/- or 15/- a week with their keep (p. 2018).
arrived or departed in horse-drawn carriages, for the 'nineties was the brilliant end of the carriage and pair. The theatre especially was the occasion for some social display, and the gas-lit city streets that had perhaps witnessed an unemploy-
ed procession in the day time are nostalgically recalled by Collis in all their evening splendour:

"The glories of Pitt Street at 10.45 pm., as Her Majesty's and the Criterion closed and disgorged men and women in evening dress, while stately carriages, each with a pair of well-groomed horses and top-hatted, cockaded and liveried coachmen and footmen, drew up, were haunting memories to many a man who had left the city to try his luck in the bush."

In fitting Wise into the society of Sydney, it is important to gain some picture of class relationships. The attempt to establish criteria for class divisions has engaged historians and sociologists from the earliest period of our history, but it is a rather fruitless discussion for divisions are shifting continuously. In Wise's day the economic gap separating the working class from the professional class was quite wide, and the opportunity for social mobility was considerably less than it is to-day. We encounter such terms as the "masses", the "underprivileged, the "lower orders", and sometimes the "humble" and "poorer" classes - but these terms are quite vague. If we accept the term "the workers", the name generally favoured by its own representatives, then we can roughly represent this class by those in the income group below the skilled tradesmen, although when it comes to classifying a working-class journalist, for instance, the division must be very arbitrary. At the other end of the social scale we can find working-class attitudes to what is termed the "upper classes" - the "gentlemen", the "aristocrats", the "exclusives", the "moneyed-men", and, in descending order of compliment, the "title-holders", "capitalists", "fatmen", "nobs", "toffs", "swells", and "snobs". The assumption that a privileged class exists is unmistakable; less easy is it to define its membership. On English standards there was no gentry
class in Australia, nor generally speaking was there in society any of the family
tradition and continuity which distinguished class structure in cities like Boston
and Philadelphia in the U.S.A. The classification of "upper class" would seem in
the 1890's to imply such criteria as wealth and how it was gained (family inherit-
ance, property ownership, professional occupation), social position (residence,
 servants, club, entertainment, travel), education and cultural interests (university
literary, art- societies, etc.), and finally there was the connection with English
society which seemed to give to a man in the colony some special elevation. The
whole range of these criteria was not required, as any one distinguisher might earn
the label "upper class", e.g., membership of the Australian Club might in itself be
sufficient, but it was a generalisation common to most working-class spokesmen
that a community of interests existed among this group, and in the political sphere
the aim of "upper class" politicians was to safeguard and perpetuate the privileged
position of their class. On the criteria we have suggested, it can be shown that
Wise occupied quite an exalted position in Sydney society and would unquestionably
have been placed among the upper class. To appreciate the strength of class
feeling, and the extent to which prejudices had permeated the community in this
disturbed period, a brief reference might be made to the political atmosphere
prevailing when Wise entered public life. If apathy existed in the early 'eighties,
it had given way by the end of the decade to intense interest in political life.
Many reasons might account for this, but the governing interest of the working class
in political action was perhaps the most important. There was remarkable enthus-
iasm for political discussion and debating and the press reports of the thousands
attending meetings in halls, and in the outdoor Domain, are something of a revel-
ation. Without the adult educational facilities, or the mass news media of to-day,
the political meeting or debate held in Leigh House, McNamara's Bookshop, or the
Sydney School of Arts became for many men a means of self-education, or an outlet
for entertainment. Prescriptions and panaceas for a new social order were popular fare, and when Henry George visited Sydney in 1890 his reception was truly remarkable and crowds of up to five thousand attended his meetings. In such an atmosphere a young orator like W.A. Holman, who delivered a series of addresses on the theories of socialism, could win great prestige. "Whenever he was announced to speak, great multitudes gathered to hear him, listening with rapt attention to his wonderful oratory, and at its close lifting the roof in thunderous applause." In this atmosphere the interest in the candidature of the young "aristocrat" Wise, seeking election in a working-class constituency of South Sydney, can be imagined.

This was also the great radical period of Australian journalism, for the 'nineties witnessed a proliferation of political papers and journals of all kinds, many of which didn't survive very long, but while the candle lasted they burned brightly, and added to the general spirit of protest and revolt against the inequality of society and the privileged position of the upper classes. Many were brilliantly written and fearlessly edited and the virile style and iconoclastic spirit of journalists such as Black, McMahon, Higgins, Traill, Cotton, O'Sullivan, Wisspe, Holland, Norton, and Bathe raised the level of political interest in the community. This was also the great era of the political cartoon and Livingstone Hopkins, Phil May, and later Norman Lindsay and Will Dyson added spice to political life by their distinctive caricature and witty delineation. Especially do these cartoonists reflect the prevailing class feeling, for the upper class is depicted in an album

1. D.S., 11.3.1890.
2. W.M. Hughes, Article on Holman, Sydney Mail, 13.6.1904.
3. N.S.W. Radical papers and journals circulating in Sydney included:
   The Australian Radical, 1886-90,
   The Worker, 1892,
   The Australian Workman, 1891-7,
   The Bulletin, 1880-
   The Collectivist, 1897
   Daily Post, 1895,
   The Democrat, 1890-5,
   The Hamer, 1891-2
   Justice, 1894.
   The New Order, 1894,
   The Northern People, 1897,
   The People, 1890,
   The People and the Collectivist, 1896,
   The Radical, 1887-8,
   The Republican, 1888
   The Single Tax
   The Socialist, 1894-6,
of brilliantly drawn stereotypes - the waistcoat-bulging Fatman, usually at a banquet, the monocled toff at the club or theatre, the bewigged, stony-faced judge, the sleek "buzzards of the Bar", and the gross-looking, top-hatted pastoralist, all five in their "Bulletin" poses, while on the other side of the social canyon is the stylized working man in shirt-sleeves, lean-jawed, straight-gazing, with an earnest and worried countenance; there is the rugged and tattered "Sydney Unemployed" stretched out in the Domain, and the weary swagman leading outback. There were no blessings reserved for the rich in the radical press.

But class hostility wasn't confined to this wing of the press, for there is also a strong feeling of bitterness and anger to be found in the literature of the time. There is a real intensity in much of Henry Lawson's verse, reflected in "Faces in the Street", and it was the inequalities of his society that led Bernard O'Dowd to create a new vision of "Young Democracy"

"Where greed no more shall those oppress
Who by the roadside fall".1

Dowd O'Reilly is very moved by the victims of the depression and expresses his bitterness when he calls upon Premier Dibbs to "protect the wealthy in their sordid case"; and Joseph Furphy is in revolt against what he has Tom Collins call the "sanctified lie of inequality" and the insulting condescension towards the rank and file by the "mail-clad demons of privilege".

But of all the protesting voices the one which best typifies the spirit of the time, and gives utterance to the ideas and prejudices of its generation, is the "Bulletin". From its beginning in 1880, it was edited by J.F. Archibald, "undoubtedly the most brilliant Australian editor of his generation", and in journalists like Traill, Edmond, and Stevens and artists like Phil May and "Hop", it had a

singly gifted group which seldom comes at one time to any journal. Together they gave to the "Bulletin" in the 'nineties an intoxicating flavour. It became the guide and critic of young Australian writing, and in its nationalism it expressed the pride, the fears, the hopes and the hates of a stirring national consciousness. Its criticism was fearless and independent and its satire and caricature destructive. No subject or topic was outside its orbit and it gave its readers a varied diet of theology, philosophy, political economy and constitutional law, as well as the doings of the shearing shed, "high society", and the criminal court. Its potential as a strong influence on the thought of the colony is hard to exaggerate, for it was not read by one narrow group. It circulated in the city, in the bush and beyond the colony and appealed to men beyond one single class. Visitors such as Richard Leeb and Francis Adams acclaimed its creative writing, and an observer from the "Times" of London, sent out to report an Australian life, remarked on its wide influence:

"it is very hard to over-estimate the extent to which this journal modifies the opinions (one might almost say the character) of its readers. . . Its policy is consistent and persistent. . . It is there week after week under the bushman's eyes until its viewpoints become as familiar as the colour of its cover, and the caricature is brought one step nearer to reality."

The "Bulletin" had its own set of prejudices, and they were deeply embedded. Some were very personal, such as those concerning "coloured races" and English cultural values (even imported English trees were anathema to A.C. Stevens), but in general they were directed against the "establishment", both in the colony and in England, the monarchy, the gentry, the Church, parliament, the law, and professions, and of course the squatter and the capitalist. The condemnation of wealth, privilege, and social status were all part of what the "Bulletin" stood for. As early as 1863, in a "Criticism of Inequality", it was speaking out against the "monstrous and iniquitous disparities which exist". "The whole system euphemistically styled 'law and order'" represented for the "Bulletin" an alliance between the

2. 21.7.1883.
wealthy and the educated, for the university and the professions were as concerned with safeguarding and perpetuating their privileged position as were the landholders, monopolists, and bankers their economic advantage. Parliament was the instrument, and with the co-operation of the judiciary and the tacit acceptance of the hypocritical Christian churches, the "establishment" had to be breached by a crusade of the non-privileged. In such a crusade the "Bulletin" was in the van - "Sydney invited revolt from existing conditions and the 'Bulletin' was the organ of that revolt".

The relationship of Wise and the "Bulletin" is interesting. Wise appreciated its spirit and satire and no doubt often agreed with what it had to say. He amusingly recalls how on one occasion he shocked a conservative gathering by expressing his admiration:

"During an awful pause at one typical dinner party, I was heard saying in a cheery voice 'What a capital paper the 'Bulletin' is!' An old gentleman next me, who was a Member of the Upper House, turned and said in a shocked tone, while all the Company kept silence, 'But don't you think, Sir, that it is a very scurrilous paper?' I answered that I had been back too short a time to understand the personalities, and thought I had got rather well out of that difficulty. 'And don't you think, Sir, he continued, 'that it is a very blasphemous paper?' This was more difficult, but, again, I thought I had escaped by answering that 'I had only seen two numbers and read them very hurriedly and had not noticed any blasphemy.' Then he dropped his voice to a solemn whisper, all the Company still listening, and as a climax fired this final shot: 'And do you know, Sir, that it sometimes makes remarks about the Prince of Wales?' This, remember, was in 1883, when King Edward was young! And nobody even smiled, so that I wondered among what manner of men I had fallen! This incident was typical of many others."

But Wise was in no way daunted by the "Bulletin's" criticism nor did he adjust his views or his way of life in any way in an attempt to conciliate or reach a compromise. He seems to have adopted a general attitude to all press criticism that it was the inevitable return to a politician with an independent outlook, and remained indifferent "because every man who braves public opinion must expect abuse and misrepresentation."

2. W.M., p. 84.
The "Bulletin", on its part, was obviously interested in Wise, in his ideas, and his interests in Australian literature, art, etc. He was always newsworthy, and, following his defeat in 1895, it expressed regret at his absence from the Assembly. But Wise personified all the social qualities which the "Bulletin" abhorred, and unless he was prepared to renounce all this, he could never have hoped to win acceptance, even though he passed most of the tests of Australian democracy which the "Bulletin" frequently set up.

We will now briefly consider how Wise was affected by the class spirit which entered so strongly into the political temper of his day:

First, as we have mentioned earlier, Wise's breeding and English background positioned him naturally among the upper social class when he re-entered Sydney society.

J. F. Archibald tells how Wise soon after his arrival from England "was a welcome guest in Sydney's best houses, where to be a near imitation of what they imagined England to be was 'the thing'". But Wise was no mere English imitation, as all traces of his colonial childhood had evidently vanished, for Deakin says that Oxford had made him more English in manner than most of its sons. It would also seem that there was about Wise some quality which suggested the "aristocrat". Deakin speaks of this, and Piddington says that he "was an aristocrat to his finger-tips as all his associations and habits showed". It is rather ironic that, whereas in Oxford Wise had stood against aristocratic conservatism, in Sydney he should so clearly typify the aristocratic type, and he was often identified with the superior gentleman-type Englishman which Purphy brought to life in his characterization of Willoughby.

Readers of the "Bulletin" could gain such an impression immediately from the caricatures of Phil May and "Hop", for Wise was invariably represented as a

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pedigreed aristocratic type whose nose was set at a permanent upward angle of tilt suggesting a rather surprised or disdainful expression, and the impression was sharpened still further by making play of his accent in such expressions as the "lower hordes". In parliament his Englishry and superior style drew scoffers from among his opponents. "There is no salt in the colonies", quipped Slattery, and Ninian Melville, an undertaker of radical opinions, waxed satirical. Feigning an attitude of self-abasement, "as one of the rank and file", he refers to Wise as a gentleman born with a silver spoon in his mouth... one who "belongs to the most highly protected class in New South Wales... If an ignorant ass like myself were to don a wig and walk into the Supreme Court he would soon find himself in Darlinghurst Gaol; yet the most consummate idiot ever born, if he can manage to eat a sufficient number of dinners in England, is honoured here by being called 'the honourable and learned member'... The style of Wise's oratory which in his early parliamentary speeches carried traces of the ornate and studied style of the Oxford debater, as well as a hint of that youthful impertinence, characteristics of the Union speeches, drew forth charges of arrogance and presumption from older men.

"I have never listened to a more impudent and boyish speech", said J·P·Abbott after a rather rhetorical speech from Wise, and later, when Wise was made Attorney-General, Abbott said he would now be so exalted "that when we meet him in the street, we do reverence to him".

It was only to be expected, in this political atmosphere, that Wise would encounter a lively reception from election audiences, and taunts such as "snob" and "toff" were thrown at him on the political platform. Writing to Forbes after his defeat in 1889, he was rather unhappy about it all, and said the attacks on him were personal; "especially my aristocratic sympathies. Using arguments like these, no wonder they would not let me be heard". As social criticism Wise might disregard

these attitudes to the aristocratic image he presented, but politically the implications were more serious, for there was created a suspicion of his motives. His real interests were those of his own class, it was said, and he only affected to be interested in the working man. The task of convincing men of his sincerity remained a continuing problem, and one which Wise never overcame. In 1901, despite his trade union legislation and his support for the principle of a minimum wage, Wise still encountered these charges of class interest. When he was opposed by the Labour-supported Tom Brown in the first federal election, Albert Gardiner, a former Labour parliamentarian, told his audience that Wise sneered at the working man: "He would sneer at you or your children just the same if you, or they, had the ability to come forward and fight for the masses against the classes."

Second, it was difficult for Wise to avoid being identified with the interests of the wealthy class. His position as a leading barrister, with a residence on the eastern harbourside at Edgecliff, naturally placed Wise in the upper bracket, although he seems never to have accumulated any wealth during his political career. But his interests and associations in Sydney society would have typed him, as Wise's style of living bore the outward marks of the well-to-do. The cultural life of Sydney seems to have been, pretty generally, the preserve of the upper class, and as we have noticed earlier, the interests of Wise and his wife in art, literature, etc. would have led them to join the company of men and women with similar tastes. The centre of life for a man of style and culture in this period existed in a number of exclusive male clubs in the city which drew their membership from the social élite of the colony. At the Athenaeum, the "goddess of wit and wisdom met her chosen disciples of the Southern Hemisphere", among whom were the leading intellectuals of the university and the professions. Here, says Piddington, you could hear "first-

1. "Worker", 23.3.1901.
2. Letters to James Conroy show Wise to borrowing money over a period, often on the security of his next case. His political activities made inroads into his professional work. See letters in Un-catalogued Papers of James Conroy, Dixon Library.
class minds discussing everything under the sun"; here Mark Twain and notable visitors came to visit and the Governor, Sir Robert Duff, came along to join the circle. Wise was quite a figure in the Athenæum; it was here he entertained Stevenson during his visit, and in the congenial company of professors Butler, Stevens, and McCallum, fellow barristers Barton and O'Conner, and other 'Athenian' men Wise could perpetuate a style of life made familiar to him in Oxford rooms and later in London.

The real aristocratic centre, however, was found in the two older clubs, the Australian and the Union. "All the aristocracy are in the Australian", wrote Sir Stuart Donaldson, and in the membership lists of these two clubs, dating back to 1838 and 1857 respectively, can be found the names of the men of wealth and influence in the colony, including Wise's father. In these clubs the style of the gentleman was kept up, and members did their best to emulate English social life and manners with formality of dress and rituals, and membership was kept exclusive as it was strictly by nomination and selection. Things were less starchy at the Reform Club where Sir John Robertson, "the knight of Cleveley", held sway as President, but there was little chance of an invasion by the lower orders, as membership fees kept the club class-bound - £30 to join and £12 annual subscription, which was equivalent to half a year's income for a man earning 6/- a day, the labourer's rate in 1894.

One can gain some impression of the style of life of a clubman from Sir John's methods of managing the financial affairs of the 'Reform Club'. To what particular cause the club was dedicated is not clear, but it was certainly not temperance reform. The subscription fees were evidently insufficient to maintain

1. Australian Club Centenary, History and Records, p. 23.
4. See wage scale above, p. 51, fn.
solventy so Sir John led a campaign to drink the club out of debt. His financial policy involved such radical measures as prescribing champagne for those who appreciated the financial problem, and for those who didn't Sir John fined them for their ignorance: "Waiter, bring a a magnum of champagne and charge it to this gentlemen."

(This original administration probably kept the Club going, for soon after Sir John's death in 1891 the "Reform Club" ceases to appear in Sand's Dictionary). Such fine gestures and champagne tastes reveal something of the manner in which some of these city "gentlemen" lived. Barton had quite a reputation for his addiction to the pleasures of the Club, and Piddington gives us a rather exotic account of his (Barton's) drinking habits and expensive taste for luxury living.

It is this aspect of the life of the upper classes that comes in for such severe treatment from working-class spokesmen and the radical press, and the "Club" came to be represented as a Babylonian institution whose wealthy members were wallowing in luxury, completely indifferent to the plight of the poor. In Parliament, W.F Schey, a Labour member, spoke of how, at Christmas time, "the cries of the unemployed, rising up through the bubbles of gluttony in the Union Club" were drowned out by the singing of members filled with champagne. This is well illustrated in one of Phil May's sketches. A rather foppish-looking member, complete with monocle and topper is accosted outside the club by one of the "Sydney unemployed":

"Swell: 'Are you very hungry?'
S.U.: 'Oh yes, Sir! so hungry.'
Swell: 'Are you absolutely homeless and friendless?'
S.U.: 'Yes, Sir - indeed I am.'
Swell: (as he walks up the steps of the club): 'Faw Devil'."

This type of satire and criticism would reach Wise. We know of the Athenæum Club, the records of the Australian Club show he was a member, he also refers to the

2. op. cit., p. 28.
4. Phil May in Australia, a Jubilee Example, p. XLIV.
5. Australian Club by-laws and Records.
"French" club, and it is reasonable to expect that he might, at times, continue his political discussions lower down Macquarie Street, in the "Reform Club". It is also not surprising that Wise would be on the governor's list, for he would share common English interests, and perhaps university, acquaintances; we know he was on close terms of friendship with Lord Carrington. The picture of the "exquisitely groomed Wise" arriving at Government House for a social occasion might well cast doubts into the minds of the underprivileged that Wise was genuinely concerned with their own welfare. One must understand how bitter and uninhibited were the attacks on class privilege at this time to appreciate the extent of this problem for Wise.

The "Bulletin's" attitude towards the upper class paralleled, in a way, Matthew Arnold's attack on the "barbarians" and "philistines" of his own society. It represented its pernicious side as money-making, title-seeking, and political monopoly; its grosser side it represented as social display, fat living, and blatant hypocrisy. The "Bulletin" provides a very illuminating insight into the political mind of the working class in its attack on the decadence of the "House of Have". Completely divorced from any religious creed, its censure is, nonetheless, often made on moralistic grounds, and the condemnation of inequality is often framed in terms of sinful conduct - the selfish indulgence, greed and avarice, the idleness and slothful habits, the drinking and gambling, the lies, hypocrisy and lack of all scruples are generally contrasted with the honest work of the labourer - the virtues of kindness, sincerity, and brotherly love in the "mateship" ideal of unionists, and the principles of justice and equity underlying Labour policies. The "Bulletin" attacks the governor as "a patron of rum-begotten wealth", whose "function was to foster grovel and give Balls . . . and smile approvingly as beasts are urged past a winning-post", and it objects to the Chief-Justice Darley "feeding the same old representative mob

4. 2.7.1887.
at upper-crust tea-parties" on his vice-regal allowance. The "Worker" emphasizes the "shady morals of the Fatman; how the vast expanse of white waistcoat covers a multitude of sins", and Purdy observes how nice it is to see a "gentleman" who when drunk can lie in the gutter like a "gentleman". There is a strong evangelical tone about the criticism of some of the Labour parliamentarians, and socialist writers who rather self-righteously compare the Christian ideas of the worker with those in the "sordid temple" of the wealthy. There is frequent reference to the Sermon on the Mount; Christ, the Galilean carpenter, is the worker's friend, and for MacNamara he is the "Socialist of olden time":

(These) "The rot in wealth and strew in crime
Would have been shown little quarter
By that Socialist of olden time."

In this criticism there was no immunity, as the censure covered all from the governor downwards. Barton, the noble son in one tradition, is "Sir Toby Tusspot" to the readers of the "Worker", and the sophistication of Wise, along with his intellectual interests, would seem to be at the basis of the moral censure which underlies an assessment of his politics in the "Catholic Press". Among other things it attributes his failure to the fact that he "never made sacrifices for the sake of sacrifice. He has never recognised or taken into account the moral forces that sway humanity. In the old pagan days he might have had a great time, but it is questional if even then he would have respected the Gods." In all it seems clear that, in the eyes of the lower orders, their "better" were no better, but a good

1. 20.7.1895.
2. 12.6.1893. See article "Historical evolution of privilege".
deal worse, than they ought to be as an educated and privileged class and, as for Wise himself, a more moral view of life might have found for him more favour, at least with the "Catholic Press".

A criticism that was to touch Wise more closely was the charge that the upper class was batten on the people in gaining financial privileges - ministers' salaries, government billets and pensions. This aroused bitter protests and insinuations. The system of pensioning judges was particularly obnoxious to a radical democrat like E. W. O'Sullivan. He instanced the case of Justice Foster who retired in 1894 on a salary of £1820, and was still living in 1900 when O'Sullivan calculated that he had taken £20,000 from the people's purse. When an additional pension was granted to Sir William Manning in 1889, it aroused angry protests, and questions were thrown up to Wise on the election platform. This particular criticism Wise found embarrassing for, as well as this large pension to his uncle, his mother was receiving government pension, and both his father and himself had drawn ministerial salary while practising their profession. It was all brought before the public view when E. W. O'Sullivan asked in parliament to have tabled "the amount of public money paid to the relatives of Mr. B. R. Wise", and the Return to the Order set out all monies paid to the family, much to Wise's discomfort. Such political capital was not to be wasted, and T. M. Slattery carried it further, in a personal attack on

1. S. W. H., 21.10.1905, "Behind the scenes in Parliament". Justice Foster held extensive pastoral interests during the time his pension was paid, which added to O'Sullivan's sense of injustice. (I am indebted to E. B. Mansfield for revealing the identity of "Spectator", the author of these articles.)

2. See his letter to Parkes, 27.8.1889, op. cit., p. 328. Manning's pension was a very strong point of criticism as it finally amounted to £2620 - £1050 was granted in 1856 "to judges who have retired from office." An additional £770 was later granted as a pension under the Colonial Acts. A further amount of £1800 was granted in 1899 "to officers of the Government who, on political grounds, retired or were released from office. Estimates and Expenditure, 1889, Vol.3., schedule "B", p.6,14.


4. N. S. W. Notes and Proceedings, 1889, Vol. 2, p. 425. "Relatives of Mr. B. R. Wise." Listed with the family also was G. P. Wise, Immigration Agent, and a Mr. J. M. Marsh, Stipendiary Magistrate, who Wise denied had any connection with his family. With the Return is an explanatory letter from Wise denying such a relationship.
Wise later in the year, and his additions reached the grand total of £108,000 which he claimed the Wise family had drawn from "your fellow colonists, including the Irish. Every member of your family is and has been a successful billet hunter... It is in your blood". Though Slattery was not a working man, echoes of this kind of criticism were bound to find their way into the minds of men harbouring resentment of upper-class privileges. It is not hard to see the progression from this kind of criticism to the charge that Wise was motivated by self-interest in his political career.

Third, we might briefly consider the reaction to Wise's educational background. Here again it is necessary to understand the differential in the matter of educational opportunity which existed at this time. Not only was the university very exclusive in terms of money, but the opportunity for students without means of preparing for university entrance was also very restricted in the 1890's. Though education was nominally free and equal for all seeking it, the private school had what almost amounted to a monopoly of university entrants in the early 1890's, as entrance opportunities to university, when applied to students from the free state schools, were extremely limited. Only five high schools from which students might matriculate operated in New South Wales in 1890 and, in the case of Sydney's two schools, selective entrance was first determined by merit examination. In those conditions it can be appreciated how the private school became an indicator of exclusiveness and, for those who could afford it, an English schooling was the very same. As few scholarships were available, the university perpetuated this notion of

2. Sydney Boys' High and Sydney Girls' High were the only two state high schools in Sydney in the nineties. An expanded state bursary system came into effect in 1890 which resulted in more graduates appearing from non-private schools towards the end of the decade, but the majority of university entrants in this decade were from private schools, e.g., in the period 1890-1906 only three state scholarship holders graduated LL.B. (I am indebted to Mr. R.J. Burns, Ph.D. research student in the Dept. of Education, University of Sydney, for this information from Examination Branch Records.)
exclusive educational privilege and, as recruitment to the professions shows, they, in turn, retained their class character. Once these limitations are recognised, the attitude to the university man can be seen in its proper light as part of the general criticism of inequality.

To Wise, Oxford was the tuter of democracy; to the "Bulletin", the University of Sydney was the negation of democracy. The "Bulletin" led the attack from outside the walls, which it said were erected to keep the poor man's son out. It attacked the university on the general grounds that it was "un-Australian" in character, that its contribution to the life and thought of the community was miserable, but, more importantly, it was the preserve of the rich. "Bulletin" writers gloried in their own non-academic tradition and satirised the superiority of the "graduate" and his cultural affectation. A.C. Stevens defiantly set his own intellectual values and rejected the idea of an educated élite. In a Red Page editorial he denounced the university as a class-ridden institution, claiming that it had betrayed its founders and the people. "(Wanworth's) institution for the poor has become one of the great strongholds of the snobbishness and the insolence of the rich, a place from which the poor man's son is barred by almost insuperable obstacles... the worship of wealth, the eager pursuit of contemptible titular distinction, the suppression of mental freedom... these are the chief manifestations of the University of Sydney." There was among the working class in New South Wales no subservient attitude that the educated minority were best fitted to govern the country.

1. In the year 1890, undergraduates in their final year for the various faculties numbered: Medicine, 93; Engineering, 13; Law, 11; Arts, 32 (including 11 evening students). These numbers established an alumni of limited membership in Sydney society. *Calendar of the University of Sydney, 1890.*

2. None of the "Bulletin"s" journalists was a university man, and among the Australian school of poets and authors which the "Bulletin" discovered and patronised, only one or two had any contact with the University. See S.E. Lee, "The Universities and Creative Writing", Drylight, 1960.

3. *Bulletin*, 18.10.1902. The University Chancellors were not immune. Sir William Mindenary remained the "Hanging Judge"; Dr. McLaurin was "conscientious prig". The Vice-Chancellor, Judge Backhouse, hit back, declaring that such criticism came only from those who were jealous, who knew nothing of university life and cared less; they were "just pigeons kicking at the foundations of our noble (over)
rather the reverse. The "Australian Workman" expresses the viewpoint frequently encountered in the radical press that the educated class can't be trusted by the workers: "If the workers send the so-called upper-class into Parliament, they will never get democratic legislation, for the highest education is simply a class education."

The implications for Wise of this educational criticism and antagonistic spirit towards the university are fairly obvious, for Wise represented the university man par excellence. Not only was his education exclusive, it was English. Even if Oxford did not earn the reproaches of Sydney, Wise was in fact closely associated with the University of Sydney; he had university membership and was an examiner in law, many of his friends and associates were graduates, and his uncle was Chancellor till his death in 1895, all of which helped to identify him with the interests of the educated élite which, for many, was synonymous with the interests of the wealthy.

Wise's education had other political side effects. Undoubtedly his intellectual attainments and his literary and oratorical abilities helped to bring him into early prominence, and gave him a high standing among men of inferior education. But his very youth and his academic background led to other attitudes. He was frequently referred to as a "college boy" in politics, a fledgling who knew nothing about the practical world, "an extremely smart young gentleman, just from College, who has come here to teach honourable gentlemen on this side of the House of wisdom." A rather theoretic dissertation from Wise on the weakness of the protectionist arguments, in the early days of his parliamentary career, roused the ire of E.W. O'Sullivan:

"We have a free-trade fledgling, like the honourable and learned member for South Sydney, who has only been in the colony three years, after having spent some time at a University, during which time he has known institutions, gulls chattering in the wind." The Union Book of 1902, p. 265.

nothing of what has been going on in New South Wales, talking about the ignorance of the protectionists. This young spark puts himself on a level with Henry Clay, Daniel Webster, Lincoln, and Garfield. To me it was simply pitiful. When young men shake off the abstract ideas which they naturally learn at College and University, they become practical politicians and turn Protectionists. 1

Any suggestion that Wise is adopting a patronizing attitude towards his less educated fellows draws forth a quick and angry response "to the arrogance of this young pup". A more hurtful thrust came from Melville when he told Wise not to forget "that his education had been paid for by the people of this country". 2

Another reaction was to Wise the academic politician, and his political ideas were often classed as faddism. A general scepticism of anything that smacked of the doctrinaire led the "Bulletin" to picture him as the "benevolent theorist of the Assembly, and his "talent for political abstraction" led Hughes to dub him Baron Munchhausen, who "would weave his wondrous rhapsodies and next morning explain their mysteries away". This strong anti-academic spirit was also found in his own Free-Trade Party and Wise, when president of the Free-Trade Association, was publicly humiliated by a strong attack on his "bookishness" at a party banquet by the old free-trader, Sir John Robertson, who proudly claimed that he got none of his ideas from books and objected to "youngsters with hardly a feather on their phiz (laughter) giving advice on how to run the party". 3

In attempting to fulfil Tennyson's idea of the trained student helping to direct the course of public opinion, Wise was to encounter difficulties unforeseen at Oxford, and his education proved to be a mixed blessing. There was with Wise, however, no suggestion of currying favour or talking down to an audience, for he condemned those who approached the working class as "my friends", and spoke of

1. ibid., p. 798.
2. ibid., p. 677.
3. 16.3.1895.
5. S.M.B., 15.5.1887.
themselves as "workers who work with their brain", as using "coarse flattery and smug hypocrisy".

We can go no further than mention these attitudes as part of the climate of thought in the nineties. To what extent they affected Wise's career or helped to establish the tradition about him it is not easy to say; but they must be considered along with other prejudices when attempting to see Wise in his own environment.

Finally, mention must be made of a widely held prejudice about the legal profession, which Wise was to encounter, and which he found most difficult to offset. Hostility to the law was a nineteenth-century tradition in Australia. In a community comprising many descendants of English convicts and emancipists, reinforced by Irish prisoners and immigrants, hatred of the English criminal code and the injustices in its administration was naturally perpetuated. The Botany Bay traditions, Batehaven, and the romanticized myth of the bushranger, all lay in the background helping to form the attitude that the law was arraigned against the underprivileged, and during the period of the strikes in the 1890's the feeling that "law and order" was really an alliance between the employer and the judiciary was expressed by many unionists. In the case of the "Bulletin", detestation of the legal profession was perhaps the strongest of all its prejudices. Its criticism was all-embracing. It alleged discrimination against the worker and the unionist, judges were represented as arrogant and dictatorial, and the "Botany Bay Goddess of Justice" was said to be reigning still in the 1890's.

The attitude that the law was a highly exclusive and snobbish profession probably had its origin in the earliest days of the colony when the first judge of the Supreme Court attempted to establish its pre-eminent status in the emancipist society of Macquarie's world. This attitude still held and the "Bulletin" added

1. See opening remarks to his address, "The Labour Question", 1890, p. 5.
2. See e.g., W.B. Spooner, "Australia's Awakening".
3. See issues April, May, 1895, on "the gory burlesque" of the Mt. Rennie trial.
its own special grievance — that the profession was also un-Australian. This was quite true in terms of legal training, for almost all of the judges and many barristers up until 1890 had an overseas background and as most were from the English Bar the "Bulletin" was thereby more contemptuous. Much of this criticism had a direct or indirect application to Wise. As son of an English judge and nephew of a Supreme Court judge, as a prominent barrister and a young Attorney-General, he was placed right in the centre of the "Bulletin's" sights. In an article entitled "My Relation the Judge", the "Bulletin" alleges nepotism, and this directly applies to Wise, for he is included among the sons and relatives of judges who, it is claimed, receive special privileges.

To these traditional grievances there is added another applied to lawyers in general. They are a parasitic class — brigands, bandits, vultures, harpies, sharks — "cheeked like iron-clads and billed like pelicans". The people are the victims. The distrust of the morals and motives of the lawyer extended beyond the legal chambers and courts to cynicism about lawyers in parliament, and they were represented as a class-interested group with selfish motives. It is the lawyers who oppose payment of members, which to the "Bulletin" was "the keystone of democratic government". The attempt to get an Australian judge on the Privy Council is the "Great Lawyers' Conspiracy", for it is an aid to British capitalists, a sop to keep the colony within the Empire; the federation movement is dominated by lawyers whose real aim is to design a constitution in the best interests of the privileged classes. The problem for Wise, in clearing himself of such suspicions,

1. See H.W. Huntington, "Lives of the Justices of the Supreme Court", N.S.W. Law Almanac, 1886, no. 1. Before the Law School was opened in 1890, 11 graduates from the University of Sydney had joined the profession and by 1895 Law School graduates still numbered only 7. A few barristers such as Reid, Holman, and Hughes came to the Bar by way of serving articles and passing examination outside the university as did most solicitors in this period, but they were not given the same class stigma as the true-blue university men. See Calendars of the University of Sydney, 1890–1900 2. 19.8.1894. See also 30.3.1895, "Judges and their Relatives."
3. 4.5.1895.
4. 16.3.1895, 23.3.1895.
is well illustrated by the Official Report of the Third Intercolonial Trade Union Congress of 1885. Although Wise spoke to the delegates as a trade union supporter and sympathized, and was apparently well received, he is automatically censured by the statement in the preface:

"Payment of members is the very lever of manhood suffrage, and to expect a Parliament packed with squatters, importers, capitalists and monopolists of every kind with their natural allies the lawyers, to concede a reform that would break their power and destroy their interest is not natural."

When Wise was first elected in 1887, the "Bulletin", invoking the principle that "the lawyer is the natural enemy of the people", made the rather sour comment that "the return of one more addition to the ranks of the vultures and corrompants who already muster so strongly in the N.S.W. Legislature is not a victory to be grateful for." As we shall see, Wise often stood against his own class and his profession in advocating certain political principles. He openly declared that the law, as it stood, operated unfairly in regard to trade unions, and he recognized, in the conservation of his own profession, one of the great obstacles to his Arbitration Bill. Yet with all this, so strongly embedded was the prejudice against the lawyer in some quarters that the charge was still to be heard that Wise was really working to get the control of strikes into the hands of the lawyers. "Every judge comes from the lawyer class - therefore his instincts are almost always with capitalism and for the maintenance of society and its institutions. . . Such a measure as this, evolved out of the gigantic intellect of Bernhard Ringrose Wise, capitalist, lawyer, politician, will blemish the workers." (It perhaps illustrates the problem for Wise when one mentions that at the same time Chief Justice Darley was himself strongly opposed to the Bill, and took a rather unprecedented position in coming out in public to say so.)

It was during the federation campaign that Wise, as one of the constitution

1. Preface, p. x. (The Preface was written by John Norton.)
makers, met the full force of this prejudice. The Labour movement generally opposed the constitution on the grounds that it was undemocratic, and expressed the suspicion that its lawyer framers had weighted it against the interests of the working man. The extent to which this view prejudiced his chances of success, when opposed by a Labour candidate in the first federal election, might be judged from the "Worker" propaganda directed against the lawyer candidates.

"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, the God help us. The boss bounder and swilling guzzler speaks in the name of the people when he has not yet been elected for any constituency. Every position of any importance in all the States is held by these rotten sharks or by their deputies. Under no set of circumstances that can be brought forward, have they the right to represent the people in Parliament - a place where the laws are made by whose distortion these hambugs live in luxury. 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 burglars and thieves 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 can the real wealth-producers of this fair land under any circumstances vote for these foul birds of prey? Every worker who votes for any of these parasites should be black-balled for ever by his fellows. The land is full of law, but it is freedom that is required - the freedom which is all men birth-right."

The extent to which this kind of prejudice seeped through the minds of the working class generally during this period is hard to assess, but the "capitalist-lawyer-politician" charge Wise had to live down, or learn to live with. If he was to be an exception, then it was for him to prove it. That a man of his class could win the respect and the admiration of the working class is demonstrated in the case of Justice Higginbotham of Victoria whom the "Bulletin" was glad to acknowledge as "the embodiment and exemplar of every democratic principle". There was also admiration for the radical Justice Higgins and for Sir George Lilley, who openly disagreed with...
the partisanship shown by the government and the law during the Queensland sheared's
strike in 1891. There was undoubtedly also a good deal of interest and respect for
Wise, coming into an electorate like South Sydney with its slums, in supporting the
cause of trade unionism and advancing radical social reform ideas. But whereas in
the eyes of the "Bulletin" Higginbotham "abhorred the pretensions, the mummeries and
the aristocratic airs of the vulgar coterie that dubs itself society", Wise remained
within his class. Whereas Higginbotham was of Irish origin, the very Englishness of
Wise was almost beyond compromise for the "Bulletin", since the prejudice of
Archibald and Stevens embraced all aspects of English life, culture, and society.

It might be argued that such problems which we have outlined in this
chapter would not be special to Wise — that they would apply equally to other men
of his class in politics, men for instance like Bruce Smith, Adrian Knox, and John
Garland, all barristers, men of wealth, and social position, and all educated in
overseas universities. However, the problem for Wise is special, though this will
not become clearly evident until we look at his ideas and his political philosophy
in a later chapter for, whereas the other men remained on the conservative side of
political party division, intellectually Wise was moving very close to the Labour
party, and shared many of its aims. His is the problem of a man born into the
upper class of Australian society who seems to be running against the natural
instincts of his class; yet in the particular environment of his time it is almost
impossible for him to bridge the social gap which separates him from the working
classes in whose welfare he was so politically interested. In English political
life, with its tradition of aristocratic radicalism, we are accustomed to the
presence of upper-class men in the Labour Party, and the acceptance of their leader-

ship by working men. In Australia, though prejudice against the intellectual and

1. Ibid.
2. See A.W.Martin and P.Wardle, "Members of the Legislative Assembly of New South
Wales, 1856-1901."
the man of wealth still exists, we have seen in our own time a High Court Judge leave the bench and in due course become leader of the Federal Labour Party, and later return to the position of N.S.W. Chief Justice. A barrister is now a Deputy Federal Leader, and a Doctor of Philosophy is accepted as normally on one side of the House as on the other. One can hardly postulate that this could not have happened in the 1890's but the possibility was remote in the extreme. There is for instance, in the period covered by Wise's career in New South Wales politics, not one instance of a man approximating to his social position crossing the barriers of class and working within the Labour Party. For a man like Wise to be accepted by the working class as a sincere advocate of their cause in the 1890's required on their part an exceptional act of faith, and for Wise a virtual renunciation of all his connections, associations, and interests. But, despite his radicalism, Wise was a once-born rather than a twice-born man, and in his social and intellectual values he belonged to his class.

That Wise in another time, and in other circumstances, may have moved much closer to a Labour Party and been more readily accepted can be judged, I think, from a letter he wrote to H.B. Higgins when his Victorian Liberal friend agreed to join the Cabinet in the first Federal Labour government under Watson in 1904. Wise wrote: "Although I know that the opinion of others counts for less with you than with most men, I would like to tell you that at least one old time political associate and fellow barrister is glad you had the courage to become Attorney-General in the present administration." The individuality of Wise may have prevented him from ever taking a pledge and joining the Labour Party but, as in the case of Higgins, he could have worked closely with the party for, after all, the Labour Party gained its initial success by working with other parties, and in the Reid

1. The only man in the Parliamentary Party during these years with any university background is L.Z. Hollis, elected among the first Labour Party members in 1891. He had graduated as a physician the previous year, having before that spent some years as a pupil teacher. He did not remain in the official party after the "pledge" (over
government of 1894 Wise's ideas and his politics should normally have won for him recognition as a sympathizer and supporter of Labour's aims. That instead of this he earned the hostility and distrust he did is, I think, strongly related to the issues raised in this chapter.

(from 105) division in 1893, and he left the party in 1895.
Chapter IV

"It is gratifying to find Mr. Wise, educated in one of the best universities, coming amongst us to render his best services to what he believes to be the good of the country." ("Hear, hear!") 1

(Henry Parkes)

"No one can deny (if he is truthful to himself) that, both by reason of his splendid service, ability and enormous experience, the Parliament of New South Wales is incomplete without Sir Henry Parkes." 2

(B.R. Wise)

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1. Chairman's remarks, meeting of the Free Trade Association, Sydney, 22.i.1866, S.M.E., 23.i.1886.
2. B.R. Wise to J. King, 18.2.1866, Papers of J. Conroy, add. 896, D.L.
One cannot discuss the career of B.R. Wise after his return to New South Wales in 1883 without becoming involved sooner or later in some analysis of the Wise-Parkes relationship. Apart from the fact that much of our knowledge of Wise as a person is revealed in the intimacy of his correspondence with Parkes, the relationship was to have a direct bearing on Wise’s political career at almost every vital point right up to the death of Parkes in 1895, and it would not be difficult to argue that the influence of Parkes was pervasive, even after his death. (In a sense Wise’s devotion to the federal ideal, and his later attitude to the fiscal issue, though perfectly consistent with his own outlook, were something of a memorialization of Parkes, as his inspiration and wisdom were frequently invoked by Wise.) As well, the name of Parkes is bound up with the tradition of Wise, the political plotter, for it is with Parkes that Wise is said to have conducted his intrigue. As part of this background to Wise’s political career, it is of cardinal importance to determine as far as it is possible to do so, just what was the real nature of the Wise-Parkes association. To say the least it was unusual; another just like it would be difficult to find in Australian political history.

First of all there is the matter of respective ages of the two men. Wise was a young man of twenty-six and Parkes was an old man of seventy when we find the first direct evidence of the association in the Parkes papers. They are dissimilar in many respects. Wise, well bred and educated, socially polished, with entrance into the upper-class world of club, theatre, and university; Parkes was not of this world, nor did he seek to belong to it. The humble origins of Berkshireshire peasantry and the working-class surroundings of his early life had left their mark; he was rough-hewn, awkward and unsophisticated, and the evidence of his self-education was sharply underlined when set against the academic Wise. Wise had successfully married into his own class; Parkes had married “an unpretending woman” whose homely
nature kept her in domestic seclusion; an issue of twelve children had been produced in wedlock, but now another younger generation was gathering about the old man - this issue out of wedlock. Wise was the professional man with every opportunity for success; Parkes had proved himself a hopeless businessman and provider. Twice bankrupt, he was almost permanently insolvent with 'destitute children and a breadless house'. On the surface it would seem unusual for a deep friendship to develop, but it did. The extent to which Parkes was involved is not so clear as we do not have his letters; with Wise it is clear, for we can follow a political association deepening into emotional feelings of admiration and loyalty. The association is obviously quite complex and will require some analysis.

It is interesting, first of all, to discover that the friendship of Parkes with the Wise family extended over two generations. We have noted earlier that Edward Wise found common cause with Parkes on a political level. That the relationship went beyond this and the two men were in fact on close terms of familiarity is evident from a letter written to Parkes prior to departure for England. Herein Wise refers to letters of introduction for Parkes which he is sending on to English connections; he discusses aspects of the trip and wishes him well on his forthcoming visit, trusting "that you may return to the colony with increased knowledge of English institutions and other intellectual and social progress which may hereafter be turned to the advantage of the colony". Parkes was also friendly with the brother of Judge Wise, George F. Wise, for it is a letter from the uncle to Parkes in 1879 that most clearly foreshadows the later association between the older Parkes and the B.R. Wise. This is a convivial letter from Tunbridge Wells in England, congratulating Parkes on his return to office as premier and, after ranging over such personal matters as wives' health and nostalgia for Australia, Wise then

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1. This phrase, evidently used by Parkes, was contemptuously quoted by the Sunday Times in an exposé of the Parkes debts, 'The Great Debts of Henry Parkes', Sunday Times, Nov. 13, 1887, Newspaper Cuttings, Vol. 116, pp. 180-8, M.L.

goes on to inform Parkes of the successful career of his nephew at Oxford, of his Australian interests and his intention to return to Sydney. "It is evident", he writes, "that my nephew is educating himself to become a useful member of the community of New South Wales. I am sure therefore that he would be most gratified if you were able to afford the time to write to him." This letter must have had considerable interest for the New South Wales premier as the young undergraduate had requested of his uncle "publications or information affecting the condition of the people of New South Wales socially or politically, especially any papers relating to Federation, Protection, the Chinese in Australia and especially the history of Education in New South Wales up to the present date". It would also be significant, in view of later developments, if it did no more than bring the interests and the career of the young man (he was then just twenty-one years old) under the notice of Parkes. But such a nicely judged set of enquiries - topics which embrace the main themes of Parkes' political career - would certainly have predisposed the old statesman to follow with interest the career of such a promising young man. Whether this letter represents a tactical approach merely to gain favour or attention should be judged in the light of Wise's current interests at Oxford and his expressed political intentions, which we have noticed, date back to his schooldays at Rugby.

It seems quite certain that Parkes did correspond with Wise at this time, for we know that the two met during Parkes' visit to England in 1881. This is revealed by Parkes, at one of the first public meetings of the Free Trade Association, Parkes as chairman was introducing Wise, the principal speaker, and he told the audience of his association with Wise's father, how he had noted in close sympathy with him on many questions, and in what great respect he held the late Judge Wise.

2. ibid.
He went on to say how he "had also met his gifted son in England before his student-
ship ended, and recalled having more than one interesting conversation with him as to his future course in the colony". Thus we can see that the two men were brought together initially through a family association. We will now consider certain factors which might explain the close relationship that followed.

First, on a strictly political level, we might notice how the association would serve the political careers of both men. Regarding the ambition for a political career, which I think we can accept Wise had entertained since his student days, it is self-evident that the patronage of such a prominent and influential politician as Parkes would be much to be desired. Before Wise had ventured his first step towards a parliamentary career, Parkes was already a veteran of more than thirty years in the House. He had been in and out of office many times, and the year after Wise arrived in the colony, had succeeded to the premiership for the fourth time. The death of Sir James Martin and the retirement of Sir John Robertson, the two men who had competed with him for leadership of the colony's affairs, for so long, left Parkes in 1885 the most powerful politician in the country. Not only did his power rest on his influence and prestige but, as Alan Martin so clearly demonstrates, he had developed such a network of political machinery throughout the colony that he virtually controlled the election of many members to the Assembly.

Of Parkes' influence in 1885, C.E.Lyne has this to say:

"His personal popularity at this time was surprising. So pronounced in fact was public approval in his favour, that very quickly it was recognized by candidates for the new Parliament, that supporting Parkes was the high road to success and disapproving of him certain defeat."

Considered, then, from a strictly utilitarian view - the view Wesley has given us of Curzon's premeditated course, it would be elementary to conclude that Wise, once he understood the real extent of Parkes' power, would manoeuvre to get on side with

1. S.M.H., 23.1.1886.
this "super-manipulator" and maker of ministries. This is consistent with Evatt's judgment of the political opportunist, but in attributing such motives to Wise there is the difficulty of explaining the adherence he was later to give to Parkes when the old man's power was on the wane and when every instinct of self-preservation should have told him it was time to abandon Parkes. One must acknowledge the possibility that such motives could have actuated Wise in his early dealings with Parkes, but I find it very difficult to accept this as a basis of Wise's friendship.

As for Parkes, it is perhaps not so difficult to accept such an interpretation. In view of the revelations of his methods which Martin draws from the Parkes' correspondence, it is not at all inconsistent that Parkes would see in the promotion of a young man like Wise the possibility of harnessing political talents which could be of great service to him. His political opponents testify that this was almost standard practice with him, and there is something allegorical about Parkes, a crafty old spider, drawing innocent young men into his political parlour. Thus the 'Bulletin' in 1894, with an obvious reference to Wise:

"Parkes is a vampire who eats young politicians. The spectacle of Parkes' laying for a young and tender member in the House is well known. His tactics differ but he often merely lures them from a distance, then one night embles gently across, sits down and starts talking - generally about literature. 'It was reading he most remarkable book the other day' is probably how he begins. Parkes admires the observations of the young member - 'that his a most horizental view of the case... It bevidences deep thought!.' Thereafter the veteran admires the most stupid observations until the young member becomes like Wise - his SMITE. The young man who once begins to joke Parkes is like the young man who once begins to take orium - he is lost!"

Allowing for the 'Bulletin's' bitter antagonism to Parkes and all his works, this impression of a practised political seducer is corroborated by others. E.W.

O'Sullivan, recalling his impressions of Parkes in 1905, remarks upon this same technique:

1. Martin's phrase, op. cit., p. 279. The power of Parkes in promoting the career of a young supporter by electoral influence is well illustrated by Martin in the case of Walter Cooper, who was elected by a large majority in East Lachlan.
"Another quality he had was the ability to judge of the character and the powers of younger men. He would sit for hours with his arms folded listening to the debates and noting the performance of younger men. Then he would gradually attract them to him and in some cases utilize their services."  

The suggestion that Wise was a victim of such predatory methods and lived in Parkes' pocket was often heard in the Assembly, and the implications were fully exploited by political opponents. "We saw the Colonial Treasurer take the hon. gentleman into a room, and coach him carefully. We also saw the Premier take the young goose out, and put him on the right track..." while "Parkes' pup" and "Parkes' baby" were catch-cries from interjectors which Wise became quite familiar with at election meetings. The press was equally candid. The combination of Wise's name and the Parkes association was too gratuitous an offering for cartoonists like "Hop" and Phil May to resist. It required only the slightest alteration to "Ringrose" to create a complete and ready-made political satire. Wise was almost invariably shown when Parkes was in the picture with a lead attached to a "Ringrose", being led along the political path by the "Grand Hi Ham", and he was also shown perched on Parkes' shoulders. The quality and cleverness of these cartoons made them irresistible, and they undoubtedly helped to set many impressions about Wise, and especially the notion that he was in political bondage to Parkes.

Despite the credence given to such a theory about Parkes and Wise, I find it very difficult to believe that such an intelligent and apparently mature man as Wise appeared would fall such an innocent victim and become so easily duped by Parkes, especially in view of all the public warnings he so obviously received. One cannot rule out the possibility that Parkes exercised some fatal attraction for Wise that destroyed his independence of thought - Barton and others have also spoken of Parkes' "personal magnetism" - but, in fact, Wise did retain his own

4. See Barton's comments on Parkes, S.M.H., 14.1.1901.
political individuality, and his ideas were conditioned by Parkes' limitations. There is, too, quite a healthy exchange of opinion in Wise's correspondence which does not suggest the captive mind. It would not be beyond some of Parkes' enemies to go even further perhaps, and suggest some sinister hold over the young man - Parkes was probably instrumental in having had the pension for Wise's mother put on the annual estimates; he could have used the family relationship as some form of pressure; there may have been promises and commitments as part of some bargain. Such possibilities, though rather extravagant, might suggest themselves, but there is nothing in Wise's written or spoken word after the death of Parkes to suggest the slightest change in his feeling for the man, nor is there any sudden emergence of a newly integrated personality, or a more independent and mature politician, that might suggest a release from a heavy dominant influence. Whilst it cannot be denied that such political arts may have formed part of the Parkes method, I think, as far as Wise is concerned, the interpretation is quite primitive if we see the relationship only in terms of political puppetry.

We might then look to other, more credible, explanations for a political partnership - first of all, in terms of ideas. Wise, in looking for a home for his own political ideas, would initially have been attracted by Parkes' reputation as "the Grand Old Man of New South Wales Liberalism", and also his claim to be an undying free-trader. As to his liberalism, Parkes accorded himself the title of father of the 'Great Liberal Party': "I created the first great Liberal party that ever appeared in New South Wales, nearly fifty years ago. I have been the mainstay of that party at all difficult times." This claim derived from the democratic policies Parkes followed in the early years of his political career when issues

1. A good example of a strong difference of political opinion is found in the views expressed by both men on the principle of the eight-hour compulsory clause in the Coal Mines Regulation Bill - Parkes in opposition, Wise in support. One speech follows immediately upon the other in the debate in the House in 1894. N.S.W. P.D., Vol. LXXII, p. 373.
2. N.S.W. P.D., Vol. LXXIV, p. 2552 (21.11.94). Parkes claimed his paper (over)
such as transportation, extension of the franchise, and freedom of the press, were paramount in colonial politics, and, though the title was self-conferred, among colonial politicians, Parkes probably had a better claim to it than most others. There were many men who acknowledged his right to such a title. Of his “Empire” days C.B. Barton said Parkes “was one of the ablest and most consistent advocates of Liberalism. It may be said that among all politicians he makes the nearest approach to a statesman”, and when David Syme of Melbourne wrote in 1871, asking Parkes to become the Sydney correspondent of “The Age” he remarked: “I don’t think we should disagree in politics as we are both advanced Liberals”. Parkes also had legislative achievements, particularly his Education Act of 1880, to point to as evidence of his liberal spirit, and his public support for Gladstone’s policies would have added further to Wise’s interest in liberalism.

Wise, with his English-formed concept of a liberal party, would have soon come to realize that Parkes’ claim to lead a liberal party was mere rhetoric; no such party had ever existed, and in the chaotic condition of politics in the early ‘eighties it was a preposterous claim. He would also have soon recognized that there was a gap separating his own liberal ideas from those of Parkes, for on some questions Parkes’ advanced liberalism of 1871 was now in Wise’s view, the liberalism of the old school. Parkes still held to many of the principles of Individual Liberalism, he opposed, for instance, the right of the state to fix the hours in which a man should labour, and his opposition to payment of members as dangerous to the democratic structure were ideas Wise had by-passed and he now rejected in the name of modern liberalism. This will be discussed later, but it is important here to realize that there were very few “liberals” in the colony who held such an (from 114) “The Empire” was the organ of the First Liberal Party in New South Wales.
3. “Mr. Gladstone and English Liberalism from an Australian point of view”, 1878. Parkes was the prime mover behind the “Gladstone Address Committee” which forwarded a resolution expressing the colony’s admiration for the English statesmen.
advanced view of liberalism as Wise did. It is also misleading, in my opinion, to say that Parkes' liberalism of this period consisted only of empty husks, for I disagree with the view that he now lived only in the past, reiterating stock democratic and reformist ideas which he had absorbed in his early Birmingham days, and which were current among middle-class radicals before his emigration.

Parkes was not an academic liberal, and never defined his philosophy as a group of systematic ideas, hence we can judge his liberalism solely by its practical bearing on his politics, and it could well be argued, as many of his contemporaries did, that he was in his later career really a conservative. But it is the spirit of Parkes' liberalism, his outlook rather than his ideas, that we should consider in trying to understand how Wise could believe in his liberalism, for Parkes was essentially a humanitarian in his approach to politics and always expressed a true sympathy with his fellow man. Without vested interests of any kind, without economic security at any stage of his life, and possessed of a sympathetic understanding of the problems of the working class from which he sprang, Parkes could truly be said to have the interests of humanity at heart. "A man must be insensible and unjust indeed who did not sympathise most fervently and deeply with the large wage-earning class of our population in trying to improve their condition of life." Parkes' belief that legislation could uplift the masses and that this was the process by which civilization in a democratic community advanced, was fundamental to Wise's own view of political life, and when viewed at this level, the affinity in the ideas of the two men is neither mystifying nor contradictory. In

1. We find him, for example, supporting the movement for women suffrage. See letter from Margaret Findeyer, thanking Parkes for his support, Jan. 7, 1891, P.C., Vol. 42, p. 447.
3. "Speech to residents of Campbelltown", S.M.H., 30.3.1891.
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the liberal spirit still lived. Though the two men differed in their application of liberal principles, there was a common cause, and when it came to such basic issues as an industrial strike or the bank collapse, or a large question such as federation, there was basic agreement. Although we can see Wise trying to convert Parkes to his own liberal policies, he never at any time altered his conviction that Parkes was the best man to lead the liberal forces, and he held to that view to the end of Parkes' political career. It should be emphasized that Wise was in no way stuck with Parkes, for Parkes resigned from leadership in 1891. We will not anticipate the discussion here, except to say that in spite of the new leadership of Reid, whose ideas at the time were more in keeping with his own, in spite of the chance to take over the leadership himself, Wise continued to look to Parkes as the natural leader of the Free Trade Party, and refused to give allegiance to any other leader except on this understanding.

The other attraction for Wise in Parkes' politics was his free trade policy. As to his fiscal convictions, Parkes could claim that he had been a free-trader for twenty-five years; his faith had been kindled at the fireside of the great free-trader himself, Richard Cobden, in 1861. Here he had "learned the truth": "I listened to Mr. Cobden's quiet wise words in that winter firelight, and though I had been bitten by the doctrine of fostering infant industries, I never afterwards wavered from the cause of free trade." There was common connection also with the Cobden Club, for Parkes was an honorary member, having received a gold medal for his labours in the cause of free trade, and he maintained a contact with the club over a long period. Like many of his contemporaries, Parkes' free trade was based on a rather narrow fiscal concept and, as with his liberalism, had none.

1. In retrospect, Wise was to remark upon Parkes' failure to recognize the forces of social change which were acting upon political life at the time, "Making of the Australian Commonwealth", p. 32.
2. Henry Parkes, op. cit., p. 142. Parkes was visiting Cobden's home.
3. See letters from secretary of the Cobden Club, and re Parkes' visits to the club when in England see P.C., Vol. 37.
of the theoretical foundations of Wise's ideas. But, despite this, it was still
evertheless, that Wise would look to a Parkes-led party, especially at a time when
the fiscal issue was beginning to dominate New South Wales politics. At the first
election which Wise to witness in the colony, Parkes carried the free trade flag
against the opposition of Sir Patrick Jennings, whose government had re-imposed a
five percent ad-valorem duty in the previous session, and his sweeping victory must
have impressed Wise and no doubt led him to the conclusion that a Parkes party
would provide the best harboursage for his own ideas. At all events, having
joined Parkes, he continued to look upon him as the leader of the Free Trade Party
until the end, although there was a wave of disillusionment when he came to realize
just how shallow the professions of many free-traders really were. However, it is
significant that when Wise published his book "Industrial Freedom", in which he set
out his complete free trade liberal philosophy, it was dedicated to "Sir Henry
Parkes - An Honoured Chief and Friend", and we find Parkes coming into Wise's con-
stituency to support him.

On the other side of the association it is obvious that Parkes would be
interested in the ideas of such an academic free-trader as Wise. Wise's Cobden
Club laurels, his writings in McMillan's Magazine, and his early election to the
presidency of the Free Trade Association ensured him a standing which Parkes could
hardly ignore. Parkes too, no matter how powerful his control of the electorate,
had to face the changing situation in politics: that elections would henceforth be
fought around issues, rather than personalities and, with a tightening party struc-
ture, it would be invaluable to have a man like Wise in the fold. This reasoning
was not beyond the deductive powers of the opposition and, when Wise first entered
the House, the point was made by a number of protectionist speakers that Wise, as
President of the Free Trade Association, had been set up by Parkes for the defence
of the government. But Parkes had a high opinion of Wise's talent and he encour-
aged and supported him; he made an early overture to Wise to enter politics in 1886 and promoted him to ministerial rank in his first term in parliament. As to Wise's advanced ideas, Parkes tended to look upon them with the benevolent eye of the wise old man - in this spirit he wrote to Freude of "the young intellectuals who believed in Henry George and wanted to change society" - but he gave Wise encouragement; he chaired his meetings and publicly supported his efforts even when Wise was advancing policies far in advance of Parkes' own, and in every election we find Parkes coming into Wise's constituency to support him. From this I think we can conclude that the Wise - Parkes association had a firm political basis.

These cognate ideas and the common purposes we have mentioned do not go far enough, however, to explain the very high regard Wise held for Parkes' leadership. It is obvious that he saw other qualities in the old leader, the qualities of statesmanship. In considering this question, we are involved in a very difficult problem of interpretation with Parkes, for there is probably no other political leader in Australian history about whom such rival opinions can be found. On the one hand, there is the interpretation of Parkes, the great colonial statesman; the halo is firmly set on his head by biographers Lyne, Bevin, and others. However, some more recent historians have unceremoniously removed it. Cyril Pearl looks behind the "sacred of whiskers" and exposes a mediocre politician with an unpleasant personality, and H.V. Evatt likewise reduces him to the level of an opportunistic "syndicate leader" with grandiose ideas, and attributes his political longevity to little more than a combination of the arts of the actor and orator and a "finesse in Parliamentary intrigue". A.W. Martin has the highest regard for his organizational skill and classifies him as the "politician for excellence".

rather is it an acknowledgement of his manipulative skill in "cynically pulling the levers" of his machine and thereby ensuring his long period of pre-eminence in New South Wales. Bede Nairn, on the other hand, makes the judgment that "the much-maligned Parkes is in reality one of the greatest New South Wales statesmen of the nineteenth century". Douglas McCallum attempts an objective view of his federation work but delivers no clear judgment, and leaves the question of his statesmanship open in terms of the reader's own definition. Parkes' own story is a rather vainglorious effort and leaves little room for critical interpretation. The published parts of Martin's study of Parkes offer the most penetrating analysis, but he admits the great problem in reconciling the conflicting interpretations of the man based on stereotypes of the 'noble'-or scheming-politician. He hints that the intuitive insight of Alfred Deakin might provide the historian with the best starting-point in attempting to reconcile these warring judgments, and quotes from a passage in which Deakin suggests to him a "curious borderline region in Parkes' personality where substance merged with shadow".

It is obvious that we cannot start with any ready-made or easily acceptable picture of Parkes. To survey contemporary opinion is simply impossible - the range is from Machiavelli to Gladstone. But in order to gain some picture against which to offset the view of Wise, we might look closely at Deakin's analysis in 'The Federal Story'. Deakin and Wise were able to study Parkes from the same vantage point as fellow federalists. They were close friends, and after his death must have discussed Parkes and his influence quite often. The sheer brilliance of Deakin's picture is seductive; his pen seems to have the sharpness of a scalpel, and when he puts it down one might be pardoned for wondering what else there is to

1. Ibid., pp. 279-80.
say about Parkes. His summarizing sentence catches the vividness of the picture and suggests the heroic stature:

"He was cast in the mould of a great man and though he suffered from numerous pettinesses, snipes and failings, he was in himself a full-blooded, large-brained, self-educated Titan whose natural field was found in Parliament and whose resources of character and intellect enabled him in his later years to overshadow all his contemporaries, to exercise an immense influence on his own colony and achieve a great reputation outside it."

Against these interpretations of Parkes, we might record Wise's impressions and deduce what we can about the personal factors involved.

First, Parkes the statesman: without any doubt Wise saw in Parkes the qualities which set the statesman above the politician. He clearly saw all the great qualities which Deakin acknowledged and the weaknesses in a more generous, if less realistic, spirit. There was to him nothing ludicrous in the comparison with & Gladstone - quite the reverse. Long after Parkes' death, Wise revived this analogy:

"One of the greatest Parliamentarians who ever lived and worthy to be ranked with Peel, Gladstone, and Macdonald (was) Sir Henry Parkes. A master of constitutional lore by study and instinct, he, more than any single individual, established the practice of responsible government in Australia, and maintained it at a high pitch for forty years, (1856-1896)."

This was not hyperbole, as Parkes had a firm reputation as the guardian of constitutional procedure and parliamentary dignity. The Parkes correspondence abounds with examples of his constitutional knowledge and the deference paid to his experience and authority, and he can be found at all times advising, suggesting, warning, and even issuing ultimatums to all from the Governor downwards. In the words of H.W.

2. The Gladstone analogy came readily to the contemporary mind, because of the age and prestige of the two men and the position of leadership which they occupied in their respective parliaments. Parkes obviously cherished such an illusion about himself, and probably helped to cultivate it by his fondness for comparing himself with Gladstone. He had met him and heard him speak in the Commons on his visit to London in 1884. Though the comparison was treated as a Gilbertian preface by his opponents, there were prominent men, who were anything but devotees who put forward the suggestion seriously. E.W. O'Sullivan said he was "the nearest approach to Gladstone Australia ever had", (S.M.H., 21.10.1905) and Sir Charles Dilke placed him in the company of Gladstone and Macdonald of Canada as the three leading men in the Empire. (Letter Dilke to Lord Carrington, cited by C.E. Lyne, op. cit., p. 529.) (See also Lyne, chap. XXVIII, "Resemblance to Gladstone").
Huntington, Parkes symbolized "the great pillar and ornament of constitutional government" in New South Wales. It goes without saying that Parkes used this position to his own advantage, but it would also not be far from the truth to say that in the evolution of New South Wales constitutional lore Parkes himself directed the course of much of its development and set many a precedent. This would obviously impress Wise coming into colonial politics from a background of English political institutions, and he frequently expressed his admiration of this aspect of Parkes' statesmanship. After one speech Wise wrote: "It was a storehouse of constitutional precept which should be in the hands of every aspirant to office". And again: "Ought not you as perhaps the only, certainly the most prominent and serviceable guardian of the constitution now in Parliament, to call attention...

Another mark of the statesman which Wise apparently recognized in Parkes was a breadth of vision and faith in a great ideal. "Unmethodical and impatient of detail, he dreamt dreams and saw visions which self-confidence and an ambition which was without pettiness prompted him to translate into realities." His great vision was federation. For Wise, Parkes was the real father of federation; his Tenterfield speech was a declaration of faith "which stirred Australian feeling to its depths", and in retrospect he maintained that when Parkes "with aper vision refused to divide parties upon the lines of party politics", his were the statesman's "words of wisdom". Parkes' ability to lift an issue out of the region of petty politics and transform the discussion into a question of high principle is always impressive. In a note commending him for his speech on the Governor's salary which, he said, Parkes "lifted out of the miserable f.s.d squabble and

3. Ibid., Vol. 42, p. 290.
6. Ibid., p. 167.
placed on a higher plane", Lord Jersey went on to remark "I have often said without pledging myself to agree with every word that your speeches gave me pleasure to read because of the finer and higher and more far-seeing sentiments to be found in them. Only a few can educate a people". This same ability was also used to escape from pressing detail and to screen his failure to go through with legislative spade-work, but to Wise a man who could lead debate in this way was infinitely to be preferred to the pettifogging squabbling over minor administrative detail, or faction feud which so often clogged the agenda.

Finally, Wise also saw in Parkes the personal characteristics of a great party leader - experience, devotion to office, and an ability to inspire and discipline his followers. In Wise's view these qualities so far exceeded those of possible rivals in the Free Trade Party that, while over the possibility of Parkes' leading the party existed, no other man could claim his allegiance. "Then the retirement of Parkes from leadership in 1891 was mooted, Wise wrote expressing his concern:

"Nothing I am sure could be more disastrous to the best interests of Australia nor more destructive of the 'morale' of our party. That the weary Titan should grow tired almost to death is natural enough, but others may see the light in time before he can see it... You know you can count on me as your loyal friend whatever may be the course which your judgement approves."

When Parkes did retire from leadership Wise made his own position clearly understood - that he still regarded Parkes as the natural leader. In 1893 when the party under Reid's leadership was in opposition to Dibbs, he wrote to Parkes:

"I cannot give up the hope of seeing you in office again as P.M."

and later in the same letter he tells Parkes that there is a strong feeling in the party for his return: "If any man can lift us out of our lamentable confusion and misfortune it is yourself and I see no one else who can." Wise evidently felt the party needed the disciplinary hand of Parkes, for in the following year when

Parkes intimated that he was a candidate for leadership again Wise wrote: "By your position you might take a notable lead in the direction of party discipline and at the same time assume your rightful place as leader." It is quite obvious from these professions of confidence just how highly Wise regarded Parkes' leadership qualities, and he was not alone in this, for other younger politicians, such as McMillan, Bruce Smith, and Carruthers, all said the same kind of thing when Parkes stood down from party leadership in 1891. Smith, who was perhaps less happy under Parkes' leadership than any of the others, could yet say quite sincerely: "Allow me to acknowledge here the great advantage my colleagues and I have derived from a careful observation of your unusual gifts of patience, of wise deliberation, of tact and judgment in public matters, and especially your rare power of counsel."

In our consideration of Wise's view of Parkes as a political leader, it is important to note the circumstances in which he first came to observe the Parkes style of leadership. Just at what point Parkes reached the zenith of his power is not easy to decide. Martin sets his golden period in the 'seventies, but for the sheer romance of political success the period immediately following Wise's return was one of Parkes' great periods. The year 1885, in Lyne's view, "opened a period of his career which for vigour, brilliance and success was unsurpassed in his history." Had Wise arrived in the next decade when the volcano was nearly exhausted, his impression of the heroic statesman may never have materialized, but in the mid-'eighties Wise was witness to a series of great personal triumphs for the veteran leader.

Emerging once more in 1885 from one of his retirements, Parkes was elected for Argyle and entering the Assembly he immediately faced a motion for his

expulsion because he had grossly libelled the House in an address published at the
time of his resignation from his former seat of Tenterfield in the previous year.

The leader of the government, Sir Alexander Stuart, moved the expulsion motion. It
was carried by four votes, but Parkes defied the government to act. He admitted
all he had said, he admitted publishing it; he refused to withdraw or qualify; he
reiterated it: "I snap my fingers at the motion", he declared. The government,
however, wouldn't risk sending him back to his electorate and, with his prestige
enhanced, Parkes remained unrepentant, to taunt the government. Wise would also
have been impressed, as well as in full agreement, with the fine show of independ-
ence which Parkes displayed when he flew in the face of empire feeling in vigour-
ously opposing the offer made by W.B. Dalley, the Acting-Premier, of a contingent of
New South Wales troops for the Soudan. Shortly after this, Parkes brought about a
constitutional crisis when he claimed that the replacement of the Premier (who had
retired ill) by G.R. Bibbs was unconstitutional, since parliament had already been
dissolved by the retiring Premier. Parkes publicly censured the Governor, Lord
Loftus, for what he termed an unprecedented and revolutionary proceeding; and with
his fighting instincts fully roused challenged the new leader in Bibbs' own elect-
orate of St. Leonards. On such a constitutional issue he was at his best, but he
judiciously added a sop to the local voters and, anticipating the Harbour Bridge by
some fifty years, he told the electors that, having got the railway, what they must
now have was a North Shore bridge. Obviously he was the man to give it to them.

With the sure touch of the demagogue he bent Lord Macaulay to his purpose:

"In that straight path a thousand
May cross as soon as three;
Now who will stand at my right hand
And build the bridge with me?"

1. Among other things Parkes had said that in the parliament he was leaving
"political character had almost disappeared". Ibid., p. 435.
2. Ibid., p. 455.
3. Ibid., p. 458.
"The appeal", Lyne comments, "was irresistible". He swept the poll. Wise was watching a master at work.

In the new parliament, Parkes rose quickly to take over leadership of the opposition, practically forcing the retirement of his old adversary, John Robertson, by refusing to accept a portfolio under his leadership, advancing all the time professions of parliamentary principle. Once leader, he raised the banner of free trade, following the passage of a Customs Duty Bill and, with the free trade press behind him, he brought down the government. Though uncertain as to his active support in the House, he received a call from Lord Carrington to form a ministry and then, daring the House to refuse him supply, dissolved parliament and went to the country for the great election victory of 1887. This was the election fought on the fiscal issue which marked the first clear outlines of a free trade party; it was also the election which returned B.A. Wise to his first parliament, the admirer and supporter of Parkes. It is not hard to understand how the young Wise might have been captivated by the sheer adventure of Parkes' politics, and the enduring concept of the great political leader probably had its genesis in this period.

This is one side of the public figure of Parkes. That of the other side, against this image of the wise, independent, and resourceful leader can be placed the picture of the arrogant, dictatorial Parkes, the mean and vindictive Parkes, Parkes the opportunist and calculator. This is the real problem - one might almost call it a mystery - which one faces with Parkes, how to reconcile the concept of high statesmanship with the unscrupulous intrigue and political amorality which Martin lays bare. The "sectarian mud-raking" and the cultivation of "religious passions", the blatant hypocrisy in his intrigue with Butler, the Catholic politician, and Wearne, the leading Orangeman, the clumsy and evil attempt he made 1. " Faction Politics and the Education Question in New South Wales", Melbourne Studies in Education, 1960-61, p. 36. Henceforth "K".
to gain capital out of the O'Farrell treason plot, the bland lying and dissembling before the House and the country. Parkes could unctuously declare that he had nothing to do with any organisation that could assist him in political life. "Whatever position he might have had he had won it fairly and against great odds and obstacles; simply by much powers as God had given him", but it was hardly disinterested recognition that led the Protestant Political Association and the Loyal Orange Institute to present him with resolutions of approval and admiration.

The statesmanship of Parkes is pitifully reduced by his desperate efforts to have the report of the parliamentary committee of enquiry into the Klare affair taken out of the records of the House, for the committee, in Martin's judgment, branded Parkes "a fool, or a charlatan, or both". And as for his political principles which were so much admired, they proved to be very adaptable in the face of opportunity. He could affect horror and disgust when Robertson and Martin came together in 1871 after opposing each other "in office, out of office, on the hustings, and in the Assembly", yet he subsequently formed a coalition with each man in turn with a fine disregard for these principles or the public conscience. Parkes was the supreme opportunist - "no politician in the Australian world could better judge of the opportune moment to take over an agitation than Sir Henry Parkes" (this is O'Sullivan's opinion) - and even his inveterate enemy, the "Bulletin", confessed that Parkes had a true genius for timing his political strokes. It goes without saying that such a tactician would use his great parliamentary prestige and constitutional knowledge to his own ends, and he could be completely unscrupulous in the exercise of his authority. To what extent these opportunistic tactics

2. A.W. Martin, "K", p. 36.
3. L.O.I. Illuminated Address, 1884.
5. See 26.1.1889.
6. A good example of this is the attempt he made to prevent the appointment of a political opponent, F.S. Sutton, to the Legislative Council. He put the pressure on the Governor, Carrington, to refuse to make the appointment on the unusual constitutional ground that Sutton had been defeated in elections for the Assembly (over)
and the nefarious electioneering methods Martin discloses can be adjusted to the idea of statesmanship is a matter of personal judgment — too rigid a standard of political morality cannot be applied to a period of faction politics, and it must be remembered that Parkes’ career presented a large political landscape as it spanned the whole forty years of parliamentary life in the colony.

To deliver a judgment on Parkes the politician is well-nigh impossible, and the interpretation Martin has given us may well be modified in his final assessment. Following his death in 1896, admirers and cynics held their convictions. Writing from the House of Commons as a friend and admirer, J. Henniker Heaton said of Parkes that he was "in the very best sense 'The Incorruptible'". To the "Bulletin", however, he remained Brummagem, "The Prince of Artful Dodgers". His death altered this judgment not a whit. In the beginning as in the end he was "selfish, improvident, hypocritical - possibly so hypocritical he deceived himself."

Perhaps we might leave it to the man himself to sum up his claim to statesmanship in a few simple words spoken at the banquet to mark his eightieth birthday:

"I have little to say of myself. In the cause of constitutional government I venture to say that impartial men will acknowledge that I have laboured faithfully. With all my shortcomings and all my errors of judgment I have, I believe, devoted my life honestly and with all the ability God has bestowed upon me to try and establish the true principles of constitutional government in Australia, and to raise the character of the free people over which it has been erected." 3

Compared to the rather egotistical tone of his autobiography, this seems a singularly honest attempt to assess his own place in history and, as Tighe Ryan says, it is hard to see how even his most bitter critics could cavil at such an estimate.

It is important in this study to have some dimensional view of Parkes as (From 128) "To appoint him to the Legislature Council would be public scandal and abuse of power which Parliament itself would be compelled to enquire into." 21.2.1889, P.G., Vol. 46, p. 183. (The appointment was made.)
4. Ibid.
a political leader, for it is clear that, although Wise saw the darker side of the coin, he was able to explain away most of the defects, and keep always in view a picture of the true statesman. But it is also clear that his is a personal judgment and as such, it is impossible to keep our discussion within the limits of public character, for human factors must be involved. Hence we might now attempt some analysis of the personal relationship which grew up between the two men during the ten years of their political association.

In trying to assess the impact of Parkes, the man, we might first mention the romantic appeal which the Parkesian figure may have had for the imaginative young Wise. There is something Biblical about the picture contemporaries have left us of Parkes in the years when Wise knew him - Parkes the patriarch, old, wise, and venerable; and it seems that consciously or unconsciously he cultivated such an image of himself. Deakin's portrait catches the effect:

"The huge figure, slow step, deliberate glance and carefully brushed out aureole of white hair... a far-away expression of the eyes, intended to convey his remoteness from the earthly sphere and often associated with melancholy treble cadences of voice in which he implied a vast and inexpressible weariness... Movements, gestures, inflexions, attitudes harmonized, not simply because they were intentionally adopted but because there was in him the substance of the man he dressed himself to appear."

Mary Gilmore has given us a more homely picture of "Old Henry Parkes coming down the street in an out-of-date carriage, wearing his big top-hat on his lion-like head, but withal the impression is of a
great old man coming down the way,
Coming into Sydney like a King."

for the Parkes figure was part of the world she knew, and Sydney was never so empty as when he died. To her,

"Parkes couldn't die."

Among Wise's papers there is a large photograph of the Parkes countenance in which some of these qualities are conveyed - there is dignity in the graven lines, and the sleeping strength in the face is striking. Wise has described this

1. Alfred Deakin, op. cit., p. 78.
quality himself: "Big and hirsute, with the face and sleepy eyes of an old lion".

It is rather revealing, I think, that in his book Wise includes a description of
Parke by the visiting author, David Scott Murray, who happened to be in the audi-
ence at the Tenterfield speech. The profile is heroic - that of an old warrior,
weary but head erect, with his fighting instincts fully aroused. "It was truly
remarkable and not without a touch of sublimity," Murray concludes. With his
vulnerability, there was a dynamic energy about the Parke figure which made it the
more remarkable. While other men of his age were living in the past, there
remained with him some quality of "eternal youth". Observing him on his eightieth
birthday, Tighe Ryan beholds him in the "prime of life... the eyes sparkle, the
head shakes with animation, the mouth of old age disappears..." The laughter
of little children (Parke's own) playing in the corridors of Kenilworth testifies
both his juvenescence and his vitality.

Parke as a father figure is a familiar representation. In a political
sense we are familiar with such titles as father of education, of federation, etc.,
but here the image of Parke, the political father, might be seen in a more person-
al light, for there are grounds for suggesting that on a personal level there was
something approaching a father-son relationship between Parke and Wise. Alan
Martin, commenting on Wise's attachment to Parke in 1895, remarks that Wise would
make a compelling psychological study. We shall not enter the domain of Leon
Edel and others, however, and attempt any psycho-analytic reconstruction, but we
might make mention of one or two psychological factors which appear to be involved

2. Cited by Wise, ibid., p. 6. Parke's sublimity is clearly in the eyes of the
beholder, however, as another literary man, Francis Adams, visiting about the same
time, left a different picture of the old man sitting in the Assembly"... feeble and
languid, sitting huddled up with weary blinking eyelids, the not unpsychotic image
of a big, sick anthropomorphoid ape, well stricken in years". (Francis Adams,
The Australians", p. 62.)
in the relationship of the two men. Undoubtedly in his early years of unhappiness and heavy childhood responsibility Wise missed the security and strength of a father, and he has told us how much the friendship and guidance of the older Cross, the Dean of Queen’s, meant to him at Oxford. It also appears that in his first couple of years in the colony Wise found in Dr. Fortescue, an older man, a friend to whom “I could have looked for guidance in my public and private life”, and he speaks of the irreparable loss he suffered by Fortescue’s death in 1885. The suggestion, then, that Wise found in Parkes something of a substitute father is not just baseless theorizing. Certainly there does appear a strong dependence on Parkes; a disposition to seek counsel, approval, and guidance from the older man is clearly evident in his letters, and he makes repeated professions of his regard for Parkes’ help and friendship. “Thank-you for your kind note”, he writes in 1888. “It has been the ray of sunshine in what has been for me a very gloomy week... I value more than I can say, being associated with you in politics, and the friendship to which in this case the association has led...” Again in 1890 he tells Parkes of the pleasure which his “kind and sympathetic note” gave him. “I wish we could meet more.” We gain an idea of the value Wise placed on Parkes’ advice in a letter written in 1894. At this time, with such failure attending Parkes’ own decisions, one might expect that his guidance may have been less valued, but Wise writes to thank him for his “most kindly letter and gift... I will not neglect your words of warning and indeed have already had resort to the corrective influence of historic reading”. As well as seeking his counsel, Wise seems to have some need of Parkes’ approval, for he so frequently seeks his approval—

1. ibid., p. 96. Included is an extract from a notice Wise wrote of Dr. Fortescue in the “Herald”.
2. 9.2.1888, P.C., w-y, p. 146.
3. 23.6.1890, ibid., p. 150.
4. 4.8.1894, ibid., p. 160.
saw and liked my speech on Friday night. It was well reported in the 'Daily Telegraph'. "An emotional element is unmistakably present. From the professional salutation, "My Dear Parkes", we notice a progression to "My Dear Sir Henry, ... I am yours - if I may say so, affectionately, B.R. Wise". In this correspondence there are some very intimate glimpses of Wise, for he evidently feels free to discuss his personal problems and inner conflicts with Parkes; in fact one gets the impression that he wants Parkes to gain a deeper understanding of him.

"What you said to me yesterday about my speech on Friday, both troubled and gratified me more than I could show, and I fear that I may in consequence, have seemed ungracious. I have frequent fits of depression, and you can perhaps hardly realize how much discriminating criticism, either favourable or unfavourable, is cherished in my memory ... It is more than you would think the result of diffidence that my manner is at times aggressively self-conscious and words such as yours do much towards creating in my mind a solid justification for continued efforts." 3

Behind the apparent assurance of Wise there was a very reserved nature, for he reveals that, even in his boyhood relations with his mother, there was "a morbid inability to speak of things I felt deeply - not from want of love for I loved her dearly". With Parkes he is able to get past this emotional barrier, and evidently feels free to discuss personal aspects of his life with the older man, and confide to him the existence of this problem. In one letter he reveals to Parkes the nature of his love for his wife; Parkes had evidently referred in complimentary terms to Mrs. Wise and Wise replies thanking Parkes for the affectionate appreciation of his wife's high qualities. "It is not in my nature to refer in a serious manner to the things which touch me most deeply. I think that even you have not always formed a right impression of the sure confidence and affection between my wife and myself." These personal self-analyses suggest the nature of

1. ibid., Vol 42, p. 265, undated.
2. 23.12.1893, ibid., p. 221.
3. ibid., p. 265, undated. (It would appear to have been written about 1888.)
5. 17.3.1891, ibid., Vol. v-y, p. 154.
the friendship, and the "even you" reference reveals also that Parkes' friendship
touches him deeply.

Further evidence of unusual sensitivity can be found in his letters - a
political sensitivity which is in such contrast to the toughened exterior of Parkes.
He frequently writes to reassure Parkes that he has been misquoted in the press, or
to correct an impression which could taken from some published statement. "I am
very sensitive about being thought to be indiscreet in talking," he adds to one
note. It is important to recognize this sensitivity in Wise, as it helps us
understand later on the troubled position he found himself in when he was caught
between the opposing loyalties of friend and party leader, represented by Parkes
and Reid, both of whom, in contrast with Wise, were insulated by an almost imperv-
ious political coating.

What of the Parkes side of the relationship? Did he hold Wise in such
terms of friendly intimacy? Did he fill the role of a father in a personal sense?
This is more difficult to decide as we are without Parkes' letters. It is clear
from the extracts above that Parkes responded to Wise's approaches; the mention of
kind words, gifts and advice clearly point to certain reciprocal gestures, and show
that the relationship extending beyond political patronage. But how sincere was
Parkes as a "true friend" is the difficulty. Piddington tells us that Parkes
"continued to use Wise but spoke of him in terms of contempt", and in illustration
we have the story of Parkes applying the "bottle-ended" epithet to Wise, to the
amusement of members in the Assembly. Garran also says that while "Wise was a
passionate admirer of Parkes, it did not prevent that sly old statesman from poking
fun amongst his friends at Wise's instability of character, comparing it to the
disequilibrium of a soda bottle of those days". This story could be untrue or
or distorted, but such a jibe is not out of character with the bitter streak in

1. ibid., Vol. 42, p. 318, undated.
Parkes who, Deakin tells us, carefully framed his phrases and insulting epithets so that they would stick and sting. If true, however, one must speculate just when the epithet was coined. Piddington narrates it word for word as from an onlooker — but, as we have noted, he didn’t come into the House till 1895, when Parkes had gone. It is hard to believe that Parkes would deliberately offend, and possibly bring about the rupture of the friendship, by such an insult, especially towards the end of his career when he knew that Wise’s influence could be so vital in his return to party leadership.

It is more likely that Piddington, like Garran, had the story from hearsay, in which case it may have dated back to 1888 when Wise resigned his portfolio of Attorney-General. In the years covered by the Wise letters this seems to have been the only rift in the friendship. Wise had discussed the matter of his resignation from the ministry with Parkes and explained his reasons, but when he disclosed his intentions to Sir William Manning, Parkes showed annoyance. He chides Wise on his breach of confidence: “Such miserable publications can do no possible good to you or to others, but they very much embarrass me. . . . But I suppose I must learn to put up with such things.” Perhaps some feeling of resentment, or pain, at this time loosened the Parkes tongue — a tongue well renowned for its acerbity. If so, it would seem that Wise must soon have been made aware of this indignity administered by Parkes as it was to become quite a legend. One can also assume, knowing his sensitivity, that he would have been hurt by it, but there is nothing in the correspondence following Wise’s resignation to suggest any cooling of the friendship; in fact Wise makes the remark that “Nothing has occurred in any way to alter my cordial sentiments and friendship towards yourself and the ministry. It is and must always be a source of the greatest satisfaction to have served as a minister in your cabinet.” We might also judge that Parkes harboured

3. 9.2.1888, ibid., Vol. w-y, p. 146.
no ill will, for he wrote sympathetically to Wise soon after his resignation, and it is in reply to his "kind note" that Wise mentions what a ray of sunshine it has been. "I have felt the official severance very keenly," he writes.

Two years later, when Wise was out of the House, the same spirit of open friendliness and confidence is found in his letters, which would seem to dispel any idea that he is aggrieved or disappointed in anything Parkes may have said or done. In a congenial letter from Tasmania he volunteers his personal services to Parkes: "Could I be of any assistance to you in a private way in looking up things, or preparing drafts or anything of that sort? If so, nothing would give me greater pleasure." In all, if one accepts Piddington's opinion that Parkes continued to treat Wise with contempt, we must perform as Wise as a very suave personality in the Parkes' shadow. This I do not accept, and hence, without knowing anything more of the Parkes insult, outside the Piddington version, must accept the story with reservations.

From the Wise correspondence we can put together some theory of a filial relationship between Wise and Parkes. If we accept this as an hypothesis, it is interesting to go further and consider what personal factors might have brought the two men together in such a way. With Parkes there may have been simply a strong sense of obligation in respect of his friendship and regard for Edward Wise to stand in loco parentis to his son. With Wise, this same background and the sense of gratitude to Parkes for family help may have led him to look to the old man as a philosopher-friend when he first returned. Strengthening this early association there may have been the strong attraction of opposites, with Wise admiring in Parkes those qualities and abilities he most lacked and with Parkes, similarly, seeing in Wise the realization of his own social aspirations. Though Wise might have been with the common man in his ideals, he was not a common man, and experienced a great

1. Ibid.
2. 23rd December, 1890, ibid., p. 150.
problem in coming to the common man and being accepted by him. Parkes, on the other hand, was of the multitude; his origins and working-class background were indelibly stamped upon him and he could well claim to be a "tribune of the people". The "Herald" could say of him that "no man among us knows better where to find the heart of the dark-browed and the rough-handed" and, although he lost his touch in interpreting the mind and feeling of the people in his last years, the quality which most suggested a comparison with Lincoln to one journalist writing his obituary was "the instinct of comprehending what the multitude felt and speaking to them of it in clear forceful words."

But what the sophisticated Wise may have admired, ironically Parkes tried to escape from. There is something pathetic in his great desire for social elevation and recognition; his persistent name-dropping and autograph-hunting, and the ostentatious display of his correspondence with eminent men, all bear witness to his great concern for social status. Alan Martin traces these aspirations back to Birmingham, and in an interesting way shows Parkes as typifying a characteristic of the Birmingham artisan who espoused the values and sentiments of the middle class in an environment which encouraged dreams of self-betterment. This early experience, Martin says, goes a good way towards explaining many of Parkes' political attitudes. Perhaps then we can see for Parkes in the Wise friendship some element of compensation - either an elevating feeling in gaining the close friendship of a young patrician who represented almost everything he aspired to, or else some sense of power in the influence he was able to exercise over one of his "betters".

2. Del., 27.4.1896.
3. For examples see the letters he reproduces in his autobiography from people like Bright, Cobden, Nightingale, Earl Grey, Gladstone, General Grant, Carlyle, and Tennyson - many quite inconsequential.
4. For this discussion of Parkes' early career, see A.W. Martin, "H".
5. It is interesting to notice how often Parkes refers to "we as "an educated young man" and mentions his university background when speaking from the platform.
Another approach to the friendship is the suggestion that both men were drawn together by a sense of loneliness and isolation, strengthened by a sharing of political confidences, and common cultural and literary interests. Their correspondence suggests that the friendship became rather exclusive. Though Parkes was probably the best-known man in the colony, his intimate friends were evidently very few; his personal touch was a cold one for most of his acquaintances - "in-drawn, still, and cold as ice" is how Mary Gilmore described him. Socially he was not de rigueur. He belonged to no club - perhaps he wasn't wanted. His matrimonial affairs, irregular by any conventional Victorian view, left him outside the Governor's invitation lists and perhaps added to his sense of detachment from the social world. His debts also prevented him from gaining any firm basis for his social position; his list of creditors was continually growing, and in the face of public criticism of his comings and goings between the ministerial office and the Insolvency Court, he no doubt tended to retire further behind a self-defensive screen of formal frigidity. To find such an aristocratic young man as Wise, evidently free from connoisseurish attitudes, offering a warm sympathy, and willing to share common interests, might well have been psychologically very important to Parkes and strengthened his attachment. Wise may have been able to offer him legal advice in his financial predicaments, and he may also have been one of the friends helping Parkes financially during his deepening crisis but, as we shall see Wise himself was in financial trouble during this period, so it is unlikely that he

2. Following his second marriage (Jan, 1886) with its attendant scandal, Parkes evidently felt his social position to be very delicate, and as he did not want to expose his wife to embarrassment or indignity he refused the Governor's invitation to the Federation Convention Banquet in 1891, even though he was president of the convention. See letters Parkes and Jersey, P.C., Vol. 19, pp. 395-399.
3. It was estimated in 1887 that Parkes had incurred debts to the value of £147,000. The "Sunday Times", in setting out the details, alleges a grave irregularity in Parkes' acceptance of a public salary as Minister while at the same time borrowing huge sums from leading merchants and traders with no security. ("Sunday Times", Nov. 13, 1887, Newspaper Cuttings, op. cit., pp. 130, 132.) In the face (over)
could have done much to help in this regard. It is more likely that Wise, who well understood the feelings of the social reject, felt an understanding sympathy for Parkes in his enforced exclusion.

On the psychological level we might note another aspect of the relationship. It is fairly obvious that the admiration of Wise, and his frequent compliments, would have fed Parkes' vanity and this, in the opinion of some of his contemporaries, was with Parkes almost a pathological need - "vain beyond all measure" was Beakin's assessment. Such vanity demanded loyalty, and the steadfast loyalty of Wise would normally be expected to endear him further to Parkes, or else to invite contempt. Riddington finds for the latter response; it is my view that the friendship was thereby strengthened. It is significant that while many others found this over-riding vanity of Parkes such an unlovely trait in his character, Wise sympathetically explains it "not as the destructive vanity which stands in the way of self-knowledge, but the harmless vanity of an intensely sympathetic nature, which having been crushed by the harsh treatment in youth, sought in later years assurance that his work was good." So, too, he sees his prestige-seeking with the kindest eye. He refers to the childish happiness Parkes found in collecting autographs and letters: "In this there was no vulgar self-assertion but a conscious pride that the Warwickshire peasant, living in a remote and small community, was recognized by the best spirits of his age." This might suggest that the protective impulse was not just on the paternal side, that in fact it worked in both directions and that, to Wise, the lonely Parkes was the victim of misunderstanding and prejudice. The fact that Wise was associated with Parkes as a butt of the "Bulletin" joksters would tend to strengthen the feeling that they were standing together.

(from 138) of such criticisms, Parkes' social position must have been very sensitive, to say the least. For illustration of this, see Beakin, op. cit., p. 27.
3. ibid., p. 20.
As for Wise, although he had all the social advantages and opportunities his political ideas were to put him off-side with many of his own class, and in politics the remorseless class prejudices we have mentioned must inevitably have put him under strain. His natural reserve may have added to his problem of easy acceptance, and this also applied to his wife, for she was never at home in Sydney "society", and was dubbed "clever" and "aesthetic". Wise tells how she was rather relieved to be cut off the "so-called social list" when they were both placed outside the pale by Wise's support for the trade unionists' cause during the strikes. Wise's political ideas also didn't go down with many members of his own profession, and his early elevation to the leadership of the Bar as Attorney-General was not without its ripples of jealousy and suspicion. Writing of his career later, the "Advocate" pointed out this problem for Wise and claimed that "prejudices and dislikes formed against the youthful Attorney-General in 1887 had dogged him ever since". Certainly Wise had other friendships, and his wide range of interests led him to take an active part in the social world about him; yet it would appear that the the Parkes friendship was something apart. One letter is rather revealing. Parkes had evidently said something of Wise's other interests and the social world in which he circulated. In reply Wise writes: "I'm not, however, as you think 'a butterfly of society'. Far from it. I seldom, if ever, go to any entertainment other than the theatre. It is not pleasure in that sense but real hard work that keeps me occupied." This supports the idea that both men regarded their friendship as rather exclusive.

It cannot be suggested that any psychological interdependence between the two men was an emotional substitute for an unhappy marriage; Wise has spoken of the deep affection which he felt for his wife and Parkes was to re-marry twice during

1. ibid., p. 83.
2. ibid., p. 127. This incident will be discussed later.
these years. It should also be mentioned that, even when we put political interests aside, there are other easily explained reasons for a natural friendship. As we know, Wise had a genuine regard for intellectual company, and with Parkes there was always this attraction for, despite his posturing and his poetry, his love of literature and his scholarly interests were at all times apparent. Huntington remarks that Parkes was "a man of warm but few attachments, and as an intellectual companion in ordinary society, his qualifications are of the highest", and Deakin, speaking of his many-sided versatility, said it was necessary to see Parkes, in his own home, on the platform, and in parliament, to appreciate him. Wise visited him often in his home, where he could find "the man of letters, the lover of poetry and the arts... a connoisseur, dilettante and author, retired from the world in which he held the foremost place at will". The Wise letters give ample testimony that the two men shared these common interests, as the discussion is often on books or historical works "wise is reading: "Did you notice in Lord John Russell's Life...?" or suggestions to Parkes to put a set of university studies from John Hopkins University in the Colonial Secretary's Office. This is the very normal side to the relationship.

Just how exclusive or psychologically important this friendship was for either man we cannot establish with any certainty. With Wise there is no evidence from his correspondence that he enjoyed the same level of intimate confidence with any others of his political acquaintances, and his devotion to Parkes at the end, when almost all of his former associates had abandoned him, was truly remarkable. When Parkes was making his last tragic attempt to re-enter the Assembly just before his death, Wise still honoured his name and saw his rejection as a calamity.

"I cannot bring myself to believe that the electors of Waverley will show so little discrimination as to reject the preferred services of the great statesman whose absence from Parliament, at the present time, is almost a calamity."

2. op. cit., pp. 25, 26.
3. Wise to King, 18.2.1896, James Conroy Papers, Add.896.
Even Wise's strongest critics acknowledge that his loyalty was unselfish. Piddington allows himself only two gestures of generosity towards Wise - that he had a real courage beneath his gallant bearing, and the other quality which gains some admiration is "Wise's filial attachment to Parkes and his fortunes - the one unselfish feature of his career".

For Parkes, the problem remains as to what depth the friendship touched him. We know from his vast correspondence that he held the confidences of many men, and his guidance was sought by other younger politicians. But it is also clear that among his many associations Parkes held Wise in the highest esteem and, throughout the various phases of his career during the last ten years of his life, the two men remained in close personal touch. If we put aside the legend of the Parkes insult as something of a mystery, there is no evidence of any break or cooling of the friendship during this whole period, even though they view political questions quite differently at times.

Here we must end this discussion of the evidence upon which any theory of the Wise-Parkes relationship is built. It is an unusual relationship, but the nature of the friendship must be understood, for no modern historian would suggest that he could properly interpret a political situation involving issues such as loyalty or desertion solely in terms of political actions and statements. It is a human situation we are also concerned with, and the more we know of the men involved, the closer we can get to the truth about them. Certainly, with Wise, it is obvious that when he is making political decisions affecting Parkes, strong pressures are operating, and a knowledge of the nature of his relationship with Parkes makes appear more reasonable some of his decisions which, when considered in a strictly political context, seem obscure and somewhat irrational. This chapter takes its place as part of the background to Wise's career, and we shall now look to the

1. A.B.Piddington, op. cit., p. 133.
2. William McMillan, whom Martin reveals to us as a rather cold, impersonal man, felt free to discuss with Parkes the problems of his personal life and received over
political ideas of the men, which represent the other loyalty with which we are concerned.

The Parkes picture found among the Wise Papers.

Uncatalogued Wise Mss. Mitchell Library.

PART 3.

Chapter V

(Mr. Wise's reference to liberalism) "suggests the patronising attitude of an English-educated reformer who is prepared to make liberal concessions to the lower orders, provided they are duly submissive and respectful."

"No-one can have a more worthy object to which to devote much opportunities as may be afforded him in public life, than the inculcation of principles which, when expressed in legislation, such as this, will... guide our colony along paths of peace and security." 2

In a prefatory note to his book, "Limits of Individual Freedom", F.C. Montague makes this statement: "Every solution of a particular problem must imply general principles and every general principle must have its place in theory. A complete theory of individual liberty and the function of the state is a complete political philosophy and a philosophy of politics involves a philosophy of things in general." Montague in his book sets out his own political philosophy which in general outline can be identified as that of the Liberal School which emerged in England in the 'seventies and 'eighties of the last century. Montague's ideas are relevant for he was closely associated with Wise as one of the Arnold Toynbee group, and in the writings of this group as well as other Oxford contemporaries such as J.A. Hobson, Bernard Bosanquet, and Graham Wallas, and in the "liberalism" of L.T. Hobhouse who followed soon afterwards, we can find the current of thought and the direction of ideas which shaped the political philosophy of B.R. Wise.

It is with Wise's liberal philosophy that we are concerned in this chapter, for it is necessary to show that for Wise, as for Montague, the solution of political problems was related to a complete theory of individual liberty and the functions of the state. To discover the ideas and influences which shaped the

1. The "Bulletin", 12.5.1894.
philosophy of<br>politics, we must go back to the Oxford of the 1870's, for Oxford in this period was witness to a great stirring of ideas which, in the following decade, was to manifest itself nationally "in the varied protests... against the sort of civilization that was emerging under mechanized capitalism". The ideas which grew out of this period marked a new generation of social and political thinkers.

In Oxford the real issue was the problem of a bankrupt philosophy. Individual Liberalism, which had held the day for so long both as a political theory and an economic doctrine, was now coming to be recognized by Oxford thinkers to be not an instrument of liberty but, in the changed conditions of life, to be rather an instrument of oppression. It had failed as a philosophy in the face of the new problems which democracy and industrialization had thrown up, and instead of a presupposed natural harmony of interests; there was clear evidence of a great social and economic disharmony. In the words of A.D. Lindsay, "utilitarianism had become barren as a political creed... and no further progress could be made in any understanding of politics till a new philosophic basis was found for liberalism".

It was not as if the philosophy had broken down all at once. The novelists had exposed great social inequalities; Carlyle in attacking democracy was equally destructive of "laissez-faire"; and Morris, Ruskin, and Arnold had all helped to undermine the reigning philosophy in their attacks on the selfish and sordid materialism of their age. As these three were Oxford men, it was only natural that their influence would have been felt in their own university. But it was the whole notion of the state - its function, its authority and its relation to society, as well as to the individual - that was the philosophic debate in Oxford, for the basic assumption of Individualism that liberty is best served by a minimum of state interference was challenged.

1. J.A. Hobson, "Confessions of an Economic Heretic". P. 77
2. For reference to the intellectual atmosphere in Oxford, at this time, see C.E. Mallett, "A History of the University of Oxford";
   E.R. Pease, "History of the Fabian Society";
   K.S. Inglis, "Churches and the Working Classes in Victorian England".
J.S. Mill had already begun to shift the basis of liberty from an individualistic to a more collectivist concept in which the interests of the community as a whole might take precedence, but he was the transitional thinker, and it was the philosophy of T.H. Green and the new idealist school which emerged in Oxford in the late seventies that overthrew Individualism and evolved a new philosophy which was to have such a marked influence on political thought and legislative trends in the years to follow. Alfred Milner has described this spirit of change:

"The years I spent at Oxford and those immediately succeeding them were marked by a very striking change in the social and political philosophy of the place, an change which has subsequently reproduced itself on the larger stage of the world. When I went an the 'laissez-faire' theory still held the field... But within ten years the few men who still held the old doctrines in their extreme rigidity had come to be regarded as curiosities."

The point of interest for our study is that Wise's period at Oxford coincided with the mature development of a new philosophy, for it was in his senior years that T.H. Green, Professor of Moral Philosophy, delivered his lectures on the "Principles of Political Obligation" (1879-1880) - the fundamental statement of his idealist philosophy. Though Green died in 1881, his ideas were carried on and developed by Lewis Noblett, who edited his works, by his close friend and disciple Arnold Toynbee, and in the writings of such students as D.C. Ritchie ("Principles of State Interference" and "Natural Rights"), and F.C. Montague ("Limits of Individual Freedom"). Though Wise attended Green's lectures, the full impact of his ideas probably came through the influence of two other men with whom he was very closely associated. One was Green's fellow philosopher, Grese, the Dean of Queen's College, who, Wise felt, would have left no less a name than Green had he not devoted himself so unselfishly to his students. The other was Arnold Toynbee. Toynbee especially was very close to Green both in ideas and ideals. Montague tells us that between the two men "there was an entire confidence, and an intimate

1. "Arnold Toynbee, A Reminiscence", p. 47. Milner had preceded Wise by three years but returned as a Fellow of New College, 1876.
2. W.M., p. 63.
intellectual and spiritual communion which only death interrupted”, and Milner similarly speaks of Toynbee’s relationship with Green “as the most natural thing in the world. They had arrived by very different roads at an almost identical position in religion, philosophy, and social questions”, and he speaks of Toynbee looking up to Green as his “guide and master”. Wise acknowledges the influence of Toynbee’s thought and, as one of the group of young social reformers centred about Toynbee, Wise was in the closest contact with leading members of Green’s idealist school, among them being Montague, Ritchie, Milner, Cook, and Gell.

Such a close identity can be established between the ideas of Wise and Toynbee that it is necessary to look briefly at the basic principles of the idealist philosophy on which their ideas were based. For this one must look back to Green, for, in Wise’s writing in which he sets out his own political philosophy, echoes of Green’s thought are to be found constantly recurring. In its full development, Green’s philosophy was a universal view of men’s relations, not only to himself and his fellows, but to the eternal consciousness of which he was part. It was strongly religious, for to Green the basic ideal was the highest moral development of man and his self-realisation. Green followed no orthodox theology, for he held that the religious needs of a man would be met “rather by the sympathies of a society breathing the Christian spirit”; he looked to benevolent and humanitarian action for an expression of man’s religious aspiration, so inspiring men to nobler lives and showing them how to create a higher manhood and purer society.

Though we cannot be concerned here with the metaphysical, nor do we know how Wise reacted to the religious concept in Green’s idealism, it is important to see this total view, for human perfection is as much the ideal of Green’s philosophy

as is the social good; in fact they both express the same ideal of humanity, and
behind his theory of the state there is this high purpose - that it is an instrum-
ent for developing the highest moral life of the individual. It is this concept
which represents the idealism of the philosophy. It is Green’s view of the nature
of liberty that has most influence, however, for he changed the whole concept of
liberty by putting it in a social setting. He rejected the basic premise of
Liberalism, as developed by Bentham and defended by Spencer, which held the indi-
vidual to be the centre of society, and he also rejected the end of utilitarianism,
which recognized “no vocation of man but the attainment of pleasure and the avoid-
ance of pain.” He held that the greatest good of the greatest number could only
be realized in a community of individuals, and that the individual depended for his
liberty on his membership of a community. “Liberties have no real meaning except
in relation to a good for which they are used.”

The moral and ethical foundation of Green’s philosophy was founded on his
idea of rights. He distinguished these from the natural rights of the individual,
for to him no one could have rights except as a member of society, and of a society
in which some common good is recognized by members of the society as their own
ideal good.

“Every moral person is capable of rights, i.e., of bearing his part
in a society in which the free exercise of his powers is secured to each
member. . . . To say that he is capable of rights is to say that he ought to
have them. . . . only through the possession of rights can the power of the
individual freely to make a common good his own have reality given to it.”

But

the claim of any person to rights on his own part is co-ordinate with the
recognition of rights on the part of others.”

It is the responsibility for

the development of these rights, mutually recognized by members of society, and the

establishment of conditions for their free exercise which is, in Green’s view, the

1. T.H.Green, “Principles of Political Obligation”, Grounds of Political Obliga-
tion, no. 23.
2. ibid., no. 25.
3. ibid.
4. ibid., no. 26.
role of the state. Green distinguished between the state and society, however, for he recognizes that there are many agencies in society which also promote the common good and the individual should be free to participate in them.

In his view, then, the state emerged not just as a political creation buttressed by the authority of law, but as a "general will" or desire for common good. This was a much higher concept, for the vital premise of this new philosophy was that "will, not force, is the basis of the State". In this view the state was not only capable of, but derived its very existence from the idea of fulfilling a common good, and had no meaning except in relation to this. It is on this concept of the state that Green builds up his idea of political obligation and the moral justification for state interference: "To secure and extend the exercise of powers which men recognized in each other as being capable of direction to that common good... It is not a state unless it does so". Thus we arrive at the conclusion that by hindering men's freedom the state is adding to men's freedom and it is using the law for what the members of society in general believe to be the common good.

With this right and obligation on the part of the state, Green also recognized that there were limits to the action of the state and that it should itself be controlled by law. He was concerned lest the constitutional state should become too strong and stultify itself by interference with personal freedom. He had a fear of the garrison state. But the basis for his philosophy rested on his concept of the democratic state resting on law and a constitution. The state was the source and protector of rights, capable of promoting the highest moral development of the individual citizen. In Barker's words, "Green saw the State as majesty even in its limits and even because of its limits".

1. ibid., chapter heading "C".
2. ibid., "Will Not Force is the Basis of the State", no. 132.
These basic principles Green applied to the social analysis of his own society. He was not just a detached philosopher but actively concerned himself with the workings of democracy and the social evils of his time. He was a city councillor in Oxford, founder of a school for boys, and took an active part in local politics and in movements such as temperance reform. He was not a remote idealist but, like his followers, Teynbee and Boasquen, gained an understanding of the down-to-earth processes of politics and social effort and an appreciation of the idealism of ordinary men in the practical working of a democracy and the services of the state. It was this knowledge as well as the intellectual heritage of Greek and German philosophy that Green applied in asking what could the state do in promoting the common good and "fulfilling its primary function of maintaining law equally in the interests of all". When it came to social evils like ignorance, ill-health, and pauperism - "overworked women with ill-housed and untaught families" - it was plain to Green that men had not just to accept these external conditions of life as an outcome of the working of natural laws, but that the state had the duty to adjust conditions and remove obstacles to self-improvement. There was political obligation on the state, e.g., to attack ignorance and illiteracy. Green applied his philosophic principles to the question of education: "The son had a 'right' to education; the father had an 'obligation' not to leave his son illiterate; and the resulting liberation from ignorance provided the opportunity for doing things worth doing, contributing both to the higher development of the individual and to the community. On other problems, such as property ownership, Green was not so clear in defining the area of state interference. He recognized property ownership as one of the great inequalities - the cause of the creation of a proletariat - and saw as the duty of the state to exercise some control over the rights of ownership, but generally he was opposed to interference with the rights of private property.\footnote{See no. 121, op. cit.}
potentially it had social good, and therefore the individual should be left free to acquire the means of realizing a common good. Thus, while he recognized that "land was the basis on which the whole fabric of modern society rests", he was not in favour of the state drawing off the "unearned increment" on the ground that individual initiative contributing to the common good might be impaired. Green had a tremendous influence on the trend towards collective action and, although his idea of state action was conceived as a negative function - the removal of obstacles to freedom - he saw the sphere of state action as the whole field of social welfare.

Let us now look at the relevance of the philosophy of T.H. Green for this political study of Wise. In the first place one cannot refer to Wise as a philosopher - he was a political economist and jurist rather than a philosopher - nor can it be said that he carried the complete idealist philosophy into his political life, for it is clear that Wise diverged a good distance from Green on some points. Also, by the time he came to formulate his own ideas and to set them against the realities and experience of his life in New South Wales, other intellectual influences were working which modified and in some cases stood antagonistic to some of Green's principles, e.g., Wise acknowledges J.A. Hobson as the source of some of his ideas, and Hobson as a social reformer thought that the object of idealizing the capitalist society as it stood was inadequate and conservative. Wise too passed beyond Green's rather negative idea of the removal of obstacles to freedom, and saw a more positive role, e.g., the use of state compulsion for industrial arbitration - which went well beyond the province of Green. Fabian socialist writings, especially the Webbs' "Industrial Democracy", was another later influence on his thought which brought his total view of state action closer to what Hobhouse calls

1. See Barker, op. cit., p. 44.
2. See "What Parliament Can Do For Labour".
4. Wise acknowledges the influence of the Webbs in the preparation of his Arbitration Bill - see over.
"Liberal Socialism" than Green's ideas could have carried him in 1881, e.g., his ideas on the state ownership, alienation and taxing of land advanced far beyond Green's rather tentative approach to this problem. However, these are the rather natural developments which the additional experience of ten years of increasing social and political changes might inevitably be expected to bring. But it can still be shown that Green's principles lay at the basis of Wise's political philosophy, and the ideas and policies of Wise can be related to a very well established and integrated view of liberty and the rights and obligations of the state. For although he was a convinced free-trader, Wise completely rejected the individualist philosophy; he accepted Green's basic idea of liberty as existing only in a social context, and he also held to Green's conviction that the vitality of the state is drawn from personal freedom and initiative. Although he may have differed in defining the area of state intervention, his view of the state as representing the "general will" and its role in promoting the "common good" was fundamentally that of T.H. Green.

The best statement of Wise's political philosophy is found in his book, "Industrial Freedom", published in 1892. Though his ideas cannot be taken at this time as in any final form, this well thought-out exposition of his free-trade liberalism does embody the principles on which his philosophy is based. The book, he tells us in the preface, originated in a manuscript submitted to the Cobden Club for publication in 1885, "of which the spirit was Toynbee's though the words were not"; but (due to the loss of the manuscript) the ideas were subsequently developed taking new and distinct form, so that when it was completed there was left in it "nothing of Toynbee save some traces of his influence, and the vicious feeling which acknowledges that as the inception of the work was due to him, so its execution should be taken as a tribute to his memory".

"Industrial Freedom" is essentially a comprehensive study of free trade,
but inevitably Wise is committed to laying down the principles of his political liberalism, for his main thesis is that free trade as an economic policy achieves the greatest aggregate of wealth which is of benefit to the whole community, but that, when it comes to the distribution of wealth, the principles of free trade cannot be applied to any political theory. Though he admits that some free-traders carry laissez-faire from the field of economic activity, where it rightly belongs, into the sphere of political life, he denies the view that the state has no constructive powers or moral duties in this sphere, and condemns what he calls 1 the "nihilism" of the individualist view. In stating his own belief in the right of the state to interfere and control "lawless and unregulated competition", we can see clearly the influence of Green's thought. First, his definition of the state is almost that of Green: "an organised expression of the popular will which is 2 capable of directing citizens to the achievement of many high aims". Then his belief that "the power of combination can reach to many things which are not attainable by individual effort", and his concept of the state as "the greatest of all 3 combinations for the realization of a complete and harmonious development" is really a re-statement of Green's principles.

Like Green, Wise maintains that the state exists in order to secure liberty:

"to bring about conditions under which every citizen can, by a conscious exercise of will, at all times do what is best. What, then, determines the exact amount of interference with individual freedom which is necessary for the advantage of Society? To that we may answer, 'Experience', and a clear sense of what is needed by the individual in order that he may attain to a full and harmonious development. . . All that the state has to do is to see that such social conditions exist, that Society may satisfy its wants so soon as it becomes aware of them, and so soon as it is certain that their satisfaction is necessary to human development. This is the utmost that the state can do." 4

2. ibid., p. 160.
3. ibid.
4. ibid.
Here is the moral end which Green sought - the obtaining of the conditions necessary for living a good life and the justification of the state based on the opportunities it offers citizens for their development. Wise also looks to law as serving the same moral end as Green - "to render it possible for man to be freely determined" is Green's statement. In Wise's words, "laws exist to prevent men interfering with the individual freedom of their fellow citizens, or looked at in another way, a law defines a sphere within which each man's will may work with complete freedom".

Wise, like Green, is careful to limit the field of state activity and to allow the free working of other social and moral agencies in society. Once the state has established the conditions under which every citizen can freely develop,

"other influences must determine what is good or bad and must supply the motive which would make men choose the former. Philosophy and religion begin their operations on the ground which the state has cleared; but the action of the state should not interfere with the action of either... Still less must it interfere with the free determination of every individual of the guiding principles of his own life."

Wise leaves to political science the business of defining the limits within which the state can act, but liberal free-traders, he says, require to be satisfied on three points before they will support state action:

"First, that the State is the best agency for the accomplishment of that which is desired; second - that this object cannot be obtained by private enterprise; and third - that the result, when obtained, and when all its effects are taken into account, is worth having on a balance of advantages and disadvantages."

This is the empirical position of the idealist philosopher, and makes no attempt to relieve men of their responsibilities as citizens.

From this we can see that the "liberalism" of Wise is based on a philosophy with an ethical and moral concept of individual and social rights and obligations; and in the period of his political career in New South Wales, when liberalism was so variously interpreted, when socialist theories were so widely dissemin-

1. T.H. Green, op. cit., "Grounds of Political Obligation", no. 25.
2. B.R. Wise, op. cit., p. 163.
3. ibid., p. 164.
4. ibid., p. 162.
ated, and when issues such as tariffs and taxation, freedom of contract, union preference and the right of the state to determine working conditions or control industrial relations were so urgently discussed, it is important to recognize that Wise's ideas and policies were shaped by very clear guiding principles. On the basic question of the right of the state to interfere to create better conditions of social justice and economic equality within the capitalist system, Wise has clearly stated what he understands the principle to be:

"Where the object to be gained is one of national importance, which the efforts of individuals cannot accomplish, and when it can be gained without discouraging any from making efforts on their own behalf, or from entering into union for a common purpose, then all the conditions are present which are required to justify State action."

As the title of his book suggests, it is in the sphere of industrial life that Wise applies his principles, and he views the question of free trade as part of the struggle for industrial freedom:

"... this is of most importance to a democratic state, because under the modern conditions of civil life neither religious nor political freedom is likely to be long enjoyed if the fabric of liberty is once impaired on the side of industry."

His book presents a very elaborate defence of free trade, considering the policy in all its many economic aspects, and in looking to historical origins and developments he considers the policies of England, Europe, and America, and makes detailed analysis of the economic progress of the Australian colonies. With some justification he could claim that the argument had "been taken through all its windings", but the fiscal argument which was debated interminably in New South Wales (prior to Federation) is of less interest in this political study than the chapters in which he goes beyond the economic argument and takes up the issue of freedom as it applies to social and political life. However, in his general condemnation of protection, one can see an application of some of his philosophical principles for, like Green, Wise fears the paternal state in which moral and ethical values are weakened."

l. ibid., p. 164.
"For those who believe that morality is the nature of things... who try to find the best expression of a nation's moral life in its political system... Protection must be condemned. Politically it creates vested interests without due regard to the evil which it inflicts on others, and because it entrusts the power of enriching individuals to legislatures... Socially it tends to weaken the motives of self-interest and enterprise and saps the vigour of a people accustomed to depend on the Government in every difficulty; and morally because protection turns the power of law-making into an engine for enriching individuals... and is at once the off-spring and parent of corruption." 1

It is when Wise moves beyond the province of economic reasoning applied to the production and accumulation of material wealth, and comes to deal with human beings, their wages, conditions, and industrial relations, that the application of his philosophy as applied to "Industrial Freedom" is best seen. In Part II of his book, "Preparing the Arena", Wise traces the history and application of laissez-faire as a philosophy from the beginnings of the Industrial Revolution, and says that at no time were the economic arguments of Adam Smith or the doctrine of "natural liberty" developed into the extreme doctrine "that every man in the pursuance of his own advantage at the same time furthers the good of all" 2 He repudiates the philosophy of Spencer and the ideas of Ricardo that the working class would be best protected if left alone, but explains how the success of Individualism in America and the support of free trade manufacturers led to the association of free trade with laissez-faire, in all its aspects. He argues that J.S. Mill, Jevons, Cobden, and Toynbee have disassociated themselves from laissez-faire, but the public have not always been in a mood to discriminate and that working men "when they have found Free-traders confronting them at every effort to alleviate their lot by law" have denounced free trade "as a middle class doctrine, comforting enough to the well-to-do, but offering no help to the working classes". It is

1. ibid., p. 335.
2. ibid., p. 141.
3. ibid., p. 11. For the general discussion of these attitudes to free trade, see section "Free Trade and Laissez-Faire", p. 1318 et seq.
the whole burden of Wise’s argument and the premise of his free-trade liberalism that free trade is not inimical to the interests of the working class, but rather “to their advantage”; and apart from the general economic advantages of lower prices, etc., Wise develops the idea that it is the modern free-trader who views the social system from the standpoint of the working class, for he “now looks upon Free Trade simply as an instrument which destroys one form of State interference in order to leave the ground clear for more effective action by the State in new directions”.

Wise then proceeds to analyse the evils and the injustice growing out of the Industrial Revolution, and shows how free trade historically became associated with social oppression. He shows how the industrial labourer was reduced to a helpless condition and lost his liberty, for he is seldom, if ever, in a position to make terms as to the price at which he will sell his labour. Being seldom capable of more than one occupation he must find work at that or starve... In this situation the use of economic rules in regulating the mutual relations of employer and labourer cannot be justified. The value of human labour cannot under any circumstances be determined like that of a commodity... because the labourer is a conscious being, and because the State has an overwhelming interest in the character of his actions.3

This, applied to the labourer seeking to sell his labour, which is his only commodity, involves the State, for if the “bargain is unrestricted, the employer might gain such a control over the other’s labour that he would be able to defeat the object of the seller by dictating all or most of the uses to which it might afterwards be put”.4

This inequality, he says, is the kernel of the labour problem, and it is in relation to this problem that we can best see the application of Wise’s philosophic principle for here he postulates the principle so central to Gram’s idealism: “that it is the duty of the State to watch lest the terms of the bargain should be such as to destroy or stunt the moral or political existence of its actual or unborn
It is on this basis that part of the structure of Wise's liberalism is built - a belief in the right of the state to secure equality, e.g., between the worker and the employer. This principle he applied consistently during the period of industrial disturbance in the 1890's, and it is in the sphere of industrial relations that we can best follow the application of his liberal philosophy.

The principle of "freedom of contract", so venerated by individualist liberals, Wise repudiated; and he did so publicly when such a stand was to prove very inimical to his own personal interests. To Wise, "freedom of contract" implied freedom to refuse the contract, but the individual labourer, he maintained, was not free, as he was never on terms of equality; he must accept the terms or starve, unless he was supported by a combination of other labourers. Hence Wise not only supported trade-unionism as necessary for the establishment of industrial freedom, but extending the principle further he supported the right of unionists to demand preference of employment over non-unionists. To this principle Wise adhered when to many others "freedom of contract" and the rights of the "free labourer" were invoked as true liberal principles. It was, however, fundamental to his philosophy, deriving from the meaning Green gave to natural rights, that these individual rights should be superseded by those in which men as members of society recognized a common good "as that which should be for each of them."

Having established in broad outline what were the principles underlying Wise's philosophy, we will now turn to the arena of New South Wales political life to see how these principles were applied. It was imperative if Wise was to be a politician, and not merely a doctrinaire liberal, that he must come to terms with

1. ibid.
2. ibid., pp. 152-156.
3. This argument is developed in two public addresses: "The Labour Question", 1890; "What Parliament Can Do For Labour". 1891.
these things he held to be true in his own political life. Their priority must be established sooner or later in the field of political action. It is in his political policies that we should expect to find these liberal principles, but we can also observe Wise following the example of Toynbee and attempting to direct the course of social progress by bringing his ideas into public discussion, and applying the tenets of his philosophy to the problems faced by his own community.

Though isolated to some extent from the centre of academic writing, Wise continues to read avidly and to correspond with leading writers on political and economic thought; he also continues to present his own ideas, not only in academic journals (such as "McMillan's Magazine" and the "Sydney Quarterly"), but also to working-class audiences. Though a practical politician he is at all times a student; this is clearly revealed in his letters to Parkes, and is emphasized by the fact that within two years of the publication of the "ebbs" "Industrial Democracy" Wise is incorporating ideas which he acknowledges come from this book into his arbitration legislation.

In this chapter we will look mainly to Wise's writings and public addresses to see how his ideas entered the current of political thought in New South Wales. One of the most interesting examples of Wise in his Toynbee-like role can be found in an address he gave to a South Sydney audience following the entry of the Labour Party into parliament. Although his earlier efforts had been directed to the conversion of working men to free trade, Wise welcomes the arrival of a working-class party in parliament, and enumerates the main social evils which it should attempt to remedy. This, he says, quoting Leo XIII, is "the misery and wretchedness which press so heavily on the majority of the poor." He reviews the progress made in education in the past twenty years and shows how, although the work has been predominantly carried out by religious bodies, the establishment of public education is a clear indication of the change in public opinion. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the political situation and Wise's role in it.
made and the obstacles to be overcome in facing the great social problems of poverty in a democratic society, and mentions the opinions and conclusions of various social thinkers. He shows how the Individualist philosophy in an industrial world has left the worker helpless to remedy his own plight, and cites the incidence of poverty and misfortune revealed by Charles Booth's survey of East London, while dismissing the idea that poverty can be cured by working on the morals of the poor. He directs his hearers to the words of Mill — "the wisest and most even-minded writer upon public affairs that the English language possesses" — and, though rejecting Henry George's panacea of single tax, he shows how the land question is closely allied to the problem of poverty. The opinions of Goldwin Smith and writers from the "Political Science Quarterly" are quoted in an attempt to show that the object of higher living standards cannot be attained simply by legislative enactment, and finally he reviews in some detail the ideas of J.A.Hobson, whose words, he says, "I unreservedly adopt as an expression of my own opinion." Apart from evidence of the influence on Wise's own thought — which this address reveals — we see him here bringing directly to his audience ideas and opinions which might help to throw light on the question he has posed, i.e., now that the Labour Party has arrived, what can parliament do for labour?

We might next look at what Wise saw to be the task of liberalism in the sphere of political action. Basically it was to secure liberty — not in the older sense of liberty for the individual's own welfare, but in Green's sense, to secure such conditions whereby all citizens would have sufficient material support for a healthy secure life in which they would achieve full moral development. "No civilization is worth preserving unless it is likely to become the property of the many." 3

1. Ibid., p. 222.
2. Ibid., p. 221.
Human progress, in Wise's view, requires social progress, which in turn is largely determined by the material wealth created from a nation's resources. Fundamental to his political philosophy is the idea that the nation's resources should be so used and controlled by the common will - i.e., the state - that the best conditions are established for all men to develop. We have seen how Wise believed that the highest accumulation of wealth could be achieved by a policy of free trade. From this economic belief he never departed, and hence free trade is a natural corollary to his political liberalism. But Wise also recognized that no fiscal policy could remedy basic social inequalities, and he thus saw as the aim of liberalism to use the power of self-government, involving active interference by the state, to secure the best possible conditions for freedom; and where equality was a necessary condition for freedom, to remedy basic inequalities and attack the roots of poverty and insecurity.

With these basic objectives Wise builds a policy of legislative action. But as an economist Wise recognized the limits of legislation, and he also recognized that the democratic process of legal enactment is complex and slow. Hence he also looks to agencies outside the state for a contribution towards social development. This is the ground for his belief in the role and function of trade-unionism - that by well organized and intelligently led unions a great measure of liberty could be secured in industrial life, and conditions secured by "collective action" which would "advance the cause of labour very far upon the path of social progress".

Wise has summarized the guiding aim of his liberal policy, which, he says, is based on a recognition that "there is yet a class in Australian society which has not an equal chance of working out its own salvation", and it thereby becomes the responsibility of the state to secure conditions for "all men to reach a full 1. "That Parliament Can Do For Labour", p. 232.
development in point of character and intellect, and enjoy a many-sided life”.

The political policy Wise constructed from the basis of his philosophy can not be defined at any one moment for it is a developing policy, and has to be adapted to the circumstances of party life and also to some special problems peculiar to New South Wales politics. However, one can see the general outline taking shape quite early, and it is interesting to see in the early stage how closely Wise follows Toynbee’s ideas.

One subject of Wise’s special study with the Toynbee group was the attitude of the working classes to free trade. The paper he then produced, in collaboration with Toynbee, was lost by the Cobden Club, but the main ideas, he says, were included in a published address he delivered in Sydney in 1884. The approach is that of a free-trade publicist seeking to break down working-class mistrust of free trade, and Wise presents the argument which is elaborated in “Industrial Freedom”, that free trade will benefit the working man by increasing the aggregate of wealth and strengthening his share by steadying wages and reducing prices. This is the basic platform of his free-trade policy, and he believes that legislation can only act indirectly on the production of wealth by removing obstacles to free trade and individual enterprise. (His free trade policy will be shown in development in Part IV.)

It is when Wise comes to the distribution of wealth that we can see the outline of his future liberal policy and its divergence from that of the more orthodox free-traders. He denies that the wages of labour should be determined like the price of goods but as yet the drift of his thought towards collective bargaining and a fixed wage is not clear. Regarding another symptom of poverty, the high cost

2. “Free Trade and Wages”, see reference to Toynbee above, chap. II, p. 68. The close similarity with Toynbee’s ideas can be seen by comparing Wise’s address with Montague’s précis of Toynbee’s lecture, “Wages and the Natural Law”. “Arnold Toynbee”, p. 38.
of living to the poor man, Wise is much clearer in his ideas. He isolates rent, and this in turn brings him to the question of land and taxation. The influence of Henry George on Wise's ideas on land taxation are evident in this lecture. At Oxford, George's theory was discussed in the Toynbee group, for Toynbee was "so struck by 'Progress and Poverty' that he lectured upon the book at Oxford". Wise, although not converted to the single-tax theory, had a great respect for George whom he referred to on one occasion as the "Rousseau of the nineteenth century, working to construct some breakwater against the tide of poverty".

The origin of Wise's view on land taxation, which was later to form the kernel of his liberal policy in the Free Trade Party, can be found in this early lecture in 1884. It is interesting at such an early stage, before single tax and socialist theories had permeated the working-class mind, to see Wise advocating a tax on the true value of land and the "uneearned increment":

"To secure to the body of the community a fair portion of that increase in the value of land which is caused by the natural growth of the State... A land tax assessed on the true value of land, as determined by periodic valuations, would do more to encourage industry than the most ingenious tariff."

The revenue which should return to the people - the rightful owners of this state-earned increment - Wise saw as one of the great sources of state income which would help to attack the problem of poverty. Direct taxation, including the land tax, was to be an important element in Wise's liberal policy, for not only was it an alternate source of revenue implied by free trade, but he makes it clear that it was also a basic social reform; it would help establish better conditions of economic equality by taxing the accumulation of wealth, and it would free the poor from the unfair burden of indirect taxation which they shared equally with the rich by a system of customs.

1. Ibid., p. 52.
2. Address at Redfern, D.T., 25.2.1890
3. Free Trade and Wage, p. 29.
Another element in Wise's liberalism can also be found in this early statement of his ideas, viz., his view of the role of the state in reform and welfare, for he outlines the fields in which the state will best act in attacking such grievances as low wages, irregular employment, insecure old age and the dreary tedium of the labourer's life. Admitting that the poor cannot work themselves out of their poverty and improve their depressed and monotonous existence, Wise says the remedy must be sought outside the individual. He cites the series of English laws—factory acts, mining acts, trade-union acts, employers' liability acts—all in a sense socialistic, designed to place the workman on an equality with his employer. All these were imperative, he says, and although many were opposed in the name of free trade, Wise clears up any doubt that may exist about his views on laissez-faire by predicting that there is much more to come. In looking to the future legislation for the benefit of the working class, Wise anticipates the social welfare role of the state, and although he provides no clear formulas, his view is remarkably prescient for the year 1884. He envisions state action to remedy abuses like overcrowding and inferior housing of the poor. The state, he maintains, by letting land and controlling the rents and profits of landlords, could ensure that workers were decently housed at a moderate rate.

Wise in this early lecture also anticipates the state acting in a welfare role to relieve "the dreadful dreariness of life for the working classes" by such provisions as free libraries, subsidized theatres and public concerts. The problem which Milner says so concerned Toynbee—that of some security in old age for the working man—Wise also takes up here. To avoid what he called "the

1. *Free Trade and Wages*, p. 22.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid., p. 28. These ideas provide an interesting continuity with suggestions made by his father twenty-five years earlier.
4. Ibid., p. 29.
narrow emphasis on thrift for old age", Wise looked to some scheme whereby the
government might subsidize agencies like Friendly Societies to help men insure on
easy terms against the problems of sickness and incapacity and old age.

Though Wise's ideas at this time are lacking in clear formulation, our
interest is that we can observe a philosophy being translated into the clear out-
lines of a political policy. If to this view of social and economic freedom we
add political freedom, represented by Wise's support for further extensions of the
democratic principle and his belief in national union, then we can see the frame-
work of a liberal policy long before Wise set out to write his first election
manifesto. That it was radical for the mid-eighties is, I think, clear enough.
The liberal policies he was to follow in the twenty years before he left politics
in 1904 are completely consistent with this early statement of principles; his
ideas are constantly being modified and re-adjusted by maturity, and as other
influences on his thought make themselves felt, but the significance of his liberal
philosophy is that, whether the question at issue be free trade, social reform,
taxation, industrial legislation, local government, or national issues such as
federation or immigration, Wise looked to Green's idea of a "common good", and was
able to apply a very clear and well established concept of liberty and the role of
the state. He moves far away from members of his own party and the interests of
his own class at times, and he is much closer to the Labour Party on issues such as
the eight-hour day, payment of members, factory legislation, and a minimum wage.

That he could consistently follow the same liberal policy in two parties is not

1. Ibid.
2. It is interesting to see Wise in 1902 defending the principle of a minimum
wage before the criticism of members of the Sydney Chamber of Commerce. As
Attorney-General he had been invited to attend the annual dinner at which members
criticised not only the principle of wage-fixing but the whole idea of government
interference with private enterprise, "an influence so baneful to the legitimate
enterprise of the individual as to threaten it with paralysis or even extinction"
(President, Mr. J. Barre-Blake). Wise in reply spoke strongly. He defended
the principle, as well as the whole programme of liberal legislation, and affirmed
the clearest intention of going on with it. Sydney Chamber of Commerce (over)
mystifying, once we understand the basis of fiscal party politics for, as we will point out later, the differences between these non-labour parties, despite their belligerent attitudes, was in reality quite shallow in terms of any guiding philosophy of social progress. In our analysis of Wise's reputation as a political deserter, it is important to look back to this first outline of policy, for we can find here the same basic elements he defended before the Assembly in 1895, when the question of his loyalty to the free trade reform policy of Reid was the vital issue.

Finally, we might see expressed in Wise's liberal policy in New South Wales a crucial idea which springs directly from Green's philosophy, and is closely related to Toynbee's highest ideals - that in voluntary organizations of free men, acting for a common purpose, exists a great potential for the social and moral development of its members, and a contribution to the common good. It was on this principle that Wise based his belief in the constructive role of trade-unionism, a belief which more than any other aspect of his policy distinguished his liberalism as modern and radical in the political context of this time, and brought him closest to the labour movement.

That Wise was not merely an echo of English thought and could strike out into new fields on his own initiative is demonstrated by his advanced ideas on this question. Neither Green nor Toynbee had gone far by the time of his death towards an analysis of the legal status and internal constitution of trade-unionism and its relation to the state and society, nor were they confronted with the immense social problem which the growing strength and militancy of trade-unionism presented to later social thinkers. The development of Wise's ideas on this problem in an atmosphere of increasing tension, and the dispassionate and judicial approach he consistently maintained is, I think, a measure of the depth of his thought and the maturity of his philosophy. As far as any political policy can be said to be

(from 165) Annual Reports, 1902. See also 1903 for views of the Chamber on Wise's Industrial Arbitration Act.
original, Wise's ideas on this question mark his progressive thought, and might be judged by noting how many of his arguments anticipate those developed later by the 1
Webbs, after their intensive study of British trade-unionism.

To Wise, trade-unionism was an organic part of the industrial society, 2
and his basic idea is that it must be given and must accept responsibility, and
that it has a social role extending far beyond that of an engine of defence of
aggression in conflict with the employer class. When he first outlines his ideas
in 1884, they are rather vague and general, and close to those of Toynbee, who had
not advanced far beyond the concept of unions accumulating funds for bargaining,
and acting as some kind of provident society. But, apart from showing Toynbee's
optimism, and the hope he held for the development of a higher sense of responsibil-
ity for each class, Wise does not outline any practical policy.

In the following year, the ideas he puts to the Intercolonial Trade Union 3
Congress are much clearer and in more practical form: the wastage of the strike
might be avoided by Boards of Conciliation, joint boards of industry might be
established so that workmen would have access to information as to the real state
of the industry and, in turn, that their leadership might gain the trust of the
employer; trade-unions might interest themselves in the welfare of members, beyond
their material needs e.g., by promoting technical education, etc., and he also
suggests that on the guarantee of its corporate funds unions might enter directly
into contracts with employers. One other idea, interesting because it is rather
prophetic, is his statement concerning the availability of statistics about employ-
ment and wages:

"I believe the time will come when the prevailing rate of wages
will be considered a matter of quite as much public importance as the direction
of the wind and the height of the barometer."

1. In the preface to the 1902 edition of "Industrial Democracy", the Webbs make a reference to the advanced nature of Wise's Arbitration legislation.
Wise doesn't set out the idea of a living wage at this early stage, but we can see the trend, and it is the developing concept, even more than the particular ideas, which is interesting at this stage.

By 1890, following the industrial unrest in England and Australia, the scope of Wise's ideas has extended and the future development of unionism in the larger context of an industrial society has taken very definite shape. The application of Wise's liberal principles and the forward-looking nature of his ideas can be seen in a number of public addresses he gave during the years 1890 and 1891. We have already mentioned his philosophic justification of preference to unionists and his denial that "freedom of contract" is an interference with personal liberty. The maritime strike of 1890 confirmed the truth of these principles in Wise's mind, and he publicly said so:

"The so-called 'free labourer'-disunited and unorganized, able to accept jobs as untrained men and willing to take wage reductions, must inevitably result in a serious lowering of present standards... Once let it be granted that trade unions are a necessary and useful part of our industrial system, the refusal of unionists to work with non-unionists becomes a necessary and logical measure of self-defence."  

In the heightened condition of public feeling at this time, such a publicly expressed view from a leading barrister was very controversial and professionally it was to Wise's disadvantage. (The implications will be discussed later.) But the loss of good will to the unions' cause, and the angry criticism in the community, he says, "comes from those who do not perceive the nature of the difficulty". The vital question to Wise was that of free labour: "how can the wage earners of a class protect themselves in what they have already gained against the invasion of unskilled labour whose standards are lower?" Wise was not taking a partisan view, but rather was he attempting to apply true liberal principles to the issue at stake.

Wise could also point out what he considered the weakness in the unionists' approach to the problem. Following the failure of all unions in the maritime

2. ibid., p. 234.
strike of 1890, Wise directs an address "To the Working Men of New South Wales." He tells his audience, largely composed of working men, that he is not there to "give cheap advice or to criticise their failure to obtain the things for which they have lately striven"; but he makes a review of trade-union development, the progress which has been made in raising wages, shortening hours, and making employment more regular, and then attempts to analyse the weakness of present trade-unionism and its prospects for the future. He emphasises that the highest qualities of leadership will be expected of unions if they are to fulfil their proper role. With complete candour he remarks:

"I make no reflection on the Sydney leaders of the last strike, but I believe that I will not be going beyond the limits of fair criticism when I say that Unionism in New South Wales needs a radical reform, both in selecting its leaders and in the powers with which it clothes them after their election."  

It is Wise's ability to stand off from the problem, and to break free from set attitudes, that distinguishes his views on the future role of unionism at this point. He does not ignore differences, nor does he try to remove them, and quickly disposes of the saying that there are no classes in Australia. His aim is rather to gain proper recognition of the social and economic forces facing the working class in a society in which class divisions are clearly set. What these forces were, and the effect Wise saw they would have on the future development of unionism and the role of the state, we might attempt to summarise from these lectures.

1. Wise affirms the key place unions must have in industrial society; to play this role it must be recognized and its rights safeguarded in law.

2. A great responsibility rests on unionism to use its power without injustice. It must frame its laws with liberality and its leadership must be kept free of secret influences and political intrigue. Its membership must be thrown open and

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2. ibid. p. 5. Wise makes no attempt to appear as the champion of the strikers' cause, but can remind unionists of their own prejudices. "I am sure that even among men who wear black hats are some who are tolerably good, tolerably honest, and tolerably fair-dealing." (p.4)
3. See his address "Social Revolt and its Causes", 1890.
the outside labourer must be brought into the ranks.

(3) New responsibilities must be accepted. Unionism must understand the economics and problems of the industry and be prepared to be represented in conciliation. It should also promote the moral and material welfare of members, e.g., by sponsoring workers' education, technical education, and benefit schemes.

(4) Wise doesn't advocate compulsory membership, but believes unionism must attract men to come in by their own free will. However, he does foresee an extension of state action into unemployment relief, so relieving unions financially, and he also sees possibilities in legislation of the future to increase the efficiency of labour.

(5) Wise looked towards the settlement of one of the great problems of wage insecurity and industrial conflict by clearly anticipating the Webb's idea of a basic living wage. The state will lead the way by setting standards of wages to which all these contrasting with the state must adhere.

(6) The solution of the problem of the unemployed and the irregularly employed residue of unskilled labour he admits is not clear. All he can see at this stage is that by driving unorganized labour into a smaller compass the problem will become more pressing and society will be forced to face the problem of unemployed labour.

Finally, despite earlier failures, Wise expresses the faith of Green and Toynbee in some form of co-operative development, and envisages this as part of his unfolding view of trade-unionism.

The whole point Wise is emphasizing at this time, when many of his contemporaries have such a close-up focus on the industrial problem, is that concepts should not be too limited and attitudes too fixed in contemplating the possible solutions. How prescient was his view for 1891 is seen in his long-range prediction of the future conditions to which unionism and the state would have to adapt.
He can see, he says, certain tendencies at work which help to make the future more readily visible:

"The progress of physical science, which day by day is dispensing with the lower forms of physical toil, will require more qualities of skill and training in the worker. The problem of unskilled labour will thus increase while the progress of education will provide greater scope and mobility for labour, with its obvious implications."

He then indulges in what he says may be "something of a vague dream", but which now seems remarkably clairvoyant:

"Science may have in store for us some new form of distributing energy... Communication between distant places may become as easy as now between persons in the same town... Who then can say what revolutions may not be effected in our industrial system?"

Though Wise admits "that the outlook seems at times obscure", and he can't see the final shape, the picture he is filling out in 1891 points clearly the direction in which his own social policy is charted. In his concept of the future shape of industrial society Wise can see the developing picture of Green - a view of the state, not as a paternal institution or an instrument of class legislation, but acting with other social agencies for the common good, and a view of trade-unionism as a voluntary organization with broad social responsibilities, carrying out a constructive role in a changing industrial society. This is the same organic or harmonic view of society which was later held by Hobhouse, to be at the heart of "New Liberalism".

The force of Wise's argument is that liberalism must accept and promote such a concept of industrial freedom, but this was too modern a concept for many colonial liberals. To Bruce Smith, perhaps the most academic of the "individualist" liberals in the Free Trade Party, the prospect was simply frightening for, in his view, the idea of the unemployed claiming a right to work from the state was an absurdity - "every man finds work for his fellow man". Smith remained close to

2. L.T. Hobhouse, "Liberalism", cf. chap. VII.
3. A.B. Smith, "Liberty and Liberalism", 1887, p. 494. This 680-page defence of (over)
Spencer's view that the liberty of the individual is the principal cornerstone of society, and condemned the tendency of "people looking to Parliament for benefits which they are not capable of bestowing on one another". To Wise it was the role of the state to establish conditions whereby they could realize their capabilities, but as C.H. Currey has remarked, the Benthamite garment remained remarkably long-wearing in New South Wales, and "only a few heretics dared to question the soundness of the dogma of 'freedom of contract' in social relations". It was also difficult for those closely involved in the industrial conflict to gain Wise's perspective. Trade-unionists themselves tended to emphasize the militant spirit and exaggerate the possibilities of legislation, and Wise's practical outlook stands in sharp contrast to that of a union leader such as W.G. Spence, whose vision of the future unionism is clouded by such a utopian mist that its outline is never clear. Spence is rather typical of many radical working-class visionaries of this time with his mixture of the aggressive class spirit and Christian idealism. The more realistic outlook of the Trades and Labour Council unionists like T.J. Houghton and J.S. Watson, who could see the potential of disciplined unionism, is more in line with Wise's views, but their range of view was also limited by a such a close-up focus. Wise's view is also completely free of the fatalism of many of the employer class who could see only a continuing use of the power of coercion. Henry Copeland, a mining entrepreneur and protectionist member of parliament, also attempted to see the future development of unionism. He recognized the inevitable changes coming, and the approaching day when the "leaven of organization shall foment the whole mass of wage-earners", but he saw little prospect of an harmonic society and his message is rather a warning to capitalists what to expect, as he

(from 171) True Liberalism has as its sub-title "A Protest Against the Growing Tendency Toward Undue Interference by the State with Individual Liberty, Private Enterprise, and the Rights of Property."

1. ibid., p. 315.
There were, of course, other Liberals such as J.H. Carruthers who could stand apart from class interests, and whose thought was moving in the same direction as Wise. There is also an intelligent recognition by Andrew Garran of the "Herald", for example, of many of Wise's ideas, and although he remains jealous of the great principles of individual liberty, he predicts that some future development of state action in the field of arbitration will come.

But it is without any doubt that the application of Wise's liberal philosophy to this complex question of industrial freedom placed him in the very advanced school of modern liberalism, and for his time it was a rather daring and radical expression of political thought.

If we could see Wise simply in the role of a New South Wales Toynbee, attempting to influence the thought of his day, his contribution to the history of the period would still be significant. But Wise's importance is that he was not a mere blue-print maker but a politician who helped to build his ideas into legislat-ive programmes.

During his career in parliament, Wise applied a practical legal mind to the task of preparing unionism for the constructive role he saw it was to play. Part of his policy was aimed, first of all, at securing for unions legal recognition of their corporate status, and security for their funds. In New South Wales, he maintained, unions were still exposed to the restrictions of an obsolete criminal law; the English Conspiracy and Protection of Property Act (passed in 1875) had never been implemented in Australia, hence unions were in the anomalous position of exercising collective action without responsibility. Twice, he recalls, he

2. Garran was Chairman of the Royal Commission on Strikes, and also of the Council of Arbitration set up following the Commission. See his views in the Farewell Address of the latter body in 1884.
3. Review of the position of unionism prior to 1900, speech when introducing the second reading of the Industrial Arbitration Bill in the Legislative Assembly, 4.7.1900. (Published separately.)
carried a measure to grant what he termed this "Magna Carta" to unions, but it never came back from the Council. His opportunity came in 1900. Into his Arbitration Bill Wise built the legal conditions which made it possible for unionism to fulfill the role he had long since anticipated. His own words best express his purpose:

"In the past they (trade unions) have been most useful for purposes of offence and defence during a period of transition. That is needed now is to turn them into an instrument of construction which can be used for the rebuilding of the fabric of our industrial society. But as the law stands a trades-union can do very little work for industrial peace... A trades-union can never fulfill its proper functions if it is a mere machinery of menace, exhausting its powers spasmodically, and debarred by its action from accumulating capital, but it must become also an instrument of industrial peace, by obtaining from Parliament the power to make a collective bargain with an employer, which shall not only be binding in honour, but will have behind it a legal sanction."2

Wise's Arbitration Act is the legislative expression of his political philosophy, for in defending the right of the state to secure conditions of industrial peace and industrial freedom Wise is seeking to obtain the best conditions in which a common good will be realized, and in which hardships to innocent victims of a strike and unfair conditions of bargaining to individual workers will be eliminated. There is nothing panaceic about his approach, but the ideal in his philosophy is unmistakeable:

"I know well that we cannot by this or any other Act of Parliament enter into Elysium of industrial peace, but I contend that this measure contains legal machinery which with proper motive power and proper guiding intelligence can be made effective for the highest social purpose."3

It was from his basic liberal principles that Wise argued the case for this legislation. Association of workmen, he contended, is basic to any idea of freedom of contract, for it is only by membership of a trades union that the workman is placed on terms of equality with the employer.

"No student of economic history needs to be reminded that 'freedom of contract"

1. ibid.
2. ibid.
3. Wise is commenting on public criticism of his bill. B.R."Ice Press Cuttings, M.L."
To these principles of collective bargaining and union preference Wise added the principle of common rule which, he acknowledged, came from the Webbs, and it is these principles which establish the advanced liberalism of Wise in New South Wales politics. They are, however, completely consistent with his fundamental philosophy:

"I have in effect merely been quoting words of my own which I first made public in 1887 and repeated in 1890. . . ."

Such principles were a very long way from being accepted in 1900, however, and Wise found himself under attack from many so-called liberal defenders. It was anathema to the liberal mind of such a leading free-trader as Bruce Smith - to whom such state action was calculated "to perpetuate the unfittest at the expense of the fittest and to take from individual man the incentive of self-help". The liberalism of William McMillan rejected the principles of Wise's Arbitration Bill - remaining close to the soil of its growth, his business and importing interests. Invoking the classical concepts of free trade, he "almost exhausted his vocabulary of denunciation" in attacking Wise's bill. From his own profession Wise had forecast opposition. Although he might point out that barristers themselves invoked the very principles of his bill - in refusing to take a brief with a solicitor - and

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1. Summary of Wise's speech on the second reading of the Arbitration Bill in the Legislative Council, National Review, Aug. 1902, pamphlet, p. 2. For a similar statement of these liberal principles, see L.T. Hobhouse, op. cit., pp. 94 et seq.
2. The idea of common rule is that any award or terms of an agreement made between a particular employer and a union be applied to all members of the trade or industry. Mr. Wise: This idea has been suggested to me by Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Webb, whose interest in all industrial questions and very wide and accurate knowledge entitle any opinion of theirs to the highest consideration.
5. Wise uses these words when referring to McMillan's address to the Chamber of Commerce. N.S.W. P.D., Vol CV, p. 2363.
were members of one of the strongest trade unions, "yet I would be very much sur-
prised if I find that those who condemn this measure as an improper interference
with the freedom of workmen and non-unionists, are not members of my own profess-
ional..." His anticipations were not astray. Even the Chief Justice came out in the
open against the bill, and his public strictures were quickly endorsed by vested
interests, e.g., the directors of shipping companies, the Employers' Association,
and the Master Builders' Association - all in defence of liberty.

Once again Wise was accused of being a deserter to free trade. Dr Cullen
took up the stand of a traditional free-trader during the Legislative Council
debate when he attacked Wise's bill on the general principle that a free-trader
cannot be consistent in granting protection to unionists. Wise, in answering
such criticism, once again explains how his free-trade belief is integrated into a
total philosophy and reiterates the very points he set out in his book nine years
earlier - that the arguments behind the economic issue do not necessarily prevail
when questions of national interest or human welfare are involved. In answer to
Cullen, he says:

"It is not true that Free Trade compels us to refrain from any
attempt to alleviate the condition of the wage-earning classes... It is not
true that Free Trade compels us to keep our working classes at the lowest level
of those competing with us through their experts. As a Free Trader, I say
that this is not true and that it were better to have protective duties at the
Customs House rather than to see our labourers and employers exposed to the
dangerous vicissitudes of trade which must follow the present system of
settling industrial disputes."

There is no shift of position.

It is a commentary on the narrow fiscality of the Free Trade - Protection
debate in New South Wales that many free-traders failed to see, or refused to see,
the distinction between the economic and political argument. That Wise was pre-
pared to sink the fiscal issue for the national object of federation was difficult

1. "Industrial Arbitration Act of New South Wales", speech by Wise in Legislative
Assembly, 4.7.1900. Pamphlet, p. 5.
3. ibid., p. 5599.
for some free-traders to accept; that he was also prepared to do so for social betterment was even more difficult.

In considering the whole question of Wise's consistency or loyalty to free trade, it is consistency to his own concept of free-trade liberalism which is the issue, and not necessarily his loyalty to the Free Trade Party. Wise's effort in framing, presenting, and defending his Arbitration Bill, fraught as he believed it to be, "with incalculable advantages to the labouring classes", in my view effectively answers all criticism that he had no ideal in his political life, and his action in resigning from the Assembly to pilot his bill through the Council can hardly be seen as the action of a man whose political career was motivated by narrow personal ambition. It is said by Labour Party protagonists that the Arbitration Act was really the work of Labour men exacting labour legislation from a non-labour government in return for their support. As against this view I believe that there was no man so well fitted to frame such a piece of legislation, none so firmly grounded in its principles, than H.R. Wise, and it is to his influence, as much if not more to that of the Labour Party, that this piece of advanced legislation was put into the Statute Book in 1900. If for no other reason, this legislation should establish his right to a worthy place in Australian history.

Here we might sum up the political liberalism of H.R. Wise. It derives from the Cobden-Gladstone tradition of economic and political liberty, and the idealist philosophy of T.H. Green underlies the concept of social liberty, involving the relations of the individual and the state. To this is added an interest in social reform and a belief in national freedom through unity. Green's philosophy I. That his influence extended beyond New South Wales we might judge from a letter from George Leake, Leader of the Opposition in the West Australian Parliament. An extract reads: "I read with great interest your very excellent speech on the second reading of your Industrial Arbitration Bill. I don't want to flatter too much but it was a very masterly effort and I have received from it more instruction on this very complex subject than I thought was possible from reading a man's views." Perth, 3.8.1900, W.G.
superimposed upon the ethos of home and school provides the ideal, and the inspira-
tion for his political effort he acknowledges came from Toynbee, and may well have
had its origin in the work of his father. These influences working on a well
trained and original mind, adjusting itself to a period of rapid transition,
produced a political policy which was an advanced and fearless expression of
liberalism.

To put Wise's ideas within a system of thought is difficult for it
involves problems of definition. One could apply the label "New Liberalism" as
1
used by J.T. Hobhouse in England, and by Evatt in Australia, or with equal relevance
2
the term "liberal socialist" as used by David Thompson to denote the social reform
policies of the Lloyd George liberals. To men with exaggerated fears of socialism
3
like A.J. Sti Ledger, Wise's ideas were socialistic. Wise does not shy away from
the term where socialism is taken to mean that the state is used for "the realis-
ation of a complete and harmonious development of the individual and the nation",
4
but as "socialism" was interpreted in so many and varied ways by individual theorists
at this time, Wise's definition is just another way of stating the idealist philos-
ophy. By 1900, Wise had certainly moved close to Fabian socialism, but in point
of theory he stopped short of any definition which held that the state should
abolish private property, and he was always apprehensive of the growth of a paternal
bureaucracy, for he remained close to Green's basic idea that the vitality of the
state is drawn from personal freedom. To the socialists of the Australian Social-
ist League, however, Wise ever remained the "capitalist-lawyer-politician".

Looking back from the vantage point of our own day, Wise's ideas seem so
eminently reasonable and logical that one might wonder at their originality and

1. "Liberalism".
2. "Liberalism in Australia", cf. chap. XII.
For the discussion of Toynbee's socialism, see Hilmer, op. cit., pp. 52 et seq.
question their radical character. They are in fact no more than a fairly accurate prediction of the direction in which our society has moved since his day. But one must set his ideas in time and the context of a political party. Although the 'nineties was a period in which the public mind matured rapidly, the truisms in Wise's philosophy were by no means self-evident to all "liberals", and there were yet many men in New South Wales who had such a strongly entrenched belief in the virtue of individualism and free enterprise that they could, perhaps quite genuinely, agree with Bruce Smith that

"a large amount of want, misery, and unhappiness is absolutely inevitable and unavoidable, and any attempts to obviate it by means of legislative encroachments upon the incentives to progress in the more fortunate of our fellow citizens will result in disappointment and failure."

It is from such a reactionary view of liberalism that we must at all times dissociate the liberalism of Henry Parkes, for whilst he retained his belief in some of the old liberal principles, he was never out of sympathy with the aspirations and the welfare of the working class, and in this sense Wise was closer to Parkes than to many other "liberals" in the FreeTrade Party whose principles of liberty were closely related to economic interests and who were unmoved by the moral aspect of Wise's idealist philosophy.

That Wise had a problem in making common cause with other radical opinion we have discussed; here we should also note a problem he was to encounter with other liberal opinion. That he was, however, a vital influence in shaping a liberal policy for the FreeTrade Party we will discuss in Part IV. But before we follow his career in the FreeTrade Party we should look at one other set of ideas which are related to the tradition of Wise's political inconsistency - his nationalism - for in Evett's judgment Wise, following his opportunistic career, switched ("with ease and jauntiness") from free trade to federation just when his inclinations were running out in the said party. This view we will examine in the next chapter.

Chapter VI.

"Suddenly a roar, as of a multitude drawing breath together, rose from the streets below; and bursts of hysterical cheering drowned the speaker's voice. Some one at the window shouted 80,000; and, for twenty golden minutes, we believed that Union had been won. Emotion was too tense for speech. Men went silently for joy. When Mr. Barton appeared at the window, the dense crowd, which filled Hunter Street so far as Castlereagh Street and stretched along Pitt Street for 2 for 200 yards, burst into fresh enthusiasm, and demanded speeches. In succession, Mr. Barton, Mr. O'Connor, and Mr. Wise spoke some broken sentences of gratitude and pride.

"We had hardly retaken our seats, and were listening to Mr. Barton's final words when Mr. Samuel Cook - the ablest and imperturbable manager of the 'Sydney Morning Herald' - entered the room, and pressed towards the Chairman, with trouble and anxiety upon his face. Everyone knew, even before Mr. Barton could announce the fatal news, that some error had been made, and that the 80,000 limit had not been reached.

The disappointment was crushing; but it could not cancel the experience through which we had just lived. The thrill of exultation and pride in the birth of a new nation, and the sense of sudden gain in political stature, which thousands experienced in those happy, but mistaken, moments, had given a foretaste of what Federation, when it came, would mean, and was the impulse which carried us forward to the final victory. Yet the emotion was not one of partisan triumph, but the sense that a stage in our national growth had been reached, and passed."}

In the political life of New South Wales in the eighteen-nineties, the main issues facing the community could be grouped as two large movements - a reform movement aiming for more social and economic equality, and the movement for national union. Both movements had tidal force and separately either one would have cut a course through the politics of the decade and shaped party divisions. But the circumstances were that both movements came together, overlapped, and set up cross-currents which weakened both, delaying alternately the forward movement of one, and then the other. To complicate the problem, the issues had to be handled in a three-party system, of which the two stronger parties were ranged either side of a fiscal issue which was largely irrelevant to the major questions involved. This

situation was to create real difficulty for a number of democrats, social reformers, and nationalists, who had not only to follow party leaders, but had also to oppose, on party lines, men with whom they shared common objectives. Men called upon to establish priorities found themselves often facing a dilemma. To some like Parkes and Barton, their course was clearly marked, for they put federation before what they chose to call local politics; others, including Labour Party men, gave their priority to the reform of an unjust social order. But there were men, such as Wise and O'Sullivan, who believed earnestly in both causes, and for them the problem was greatest, and it was complicated further by party allegiance, for they found themselves in opposing fiscal parties. In this complex and, at times, very confusing situation, it is evident that the sincerity of a man's political allegiance would be questioned, when he appeared to desert one or other of these ideals.

This problem for Wise in the FreeTrade Party will be analyzed in Part IV, but in our examination of his reputation for political inconsistency it is necessary to understand how his approach to the national question became part of the tradition about him. Along with the picture of Wise, the political deserter, found in Evatt and Fiddington, and the ultra-conservative class federalist found in Crisp, there is also a legacy from the contemporary radical press that Wise is un-Australian in outlook and that his sympathies are pro-English. Norton speaks of his "blatant jingoism", and the "Bulletin's" extreme Anglophobia rendered it almost impossible for Wise with his English connections to be accepted as genuinely Australian at heart. His liberalism the "Bulletin" rejected as merely a carry-over from his English university ideas, and his nationalism it rejected because of what it held to be Wise's blastiferous contempt for anything that isn't English but Australian". Thus any attempt to re-establish Wise as a sincere politician must

2. 12.5.1894.
take account of the policies he followed on the national issue.

In making the claim that B. H. Wise was a genuine Australian nationalist there arises at the outset the problem of using the label "nationalist" when applied to Australians in this pre-federation period. The word itself has become smudged by usage, but it has tended to have special historical application to the radical nationalism of the late 'eighties. For some reason the word "nationalist" when applied in this period of Australian history seems to suggest more the characteristics of a Joseph Furphy than an Edmund Barton, and a student might well form the opinion that the "Bulletin" writers and poets who expressed the visions, hopes, and fears of the young emergent Australia were possessed of a stronger spirit of Australian nationalism than those federalists who gave constitutional form and shape to the political idea of nationhood, and who devoted themselves to the task of building a constitution and then persuading the nation to accept it.

The federation movement has not won for itself in the Australian ethos any of the heroic traditions about nationhood which Americans have cultivated so strongly, or which have woven such strong patterns into European and Asian history; hence it is difficult even at this short distance to imagine that Australians were inspired in the same way as patriots in other countries. When one looks back at the point-counterpoint deliberation of the Convention lawyers, the anxiety neuroses of the free-traders and protectionists, and the parochial jealousies of many state politicians, there is little to suggest a crusade which stirs the imagination - in comparison with national movements in Italy, Ireland, or India. This is why federation casts such a pallid reflection, and why in contrast to the achievements of the federalists the image of the aggressive radical nationalists of the earlier decade has been projected more sharply on to the screen of Australian history, so achieving what Bruce Mansfield calls "the colour of immortality". In contrast to the constitution makers of his own nation, the American historian,
C.S. Blackton, sees the so-called middle-class nationalists as the neglected group in Australian history.

It was to this group that Wise belonged and, in saying that he could genuinely be called an Australian nationalist, there is no attempt to argue his right to some high place of honour among the nation-builders, but rather to demonstrate that he was Australian in outlook and was inspired by the ideal of Australian nationhood. As there is clinging to his work for federation the same imputations of insincerity and self-interest, the source of which appears to be found in the attitudes of radical nationalism, it is necessary first to set Wise’s Australianism against this background.

The eighteen-eighties in Australian history is generally regarded as the decade in which Australians began to break out of their colonial straight-jacket and the early years of Wise’s political career coincided with a vigorous expression of nationalist feeling. The nationalist voices of the day called to Australians to unite and be free and independent for many and varied reasons. There were undoubtedly common feelings of brotherhood among them, and a faith in the destiny of the new nation to be is clearly evident, but when it comes to ideas it is difficult to say whether one set of ideas can define nationalism in its Australian expression, or that any two men holding different ideas about the reasons for unity could be classified in the same way as nationalists. Ideas, emotions, and sentiments form a complex which is difficult to sort out. There is an idealised view of a brave new world shining through the writings of the literary nationalists like William Lane, the socialist visionary who saw his native land "burning with the feverish energy of youth". A spirit of love and hope can be found in Henry Lawson, and in its extreme romantic expression, in Bernard O’Dowd for whom the vision of a united Australia was a rebirth of men’s highest aspirations in a new, clean,
environment:

"She is our own unscathed, if worthy we..."
"She is a prophecy to be fulfilled..."
"She is the Eldorado of the dreamers..."
"She is the foetus of Creation..."

But all nationalists weren't visionaries, nor were all utopians simply dreamers, for there were other ingredients in the nationalism of a man like William Lane: there was hatred, bitterness, and contempt - hatred for the enemies of Australia, the foreign parasitic capitalists and British colonialsists, bitterness about the class divisions in a free land, contempt for the lowly Chinese. At the very basis of Joseph Furphy's nationalism was his intense belief in social equality and class loyalty, and he saw in the "leathemseverality towards nobility and royalty" a degrading of national character. The "Bulletin", with its motto "Australia for the Australians", sought to evoke native patriotism in place of colonial loyalty and nationalism became one with republicanism. The so-called nationalism of Henry Parkes was contemptuously rejected, and those who favoured nationhood with an Empire attachment were really traitors, for they would keep Australia poor in wasting the national substance for the good of the bond-holders in England. Anything less than republicanism, the first plank of its national platform, was unacceptable, for if Australia was to achieve freedom, she must first cut the royal connection. To this was added a strong racialist element. To the poets, with their trust in the brotherhood of man, caste and creed were forgotten in the "Young Democracy", but their literary patrons, Stephens and Archibald, had very restrictive ideas as to who should inherit the land for, in claiming "Australia for the Australians", the "Bulletin" clearly restricted the rewards of nationhood to a very definite Australian type - the cheap Chinaman, the cheap Nigger.
and the cheap European pauper to be absolutely excluded". Accordingly, in the words of Richard Jebb, "it might have been inferred by a congenial spirit that colonial nationalism could only be originated, not in the love of native country, but in hatred of some other country, preferably the mother country".

Republicanism in this period was probably more vocal, and the attacks on the imperial connection stronger, than in any period of Australian history. A group of emotional journalists and orators gave to the movement an intensity which is probably out of proportion to the real strength of the movement, but it was certainly a strong ingredient in radical nationalism. George Black, a capable journalist, and later Labour parliamentarian, best represents the extreme republican spirit. Black believed that behind the federation aims of Parkes and other class politicians was an attempt to impose a monarchic system in Australia. He warns his countrymen:

"Our Governors are plotting against us. There are traitors in the camp, renegades in the Assemblies, and in our halls of Justice. Confronted by foes without and traitors within it behoves us to be on guard. I say our ultimate safety is in Separation." 

There was behind this emotionalism little real solidity to republicanism, as no real constitutional formula appeared apart from a general adoption of the principles of the American constitution, and the general impression one gets from the "Republican" is that a republic would arise phoenix-like from the ashes once the flame was fully fled.

There were divisive elements also present among the radical nationalists which would have made it difficult for them to translate the vague idealism into any practical form of government. Among the societies and journals of radical character, each had its own peculiar blend of ideas, and many were self-cancelling.

In Lane's nationalism, there was militarism, which would have been rejected by some

of the democratic poets; the sympathy of the "Radical" for coloured peoples cut
across the "Bulletin's" racialism; the Australian Secular Association had annex-
ation ideas for the Pacific, while the contradiction in intercolonial socialism and
isolationist nationalism was an unresolved question. But it was the common
elements - the levelling collectivism, the democratic ideal, and the fierce spirit
of independence - which provided the heat to solder them together as a movement,
and the word "nationalist" became something of a generic term to include many
protesting voices.

A good illustration of the problem of designating the Australian nationalist can be found in the nationalism of Robert Thompson. Thompson published his
book in 1888 entitled "Australian Nationalism - An Earnest Appeal to the Sons of
Australia in Favour of Federation and Independence of the States of our Country".
In making his appeal to "the sentiment of Australian Patriotism, which is more or
less active in the heart of every Native of this continent", Thompson writes with
all the dedication of a Mazzini, professing that his appeal is to the heart and
the imagination as much as to the brain: "I am one of those who believe that faith,
hope and love are factors sufficiently powerful to influence multitudes." This is
the tone one encounters in his preface, but once he is launched on his appeal
idealism gives way to a series of attacks on the British connection, Toryism, and
Imperialism: "In the wish of the Imperial interests would be lost the last remnant
of the good name of our race."

Thompson moves on to common ground with the social-equality nationalists
like Murphy when he attacks the class interests - "the mobs, title-hunters, social
2
crawlers and lovers of Tito Barnacles in public office". Local fiscal politics
become entangled in the argument and thereby create additional confusion, for on
this issue Thompson is completely offside with the "Bulletin"; in fact he sees as

1. p. 79.
2. p. 112.
the worst foes our Australians have to counter "the shortsighted and narrowly self-

ish spirit of the New South Wales Protectionists". Thompson doesn't stray too

far from "Bulletin" radicalism, however, for he is back on-side when his appeal

turns to racialism. With his strong anti-Chinese attitude, the author so far

departs from the message of faith, hope, and love in his preface as to advocate a

war with the Chinese as a means of achieving a strong sense of unity.

"So far from thinking a Chinese war would be a calamity to Australia, I

fervently believe it would be the greatest blessing we could possibly receive.

For it would give us an excuse to clear out every yellow alien from our midst;

and there would be such an uprising of patriotism in Australia as has seldom

been seen in Anglo-Saxon annals... A Chinese threat of invasion... would

immediately federate our states into one nation; it would give us a perma-

nent national government, and, baptised with the certain halo of a glorious

victory in a truly righteous and holy cause, the flag of our new-born nation,

the blue banner of the Southern Cross, would be an emblem that henceforth to

time would inspire the sons of our country with patriotic pride and a firm

resolution to live true to her, and when necessary to die for her."2

After this stirring call to the patriotic spirit of his countrymen, Thompson returns

in his final appeal, to his earlier theme of faith and love, and putting the sword

aside, he hopes he may be pardoned for adding a few verses dedicated to the new-

born nation:

Verse 1.  "Australia, dear land of my youth and my birth,

Thy blue banner so slowly unfurled,

Shall gloriously shine in the van of the Earth

As a Herald of Peace to the world."

Here is the problem of defining Australian nationalism in this period. From this

distance Thompson's appeal seems so nympholeptic and unreal, but it expresses the

feeling for change and the utopian expectation of a new order that is the prevailing

mood among many radicals. It has, not unnaturally, captured the imagination of a

number of historians so that the term "nationalist" is more likely to call forth

the image of this rebellious native patriot rather than that of the moderate,

middle-class patriot interested in the political realization of a nation. But to

deny the term "nationalist" to this latter group simply because they appear  

1. p. 65. 
2. p. 113.
relatively more moderate, less romantic, and less optimistic about the glorious future is quite unhistorical, because, in the event, they proved to be more far-sighted and realistic about how nationhood was to be finally achieved, and more aware of the great economic and military problems of a nation born in isolation.

It was with this group that Wise belonged. To call Wise a nationalist and then relate his ideas to those of a man like Thompson creates a special difficulty, for, regardless of his ideas, as we have seen, was inevitably associated in the minds of some radical nationalists with the very things they were in revolt against. He bears little likeness to Robin Gollan’s picture of the colonial nationalist, for Gollan places the egalitarian social doctrine at the very heart of Australian nationalism, and its prophets are Furphy and the “Bulletin.” He is even further removed from Russell Ward’s personification of the idealized bushman whose attitudes and values became the expression of national consciousness and the symbol of a national mystique. The fact that he had been absent in England for such a long period makes it doubtful if some contemporary radicals would have even accepted Wise as a native son. Finally, in his very person, Wise differed from the prototype of the romantic and emotional nationalist, for he entertained no utopian visions, and sentiment seldom coloured his public expression. Though he was not without strong patriotic emotion, Wise’s national approach is not sentimental, but rather that of the lawyer and politician, and it is in the very practical application of his mind and energy to the problem of achieving national unity that we should assess his nationalism.

There is another aspect of colonial nationalism in which Wise presents a contrast, and that is the isolationist character of the movement. The development

2. "The Australian Legend".

of an ethos distinctively and uniquely Australian has been emphasized by most historians writing of the nationalism of this period, and certainly one gains an impression of almost complete detachment from nationalist movements in other parts of the world. Even though issues like Irish Home Rule and events like the Sudan Expedition of 1884 do impinge upon political discussion, one seldom finds any reference to European nationalism and names like Mazzini, Kosciusko or Kossuth are certainly not familiar in any local context. Some attempts have been made to link the distant Australian movement with wider themes – as an echo of general nineteenth century enlightenment, or in relation to Darwinism, or some world-wide idea of the frontiersman – but these are all too hypothetical, and more convincing is the idea that Australians discovered themselves by turning inwards and they were "inspired rather than dispirited by their isolation". Certainly it is isolationism which inspired the romantic dreams of building a new order here in the southern seas, far apart from the decadence of the old world.

In this regard the contrast in Wise’s outlook is striking for, as we have seen, his ideas took shape in the political environment of European nationalism. This did not manifest itself in a positive identification with outside influences, but rather did it give to him an historical perspective and a pragmatism which stood out against the rather extravagant hopes and fears of some isolationists. For one thing, Wise never lost touch with reality about Australian isolated geographic position, and he understood full well the problems involved in any precipitate move to sever the imperial connection, even though he agreed that separation would come eventually.

Wise of course was in no minority here for, once the federation movement was really under way, it was only the ardent radical republicans who refused to recognize any form of national independence which would continue to place some

reliance on the British connection and, in general, federation was carried forward by middle-class realists. In fact, by the mid-nineties, the republican movement was pretty well finished. Once men were brought to face the serious task of a constitutional formula the impracticality and general formlessness of radicalism was revealed, and no real constitutional alternative to a federation within the empire was seriously considered. As the problem became more constitutional and less nationalistic, the influence of the radicals progressively lessened. What happened to all the radical nationalists of the 1880's? We can follow names and associations up to a point: Lane, his idealism undimmed, went off to Paraguay with "New Australia"; Black entered parliament as a socialist labourite; Thomas Walker became increasingly involved in protectionist politics before going off to Western Australia. The Australian Socialist League absorbed some of the very left-wing radicals like MacNamara, and the "Bulletin" continued its iconoclasm, attacking the "establishment" over a much wider field. Blackton sees them in ideological confusion, their loyalties scattered. Once the heady fever of their nationalism had passed, many became more moderate and accepted, though scarcely with equal enthusiasm, the reality of a federated dominion, while, in the case of O'Sullivan and Thompson, a complete transition from republican to support for the federal constitution within the empire was effected in a few years.

The significance of this strong expression of colonial nationalism for our study of Wise we might now briefly consider. Its effect is two-fold. First, although it might truly be said that the dream-time of radical nationalism had passed by 1890, there was a strong survival of attitudes and prejudices which were to re-appear, especially in the Labour Party, as opposition to the federal constitution and as a suspicion of the aims and motives of many federalists. Though the

party in general did come round to support federation as the final form to be given to Australian nationalism, and some members like Bellis, West, and Cotton were active federalists, there could always be found in the outlook of men like Black, Holman, Rae, Fitzgerald, and Hughes — all prominent journalists or union propagandists — echoes of radical nationalism, especially in terms of its social and economic origins. Once the expectation of a new-born republic was destroyed, many radicals turned away from the comparatively colourless federal movement which, they said, did not spring from the people. The birth of the Labour Party and the economic depression diverted their interests, after 1891; consequently federation came to be regarded as a political smoke-screen put up to block the forward movement of social reform. Notwithstanding the presence in the first platform of the party of a clause (12) relating to the federation of the Australian colonies, there was a good deal of distrust of the motives and ulterior objectives of many federalists, particularly property owners and lawyers who, it was asserted, were working to establish in federation a counterweight to the growing power of labour. This distrust was built into something sinister by extreme radical propagandists like 1 S.A. Rose and H.V. Haynes, but there can be found at almost any time throughout the decade influential party spokesmen or journals of labour opinion, expressing deep suspicion of the class interests of federalists... There is a spate of this kind of criticism concerning the delegates to the first Federal Convention which met in Sydney in 1891. Arthur Rae, the gaol strike-leader of 1890, attacked the undemocratic composition of the convention, claiming that "they were all of the privileged propertied class", and George Black was more derogatory, referring to them as a "caucus of traitors". W.A. Holman two years later repeats a familiar radical charge — that there are "vested money interests behind Federation", and says

2. H.V. Haynes, "Federation, or a Machiavellian Solution of the Australian Labour Problem", (1891).  
he will oppose federation movement while ever men were starving and women suffering under bad social conditions. "Federation as proposed was simply an attempt to further entrench the forces of capitalism". W.M. Hughes continued this line of argument in parliament:

"Can we be blamed if we ask whether some men are not using this question as a stalking horse for their own aggrandisement, and whether a political party in this country, in order to draw away the attentions of the people from social problems that demand an answer, have not used this question to baulk the wishes of the people?"

J.H. Mahon, in his close study of the Labour Party attitudes to federation, has shown how these fears and suspicions remained, and he incidentally points up the immaturity of the party in its exaggerated fears of the constitution. A general spirit of opposition to the Convention Bill marks the debates in the Legislative Assembly and the referendum campaigns, and although the party attitude was no longer anti-federal, and a clear division of opinion had formed within the party, the criticism of specific aspects of the Bill, e.g., the Senate representation, and the deadlock provisions left the opportunity open for continued imputations about the class structure of the upper chamber, and the regressive taxation proposals which favoured the wealthy classes. W.C. Spence, harking back to the strikes of 1890 and 1892, warned again in 1898 of the enemies of the workers - the capitalists and lawyers ("working for the longest purse") - who wanted to foist a constitution on the people which would set up minority rule and allow cheap labour into the country, while Holman said of the ultra-conservative Senate that in comparison the house of lords was "furiously democratic".

1. S.M.H., 4.7.1893. Holman with his colleagues, G. Black and W.C. Higgs, were attending an inaugural meeting of the Australasian Federation League in Sydney in June, 1893, and in an attempt to wreck the meeting tried to get an amendment accepted in favour of a republican form of federation. Holman is here quoted when speaking in support.


3. See the speeches of Black, McGowan, Sleath, and Dacey in the Federation Bill debate, H.S.W.P.D., Vol. LXXXVIII, 1897.


The implications of these anti-federal attitudes for Wise are fairly clear. As a strong supporter of the federal idea, as an associate of leading federalists, and later as a Convention delegate, Wise would be identified politically with the "middle-class" group who had taken over the movement. The prejudices attached to the class composition of this group we have mentioned, but the problem for Wise was more difficult, for, more than any other leading federalist, his liberalism was to bring him closer to the Labour Party and its social reform objectives. It was difficult for men to reconcile these two policies, and thus when, after 1895, Wise took up again the federal cause after he had given an earlier priority to social reform policy, the feeling about him can better be understood. The reasons for this will be taken up later, but here it is important to see how difficult it was for Wise's liberalism and nationalism to co-exist.

The other way in which the radical nationalist phenomenon affected Wise was in regard to the Parkes relationship. From the beginning Wise accepted the idea of a federation of states as the best constitutional means of achieving nationhood, and "talked federation with enthusiasm and conviction long before people were ready for the question". Once the New South Wales movement began to take shape, Wise became closely associated with Parkes. As we have remarked earlier, he believed in Parkes' federal leadership and spoke of his Tenterfield speech as "a declaration of faith... marking in a decisive fashion the beginning of a new era in Australian politics... From this day forwards the desire for

1. A good representation of this middle-class grouping can be found in the editorial committee of the "Australian Federalist", formed in 1891 on the suggestion of Wise. The Sydney Committee comprised:

Mr. Justice Windyer  
Mr. Barton (barrister)  
Prof. P.H. Cobett (Law School)  
Mr. W.F. Cullen (barrister)  
Mr. Henry Gullett (newspaper editor)  
B.E. Wise.

B.E. Wise, op. cit., p. 100.

union which had floated before men's minds as a vague aspiration took definite shape."

Although this testimony to Parkes' leadership was written years afterwards, evidence shows that Wise was closely associated with Parkes in his federal plans from the outset, e.g., he shared Parkes' opinion that the Federal Council which Victoria wanted to strengthen was an inferior attempt at unification, and we can find him soon after the Tenterfield speech discussing tactics with Parkes as to how to outflank this existing organization and move towards the higher constitutional form of federal government. Wise is requesting Parkes to reconsider his decision not to go to Hobart where the Conference was proposed. Parkes had evidently stated his opinion that this was an attempt to corner him and force New South Wales into the Federal Council.

"Assuming this to be correct," writes Wise, "the course of events at any conference cannot fail to give a man of your resource and experience many opportunities of thwarting the designs of those who are only pretending to be advocates of Union, and possibly even of shaming such people into another course... The immediate matter of concern is that the public would understand such a course. They will not understand a refusal to go into the Conference."  

Such an exchange of views leaves no doubt that Wise was in the Parkes movement, and looked to his leadership. But most of the radical nationalists contemptuously rejected Parkes' nationalism, and ulterior purposes were attributed to his federation policy. George Black expressed the extreme view that it was imperialist-inspired and that Parkes was "endeavouring to trade away Australian liberties for the problematical return of Imperial honours", but there is ample evidence of a very general distrust of Parkes' federalism. The first Federal Convention, held in Sydney in 1891 under the aegis of Parkes, was so timed, said the "Australian Workman", as "to prolong the life of the capitalistic politicians.

3. For evidence of contemporary cynicism about Parkes' Federal ideal, and an evaluation of this evidence, see J.H. McCallum, op. cit., pp. 53 et seq.; D.MceNe McCallum, op. cit.
and their allies", and to try and prevent ". . . the workers from reconstructing
1 society". The "Bulletin's" denunciation of Parkes and all his works naturally led
it to offer the cynical view that federation was simply another road-block to
progress set up to confuse the people by the grand old sham.

In supporting Parkes' federation policy, Wise was naturally drawn into
other historic conflicts in which Parkes had become involved. The Irish Catholic
opinion, a significant radical element, had hardened into deep antagonism to Parkes
following the sectarian conflict over the Education Act of 1880, and his earlier
anti-Irish Treason Felony Act of 1868 resulting from the assassination attempt on
2 the Duke of Edinburgh by the Irish Catholic James O'Farrell. When enthusiastic
anti-royalist demonstrations took place in Sydney during the Queen's Jubilee
Celebrations (1887), strong feeling was aroused and Parkes in alarm closed the
theatres on Sunday in an attempt to prevent disorder. Quite naturally, this
action further aggravated the radical nationalist feeling, and Parkes was condemned
3 as a loyalist, an imperialist, a dictator. In the Assembly, Irish members such as
O'Sullivan and O'Mara lost no opportunity of expressing in fine Gothic style what
they thought of Parkes and his "British" policies, and this hostility carried over
to his federation policy. Despite the fact that Wise had publicly expressed his
support for Irish Home Rule, and had been one of the guest speakers at a St.
4 Patrick's Day banquet, his association with Parkes was too much for Irish radical
nationalists to compromise, and he was lumped in with the loyalists. "You are a
cur", said O'Mara when Wise interjected during an attack on Parkes, and O'Sullivan,
5 was also quite scathing when Wise first appeared in the Assembly. (It is rather

2. See Celia Hamilton, "Irish Catholics of N.S.W. and the Labour Party, 1890-
1910", H.S.A.N.Z., Vol. 8, no. 31, and A.W. Martin, "K".
3. See the impeachment of Parkes' plan for the erection of a State House as a
centenary memorial by O'Sullivan, O'Mara, and other radicals. H.S.W.P.D., Vol.XXX
p. 2680 et seq., 21.2.1898.
4. S.M.H., 1813.11.87.
5. See his sarcastic attack on Wise, "the fledgling with the pretty manner", ibid,
Vol. XXV, p. 795.
characteristic of O'Sullivan, when later he decided that Wise was a sincere
nationalist, that he should publicly express his change of opinion in the House.
This was not so with others.)

From this, I think, we can judge with sufficient reason that, in joining
with Parkes in the Federal movement, Wise placed himself outside the pale with many
radical nationalists, despite the common cause he may have established with some of
them by his radical liberalism. As we shall see, the political circumstances in
the colony after 1891 led Wise to place social reform legislation ahead of federat-
on, for he believed with the Labour Party that the opportunity had arrived to
bring in legislation of great benefit to the working classes. But Parkes in this
period kept federation as his first priority, and Wise's continued association with
Parkes kept a reservation about Wise in the minds of those for whom the two policies
were mutually exclusive. Thus, when he launched his attack on Reid's leadership
in 1895 on grounds which the Labour Party should normally have supported, i.e.,
failure to carry through pledged policies of social reform, the coincidence of
Parkes' attempt to overlay this issue and to re-align parties on the issue of
federation was so strongly resented that Wise not only received no support, but
earned instead condemnation and reproof. This is a very involved situation which
we will analyze later, but here we might simply understand how his return to
federation work could be viewed by disenchanted radical nationalists and Labour
reformers as merely a rationalization for opportunistic politics. Against the
historical tradition of careerism and insincerity applied to his work for federat-
on by Evatt, Piddington, and others, it will be argued here that Wise was a
genuinely Australian in outlook, and the ideal of nationhood was one of the genuine
motivating forces in his political life - that he was by this definition a true
nationalist. To do this, it is necessary, as it was for his liberalism, to see
Wise's national policies in a total view which must take us beyond the limits of
his work in the Free Trade Party. Some outline of Wise's nationalism will now
follow.

The annexation of New Guinea by Sir Thomas McIlwraith in July, 1883,
brought into public discussion the question of Pacific annexations, and many voices
were heard in Australia advancing the idea that Britain should move and acquire
territories before they were parcelled out among "foreign" European powers. When
support for this action came from prominent missionaries, Wise took up a stand
against the whole idea, and wrote, not as a "Little Englander", but as an Australian,
questioning the expediency of annexing islands while "our own country is undevel-
oped". Wise writes strongly in the first person and is clearly identifying him-
self with Australia. He concludes a letter to the press with these words:

"The black flag is still the pirate's emblem, although our missionaries chalk
the cross upon it. We have a noble future for our country independently of
foreign conquest. We have to build up a great nation upon the basis of
social equality and political freedom. That is a task from which we do not
need distraction and it is the task by which our claim to greatness will be
judged."

Wise was again ready to enter public controversy on the national issue
when the Australian contingent was despatched to the Soudan a few months later, and
he opposed such a bold declaration of empire commitment. In his view the Soudan
was a point of departure from the old colonial association, for

"the despatch of
troops was the first step along a bifurcated road which leads either to
Imperialist Union or to Separation. Having once surrendered the advantages
of our isolated position, we must, henceforth, be prepared either to take
part in European affairs, or else to hold aloof".

These views he set out in
a publication, "An Australian Appeal to the English Democracy", which was reprinted
in McMillan's magazine in August, 1885. Written within two years of his return,
this article, far from reflecting English attitudes, is unmistakably Australian,

1. In his memoir Wise reveals what he calls some secret history: how the Victo-
rian Premier, Service, was intending to imitate McIlwraith and send the gunboat
"Corborus" to annex the New Hebrides Group, and how Dalley, the N.S.W. Acting-
Premier, forestalled such a blunder.
2. S.M.H., 30.12.1884. This question is discussed in his memoirs, pp. 86-91.
and is a very interesting expression of Wise's nationalist ideas at this stage. Directed to an English audience, Wise's attempt to interpret Australian attitudes on some important issues reveals an impatience with those Englishmen "who form opinions about Australia from voices which do not represent the common people". He is obviously trying to interpret sympathetically the spirit of the Australian nationalist to the English reader who, he feels, doesn't understand colonial aspirations, and he warns against accepting returning colonists as trustworthy exponents of Australian opinion:

"These gentlemen are for the most part not Australians, but Englishmen who have spent some years of their lives in making money in Australia; and all of them belong to that class comprising the squatters and their immediate connections, the bankers and merchants, which has always fought unitedly against the rest of the people for the possession of public lands. The democracy of Australia, on the other hand, had no spokesmen in England, and but few sympathisers among the Englishmen who visit the Colonies. 1"

Wise is at pains to correct misconceptions in England about the annexation question, and he expresses strong opposition to any extension of British colonial influence in the Pacific, describing the colonial-type Englishman as the worst type of colonizer. "We have but one type & that of the British bourgeoisie. Is it better that the Pacific islands be kept for the perpetuation of this type, or 2 that other types should settle for our example and improvement?" Elsewhere he condemns the colonial tradition: "Englishmen have failed to win the regard of any nation they rule. Everywhere they form a governing class apart from the people; and where Frenchmen and Spaniards would by intermarriage with the natives continue something of the national life, Englishmen only destroy whatever society already exists." 3

Wise approaches the question of the English connection in reference to the Soudan.

1. Paraphrase in Wise, p. 95.
3. ibid., p. 8.
To Englishmen it may mean a small thing to send 600 men to fight an Egyptian war, but in a country which has hitherto been working out a glorious destiny removed from European entanglements... it is natural that political sentiment should be profoundly stirred by such an entry upon unknown paths... If such things are always to be an incident of the English connection as it is at present, and if things cannot be put upon a different footing, it may well happen that we may yet congratulate ourselves on having learnt experience at so cheap a rate.¹

There is no suggestion that he is favouring separation, but rather does he wish to point out the future possibilities and serve as a reminder to imperialists that:

"at present it is only a sentiment of loyalty which restrains us from obtaining a position of complete independence, and he is the wisest man who puts as little strain on sentiment as possible."²

It is also interesting at this point to see that Wise is looking towards the higher constitutional form of a united Australian government, for he requests Englishmen not to accept the Federal Council idea as a typical unifying movement as

"it is inferior in all attributes of a governing body... and it receives the vehement support of the Australian Tories, who fear popular government."³

The general impression to be gained from this essay is that of the young intellectual "revelling in the strenuous youth of his country", to use Hancock's phrase. But what is significant is that Wise clearly reflects an Australian rather than an English outlook, and it is also clear that he has nothing in common with the Imperial Federation League, the Anglo-loyalist body, which he was later to describe as

"a party of unreasoning Unionists, residing principally in Melbourne, who are Englishmen by birth and sentiment, and who would subordinate the interests of Australia to the fortunes of the Conservative party at Westminster."⁴

There is an obvious radical tinge colouring these early viewpoints, but we can see them in better balance in the following year when Wise critically

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1. ibid., p. 15.
2. ibid., p. 8.
3. ibid., p. 13.
I am indebted to Dr. E.C.Fry for having these articles photographed at the British Museum.
reviews the impressions about Australia's future made by J.A. Froude in his book, "Oceania". He is again concerned to disassociate himself from those colonists "to whom England is everything and Australia very little", and reminds Froude that, as he associated only with the wealthy and official class, he was not well placed to interpret the sentiments of men and women who really compose Australian opinion". Wise again speaks of the very slender threads binding the colony to England, and views the sentimental dependence on the Mother Country as a danger to the development of national responsibility and a sense of national pride. He can be found here making the very same criticism of those English-oriented colonists as the "Bulletin" often directed at himself - "that a prejudice exists against everything 'colonial' and there is a readiness to accept anything of any quality whether in things, books or men, provided that it come from England". So long as this dependence exists, he says, Australian citizenship will thereby be impeded in its growth.

But any idea that Wise sees a republic as the only gateway to national citizenship is discountenanced here when he again approaches the question of separation:

"To talk of such a thing at present in our disunited and defenceless state would be almost the act of a traitor. But it is another thing to have separation in view as an ultimate necessity, and as an absolutely necessary step towards any real union with Great Britain. Separation at present would mean, in all probability, a repetition in the Pacific of the history of the South American Republics. But the separation of a Federated Australia would, under wise counsels, be only preliminary to a Union with England. For the Union which Australians would approve must take place upon a footing of equality. It must be the Union of an equal with an equal, not the absorption of a colony by an empire." 3

In this concept of a unified independent Australia in some form of equal partnership with England, we can see the outline of Wise's future national policy.

2. ibid., p. 265.
3. ibid.
Though his 

natural bent towards the radical, the perspective he is able to bring to his viewpoint leads him to reject the isolationist outlook of many radical nationalists, and his intelligence and legal training naturally lead him beyond the single idea of independence to the more constructive task of unification. By the time he enters parliament his ideas have settled into firmer shape and he has a very clear idea of the road along which he thinks the colony will travel towards independence.

It is interesting at this point to set Wise's nationalism against the ideas of both the radical nationalists and the Anglo-loyalists which can be found in the Assembly of 1887. A debate took place in November centred upon the status powers, and the office of colonial governor, deriving from proposals submitted by the Parkes government aimed at clarifying vice-regal appointments, and seeking some measure of consultation by the Colonial Office. The resolutions had been brought forward because of the problem created by Queensland's objection to the appointment as Governor of Sir Henry Blake. (Blake had previously served as a magistrate in Ireland during the time of the suppression of the Land Leagues.) The occasion is a fine one for the critics of the imperial connection, and an amendment is put forward by the republican David Buchanan which reads in part: "... that this House is therefore of the opinion that a political connection so subversive of our most valued rights should no longer exist". Those who would immediately cut the knot number only two (Buchanan and Walker), but there are others who would quickly disentangle the colony from the colonial office bonds, and who look forward to a future United States of Australia. "... when we will go forward as a nation even against Imperial interests". Irishman relish the ready-made platform for a

2. ibid., p. 560.
3. G.Dibbs, ibid., p. 556.
reminder of the imperial oppression in their homeland; T.G.O'Mara is repelled by
the very notion of an "Irish policeman" becoming a governor over loyal ex-patriot
Irishmen, and attacks the imperial concept with a determined gesture: "We will
have no more Imperial pensioners put upon us". O'Sullivan is completely at home
and enters the discussion joyously. Before developing his favourite themes, he
first of all congratulates the government upon "the confidence and nerve with which
they have taken their first dip into the waters of Australian nationalism". He is
soon firing on to familiar targets:"the oligarchic British governing class who still
rule and dominate Ireland and Scotland and who, in my opinion, are responsible for
the disgrace attaching to the British name". Familiar themes re-appear - the
idea of the Anglo-Celtic race building up beyond England's shores a nation "that
will be a home for oppressed and tyrannised humanity, where liberalism in its
purest and strongest growth may be found". But O'Sullivan is not for immediate
separation, for he envisages the future metaphorically "as a grown son will leave
his father's roof, and full ripened fruit will fall from the tree".

Against these radical voices were those seeking closer empire ties and
defending the British connection. C.H.Reid resented this talk of separation and
said it was "positively mischievous that there should be so many trying to wring
the tail, and pluck the beard of the British lion"; William Macmillan rose to
defend the system of an English-nominated vice-regent, while the conservative Irish
Catholic, T.M.Slattery, took upon himself to defend the person of the present
governor, declaring that if New South Wales were ever to be in a position to elect
a president of its own government, then Lord Carrington, he had no doubt, would
head the poll. Parkes, whose emphasis had been on the self-government aspect of
the question, rejected O'Sullivan's suggestion that he was becoming radical and, in

1. ibid., p. 596.
2. ibid., p. 599.
3. ibid., p. 602.
4. ibid., p. 572.
one of his purple flourishes, rhetorically demanded "Why we should leave the Great
British Empire... one of the finest, most heroic empires that were ever formed on
the face of the earth".

Just where was Wise placed in this cross section?

One can judge quite clearly from his speech that at this time he is much
closer in ideas and sentiment to a radical view of possible separation than he is,
for instance, with empire glorification. His approach is a pragmatic one, and in
supporting the resolution he stays fairly well within the limits which practical
consideration of the issue imposes, but emphasizes that any appointed governor
should be acceptable to the mass of the people who, in turn, should be free from the
"thraldom of the colonial office". He supports the resolution for another reason,
however, and it is here that we see the direction in which his ideas are going:
"... because I believe, in spite of the disclaimer of the Colonial Secretary,
they are a necessary step towards the political independence of these countries".

He now sees the colony's feet firmly planted on the road to absolute political
independence, and surveys the advance made since 1885 when that "chivalrous eccen-
tricity" (the Soudan expedition) "brought us to the point where the roads separate,
one leading to more complete dependence, the other leading to political independ-
ence". He once more shows resentment at colonial opinion being taken for granted
by the Colonial Office and warns, as he had done earlier, that if the British
authorities lead themselves into a false belief that we are ready through the
passing of such a measure (as the Naval Defence Bill 1887) "to attach ourselves
for ever and irretrievably to the destinies of England, and to become her partner in
good and disaster, it is time for those who are entrusted with the confidence of
the people to speak out more plainly than they have done".

1. ibid., p. 601-2.
2. ibid., p. 576.
3. ibid.
4. ibid.
He makes it clear, however, that this attitude towards the Colonial Office should not be mistaken as anti-British, as his respect for the British heritage he freely acknowledges:

"Unionists we all are in one sense. We are heirs to the tradition of England and of her history... It is because we are attached to her that we are able to defy the isolating influence of distance and float so bravely in the main current of civilization and of progress..." but this very British heritage is the quality which in his view should now determine us "to support no measure which may push us, even for a moment, in the wrong direction."

He goes on to predict - and here his view is akin to that of O'Sullivan - that separation, when it comes, will come gradually and peacefully in statesmanlike fashion, and by those "quiet imperceptible steps of which this is one." As one might expect, he disassociates himself quite clearly from the "separation now" radical proposal of Buchanan, referring to it as a "bald naked amendment which can have no possible effect except to bring ridicule upon the cause we advocate", and he pertinently comments on the whole weakness of the extreme republican's position, for they would "bring down into the market place important questions touching the fundamental existence of the state, when it is impossible that anyone can propose any adequate means of giving them practical effect".

From this debate we can establish, with a fair degree of accuracy, just what was the measure of Wise's nationalism at this time. He is unmistakably Australian in his outlook, with strong convictions about Australia's destiny as an independent nation; when he speaks of "our cause", he is obviously associating himself with other nationalists in the cause of nationhood. He is strongly resistant to any suggestion of overlordship by British colonial authority, and is consistent with his earlier anti-imperialism when it comes to military commitments and the proposed Imperial Federation. On the other hand he shows himself to have

1. ibid., p. 577.
2. ibid.
little in common with radical republicanism, and his ideas on separation are conditioned by the practical considerations of isolation. While he displays no sentimentality about English traditions, there are also no traces of the visionary and romantic Australian idealism, and he is obviously looking at the question as a problem in constitutional form as well as a national attitude.

If one might judge from O'Sullivan's reaction to this speech, Wise had redeemed himself in one radical quarter at least, for the fledgling he had seen sheltering under Parkes' wing some months ago had now emerged as a young Australian eagle. He tells the House that he listened to this speech with a good deal of pleasure:

"It had a truly Australian ring about it. It came from an imagination as bright as the flowers that deck our woods in springtime, and it was fragrant with the smell of wattle blossom... The honorable gentleman condemned Imperial federation, and stood forward as the champion of Australian independence, which he has a right to, being a native."

From this point onwards we can see Wise moving closer to Parkes as the man to lead the movement towards a federal constitution and, in so doing, he draws further away from radical nationalism. That Wise believed in Parkes as the statesman to lead this national movement we have discussed, but it is important to establish that the ideas of the two men regarding the constitutional shape of the future nation, and its position in relation to the empire, had reached a high degree of coincidence before Parkes launched federation as a political issue in 1889. Parkes was more inclined to vaunt the empire association than was Wise, but it cannot be denied that his view of the future realization of nationhood within the empire is remarkably prescient and foreshadowed the commonwealth relationship that was to follow. That Wise saw this Parkes vision as a national ideal can be seen from another article in "McMillan's" which he wrote in 1888. The article is directed against the imperial federationists who, he said, in attempting to push Australia into some legislative form of union, were endangering future relationships.

1. ibid., p. 599.
and provoking aggressive colonial self-assertion. "We have first to unite among ourselves", he says, and he concluded by quoting the following words of Parkes which he said expressed an ideal which was clearly his own:

"I have thought for many years on the subject of the connection with the mother country. I am as sensible as any man living to the abuses, to the misdoings, of the land I call my parent land; but I know very well that her great benefactions to the human race, her consistent and continuous efforts to carry freedom (sometimes, I admit, attended by disastrous consequences) to all races on the earth, far outweigh any defects in her national history. Whatever may be the future of these Australian colonies, I, for one, do not believe it will be a copy of anything that has gone before. I do not believe that at any time these colonies will copy the constitution of the United States of America. I do not believe they will ever think of copying any of the ancient republics. The thing is out of the question. And I firmly believe that it is within the range of human probability that the great groups of free communities connected with England will, in separate federations, be united to the mother country - not by any scheme such as has been called Imperial Federation, but by the empire being a compact central power, and free communities, like the North American colonies, the Australian colonies, the African colonies, and the settlements in India, being in independent federations connected by some new bond to the parent state. And I also think that in all reasonable probability, by some less distinct bond, even the United States of America will be connected with this great English-speaking community of free governments. I believe the circumstances of the world will develop some such new complex nationality as this, in which each of the parts will be free and independent while united in one grand whole which will civilize the globe. That is the hope I have of our nation and its future progress in civilization and liberty."  

In any consideration of Wise's attachment to Parkes as federal leader, this identity of aim and purpose in their national policies must be recognized, as well as those other qualities which Wise saw in Parkes as necessary for such a task as nation-building. The fate of the federation issue during the period of Wise's membership of the Free Trade Party, and the circumstances in which he placed a social reform policy ahead of federation in Reid's ministry will be discussed in the following chapters. But to allege that his return to the cause of federation after he left the Free Trade Party in 1895 was sheer political opportunism is, I maintain, to misunderstand the whole background of Wise's nationalism. Had he

1. At the conclusion of the debate on the Naval Defences Bill in the Legislative Assembly of New South Wales, November 25th, 1887. Cited by Wise, ibid., p. 106.
withdrawn from the movement after Parkes' death in 1896, or given only token support
when Reid, having recanted his anti-federalism, took over political leadership of
federation, then the charges of political opportunism and insincerity may have had
real substance; but Wise continued to work whole-heartedly for federation. As a
New South Wales delegate to the National Convention which framed the constitution
in 1897-98, his constructive mind, his legal talents and the brilliance of his
advocacy proved quite a force, and his efforts won for him, in Deakin's estimation,
a place among the first rank of men of influence in the Convention.

There are some remarkable tributes to Wise's work in the Convention, in
which he was at the very height of his powers. Garran regards his speech aimed
against the solution of deadlocks by referendum as "probably the most influential
speech in the Convention"; and similarly Fysh says of one of his Melbourne
Convention efforts that "it was a great effort excelling beyond all measure the
long list of able speeches that the three sessions have produced". During the
two vital Commonwealth Bill referenda, for which the New South Wales federalists
had to work so hard to gain the 80,000 majority, Wise worked prodigiously, and the
number and frequency of his speeches, his articles and letters in the press and his
work behind the scenes revealed in his private correspondence entitle him to be
ranked with Barton as one of the movement's great propagandists in New South Wales.

In Wise's work for the federation, there can be found evidence of that
real enthusiasm which Deakin claimed was to be found only among the young, the
imaginative, and the patriotic. With a background of sympathy with the spirit of
European nationalism, it is quite believable that the feeling of being part of a

3. Telegram Fysh to Mrs. Wise, 10.3.1899, uncatalogued Wise Mus., N.L.
4. See reports of his speeches from Tasmania and New South Wales districts, un-
catalogued Mus. See press controversy with Hughes, and letters answering criticism
of the Bill from Lyne and Gullet, D.T., April, 1898. For examples of his work
behind the scenes see letters to and from Cardinal Moran, Lachlan Briant, Samuel
nation-building movement in his own land would have profoundly stirred him, and that with achievement within sight, he would experience something of the elan of the young nationalist for whom victory is its own reward. One can catch something of the emotional impact which this fight for the people's vote for the Bill had on Wise from his account of the exhilaration he and his close associates experienced when, for a brief twenty minutes, a mistake in the recording of the votes for the first referendum put the figure beyond the required 80,000, the federation appeared 1 a reality.

In the light of our attempt in this chapter to define Australian nationalism, I think it might fairly be claimed that in describing these few moments of exhilaration, Wise has evoked the spirit of nationalism just as truly as the visions of O'Dowd and the hopes of the radical nationalists had done earlier; now, however, it is the spirit of nationalism in response to one of history's rare moments - the birth of a nation. Writing of these days later on, Wise was to make his own pronouncement: "this was indeed a time of stirring of hearts, when it was good 2 to be alive".

In this chapter on the Australian nationalism of B.R. Wise, and in earlier chapters, we have attempted to show that Wise did not look upon his birth in Australia as some mere geographical accident, but he identified himself closely with Australia, its life and its progress. It was suggested that his Australian nationalism may have been a strong impulse behind his decision to return to his native country. From his writings, and speeches, and his constructive contribution to the constitution of the Commonwealth, we have evidence enough of his attachment to the ideal of Australian nationhood, and despite political storms and 1. See quotation at head of chapter. "Garran who was there at the time comments on the scene: "We went mad. It was like V. Day. Barton and Wise nearly flung themselves out of the window, shouting triumphantly to the cheering crowds below". R.Garran, op. cit., p. 129.
disappointments it can be shown that he continued to devote his talents and
energies to the service of Australia over a long period. We have used the generic
title "nationalist" to cover many divergent and often conflicting ideas about
Australian nationhood. Though Wise does not conform to the prototype set by the
radical group and is representative of the group loosely called "middle-class", in
my view he can be designated a genuine Australian nationalist, and should be
numbered among those who did most to bring the Commonwealth into being.

But history has dealt unkindly with Wise, and the accusations of "turncoat"
and "deserter" have been applied to his work here as in other fields. In attempt-
ing to bring these charges to earth and to discover the real gravamen, our lines of
enquiry have led back to two main traditions:

First, that Wise moved from his earlier radical sympathies to join the camp of the
conservatives of federation, and thereby deserted the cause of the working classes
and the Labour-supported social reform party;

Second, that of the "bottle-ended" Wise, who switched back and forth from free trade
to federation, and finally deserted the free trade cause altogether.

As to the first, we have noticed earlier how this judgment is not un-
related to prevailing class attitudes and reactions both to the man and what he
represented in the social milieu of his day. In this chapter we have taken
account of the prejudices which were left behind in the Labour Party following the
surge of radical nationalism. Though the opposition of the Labour Party to feder-
ation was greatly modified as the movement came down to the popular level, fears
and suspicions of the motives of the constitution-makers persisted until the end in
the minds of such prominent spokesmen as McGowan, Holman, Hughes, and Spence, and
were reflected in the attitude of the radical press. Following the failure of
Labour to secure the election of any of its candidates to the Federal Convention in
1897, the "Worker" deplored the ignorance and illusions of the people who could
electorates and plutocrats - "privileged parasites intent on maintaining their privileges and on increasing their domination of mankind".

Time has revealed how unrealistic were these Labour Party fears for democracy during the federation campaign, and the party's immaturity at this stage is clearly seen on this issue. Without one constitutional lawyer in its ranks, the party did not think the problems through to any great depth, and some of its opposition was purely instinctive and rooted in provincialism. It is characteristic of Wise that he should point this out when he was taken to task by Hughes for support for the "undemocratic" equal Senate representation clause. It was just as characteristic of Hughes that he should turn the debate into a personal attack on Wise.

Piddington asserts that Wise, unlike "Barton and other honest men", supported the principle of equal Senate representation by "palmary sophistry", and that his real reason was his natural aristocratic "leaning towards an august super chamber". In fact, Wise's position was that of complete realism - "unless we are prepared to grant equal state rights there will not be any federation", and, far from favouring a strong Senate, he made it perfectly clear in the Convention that the predominance of the Lower House was one of his first principles:

"Recognizing then that responsible government will probably prevail, and believing as I do that it ought to prevail, we are driven to the necessity of establishing the predominance of one of the two Houses... and that House by reason of experience we accept, is the House which represents the people in their numerical majority."

2. This opinion is confirmed by J.M. Mahon when he says provincialism in the Labour Party was "a powerful and at times rabid force which tended to counteract the rising tide of nationalism. Men such as Deasy, Holman, and Hughes used all the provincial arguments they could against the Bill." Op. cit., p. 4747.
3. See series of letters, "Mr. Wise and Mr. Hughes" D.T., 9, 11, 13-4. 1898.
On what grounds L.F. Crisp labels Wise a real conservative in the Convention, it is difficult to judge, for in fact Wise, on some issues, emerges as the most advanced radical in the Convention. His proposals for land taxation and for the federal government to nationalize large areas of unalienated state lands in the interior, his support for Australian-appointed governors and his proposal to eliminate state vice-regal representation, as well as his support for the highest figure of payment to members, find him at times more advanced than his fellow-delegate, H.B. Higgins, whom Crisp designates one of the great liberals who spoke "for Australian democracy and Australian nationalism... who in the absence of Labour spoke for working people".

But to many of those who were heir to the tradition of radical nationalism Wise could never again speak for the working people. To George Black his defence of equal representation automatically put him with those "gentlemen of wealth and property (whose) real object was to erect an obstacle to reform and a rampart behind which the forces of conservatism can make a successful stand".

While the "Worker" drew the implication that, having opposed the referendum as a settlement of the deadlock problem, Wise wanted to stifle the voice of the people, and it made the further deduction that he favoured the view that the working class should not have the franchise at all. This prejudice followed him into the Canobolas electorate at the first federal election when his name was linked once more with the enemies of the workers, "the men whose pockets are lined with stuff", and his Labour opponents stressed again how Wise "snared at the working man".

This is part of the tradition that has followed him down the years and,

1. L.F. Crisp, op. cit., p. 25. For Wise's viewpoints on these issues, see the Adelaide Official Record, pp. 107, 111, 998, 1012, 1150. While Higgins agreed with Wise's principle of land taxation, he felt it was too radical for the Constitution: "we do not want to frighten people coming into Federation" (p. 1012). The two men were incidentally close friends and associates. (See Higgins letters, WC)
3. Wise was the author of the double dissolution solution to the problem of the deadlock.
4. 16.3.1901.
as I believe it leaves Wise most unfairly presented in terms of his nationalism, we might look again for a final balance to the revised assessment of W.A. Holman, one of the Labour leaders who, at the time, strongly opposed Wise’s federal policy. Holman admitted that he came into the House “a bitter political opponent of Mr. Wise and his views. I believed he was engaged in a conspiracy to direct New South Wales into undesirable arrangements for the future Federation of Australia”. But the premier went on to say how he subsequently came to recognize that

“Mr. Wise was probably the keenest and foremost political mind in Australia... the man who did more than any other single man to bring about the union of the Australian States... He was one of the half-dozen inspiring spirits who made the Federal Conventions live assemblies, truly representing the spirit of the Australian people, and prevented those Assemblies from becoming machines to register the prejudices of sections which were out of touch with the advancing tide of democracy throughout Australia... When all allowances have been made for the work done by Sir Edmund Barton and Sir Henry Parkes, we realize that the main constructive mind which overcame difficulties and reconciled conflicting interests was the mind of Mr. Wise”.

This testimony by Holman may need to be tempered by the same historical proportion as the prejudices against Wise, but it does not strongly at variance the judgment of his own biographer, and the other historical views of Wise that appear to have their genesis in the radical and Labour Party sources.

The other legend of Wise, the unstable, unscrupulous, “bottle-ended” politician, defecting his free-trade principles, changing leaders and engaging in “political intrigues in which he revelled”, is so firmly centred on the events of 1895 that it will be made the subject of our special study in the following chapters. It is only by following Wise’s career through the history of the Free-Trade Party, and setting it against the background which we have sketched in the foregoing chapters, that any proper judgment of this tradition can be made. Hence we will now return to 1887 and follow Wise’s political career through to 1895, a history which should draw the various strands of our story together.

1. Speech in the N.S.W. Legislative Assembly, 22.9.1916.
2. A.B. Piddington, op. cit., p. 137.
They should rejoice that the young man who sought their suffrage was a true son of Australia, had received the best education possible, and carried off the greatest prize of his profession... If they wanted men of intellect, men to raise the character of their institutions, they should elect Mr. Wise.\textsuperscript{1}

New South Wales public opinion had formed a good opinion of this promising politician who, as an honourable and brainy man has, despite his free trade mania, high claims on the popular esteem. But he has elected to lend himself as a link in the tail of the dirty old crew, and must take the consequences. Wise is a man of parts, but in years and experience he is a mere schoolboy. Parkes will be able to manipulate him with ease.\textsuperscript{2}

On the 31st January, 1887, the "Sydney Morning Herald" headed its political news column with the announcement that B.R. Wise, President of the Free Trade Association, intended to stand for election, and in the same issue appeared a manifesto addressed to the electors of South Sydney from the new candidate. Though only a week remained before the poll, the decision of Wise to seek election would scarcely have come as a surprise to those who had followed his participation in political affairs since his return from England three years previously. His ideas had received an airing from the public platform in lectures and addresses; he had already achieved prominence as a writer on Australian affairs in English magazines and locally published pamphlets; and even beyond the politically-minded circle the general reader's attention had probably taken note of the young barrister who had entered the arena of public discussion with some controversial viewpoints, and who had engaged the Chief Justice in a running correspondence in the daily newspapers on the fiscal question. Especially was he prominent as an

\begin{itemize}
\item Sir Henry Parkes to the Electors of South Sydney, S.M.H., 1.6.1887.
\item "Bulletin", 4.6.1887.
\item See, e.g., his letter and following correspondence on the question of missionary activities and Pacific Island annexation, S.M.H., 30.12.1884
\item See letters of Sir James Martin, S.M.H., 4.7.1886 and following correspondence.
\end{itemize}
advocate of free trade, and as the tariff question came more and more into public
focus after 1885, with the increasing financial problems of successive governments,
so too did the ideas of the academic free-trader gain wider broadcast. The
protectionist argument had been gaining strength, both inside and outside parliament,
during this period of economic depression and Treasury deficiencies, and
protectionist organizations were promoting propaganda directed towards the manu-
facturers, farmers, and workers in a challenge to the traditional free trade policy
of New South Wales. This activity culminated in the formation of a Protectionist
Union in September, 1886, drawing into a single organization the protectionist
parliamentarians and the representatives of outside organizations. It had definite
political aims, and by increased publicity sought to woo the working class and the
trade-unions to its cause by the arguments that encouragement of native industries
would bring about improved employment conditions; that the competition of foreign
goods produced by cheap labour would lower workers' standards; and by the associ-
ation of laissez-faire evils with the doctrine of free trade. Through the influence
of such radical leaders as E.W.O'Sullivan, and with the support of the "Bulletin",
working-class opinion was strongly influenced, and at a protectionist conference in
1885 the Trades and Labour Council committed itself to support none but the protect-
ionist candidates at the next election. If the trend of these events left some
complacent free-traders undisturbed, public evidence of the strength of protection-
ist organization and its support was clearly shown in a great demonstration and
procession held in Sydney in November, 1886, where upwards of 6,000 people attended
meetings addressed by spokesmen of farmers, manufacturers, and workers, and native
Australian workmen were called upon to show whether they "were satisfied with a

1. For review and analysis, see E.M.H., 13.2.1887.
policy which had made our interior a sheep-walk, and Sydney a receptacle for the shoddy goods of Europe, while thousands of skilled and unskilled labourers were cut of employment". For O'Sullivan, the tolling bells of the procession marked not only the wedding of capital and labour, they also tolled the death-knell of free trade.

In the face of this kind of challenge to the free trade tradition of the colony, free-traders also began to organize their own association, with the aim of countering protectionist propaganda and disseminating factual information on the workings of free trade. In this situation Wise came to the fore. His knowledge of political economy and his familiarity with the protectionist argument had already been established by his writings, but especially valuable to the free trade cause was the work he had done in collaboration with Toynbee, directed towards breaking down the working-class mistrust of free trade. He had already established a personal liaison with the Trades and Labour Council and had endeavoured to influence the Council to have working men represented on the council of the emergent Free Trade Association. Wise drew no response from the Council, but he did establish himself as something of a champion of the cause in carrying the argument to the working man that free trade would strengthen his share of the natural wealth by steadying wages and reducing profits, and in disassociating free trade from laissez-faire as a political philosophy. Accordingly, when the Free Trade Association was formed in Sydney in October, 1885, Wise was elected president, and at the Association's first public meeting - chaired by Henry Parkes - he was the inaugural speaker. Parkes, in introducing Wise to the meeting, remarked how

3. "The minutes of the meeting of the 13th August, 1885, include a motion of thanks to Mr. B.E. Wise for his impartial lecture on trade-unionism, p. 409.
5. See "Free Trade and Wages".
6. The subject of his address was "Free Trade in Finance", S.M.H., 23.1.1886.
pleasing it was to see young men of his stamp coming forward to render their services, and G.R.Dibbs, who had just vacated the premiership and who was, at this point, still publicly expressing his allegiance to free trade, acknowledged after the address that "Mr. Wise had made a mark for himself in this country".

During 1886 the Free Trade Association had drawn into its ranks many enthusiastic free-traders, and as the election of 1887 approached the Association came to play an increasingly important part in the organization of a Free Trade Party. As president, Wise became involved in a good deal of political activity, and his influence undoubtedly became more widely felt, and it must surely have appeared to many of his contemporaries that his course was clearly charted in the direction of parliamentary life.

When, in January, 1887, the government of Sir Patrick Jennings collapsed quite suddenly due to internal division, Sir Henry Parkes was called to form a ministry. Though he commanded only a minority following in the parliament, he formed a ministry of free-traders which he announced to the House, together with the outline of a policy, in order to gain supply. He then dissolved parliament and went to the country to fight an election. The election thus suddenly brought about was to be fought above all else on the issue of free trade and protection, and Wise soon found himself in the very thick of political activity. The Council of the Free Trade Association formed a committee which met daily and assumed some of the duties and responsibilities of a party executive. It became a clearing-house for party information and advice for both city and country electorates; it appealed for funds, organized speakers and publicity, and even extended its activities to the problem of selecting candidates and advising on the problem of rival free trade candidates or running a "bunch" in multiple-member constituencies.

1. Ibid.
2. The Daily Telegraph reports (3.2.1887) that the Committee were kept busy all day with letters, telegrams, and the distribution of pamphlets and leaflets (700,000 were printed). See reports of activities in S.M.H., and D.T., 24.1.1887 onwards.
In the midst of such a hive of political activity, one can imagine that the pressure on Wise to become a candidate would be very strong, especially when William McMillan, another prominent member of the Association, "yielded to his sense of duty and showed his public spirit and self-forgetfulness" in coming forward and contesting East Sydney. When Wise announced to a meeting of the Council that he also was "yielding to very urgent representations as to his duty" and had "decided to offer himself as a candidate", the words, though accepted as conventional in most manifestos, probably reflected the true position. The "Telegraph" was delighted:

"The impulse to come forward in this critical emergency and this strife of elementary principles and to place his knowledge and ability at the service of the country has induced Mr. Wise to offer himself as a candidate for South Sydney.\(^2\) . . . With several safe and easily obtainable seats at his disposal he has resolved to take his stand in the South Sydney branch (and so give the votes there) the chance, long denied, of electing a candidate of quality and ability. Men of his stamp are all too scarce in our political arena."\(^3\)

The "Herald" was equally pleased to have an advocate such as Wise enlist in the defence of the cause which was so basic to its own interests - but which had now become a struggle of "great principles", and it professed to see in the elevation of the struggle and the calibre of the new men coming in, new purifying influences on political life, whose low tone it had long been lamenting.

Viewed publicly, then, the decision of Wise to mount the hustings seemed well timed and a rather natural consequence of his political activities.

Viewed privately, and from the point of view of Wise's personal interests, however, the decision to try for a seat in parliament at this time was a crucial one: it involved security. That he hoped ultimately to find the fulfilment of his ambitions and his ideals in political life there is no doubt, but the wise course, and the one that suggested itself to him, was first of all to establish

1. *S.H.* 31.1.1887. McMillan's candidature was seen by both the *S.H.* and *D.T.* as proof that the contest was now drawing "men of intellectual vigour and cultivation into the battle". (*D.T.* 31.1.1887). They were very pleased with McMillan.
2. 31.1.1887.
3. 3.2.1887.
4. Editorial, 27.1.1887.
himself at the Bar, for not only was this his only source of income but, as he
tells us, there was a decided prejudice among Sydney attorneys (on whom he depended
for briefs) against the barrister politician. The question he had to face was
whether in his three years of barristerial work he had established such a position
of independence that he might take the risk on his professional future. There was
also his present financial position to consider. By January, 1887, he had just
begun to get clear of the commitments he had undertaken in coming to the colony and
setting up practice. He had started life here with scarcely a penny, already
indebted to Admiral Maxse in England for an advance of £200 for a
professional library. He relates how early prospects had led him by Christmas,
1884, to cable Mrs. Baird that he could make a home for his future wife, but on her
arrival in Melbourne things were so bad that after their marriage he had to borrow
1 money to pay for the return tickets to Sydney. Prospects began to improve,
however, and by 1886 he had established himself sufficiently to pay off his debts
and furnish a new rented home, Carisbrook, at Potts Point. His sails now were
fairly set, it seemed, to advance financially and professionally.

During 1886 advances were made to him to contest a by-election in East
Sydney, but he declined nomination on the grounds that the risk of a failure in an
election fought on side issues was too great, and a failure would discredit the
party and "affect me privately very injuriously". Parkes evidently took up the
question with him again later on, for in another letter Wise elaborates on the
personal difficulties of an early entry into politics: "I have not established
myself sufficiently either in my profession or in public life to run a risk for the
party which my own judgment did not commend". While he assures Parkes of his
loyalty to the party and his appreciation of the "kindness with which you have
addressed me in the matter", he seems quite definite: "I have not the means yet or

1. Wise, p. 81.
the position to run risks and I was unwilling to incur obligation in the matter of 
expenses".

The dissolution of parliament in January, 1887, certainly introduced a 
new situation in Wise's thinking, for not only was there a greater appeal in a 
general election which appeared to be drawing clear of factional politics, but he 
also found himself swept up in the general excitement of electioneering and the 
activity of organizing and promoting a new political party. In this situation 
one could well believe that enthusiasm, or a heightened sense of obligation, might 
have overruled discretion and Wise may have entered the fray on impulse, for 
representations were made that "the cause would suffer if the President of the 
Free Trade Association held aloof, while several other young men would follow his 
example if he became a candidate".

However, private considerations evidently still bore strongly upon him in 
making his decision, and he relates how his last consideration - upon the score of 
expense - appeared to be resolved when Mr. Munro, of McArthur & Co., promised, in 
association with another softgoods businessman, "to look after that for you... 
And", added Mr. Munro, "I will give you two excellent men from our warehouse to be 
your Secretary and you Treasurer".

"Fresh from England and accustomed to the payment of candidates' fees by party 
organizations, I never for a moment imagined that these words had any other 
meaning than that I was to be returned without cost to myself, and in this 
belief, became a candidate for the great working-class constituency of South 
Sydney."3

This promise of financial help may have tipped the balance, but the 
decision Wise then made was to be a vital one - it was to commit him to an active 
political career which was to extend over the next seventeen years of his life in 
New South Wales; and it was to plunge him into financial problems which set up a 

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1. Wise to Parkes, 5.5.1886, P.C., Vol. w-y, p. 133.
3. ibid., p. 103.
continual conflict of interests. Looking back he has described this decision as
a turning-point in his career, "because it brought me prematurely into a prominent
position and because it involved me in financial difficulties from which I have
never got quite free".

That there was an underside of harsh reality to political idealism he was
to discover soon enough. But the shoals which lay ahead were submerged from view
at this moment, and with barely a week before polling day he launched into the
election campaign. The entry of Wise, and A.J. Riley, the Mayor of Sydney, as free-
traders into the South Sydney contest immediately made this constituency something
of a key to the election as a whole, for Protection was also strongly represented.

Two sitting members, J. Toochey and A. Forsyth, both prominent businessmen, were
active and well known protectionists; and apart from these major party candidates
there were a number committed to one party or the other, including Miller, who put
himself forward as the representative of labour, and Mick Simmons, who held simply
a personal allegiance to Parkes and had a sporting disregard for his 40 nomination
fee. In all, with nine candidates competing for its four seats, South Sydney
beheld an exciting week's campaigning.

The South Sydney constituency, extending across the southern end of the
main city area, contained a fairly representative cross-section of the city popula-
ation. There were considerable business interests around the northern sector of
Oxford Street, a leavening of middle-class in the eastern residential area and
extending back along Cleveland Street, and the electorate also contained a fairly
large working-class population, including its share of depressed housing and a

1. ibid., p. 101. One can find Wise making urgent calls on his friend, James
Conroy, for money at various periods right up to 1914. Papers of James Conroy,
op. cit.

2. Forsyth was a rope manufacturer and a leading figure in the Protectionist
Union. Toochey's business interests were in a brewery and hotels.

3. The actual extent of the old South Sydney electorate as it was in 1887 (over)
The issue before the electors had been deliberately narrowed down by Parkes to a straight-out free trade - protection contest. In his keynote election speech in St. Leonard's he had studiously avoided committing himself on outside issues and kept his policy on a high level of generality: to provide "purity and economy of government", to restore confidence and combat the depression, to "lighten the people's burdens", and to restore New South Wales to her "rightful position of primacy and establish her good name abroad". With the practised skill of evasion, his legislative programme contained the same high-sounding but vague promises - to provide a well devised system of local government, to effect much needed reforms in the administration of justice, to mount a careful and searching enquiry into the Civil Service. He circled the pressing problem of finance: "We shall raise our revenue under a tariff more limited than in former years, and virtually throw the ports of the country open to the civilized world". And even on the direct problem of taxation he allowed himself ample room to manoeuvre: "If resort must be had to any new form of taxation, it certainly will not be an income tax, but we shall seek to devise a comprehensive and equitably arranged system of property taxation which shall reach all classes in proportion to their ability to pay".

There is no better example of Parkes' mastery of the game of politics than that he could lead a party into this election almost solely on the emotion deriving from the fiscal question, and by his skill and finesse submerge such pertinent issues as assisted immigration, the eight-hour working day, payment of (from 220) is not easy to determine, as it was broken up into four divisions in 1894. However, it included Oxford Street, in the north, Riley Street, in the east, and Dowling Street, in the west, and extended across the city south of Goulburn Street as far as Newtown. The residential settlement remaining in this inner city area to-day is largely working class, but in 1887 there were many residences, and terraced rows and some areas of middle-class housing to balance the slums and low-standard cottage rows rented to the working classes. Cuttings, Old Sydney, Municipal Library, Sydney.
2. ibid., p. 454.
3. ibid., 455.
4. ibid.
members, and the alienation and taxing of land. These evidently were questions to be settled in less critical times. This was a time of crisis, when "every candidate must speak out the faith that is in him". Protection was the dire enemy to be fought "boldly in the light of day... On every hustings we shall plant the flag of Free-trade with the motto 'He who is not with us is against us'. One must recognize that the intense feeling and the loyalties which were aroused over the tariff question in 1887, and which survived to divide New South Wales politics until the end of the century, was in a large measure due to Parkes' promotion in this election campaign. (It is ironic that when later he wanted to sink the issue in favour of the large national question of federation it was the loyalty of free-traders - later to be led by an equally astute leader - that stood in his way.)

One must also recognize that he could not commit his followers on questions outside this one issue, since a party formed so quickly, and barely a few weeks old, could have no broad policy. That Parkes could give to his following the semblance of party form is a measure of his outstanding leadership qualities.

It is also revelatory of the free trade press that they did not force Parkes to a single moment of truth on the practical implications of his policy, but helped him to lift the contest to an altitude high above "the creeping things which infest politics in times of stagnation". The "Telegraph" cast him in the role of a deliverer coming to "revitalize our politics by the kindling effect of a stirring appeal to primary principles", and the "Herald" spoke of the "true instinct of a statesman in making free-trade the burning question", and reported Parkes "welcomed wherever he went as the leader in a great and just cause".

One of the first observations we might make at this early stage of party

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1. ibid., 457.
3. ibid.
4. 26.1.1887. The "Bulletin" related this great cause of the "Herald" to some very practical interests, asserting that the annual profit which the newspaper derived from importers and merchants amounted to £80,000. "Bulletin", 29.1.1887.
evolution is the conspicuous absence of any programme in the Free Trade Party, which meant that individual candidates could take up widely differing standpoints on issues outside the central tariff question and yet still gather under the party umbrella of free trade. The consequence of this was that a compromise between the individual party members' responsibilities to a leader on one hand, and to his electors on the other, could only be achieved while the legislative programme steered clear of all issues on which a clear difference of opinion existed. Such a practised faction manipulator as Parkes undoubtedly felt he could manage this, but herein lies the key to the problems which were to beset the party in the years ahead.

The differences in policy presented to electors by Free Trade candidates is well illustrated by Wise, and Parkes, for Wise, unlike his leader, was prepared to commit himself on the wider social reform issues, inherent in his concept of free trade liberalism. Indeed, had Wise not come to terms in his political policy with the principles of his philosophy in this, the first real test of his political intentions, then this thesis would not have been written. The fact that, as president of the party's electoral organization, he could, and did, present a policy so widely divergent from that of his party leader, and still remain closely attached to him, is simply a commentary on the ill-defined party structure which lay behind the facade of unity presented to the electorate in 1887.

In his election policy speeches, Wise placed the main emphasis on the social and economic consequences of a policy of protection, as it affected the working man - how it lessens the total amount of wealth, increases costs, and lowers the purchasing power of money. "Protection", he said, "encourages state-supported monopolies and weakens trade-unionism". He strove to disassociate the policy of free trade from the tradition that it was in the interests of the wealthy

exploiter of labour, and to undermine the protectionists' claim to have united
capital and labour, by pointing out that by protecting local manufacturers the
working man was simply adding to the profits of a small self-interested group and
receiving in return nothing more than a higher cost of living. There was nothing
unorthodox in this approach - other free-traders were saying the same sort of
thing - but when Wise tackled the question of revenue and taxation he revealed what
the "Telegraph" nicely termed his "strongly liberal tendency of thought". Wise
argued strongly on the inequality of the indirect tax whereby the rich escaped
their just burden, and presented his case that direct taxes were in the interests
of the working class. His advocacy of a land and income tax was inseparable from
his free trade policy - Parkes himself had been present twelve months earlier when
he outlined his ideas on taxation at the Free Trade Association meeting. In Wise's
view not only were these taxes a permanent, elastic and efficient method of finance
which could be adjusted at will and which would put the financial position of the
country out of danger, but they would also effectively prevent any chance of
protection being adopted for raising revenue. But even more important, it was
Wise's conviction that they represented the only means by which the burdens of
taxation pressing so heavily on the poor could be removed, and the rich made to
bear his proper share of the public burden. Thus to Wise these taxes were the
instrument of social justice, and were central to his whole idea of a free trade
policy.

It was one thing, however, for a young candidate at his first election to
design a large financial reform policy, with no responsibility for carrying it out.
Parkes, on the other hand, had the problems of leadership and parliamentary support
to consider, and he well knew that on such a radical policy change in traditional
finance he could not count on party support, and it would probably split the party.

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1. 3.2.1887.
2. From a survey of Wise's election speeches reported in S.M.H. and D.T. These
   ideas had been fully expounded earlier. See above chapter.
Apart from these considerations, Parkes was firmly set against an income tax - there was a risk of injustice, but worst of all did he fear "the inquisitorial reach of this tax - that persons should have to expose their affairs to a tax-gatherer". To Parkes this was a violation of personal liberty. In a land tax Parkes also saw great dangers that it would act oppressively. Thus do we see the difference in the liberalism of the two men on this question. Parkes, however, had to face the financial implications of free trade in this period of budget deficiency and falling land revenue, but he was making no commitments. He adroitly played the issue, remaining non-specific about the sources of his revenue once the Customs Duty Bill was repealed. He spoke of a "restricted tariff" in one speech, and in another said he favoured alienating a set amount of land. "I will not fetter myself but will exercise my judgment in the disposing of land." Wise's protectionist opponent, Toohay, was not slow in pointing out that "the young bantling representative of the Manchester School who had been sent there by his chief to advocate freetrade" disagreed with his chief, but Parkes himself seemed undisturbed and publicly quite pleased with the performance of the young advocate. After all, he was quite familiar with Wise's ideas, had actively encouraged him to seek election and, just as soon as his own election campaign in St. Leonard's was finished (he was elected unopposed on Nomination Day), he came to South Sydney to give Wise support.

Undoubtedly the candidature of Wise added a spice of interest to the election fare in South Sydney. Though he presented himself as a native Australian

2. S.M.H., 26.1.1887.
3. Nomination Day Speech, ibid., 3.2.1887. A good example of Parkes' evasive and bluffing tactics can be seen when, at Bathurst, he was asked by Sattor (the man he attempted to keep out of the Legislative Council) what other form of taxation the government intended to introduce in lieu of customs duties. Parkes replied: "If Mr. Sattor had a glimmering of constitutional knowledge he ought to know that it would be very improper for me to tell anyone what I am going to do in that respect until I have an opportunity to speak to Parliament." D.T., 11.2.1887.
4. S.M.H., 4.2.1877
by birth and instinct, the presence of this young colonial "bureaucrat" with his Oxford accent and manner, addressing meetings in the Haymarket from the window of Wood's Palace Hotel, or from the balcony of Webb's hotel in Surry Hills, was evidently quite an attraction, and large crowds nightly blocked the streets. He encountered rowdy demonstrations from friends and foes. After one meeting, the "Telegraph" reported a demonstration "worthy of the days when New South Wales politics meant the struggles of great men for great principles", but there were other gatherings at which "he was howled down by the industrious efforts of Protectionists in the crowd". However, he received a very good reception from the free trade papers, and he was outside the range of the "Bulletin's" heaviest fire, which was directed at the vested interests of the "Calico-Jemmy importers" - it contented itself with a jibe at his youthful appearance and the academic arguments of a "president of a lads' debating club". It also seems clear that Wise made an impact on working-class opinion. This evident in the split of trade-union support for the so-called "labour" candidate, Miller, for some unionists rejected Miller's claim to represent labour, i.e., organised labour, and preferred the candidature of Wise and joined his committee.

Other elements outside the fiscal issue entered into the election. Sectarian feeling undoubtedly had its influence in South Sydney, as it did elsewhere. It was generally held that the Loyal Orange Institute was supporting the Parkes party, and the "Bulletin" claimed to have encountered the ghost of Dutch William "stalking through the slums of South Sydney" while, as a counterweight, Catholic support for Protection was naturally alleged. Another issue was the

1. Manifesto, 31.1.1887.
2. 3.2.1887.
3. Ibid., 1.2.1887.
4. 12.2.1887.
5. One unionist, James Lawrence, explained why he and others supported Wise: "We support Mr. Wise because we are free-traders and because he is sound on labour questions, in proof of which I would refer to the report of the last Trade Union Congress held in Sydney." D.T., 4.2.1887.
6. See letters, D.T., 1.2.1887. For evidence and commentary on the sectarian background to this election, see A.W. Martin, "Electoral Contests in Yass and (over)
"drink question" for, unlike the sectarian ghosts, the missionaries of the temperance organizations canvassed the electorate and, with William Tooke's hotel and brewery interests involved, "beer and the Bible" entered the struggle. Perhaps these two influences were balanced in Wise's case, for what he may have gained from the L.O.T. he would have lost from the Independent Order of Good Templars, who did not include him among their list of approved candidates. But these are the incalculable factors.

Meanwhile the barometer of political excitement rose steadily as polling day approached. Evidence of this was shown on Nomination Day (Thursday), when a large crowd gathered in the rain to hear all nine candidates nominate from the hustings erected in the centre of Belmore Park. Though his noisy demonstrators were there again to "boot him down," Wise got one of the best shovings of hands, and his supporters were probably feeling fairly confident when the poll opened on Saturday, February 5th. Their confidence was justified, but before his election was announced the young candidate was to witness such a remarkable demonstration of the democratic process that the visual impression of his first election to Parliament would surely remain with him ever afterwards.

The poll closed at 4 p.m. and was due to be announced at 5 p.m., by which time about 24,000 persons had gathered "with arguments a-plenty still going on". Two hours later, the result was still not declared, and now a large crowd, estimated by the "Herald's" reporter as "5,000 - 6,000 men wedged in a perspiring mass," had gathered in front of the booths. Political excitement, plus a goodly mixture of the Saturday afternoon intake of malt, hops, and yeast dispensed by the many local hotels soon expressed itself in an outburst of fighting. We will let our reporter describe the scene:

"In several places fighting began as if the hot blood of all the combatants had boiled over all at once... The inner half of the crowd was far too

(from 225)


1. S.M.E., 4.2.1887.
tightly squeezed together to fight. No man could get his arm up to his shoulder, let alone straighten it out. The row was enough to take the edge off all the noise of the trains as they thundered and screamed through the park. But on the outer edge there was more room to draw off in, and whenever a couple of men went in at each other their friends joined in the mêlée, and the crowd pranced around with them all over the grass—much to the terror of sundry nurse girls whom a sudden swoop of the rabble would send scuttling out of a gate dragging an infant with each hand as if their last hour had come. 1

The candidates meanwhile were inside the temporary polling structure awaiting the declaration of the poll and listening to the tumult without. Patience has its limits in such circumstances, and the limit was reached soon after 7 p.m. when something of a stampede broke out in the crowd and they began to invade the booths and break down the partitions where the clerks were still counting. The embarrassed electoral officer, Mr. Whidden, attempted to stem the public invasion, and from the top of a table called on the crowd to support him "in maintaining the right and proper course", adding that this was his first time as an electoral officer. The rooms were finally cleared, the counting finished, and order evidently restored sufficiently to allow the long-awaited declaration. Wise was elected. He had received 3,067 votes, second only behind Mayor Riley (3426), and the other free-trader, Withers, was next. Toohay was fourth in the counting, giving only one seat to Protection. In his turn Wise came forward to the front of the hustings and amid the tumult and the shouting—"for pugilism continued throughout"—he thanked them for "the great and unexpected honour they had bestowed upon him".

Oxford was never like this.

The convincing defeat of the protectionist forces in this strongly held frontier was a pointer to the results of the election as a whole. Polling continued in the country for some time, but it was obvious from the city results that free trade was to be in the chariot and not tied to its wheels, as O'Sullivan had

1. S.M.H., 7, 2, 1887.
2. Ibid.
predicted. At all events, it was clearly demonstrated that the union of farmers, manufacturers, and workers, which had been the theme of the protectionist demonstration, had come undone in the elections, and that city workers especially had deserted the cause. When the final results were in, the "Telegraph" estimated that three quarters of the new House were free-traders, although this did not necessarily mean they were all supporters of Henry Parkes. However, though it was a convincing victory for free trade it was also a great personal triumph for Parkes, and illustrated again his remarkable sense of timing and skill in election stage-management.

Before proceeding with a history of Wise's parliamentary career in the Free Trade Party, three problems must be raised which are central to this study: First, one must consider the question as to what extent the policy Wise presented in South Sydney could be identified with that of the party, now that a mandate had been given to implement a policy of free trade. To do this, it is necessary to look briefly at the kind of party Wise joined in parliament. Alan Martin has shown the antecedents of the two parties which emerged in 1887 in an almost continuous line of descent from the faction groupings of New South Wales politics of the previous twenty years; he has also grouped the economic forces behind the two parties—manufacturers, farmers, and skilled artisans forming the nucleus of the protectionist movement, while bankers, traders, and, at first, pastoralists identified their economic interests with free trade.

We have noticed in an earlier chapter how these fiscal "parties" were called into being by the chaotic administration of rapidly changing faction ministries when faced with the deteriorating conditions of economic depression and Treasury

1. Only three protectionists were elected from city constituencies, D.T., 25.2.1887
2. ibid.
3. The Emergence of Political Parties in New South Wales during the Eighteen-Eighties", A.N.U. typescript, M.L., henceforth "B".
deficiencies following 1885. The passage of a Customs Duty Bill by the Dibbs - Jennings government stirred both sides to action and with the mobilization of forces and the advent of electoral organizations - a rather natural evolution - the contest of 1887 was given the appearance of being a turning-point in political life. Contemporaries, who had long witnessed the old order, thought they saw a new one dawning, and this general feeling was expressed by W. C. Wall in parliament: "It was not a question now as to who should govern the country... the time had come when the great question of freetrade or protection had to be decided and fought out by the people of the country", and the "Freder" saw "something fresh and inspiring in this fair and open contest about a great question". This feeling of change reflected by contemporary opinion along with the presence at this point of two well defined electoral organizations has, in my opinion, created a false picture of party development at this stage.

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I do not wish to enter the controversy as to whether these middle-class parties provided the prototype for modern party structure, or whether this only came with the Labour Party in 1891, as this argument turns generally on the matter.

1. S.M.H., 20.1.1887.
2. 27.1.1887.
3. The view advanced by Bruce Mansfield and generally supported by Alan Martin is that "modern political organization came to New South Wales not with the Labour Party in 1891, but with the Protectionist and Free Trade parties". (B. E. Mansfield, "Party Organization in N.S.W. Elections, 1889", H.S.A.N.Z., Vol. 42, p. 71. Martin presents a somewhat different view: "In the elections of 1887 and 1889, for the first time two recognizable parties (appeared) in the legislature." (He speaks elsewhere of two coherent parties, "E", p. 123.) By 1889 he sees the completion of a transitional stage with the emergence of a well-knit two party system, wherein were displayed organizational features of a highly developed nature (See supplementary note for further discussion, "B", p. 26.) As against these views, we have that of H. V. Evatt that the Labour Party brought coherence to political life - "that politics before 1890 were controlled by opportunists and demagogues"(p.1), and that the parties were little more than "rival syndicates" (p.15). (H. V. Evatt, "Australian Labour Leader"). More recently, we have Bode Nairn's conclusion: "In fact the electoral organizations of freetraders and protectionists were spasmodic and rudderless at all times in the 1880's and by the 1891 election had completely evaporated". (Review of "Radical and Working Class Politics", H.S.A.N.Z., Vol. 9, No. 35, p. 325.) (Further to the argument, see Peter Lovelady, "A Note on Nineteenth Century Party Organization in N.S.W.", and reply by Bode Nairn, H.S.A.N.Z., Vol. 9, No. 36, p. 424.)
of organization. Undoubtedly, the mere reduction of political groups to two, with organized support outside the sphere of parliamentary control and the presence of an over-riding issue with organized propaganda, was a real breakthrough in New South Wales political history, but it also gave to the situation the semblance of party maturity which was in reality not there. Whether a political party can be said to exist at any particular point depends on definition, but if we look to one of the necessary criteria which Martin has established - that there be a "united desire to promote a political principle or set of principles" - then in my view, neither party contesting the election of 1887 can rightly be so called, for beyond the limited purpose of repealing, maintaining, or altering a piece of tariff legislation, there can be found no clearly defined aims, common purposes, or general desire to embody a set of principles in a legislative programme. On the many important social and political issues which were coming to the forefront in New South Wales about this time no community of ideas can be found in either fiscal "party", and if one accepts Bode Hainl's condition that "a comprehensive and durable reform programme" is an essential requirement for any political party, then one must agree that this was first to be found in the Labour Party of 1891, but whether or not the divided and leaderless Labour Party could itself qualify is another question.

In the light of this interpretation we might look briefly at the Free-Trade Party policy, or lack of it. Freetraders spoke freely of their "policy", and J.F. Burns, Parkes' Treasurer, and the man most concerned with the taxation

1. Supplementary note to "B", p. 28.
2. "A Note on Nineteenth Century Party Organization in N.S.W. - Reply to P. Leveday", op. cit., p. 428. Undoubtedly much can be explained in these terms - it would seem the very criterion of faction politics - but the group theorists' idea that a political party is merely the sum of its pressure-group parts and that it grows and survives to the extent it mediates the demands of these varied group interests, I find unconvinving. To my mind it leaves out all consideration of the influence of ideas and seems to deny the basis of any political philosophy. It is too cynical to reduce all "principles" to the pragmatic test of survival (over)
issue, asserted that "all members of the government were thoroughly united and
would stand or fall together". But on the question of taxation, the ideas of Wise
and Burns could not be further apart. Burns not only rejected direct taxation as
Treasury policy, but expressed his belief that it was quite outside the province of
government to exact such taxes unless absolutely necessary. Whilst Wise in South
Sydney promoted the idea of the state using taxation to secure a greater measure of
social and economic freedom and equality, Burns in Hunter was assuring his electors
that "the greatest good of the greatest number was accomplished by leaving every
individual unfettered by state restrictions... (for) much of the misery of man-
kind was traceable to the improper interference of governments in matters foreign
to their function". Fundamentally, here was a conflict in liberal philosophy,
for Burns held closely to the ideas of classical individualism. Whilst these two
positions may represent an extreme polarity of ideas within the party, a survey of
the policies of other free trade candidates reveals no unanimity on this basic
question. When Parkes came to West Sydney to support his new Minister for Mines,
Abigail, he boldly told the electors that "they knew what the Government aimed at
- it had raised strong, clear issues". But what Abigail was telling his electors
that the government aimed at was quite different to what Burns was saying in Hunter.
Abigail emphasized to his city electorate just how hard a property tax (which
presumably would be enacted) would fall upon the wealthy property owner, and how hard
the ad valorem tax (which presumably would be abolished) fell upon the working man.

On the very same morning, over the mountains at Orange, however, the Minister for
Justice, W. Clark, was setting forth something quite different again. Clark had
(from 231) by mediation. See J.Campbell, "Groups, Parties, and Federation", and
1. Saddle. 4.2.1887.
2. Ibid.
3. For other variations on the theme of taxation, see the views of W. Schey (West
Sydney), Dr. Carter (Bathurst), and R. J. Ine (Lithgow).
4. Ibid., 3.2.1887.
5. Ibid.
the support of some wealthy property owners to consider, and he found it more
diplomatic to keep to the Parkesian recipe. He would simplify the tariff, and the
Customs Duties Bill would be repealed "when some alternative source of revenue had
been substituted". Another minister, Garrett, rejected the idea that a property
tax had anything to do with a free trade policy. This wide divergence of view
within the Free Trade Party on taxation was also reflected in other important issues
outside the fiscal question, e.g., on democratic issues such as payment of members,
and an elective upper house.

The question, then as to how such differences could co-exist within a
party offering a policy of free trade can only be answered by the simple conclusion
that the party had no real policy at all. Allegiance to the great principle of
free trade was the unifying force in the election, and was invoked earnestly enough;
but when reduced to the outline of a programme to which a majority would subscribe
- and this was Parkes' task in gathering the free trade elements together under his
banner - the mystical principle of free trade materialized as a narrow fiscal
project to do away with a number of duties imposed by Dibbs' Customs Duties Bill.

As for the Protectionist Party, it was easier to state what its fiscal
policy was to be, as the revenue question could be linked with the protection of
native industries in the same taxation principle; but there were inherent difficul-
ties in such a simple formula for a party drawing its support from manufacturers,
farmers, and workers. Inevitably the workers would demand that the question of
the inequality of indirect taxation be faced, while the problem of striking at the
wealthy pastoralist by a land tax involved difficulty with the farmers. E.W.

O'Sullivan was able to arrive at a position before the election where he could

1. Ibid., 3.2.1887.
2. Parkes had proposed certain administrative changes upon which there was a
general agreement among his followers, e.g., the proposals to create a Railways
Commission, a Public Works Committee, and a reform of the Civil Service, but these
had no relation to a unified free trade programme.
reconcile direct taxation, even a land tax, with his protectionism. So too could the brewer, Toohey; but such a bridge to social reform was difficult and, in general, protectionists denounced the property tax as the election. The diversity on the broader aspects of the fiscal question which we have observed among free-traders at this election was also found among the protectionists, and beyond this again there was an even greater problem of identifying in a common policy the interests of workers and manufacturers on such issues as factory laws and the eight-hour day. In fact, as only three city protectionists won seats, the party tended to take on the appearance of a country party. Once the election was over, these conflicts became more evident, and open disunity appeared when the manufacturers' clique finally deserted the opposition for the cross benches.

The Protection party had another great weakness when it first emerged as the opposition. It had no acknowledged leader. A number of Parkes' political enemies had re-entered the House still maintaining an allegiance to free trade, but this was now a no-man's land in the new two-party division, and in many cases conversions to protection proved the better course. In July Dibbs discovered the error of his free trade ways when, by a happy conjunction of intellectual discovery and political opportunity, he moved across to take over the leadership of the new party, much to the disgust of the "Bulletin". Dibbs' leadership, though it gave political experience to protection, further diluted the reformist character of the party which radicals such as Malville, Walker, and O'Sullivan had attempted to project. Thus, six months after the election, two of the veteran faction-leaders

1. See B.E. Mansfield, op. cit., p. 46.
2. E.g., see the conflict on this question in the election speeches of H. Copeland (New England) and Sir John Young (Hartley).
3. Barbara Atkins, op. cit., p. 249. Bruce Mansfield shows the failure of the radical group to have a reform programme accepted (op. cit., chap. II, p. 66).
4. J.P. Abbott, Henry Copeland, T.M. Slattery were among the old free-traders who became protectionists before or soon after the election. Rationalization took some novel forms. Slattery's conversion took place in quite romantic circumstances during his honeymoon in Victoria, when everything in the protectionist state took on another hue (D.T., 1.2.1887).
once more led rival parties in the House. In these circumstances, to suggest that methods of leadership acquired by long experience would quickly give way before some new concept of party organization or that any durable policies would now be laid down which endangered a leader’s position, is quite unrealistic. The old personality-centred factions had gone, but the old leaders still dominated the new grouping. As to the electorate, long accustomed to individual and local politics, and affected by such strong outside issues as sectarianism, it is difficult to say to what extent it was persuaded by the fiscal publicists and the press emphasis on the new struggle of great principles. The day of the individualist local politician was far from over, and the leader’s task in keeping supporters together finally meant a concentration on administration in policy and keeping legislation as empirical as possible. Parkes was later to explain his failure to legislate during the 1887–8 administration in these very terms: “There was no coherence, no compact union among those to whom the ministry was entitled to look for support... If members had loyally acted together... a Local Government Bill and other large measures may have been carried into law”. Just how such adherence was to be achieved within a party without a policy Parkes doesn’t discuss. Presumably it was by personal loyalty to himself as leader.

Here, I believe, is the key to an understanding of the fiscal party policies and legislation in the period prior to the emergence of the Labour Party, and it must be understood in following the course of Wise’s politics. Despite the appearance of two distinct parties he was to find, in fact, no division based on a political philosophy or clear lines of policy such as he was familiar with in his English experience. The Free Trade party provided no natural home for his liberalism, and it would be true to say that there was more common ground in terms of social policy in the free-trade liberalism of Wise and the democratic protectionism

of O'Sullivan than there was within his own party. That a conservative party on English lines could not exist in Australia is a truism which needs no explanation, but had a more logical and realistic division of political thought based on some liberal-radical/conservative view of social progress coincided with the emergence of middle-class party forms in New South Wales, the political history of the state may have taken an entirely different course. That it did not is one of the significant factors explaining the emergence of a distinctively working-class party in 1891, and incidentally it forms one of the themes for the following chapters - the efforts of Wise to seed the FreeTrade Party with his ideas, for it must have soon become apparent to him in 1887 that the principles of liberalism which he accepted as familiar were totally unfamiliar and unacceptable to many in his own party.

This brings us to the second problem which must be raised at the very
outset of Wise's career within the FreeTrade Party: what was to be the relationship of Wise to Parkes, once he was within the parliamentary party, in view of the wide difference in their respective policies? We might first consider Wise's position as President of the FreeTrade Association, in relation to Parkes' leadership.

In a number of papers which he has published on aspects of Parkes' career, Alan Martin consistently takes the view that Parkes' decline began with the 1887 election when a new group of politicians sponsored by the FreeTrade Association emerged to challenge his leadership. These Association men, he maintains, were sincere free-traders whose ideas were "somewhat alien to the experience and inclinations of Parkes", and in their ideals there was an implied censure of Parkes and the older politicians. "(The Association's) propaganda was marked by a high-toned idealism and a readiness to interpret 'free-trade' as a total liberal philosophy, that stood in sharp contrast to the older politicians." Martin notes a definite estrangement, and at the 1887 poll, although the Association endorsed Parkes' followers as free-trade candidates and provided electoral facilities, co-operation ended there. "The Association did not become the 'tool' of the Parkes' party while Parkes held aloof from the deliberation of the FreeTrade Council and generally carried out a campaign on the old lines". It is easy to sense in this division of purpose, Martin observes, "a feeling of distrust on the part of Parkes and his followers" (presumably followers of the old faction days), a distrust which was evidenced in Parkes' choice of colleagues when called upon to form a new government. Ignoring the Association men, he constructed his Cabinet with an eye to the old factional groupings." He did not include any Association man who in reality were
the true architects of the free trade victory. From this point onwards Parkes' power waned, for the new men could not be held back and by 1889 Martin sees the triumph of their influence when Parkes formed a new cabinet which included four of their members. "This", he says, "signified the inevitable recognition of the new Freetraders."

This picture of the declining influence of Parkes in the face of developing party organization and new ideas is very plausible and renders more convincing the explanation often given of Parkes' call for Federation in 1889, so timed that it might revive his failing prestige and give him a new lease of political life. Martin agrees that this appears the most logical explanation for the timing Parkes' Tenterfield speech. This hypothesis has obvious implications for this study, since Wise, as President of the FreeTrade Association, is thereby placed in a most unusual position in his relationship with Parkes. We have already noted that personal factors were involved in the loyalty Wise gave to Parkes, but if Martin's case holds, the ambivalence of this private-public relationship could scarcely be maintained once he was a member of the parliamentary party. One finds, however, no change in Wise's attitude; his support for Parkes' leadership is demonstrated openly and in his private correspondence. Because of this one must look more closely at Martin's argument, for when put to the test of evidence I don't believe the facts support his interpretation and the problem of a divided allegiance for Wise just doesn't exist.

First, as to co-operation with the FreeTrade Association, Martin says remained aloof. That Parkes would be an active member I think is the unusual point. Wisdom would generally decree against a parliamentary leader taking a

1. "D", p. 266.
2. Ibid., p. 207.
3. Ibid., p. 206.
4. Ibid., p. 206.
leading part in an outside organization. But this does not imply lack of interest or sympathy. Parkes' interest in the work of the Association would seem to be demonstrated when he acted as chairman of its first public meeting. As we have seen, twice during 1886 he offered to support Wise's candidature, and the correspondence of the Association's secretary, E. Pulsford, with Parkes up until 1892, gives no hint of a difference. In 1889, the point at which Martin suggests the Association had reached its greatest measure of influence and independence, culminating in the formation of a Free Trade and Liberal Association with a party organizing committee, Parkes is not standing "aloof". At the Free Trade Conference run by the newly organized Association, he is kept fully informed of proceedings; he accepts the invitation to address the conference, and acts as a conference chairman.

Second, there was no conflict in the aims of the Association and those of Parkes, as the association's declared aims were propagandist only, and in promoting free trade its activities did not encroach on those of the political party. In its electoral work it would seem impossible that it could use such political initiative as the Free Trade Council undertook in 1887 without the approval and cooperation of Parkes. Had Parkes and the Association organized separate campaigns, or engaged in selecting candidates, organizing meetings, etc., without close liaison the result would have been chaotic. It is also difficult to imagine that Parkes,

1. Six months after the election of 1887, Pulsford, representing the Council of the Free Trade Association writes requesting Parkes to speak at the Annual Public Meeting. 19.7.1887, P.C., Vol. 30, p. 394. See also letter discussing resolutions to be put to the Association, ibid., p. 229.
2. See: First Report of Organizing Committee of Free Trade Party sent to Parkes, P.C., Vol. 14, p. 357; Pulsford to Parkes, 31.7.1889, ibid., p. 357; Conference Programme, ibid., p. 351. The conference was held over five nights and addresses were given by Dr. Carran, G.H. Reid, J.H. Carruthers, B.R. Wise, and Sir Henry Parkes. Parkes chaired the final meeting of the conference.
4. See Martin's evidence of Parkes' electoral organization at the 1887 election, "B". He was still using his own avenues of electoral management in 1891, (over)
who had brought the election on as a calculated piece of political strategy, would
have allowed control to move out of his hands without personal delegation.

A more likely explanation can, I think, be found in the special circum-
stances of a sudden dissolution of parliament and a rushed election campaign. The
Association offered its services and facilities, and Parkes was happy to accept,
and enlisted the help of the Association as a central agency in the difficult task
of co-ordinating and promoting the free trade campaign while he worked in St. Leon-
ards and visited a number of electorates. Rather than a spirit of distrust, it
would seem that the closest co-operation was involved. Here again the close
relationship between Parkes and Wise is important, for Wise was undoubtedly one of
the most influential and active men on the FreeTrade Association Council, and it
was Wise, perhaps more than any other politician, who looked to a future rule for
the Association in establishing some permanent party structure. At the FreeTrade
Banquet following the election, as president, he made an appeal to party members
for funds to keep the Association going and to set up an improved electoral organ-
ization. His appeal, however, gained little response, and even active opposition
from the old-time free-trader, Sir John Robertson, who declared "We will never have
freedom if we are to be governed by Associations. . . For God's sake never buy a
vote for your money. I believe the Association did more harm in the last election
than it did good". Marking back to the old days, he said there were no tinkers
interfering then, and he resented being lectured to by Wise, "a youngster" who got
his free trade ideas from books. "I would not give a snap of my fingers for them,"
he concluded. Whilst Parkes may have shared some of this prejudice about organised
(from 239) as we gather from a letter from Bruce Smith and the Electoral Committee
requesting information from Parkes as to affairs in the constituencies of Albury,
1. Parliament was dissolved on January 26th, and the date of city polling was Feb.
5th. Parkes has recalled how unprepared he was for the Governor's Commission which
came while he was in the country. Henry Parkes, op. cit., p. 451.
2. S.M.H., 15.3.1887.
politics, he at no time discouraged Wise, and actively supported his efforts publicly. To the electors of South Sydney he declared that Wise "afforded ample proof of his consistency of purpose, his courage, and his unsleeping attachment to principles."

As to Martin's reasoning that Parkes' distrust of the Association is evidenced by his failure to appoint any Association men to his cabinet - this evidence just doesn't stand, as Parkes had appointed his ministry before parliament was dissolved, and would have been most unlikely to change it after the election, as the individual ministers had not even entered the House before the poll. Even had a new cabinet been formed after the election, the suggestion that newly elected members might have gone straight into the ministry is rather unusual. In point of fact, the first minister Parkes had occasion to appoint after the election was the President of the FreeTrade Association, for Wise took over as Attorney-General in May. If distrust and ill feeling did develop one would expect the Opposition to capitalize on such differences - Toohey was quick to point out how Wise's policy differed from Parkes' - but the disharmony that is mentioned is that existing among the "older politicians", e.g., the dislike of Reid and Went for Parkes, and the "Bulletin's" claim that Parkes' cabinet included some erstwhile Protectionists. Once the election was over, any smouldering antagonism or distrust might be expected to appear more openly. But the Opposition attitude in parliament is rather that the Association has been bent to Parkes' purpose, and the two prominent Association men, Wise and McMillan, are there to give a free trade front to the Parkes party.

Finally, we must take a closer look at "the well defined group of young Association politicians... who appear to have gradually secured control of the

1. ibid., 1.6.1887.
2. It was constitutionally necessary that they should not. Before payment of members, ministers of the Crown occupying an office of profit had to be re-elected. Parkes got round this problem in his own case by appointing himself Vice President of the Executive Council so that he could meet Parliament and gain supply for the period of the election poll.
3. 29.1.1887.
parliamentary Free trade party”. They are distinguished by Martin by their sincerity as free-traders, combining "a sincere belief in the value of free trade as a commercial policy with an idealistic view of free trade as a liberal philosophy". The four men produced by the election of 1887 who collectively represent the strongest influences behind the "new" free trade movement, he says, are McMillan (the merchant), Bruce Smith (shipper), and the lawyers, E.H. Wise and J.H. Carruthers. But Bruce Smith did not even stand for election in 1887, and in any case he was hardly a new man, having been a member of two previous parliaments (1882-4). Whether Smith or Carruthers were even members of the Association at this point is doubtful. Neither of their names appears as members of the Free Trade Council and neither Carruthers nor his committee refer to his part in Association affairs. This leaves the two most prominent Association men, Wise and McMillan, to whom we should look for some evidence of the "division of purpose" Martin speaks of.

As to Wise, we know his support and loyalty to Parkes remained unbroken. Regarding McMillan, I have found no evidence in the Parkes correspondence to show that he was critical of Parkes’ leadership, or that any serious differences existed between them during this parliament. Rather, Martin himself shows a very close personal relationship during 1888-89 when McMillan was going through a personal crisis and appreciated Parkes’ sympathy; and apart from the disappointment which Wise and McMillan felt at the limited measure of practical free-trade legislation enacted by Parkes, they gave Parkes full support in the House. There was to be trouble in the ministry of 1887-8, and Parkes did complain of lack of support, but significantly it is to McMillan that he writes, and though he does not mention individuals, it is clear that the opposition comes, not from these "Association" men, but in centre in the older politicians in the ministry and their friends.

4. Smith was the member for Gundagai. He was elected as a member for the Glete in 1889, N.S.W. Parliamentary Record.
He demanded the resignation of one of his ministers, Garrett, and Foster, the 
Attorney-General, resigned because of a dispute with Parkes over ajudgeship. At 
the end of the parliament he commented bitterly to McMillan: "The Ministerial 
majority in the last Parliament disclosed aspects of political conduct which I do 
not care to meet again", and he spoke of resigning leadership in preference to a 
dependence on the support of unreliable followers which he termed "a form of 
slavery".

In view of this, the fact that first Wise (1887) and then Carruthers, 
McMillan and Smith (1889) were taken into the ministry suggests to me the very 
reverse of Martin's interpretation - that Parkes was in fact confident of their 
support. The recognition of these new men, Martin suggests, was "inevitable". 
One can accept this, as unquestionably they were men of ability, but in no sense 
does this imply that Parkes' hand was forced. One would need to demonstrate a 
very considerable loss of authority before it could be suggested that Parkes would 
appoint to the ministry men who were either hostile or out of sympathy with his 
leadership, or whose loyalty he distrusted. The extent to which his powers had 
been limited by concessions to these "new men" can be gauged by his strong reaction 
when he considered their actions as ministers too independent of his authority.
Bruce Smith evidently proved a difficult man in the ministry, but Parkes obviously 
was not prepared to accept insubordination and clearly contemplated Smith's dis-
missal in a letter to the Governor: "He (Smith) obviously accepted office from me 
without my leadership... our relations have become so distant that he may have to 
leave the Ministry, for I am not disposed to put up with much more of his thinly 
disguised offensive ness." McMillan was also to discover how jealously the old

3. The fourth man in the cabinet of 1889, whom Martin designates a "new" free-
trader, was Daniel O'Connor, but he hardly merits the title. He had been in par-
liament continuously since 1877, and held office previously in the Robertson 
ministry of 1885–6.
man held to the reigns of government, when Parkes publicly censured him and rather brutally over- rode his authority during the Maritime Strike incidents in 1890 when McMillan was Acting Premier. Though laid up with a broken leg, Parkes emphasized where the executive power resided. In a public statement humbly noting McMillan, he said: "I cannot admit that any other minister is empowered to speak for the government." So too with O'Connor. Parkes reminded him very pointedly of what he expected of a minister when O'Connor's absences from the Assembly exceeded what what Parkes felt to be the duty and responsibility of a cabinet position.

Martin's conclusion that after 1887 Parkes "was fumbling to maintain his 3 position among new men and methods"; that his power was tottering, "sustained only by the residue of prestige remaining from former days, and by his championship 4 of diversionary causes like Federations; must be accepted as the judgment of a scholar, and is supported by the opinion of H.V. Evatt who also concluded that "by 1887 (Parkes') influence had almost ceased to exist, and he soon lost the leadership of the Free Trade Party". Undoubtedly many of the old party management techniques had become less serviceable and the new party-type organization was now indispensable to electoral success. Undoubtedly too, he resorted to some heavy- handed methods and pressure tactics to maintain control. But the notion that he was losing control or "out of touch with his party", or that the "Free Trade Party 6 had evolved under the direction of younger men", I find unacceptable on the evidence. It is my contention that up till the time of his retirement in 1891 the Free Trade Party was essentially a Parkes party, and that no rival leader or group emerged during this time to undermine his authority or seriously to challenge his

1. S.H., 20.9.1890, cited by Martin, "C", p. 212. Martin tells how, in a cabinet crisis following McMillan's resignation, Parkes apologized, but at the same time "he reiterated his claim to supremacy in the Cabinet".
2. Parkes to McMillan (who was asked to deliver the censure), P.C., Vol. 46, p. 201.
5. "Liberalism in Australia", p. 15.
leadership. In support of this one may look to Deskin's assessment of Parkes' power and influence. Referring specifically to this period, he speaks of Parkes exercising "an immense influence" and "overshadowing all his rivals". Just how secure was Parkes' leadership may be gauged by the real problem the Free Trade Party faced when the time came to replace him.

Martin's view of Parkes has won fairly general acceptance. Because of this, it is necessary to emphasize, in following Wise's career in the Free Trade Party, that it is an unnecessarily false picture to see him as part of a movement to challenge Parkes' leadership, just as it is also completely misleading to take the view that the direction of the party had come under the control of the Free Trade Association politicians, of whom Wise was a leading figure. Whilst we can view Wise's efforts to influence free-traders and public opinion generally from organizations outside the party, his attempt to find lodgement for his ideas and to promote a broad social policy of free trade within the party must be seen in the context of a Parkes-led party. When Parkes stood down, Wise gave his support to the new leader, Reid, but made it absolutely clear that he still regarded Parkes as the natural leader and, should he return, Parkes would have his allegiance.

This brings us to the third problem which we should briefly discuss in our study of Wise as a policy-maker in the Free Trade Party — how his own clearly defined liberal philosophy was related to the "idealistic view of freetrade as a liberal political philosophy" expressed by the Association free-traders, and to the old-time liberalism of Parkes. The gap separating the ideas of Wise and Parkes we have already noted, and although Wise might look to Parkes' statesmanship and his dominant personality for leadership, ideologically his place would seem to be with the new liberal free-traders. Once again, however, Martin's analysis must be re-assessed, for in the first place I don't think it can be shown that there was a distinctive school of liberal thought common to these Association free-traders, and secondly, it is in no way clear from Martin's evidence just what constituted this

"liberal philosophy" or in what respects it was "alien to the experience and inclination of Parkes". Martin speaks of the Association propaganda being marked by a "high-toned idealism" and a "readiness to interpret freetrade as a total liberal philosophy", but this is quite vague, and, after all, there was nothing alien to the inclination of Parkes here - he was ever ready to impart these very qualities to his own free trade propaganda.

If Wise's ideas were representative of the Association propaganda then Martin's view could be fairly taken; but in fact Wise himself emphasized how his ideas could not be taken to represent the views of the Association. Regarding taxation, he told a public meeting his views were not those of the Free Trade Association Council, for it was bound only "on the principle of freetrade and protection". At the election of 1887, the Association held to this position on all issues outside the straight-out fiscal question, Pulsford, the secretary, refusing to commit the Council on questions of social policy. Of the free trade "propaganda" which one can distinguish as carrying the Association's imprimatur, the emphasis appears to be almost exclusively devoted to the economic arguments.

Edward Pulsford was an indefatigable publicist of this kind of material and his writings, perhaps, best represent the Association propaganda; it published some of his pamphlets and 10,000 copies of a Pulsford address were distributed in the 1887 election campaign. In these statistic-studded pieces the argument is considered from all its economic angles, but beyond an implicit faith in commercial freedom to produce prosperity and a happy view of the free city of Sydney developing into the

3. For Parkes' view of free trade as part of a total view of freedom, see his speech on Public Affairs, 1886 ("Fifty Years in the Making of Australia History", p. 446-7, and for his own "high-toned idealism", his speech to the electors of St. Leonards is one of many examples, ibid., p. 466-7).
4. S.M.H., 23.1.1886.
5. Ibid., 24.1.1887.
great South Pacific entrepôt, there is no development of any liberal free trade philosophy. It would seem that the Association expressed no philosophy - its self-imposed restrictions on political opinion outside the fiscal issue would ensure that it did not. To find the liberal political philosophy of which Martin speaks we must then look for some commonly held liberal principles among the individual new free-traders.

Of the four men Martin selects as typifying this new idealistic outlook, Wise and Smith were the most doctrinaire. But the liberal concepts of these two men could not be further apart, and it would have been quite impossible for their ideas to co-exist in any far-reaching liberal philosophy. Wise's liberal philosophy, grounded in Green's and Toynbee's idealism, stood directly opposed to the extreme individualism of Smith, which derived particularly from Spencer. Whilst Wise would look to the state to interfere actively in social and industrial relations to secure a greater measure of liberty, Smith even stood opposed to compulsory education as an undue interference of the state with personal liberty, and spoke of "ignorantly-conceived attempts by legislation to interfere with the various human activities of a progressive people". Whereas to Wise the new liberal epoch was just dawning, to Smith in 1887 the "aggressive function of liberalism" was over. It now remained to preserve and "guard over the equal liberties of citizens generally".

With McMillan we have no elaborate doctrinal statement of his liberal philosophy. Martin speaks of a "jealous regard for the rights of the individual accompanied by his broader vision of the common good", but from his many speeches it is clear that he remained fairly close to the Manchester School, and he shared few of Wise's philosophic convictions. The separation of their ideas can easily be seen in McMillan's veneration of the principle of "freedom of contract" which Wise

2. op. cit., p. 10.
3. op. cit., p. 203.
opposed as a violation of true liberalism, and also in McMillan’s attitude to state regulation of labour conditions. The widest separation of their basic liberal outlook, across which no bridge could be thrown, was later to be revealed in McMillan’s strong opposition to the principles of compulsory arbitration.

It must be noted that both McMillan and Smith had a very strong economic stake in the preservation of free trade—Smith was a managing director of the shipping company of Howard Smith & Sons, and McMillan was a managing partner in the large importing and trading company of A. McArthur & Co. In 1887, he was President of the Chamber of Commerce, and could advise Chamber members that a free trade victory would "pay them very well in the future". One cannot therefrom infer—as many opponents openly stated—that economic self-interest was the sole motivation. McMillan had a very high sense of duty and there was undoubted sincerity in his ideal of the responsibility of men of his class to enter public life and contribute to good government, and Smith also, I believe, was activated by a higher sense of purpose in his political life than the defence of class or economic interests. It can also be asserted that for these men commercial freedom was a high principle, just as the protection of native industries was for many of their opponents. But the issue here is not their political idealism; it is their political philosophy, and one might well quote Martin’s own sage words: “the fact remains that men are largely moulded by their circumstances, and in McMillan’s case (and the same can be said of Smith), “economic interest reinforced political principle in making him a devoted advocate of freedom of trade”. One might well add that it also set up natural limitations for any philosophic view of liberalism.

In the ideas of Smith and McMillan we have not a “new liberalism” but an expression

1. D.T., 2.2.1887, cited by Martin, ibid., p. 205.
2. The “Bulletin” was very scathing about the pretence and hypocrisy of "Mr. McMillian" and the softgoods free-traders in their support for free trade principles.
3. See his letter to Parkes in which he speaks of his aims and objects as a minister, 26.10.1891, P.C., Vol. 37, p. 207.
of the old liberalism of the classical school - the fear that intervention by the
state will be fatal to individual freedom and self-reliance. In this they were
much closer to the ideas of older politicians like the Treasurer, Burns, than they
were to Wise, or to the fourth man in Martin's liberal grouping, Joseph Carruthers.

The liberalism of Carruthers at this stage can only be pieced together
from expressions of his political views, but if one cannot rightly speak of a
philosophy, his ideas in 1887 would seem to place him closer to Wise than to either
of the other two leading free-traders. Carruthers did not regard as sacrosanct
the economic freedom of the individual or institution when it was a matter of a
common good. His proposal during his election campaign that the state should set
up a national bank, "to do away with the rotten system of banking", would scarcely
find favour with McMillan or Smith, nor would his support for a property tax.
Though Wise and Carruthers were to reach a parting of the ways in the FreeTrade
Party of Reid, their basic political outlook and the liberal principles on which
their politics rested remained fairly close - and there was a mutual recognition of
this. The point emerging from this discussion is that no common liberal philos-
ophy can be said to exist among the new free-traders, nor can the Association be
identified with any distinctively liberal policy. Hostility is not implied in
these differences; they could work together as free-traders, but the problems
involved in transforming the FreeTrade Party into a truly liberal party are clearly
evident. The re-naming of the party in 1889 as the "Liberal Party" involved no
conversion or reconciliation in terms of ideas; it was little more than a change of
label and its brief existence under its new name is not difficult to explain. In

Martin's view the disintegrating forces acting upon this new "Liberal Party" were

1. W.L., 4.2.1887.
2. For a brief outline of the ideas and policy of Carruthers, see D.T., 15.2.1887.
3. See letter, Wise to Carruthers, 30.8.1904, in which he speaks of the curious
similarities in their respective careers and common principles underlying their
political endeavours, W.C.
the federal issue cutting across the tariff question, and later, the labour
question. The explanation in my view lies in the foregoing pages - the failure
of free-traders to achieve a common political philosophy which could meet the new
forces of social change emerging at this point of history. The free-traders who
were to come closest to Wise's own philosophy of liberalism and with whom he was to
shape a social reform policy for the FreeTrade Party did not enter the parliamentary
party till later on, by which time the new third party of Labour had introduced a
completely new element into the political situation.

In view of these basic differences in liberal philosophy between Wise and
other free-traders his looking to Parkes for a liberal policy is not inexplicable.
We have noticed the differences in viewpoint here too, but Parkes' liberalism was
not grounded in economic laissez-faire, and he could at all times adjust his beliefs
to changing winds. We have also noticed that Parkes shared with Wise the same
basic view of human progress and also shared his concern for the welfare of the
working class. Parkes, on more than one occasion, emphasized how he had worked
closely with Wise's father on the problem of working-class conditions and, although
he was accused by the radical press of having class interests, he was to show by his
understanding of the workers' attitude to Chinese immigration in 1888, by his symp-
athy for the striking London dockers in 1889, and by his difference with McIlvan
on the handling of the 1890 strike that he was in no way aligned with employer
interests. On the basic liberal issue of freedom of contract, we can infer from
Wise's letters that Parkes was more in sympathy with Wise's position than he was

2. No attempt will be made here to discuss other elements of philosophic liberal-
ism. In Parkes' attitude to the education question, James Martagh says he express-
ed the spirit of the "new liberalism" of the European secularist, rationalist move-
ment as opposed to the "old liberalism" based on the Christian ethic of the nature
of man in relation to God. Such a discussion is not relevant to the concept of
liberal politics involved in this study. See James Martagh, "Australia the Catholic
Chapter", chap. 9.
with the uncompromising stand of the laissez-faire liberals. In all, Wise obviously felt Parkes could lead a liberal party, and, accepting his leadership, his efforts were then directed to converting Parkes to his ideas, but at no time did he work with any other so-called liberal politician against him.

With this background in mind we can now pass quickly over the first two years of Wise's parliamentary career with our interest concentrated on his growing influence in the party and with Parkes, and on the personal problems with which he was to be confronted. His introduction to the House was generally well received, though his protectionist opponents made much of the fact that he was a Parkes nominee. Once the House became engaged in a full-scale fiscal debate, the water became much rougher however. Wise's defence of free trade and his arguments about the fallacies of protection smacked of the doctrinaire and brought forth some strong personal reactions from protectionist champions, who didn't take kindly to the patronizing style of an inexperienced novice. Melville referred to this "extremely smart young man just out from College" and O'Sullivan waxed very sarcastic about presumption of the FreeTrade Party in putting up this "young fledgling whose manner was pretty but whose matter was exceedingly weak... He is a very pretty boy, his manner is charming; looking at him one would imagine the youthful days of Pitt or Fox". But by now Wise must have been getting accustomed to this kind of response, and, in comparison, his treatment was rather mild to that meted out to McMillan, who was named the leader of the "Calico-Jemmy Ring" whose economic interests the FreeTrade Party was fostering.

The first big test of his principles came in the Treasurer's Financial Statement in April, for not only was there no intimation of a property tax, but a...
good number of tariff duties (27) were left remaining and, for revenue purposes, excise duties were placed on beer and tobacco — "the working man's burden". Wise in his speech took the stand that the complicated initiatory machinery necessary for a property tax could not be done quickly, and he accepted the tariff cuts as an "instalment of better things to come". However, he did not retreat at all from his election policy: "I hold, I have always held, that there is no fairer tax, and no tax which falls more directly on the wealthy class than a property tax... and in the next budget I hope a property tax will be introduced and the remaining items in the tariff swept away." If the Treasurer accepted this as implied censure, Parkes was evidently quite impressed with Wise's performance, for after only two months he asked him to accept office.

The resignation of the Attorney-General, W.J. Foster, on May 19 was an early upset in the Parkes cabinet, and the "Herald" saw it necessary for Parkes to fill the post with "a man of principle... with a good legal mind", as law reform had been foreshadowed by Parkes. When the offer from Parkes came on May 27, Wise was faced with important considerations. Not only would it mean suspension of his barristerial work; there was the added problem of the reaction in his profession to such a junior member assuming official leadership of the Bar. The financial consideration was also pressing as patent fees which had previously kept the Attorney-General's salary up with the income of leading barristers had recently been abolished, so it would mean a considerable drop in income. Finally, as acceptance of an office of profit under the Crown entailed going back to the electorate for re-election, the possibility of fighting another election with the expenses involved was before him. His natural hesitation was overcome, he tells

Parkes, after consultation with Mr. Solomon and Mr. MH. Stephen, and in writing "to
1. ibid., p. 673.
2. Foster said that Parkes had promised him a judgeship, but when the appointment to the Supreme Court went to Mr. Stephen, Foster resigned in protest, claiming Parkes had treated him so badly he couldn't stay.
3. S.M.H., 19.5.1887.
accept the the high office so kindly offered him", he rejoices at the opportunity of having a hand in law reform.

The press reaction to Wise's appointment was generally quite favourable, but the Protectionist Party decided to contest his re-election and nominated a very capable candidate, W.H.Traill, former editor of the "Bulletin", to oppose Wise. So within a few months Wise was once more before the electors, this time in a straight-out contest. Though he had the leaders of his party on his platform and he was still in high favour with the free trade press, he had to answer to his working-class constituents for the unpopular excise duties on beer and tobacco, and to defend the government's "free trade on the instalment plan". It was once more a very lively campaign with many outside issues entering the contest: "Class interest, business interest, sectarian interest, party interest, monopoly and nationality, protection and ecclesiasticism, beer and opium with all their wires manipulated by the Champions of the Brewer's Holy War... all combined with the assurance that they were about to defeat a young Australian with a promising future before him." Wise was not defeated, but his margin was only 40 votes and he then had to survive a protest from Traill. Once the result was declared, Traill acknowledged that Wise was a worthy man to represent the people, but was very much too good for the company he was now going into: "If they could save Mr. Wise they would save the integrity of a man worth saving for the country... for whether he sat on one side of the House of the other it would always be a matter of pure government, integrity and manliness with him." Thus, in his twenty-ninth year Wise became a minister of the Crown.

Though his term as Attorney-General was to be a very short one - namely nine months - Wise devoted himself energetically to his administration and in this period framed, introduced, and had passed a very significant piece of law reform in

1. P.C., Vol w-y, p. 137, 27.5.1887.
2. D.T., 6.6.1887.
the Bankruptcy Act of 1887. He also personally tested a precedent which he felt was wrong in principle - the restriction on the Attorney-General accepting briefs. He accepted a brief from the Commissioner of Railways marked £55 by the Crown Solicitor, and in the resultant challenge in the House, and subsequently before a Committee of Enquiry, he made a strong case, claiming that it was the right and proper thing that the Attorney-General should represent the Crown, and emphasizing his freedom to work within his profession. As his personal integrity was involved and as he was later to be accused of mercenary instincts, it should be mentioned that he was cleared of any malpractice or contravention of the Constitution Act, and did establish the right of the Attorney-General to undertake legal work.

Having established the principle, Wise felt it was "a false delicacy to continue to profit from any concessions allowed by his party", and left it at that.

The incident, however, helped men further to form judgments about Wise. Though Dibbs who initiated the enquiry made it clear that there was no personal mistrust - "He is a credit to the Bar and this House" - J.P. Abbott saw further indications of the arrogance and presumption of this juvenile minister, "excelling himself in office", and another of his opponents was to see in the incident further evidence of Wise's "billet-hunting" propensities.

Of Wise's administration of the Department there are no records in the State Archives Department, but one can gather from his letters to Parkes that his interest was very strong; he was to remark later of his great liking for administration which "always has seemed to me to be the most attractive of official

1. N.S.W.P.D., Vol. XXIX, 11.11.1887.
2. This remained a principle with Wise, and at the Federal Convention in 1897 he attempted to get it established for the Attorney-General in the Commonwealth Parliament. See Official Report, Adelaide, p. 1036.
4. Ibid., p. 1119.
5. Ibid., p. 1137.
6. Records for this period were destroyed.
duties". The question, then, which naturally arises is why did Wise resign, if he was so absorbed in his ministerial work, and enjoying such good relations with Parkes. The explanation he offers Parkes when he first gives an intimation of resignation in November and again when he comes to a definite decision in January, is the limitations on his professional career - that his losses at the Bar are greater than he anticipated, not only in income, but "in what is of greater importance to a barrister without means - in professional position". Parkes received this news sympathetically and apparently offered him some advice, for Wise mentions later that he has "thought often over what you have said to me"; but his opinion is unaltered, and he decides to resign before the Law Courts open in February, as he tells Parkes a redistribution of barristerial work is coming up and "unless I can establish myself quickly and securely in that, the usefulness of my political efforts must be seriously impaired". He assures Parkes that there is no ill feeling - "nothing has happened to alter my cordial sentiments towards yourself and the Ministry... I value more than I can say being associated with you in politics, and the friendship to which in this case the association has led". Despite Parkes' concern about Wise taking Sir William Manning into his confidence, he evidently accepted as a worthy reason the sacrifice of professional prospects, which was the explanation Wise offered in the House, for two days later Wise writes again thanking Parkes for his kind note and saying how truly glad he is to know that he will retain Parkes' esteem. In this letter, Wise reveals his own disappointment: "I have felt the official severance very keenly, as the responsibilities of surrendering are even greater than those of accepting office."

1. Wm., p. 135.
2. 18.11.1887, P.C., Vol. w-y, p. 142.
3. ibid.
4. 30.11.1887, ibid., p. 145.
5. ibid.
6. 18.11.1887, ibid., p. 142.
8. 9.2.1888, P.C. Vol. w-y, p. 146.
The real extent of his disappointment, however, was not revealed, as it would appear from this correspondence that not even Parkes had any knowledge of the financial crisis which had overtaken Wise at this time. Unquestionably his decision to resign at this point was strongly influenced by the serious difficulties which suddenly confronted him in January, 1888, for it was then that he received an account made up to December 31st, 1887, from McArthur & Co., for £960, being the expenses of his two elections with interest added at 8 per cent. This came out of the blue, for he recalls that no question of money had come up during his January campaign; nor was it mentioned then, without request, the firm provided the same two gentlemen to assist at his re-election in June. "No doubt I could resisted the claim; but the scandal would have been great and probably would have injured me in my profession." From what we know of Wise, it goes without saying that a public airing of his personal problems would be alien to the whole nature of the man.

This was, however, a crushing blow, for already he was carrying an overdraft of £250 taken out on behalf of the Free Trade Association at the election in January to urgently assist the candidature of N.B. Dowling, who was sent to contest the strong Protectionist stronghold of Northumberland. He had been asked by the secretary to use his own personal guarantee for a bank advance as there was no time to call a committee meeting. "I consented; but the seat was lost. The Committee were profuse in thanks and promises, but except for a contribution of £10. . . I had next year, to pay the whole overdraft with interest from my own resources." Nor was this all. He also reveals how he had been the dupe of a swindle by one of his colleagues in the Ministry. Clark, the Minister for Justice, because of his high

1. W.M., p. 103.
2. W.M., p. 104. One can appreciate the strength of Wise's denial of the "Bulletin's" claim that the Chamber of Commerce had advanced £25,000 to the Free Trade Association and the feeling behind his remark that he wished it were otherwise. "Bulletin", 5.2.1887.
personal regard for Miss, had offered him a promoter's share in a new light railway to be built from Manly to Pittwater; the price was to be £250, but he was assured he would not be called upon to pay, as a Melbourne syndicate was prepared to buy out the promoters at £1000 a share. *I was versed in the ways of financial rogues, and only learnt afterwards that the Melbourne syndicate was a myth, and that I had bought Mr. Clark's own share in the enterprise. Ultimately I had to pay, and another £500 in calls; and no railway was ever made. Thus within one month of the age of thirty, I found myself under an immediate liability of almost £1500, and a further contingent liability of £500. I had no capital, and my nett income as Attorney-General...while more than sufficient for my needs, left no margin for reducing this indebtedness which it was my first care to discharge at once. I resolved, therefore, to resign my Attorney Generalship on the opening of the first term of the Supreme Court.*

With the financial plight of Parkes ever before him, his decision to resign from office is thus more clearly understandable. Twelve years were to pass before he accepted office again.

It was some time before he was to get out of these financial quicksands, as he was yet to experience the crushing weight of a money-lender's compound interest. To clear himself immediately he borrowed £1250 from the Australian Banking Company at 20 per cent. That he continued in politics might be wondered at, for he assessed the personal cost to him of this first political adventure - "counting my ex-colleagues' fraud as an incident of politics" - as £2,250. To his son he remarks: "You may blame me for continuing in politics under these difficulties and with such slender resources; but," he adds in explanation, "you must remember my upbringing and the exaggerated sense which it inculcated of the duty of public service." Within three years he was to contest two more elections - this time at his own expense.

These personal difficulties, of course, remained screened from electors and colleagues, and he had to endure privately the public criticism which followed his resignation. The "Herald", trying to be fair to its erstwhile champion,

1. Imd., p. 106.
2. Imd., p. 107.
perhaps best expressed the disappointment of his supporters. His was a short career in the thorny ways of office. Not a year! And yet the honours set aside! And for what? For, as he frankly announced, purely personal reasons... Self-preservation it is; but meanwhile critical folk will say: 'It would have been the brave thing to have hung on to your colleagues and your Ministry to the end.' Mr. Wise must expect to hear this and even more. He must suffer from the fact of having put his hand to the plough and then withdrawn it.1

Despite this rather bitter experience, Wise's political interest was in no sense diminished. By now politics was in his blood-stream, and though he had removed himself from the centre of things he could assure Parkes that his heart was still "in our joint work and never more so than when I seem to be abandoning it."2 But his future, he could now see clearly, was dependent on his efforts to gain financial independence, and once out of office, relieved of his "fictitious official seniority", he could devote himself once more to legal practice, hoping it would bring him "nearer the time when I can disregard Attorneys". His first task, however, was to clear himself of debt, and he set himself two years to do it.3

Our final interest in this chapter is in the continuing Parkes relationship and Wise's efforts to influence the party leader in the direction of a liberal free trade policy. One can observe the personal relations of the two men drawing much closer in 1888. Wise seems to be looking to Parkes for encouragement and guidance; he was obviously going through a period of political disillusionment and loneliness, for he speaks of "frequent fits of despondency". The Parkes refuge meant much to him for he confides how much his opinion "is cherished in my memory".4 It is also clear that Wise not only retained Parkes' esteem, but also kept a high place in the party as one of Parkes' "counsellors". There is evidence that he and Parkes were working closely together in September, 1888, on plans for organizing a

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1. 8.2.1888.
2. 9.2.1888, P.C., Vol. 41, p. 146.
representative conference in Sydney. (It would appear to be a free trade or 1
perhaps a local government conference.) Wise also continued to give Parkes valu-
able support in the House on some controversial questions. He stood strongly 2
behind Parkes on the Chinese Immigration Bill, and supported his proposals regard-
ing the appointment of colonial governors. Operating from this position as
friend and supporter, we can see Wise making a very determined attempt as the year
1888 draws to a close to get Parkes to re-fashion the financial policy of the
government, and to boldly declare the government’s intention to tax directly. For
the reasons we have already advanced, the Parkes government had hardly moved in the
direction of the policy on which Wise had fought the election. Parkes spoke
proudly of his other achievements – a Public Works Non-Party Committee, a Railway
Commissioner’s Act, an additional Naval Force. There was his Chinese Immigration
Act and Wise’s Bankruptcy Act that he could also point to. But as for the free
trade programme Wise had envisaged, it was a great disappointment. Even the Local
Government legislation which he had accepted as a necessary preliminary to a
property tax was unhonoured. When the Treasurer presented a financial statement
in July, 1888, there was still no sign of direct taxation. A drop in government
spending combined with some increased revenue from squatters’ rent, duties, and
land sales in an improving economy had enabled Burns to estimate a surplus, thereby
shelving any new taxation proposals. To Wise the whole approach was wrong. The
social evils of indirect taxation remained; he was opposed to alienation of land;
and the government’s pledge to reduce the deficit was not being carried out. He
stated openly once again in the Assembly that “a land tax and property tax were
absolutely necessary to enable financial equilibrium to be restored”. Such an
1. 12.9.1888, ibid., p. 306. Wise is speaking of the preliminary meetings of a
small organizing group to include McMillan, Carran, Tomkin, Wise, and Parkes.
4. ibid., p. 496.
empirical programme was just living for the day, and gave no expression to the political principles on which his free-trade policy rested. He was convinced that to survive, the party must have an overall view of progress, and August, during prorogation, he wrote to Parkes an important letter urging this wider view,

He writes: "the freedom with which you have allowed me to address you on previous occasions encourages me to lay before you some considerations on the critical state of public affairs which you may not think unworthy of notice". He proceeds to remind Parkes of the difficulty of making any serious reduction in expenditure and the problem of proceeding without a compulsory system of local government. He speaks of the necessity "to reawaken the enthusiasm of the party", which can be done, he says, by "a vigorous and comprehensive policy of social reform".

"I would like to see the government proposals for the next session centre round finance; and (what is of even greater importance) would like to see these proposals openly declared. These reforms ought to be not only effective for their own purpose, but of a character to put an end forever to the tin-kettle controversy between Protection and Free-trade... mere tinkering with the tariff pleases no one and irritates many. Surely then the true policy is to abolish all taxes upon raw materials and upon those half-manufactured articles which are used as raw materials in native industries. By doing this as part of a large scheme of re-adjustment, a treasurer can fairly demand as compensation for such concessions to the manufacturing interests, a contribution to the needs of the State in the form of direct taxation; and if a concession is also given to the general taxpayer by reducing the tax on some general article of consumption, like tea, a substantial reason is furnished for calling upon all classes to pay some form of direct tax. There is moreover a growing feeling that the political and social results of one form of direct taxation - that on land values - are of even greater importance than its fiscal advantages... the vigorous adoption of a land tax by the Government would probably break up the opposition at the next election."

He then approaches the question of an income tax - "kneeling your views about an income tax I urge mine with such diffidence". He notes that every variety of property tax has been proposed and none satisfactory. "I urge... that an Income Tax Bill be at all events prepared at once, both in order that the difficulties in such a measure may be faced and if possible, overcome, and that if it be finally adopted the measure may be understood in all its bearings - and they are manifold and intricate - before it is presented to Parliament. I need
not remind you that Sir Robert Peel was compelled to have recourse to the
Income Tax to reform the English Tariffs: the precedent is most encouraging.
A Land Tax, an Income Tax, a Local Government Bill brought forward as a
Financial Measure and a bold alteration of the tariff would, I believe, secure
throughout the country as hearty a support as was accorded the Ministry in
February, '87."

This is a significant letter and may well serve to summarize the chapter:
First, it reveals how clearly Wise views the shape of a future free trade policy.
His design of a unified policy based on the three large measures of tariff reduct-
ion, direct taxation, and local government goes far beyond a mere fiscal concept,
for it is also a broad social and democratic policy. Evidence is here that he
recognizes the limiting nature of the fiscal controversy and wants to see the party
move into new political country.

Second, Wise clearly recognizes the weakness of a party without a comprehensive
programme. A declaration for such a policy as he outlines would have brought
about a re-grouping on a broader basis than did the straight fiscal question with
obvious implications for party unity and organization. Wise is clearly casting
the Free Trade Party as the reform party - a more realistic ground for the develop-
ment of a cohesive party. Whether it would have broken up the opposition as he
suggests, or not, it would certainly have projected the character of a party oppos-
ing such a policy as conservative.

Third, his judgment that the time was ripe in 1888 for such a policy is interesting.
His confidence that the country would respond reflects a recognition of the social
changes and the advent of new political ideas in the community which subsequent
events would seem to justify. In this he was supported by the "Bulletin". Com-
menting later on Parkes' failure to launch a large programme, it said that never had
he greater opportunities. "The country was in revolt against inefficiency. It
would have supported with joy and enthusiasm a strong wise man in every rational and
national enterprise."2

2. 19.1.1889.
Finally, the policy Wise outlines here must be related to his political philosophy. It is the outgrowth of ideas and arguments he had been expressing since his arrival in the colony, and is the expression, in the form of a legislative programme, of part of his concept of free trade liberalism, shortly be expounded at full length in his book. That it is presented to Parkes as a tactical policy related to election success, is simply the mind of an advocate realistically advancing a political cause, but in the New South Wales political context it stamps Wise as one of the most forward-looking politicians of this time. This becomes more apparent if viewed in the light of Alan Martin's opinion, that in 1894 advocacy of direct taxation represented the chief touchstone of advanced political thinking.

This has not been recognized about Wise. It is Reid generally who has been acclaimed as the social reforming free-trader and given credit for the free trade policy which won the election of 1894, but the blueprint of Reid's policy in 1894 is that which Wise here presents to Parkes in 1888. Another interpretation sees the Labour Party as the instrument applying the pressure which brought this policy to the front of the Free Trade Party policy. Ben Nairn has come closest to assessing Wise's influence in this early period, and recognizes in his advanced social taxation schemes "the point of departure for the radicalism of free-traders to be so resourcefully capitalized by Reid". But there is no recognition of any philosophy; rather is it the perceptiveness of Wise, the free-trader, to use such schemes as "a counter to the depth of labour feeling on the effects of an unjust tariff". In subsequent chapters Wise's efforts to demonstrate that this reform policy was a viable free-trade policy will need to be shown.

That Parkes did not declare for this policy suggested by Wise does not

3. ibid.
need recording. If, for no other reason, his long tradition of compromise leadership, and such a diverse following, would seem to stand in the way of adherence to a party programme of reform, at this stage. But it is fairly obvious that Wise believed Parkes capable of implementing a liberal policy, despite his acknowledge-
ment of the difference in their views on taxation. His continued support for his leadership is evidence that he retained his belief in the conversion of Parkes, if not to his whole liberal viewpoint, at least to the necessity for such a unified reform policy for the party. But it would also appear that Parkes had other matters, of a more tactical nature in his mind at this stage, and his interest in "reawakening the enthusiasm of his party" with a reform policy was probably not great. The problems of leading such a heterogeneous following in parliament had not lessened, and Parkes was becoming more frustrated with the lack of support he was receiving, especially from his ministry. It seems clear that he had deter-
mined on ending this unhappy situation early in 1889 by abandoning office. Whether it was a reluctance to continue working with a disloyal ministry and a desire to change his team; whether it was a weariness at keeping disloyal elements in check, or whether there was an astute sense of timing another election, is not clear.

His own version is party disloyalty; Martin says he seemed almost to abdicate, so weary was he; but his contemporary critics put a much different complexion on events. With the free trade tide running out, said the "Bulletin", the "true genius of party management" observed the trend, and decided to out-manoeuvre the Opposition by sending them to an election from the government benches. By accept-
ing defeat before it really faced him in the House, Dibbs would be forced to form

1. There is evidence that Parkes did prepare a Land and Income Tax Bill in the following Parliament, though it was never presented. It is not unreasonable to assume Wise's influence was a determinant and his advice on the need for careful preparatory draughtsmanship may have been noted upon in this "emergency" bill. N.S.W. P.D., Vol. LXIII, pp. 4405, 4417; cited by Martin, "T", p. 319.
a ministry, enunciates a policy and then in an election would be on the defensive
with the initiative left to Parkes. Whatever the reasons, Parkes went out on a
rather minor issue involving the appointment of a Railways Commissioner, and made
little effort to rally his forces. It is illustrative of party development at
this stage that it was a free-trader, J.H. ‘Walt, ("Walt of confidence"), who had
refused to accept Parkes’ leadership, who now brought him down on a motion of
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censure with the help of a few Parkes deserters. The Dibbs administration which
followed was unable to gain a temporary vote of credit, Parliament was dissolved,
and so the parties were back before the country before the month was out.

Thus ended Wise’s first two years in the Assembly. It had been an
eventful experience, not without its lessons, and an instructive two years in
familiarizing himself with colonial parliamentary procedure. But there was now to
be an interval for review and consolidation of his financial position, for in his
next appearance before the electors Wise was to taste defeat at the poll, and in
the subsequent play of political fortunes it was to so happen that he would be a
member of a government led by Parkes for only a few brief months. Our interest in
the remaining chapters will be on his continuing efforts to promote his ideas in
the party relationship with his old leader.

2. See Parkes own account in which he alleges party disloyalty, H. Parkes, op. cit.
p. 516.
Chapter VIII

"It is however the rejection of Mr. Wise that has caused most satisfaction. In some respects this young man is the worst type of genius politician that the country has ever produced."¹

"One of the most gratifying results is that the country has come to realize the supercilious political nothingness which has been palmed off upon it as greatness in the person of B.R. Wise. Two years ago this priggish youngster consented to soil his hands with the people's affairs in much the same spirit as Royalty sometimes condescends to act the tout at a charity bazaar."²

Following the fall of the Parkes Ministry in January, 1889, over five years were to elapse before Wise was again to be a member of a free trade party government. These years were momentous ones, for events took place in the colony which were to be recorded by the seismograph of world history and which set in motion forces which are still working themselves out in our national history. In the colony itself the launching of the federal movement, the deep economic depression and financial crash, the maritime strike, and the subsequent entry of the Labour Party into parliamentary life were, by their very nature, catalytic events in politics, demanding new responses from both political parties which shared occupancy of the government benches almost equally during this period. These events are well known and form the background for our closer study of Wise's career.

Within the Free Trade Party there were also vital changes. An election victory in 1889 was followed by defeat in 1891; the withdrawal of Parkes brought new parliamentary leadership, and there emerged towards the end of the period a new grouping on the left-wing of the party. New problems transcending the fiscal issue faced the party - the large issue of federation, the problem of unemployment, and social distress, and the adaptation to a new third party bargaining their

¹ "Freeman's Journal", following Wise's defeat at South Sydney, 9.2.1889.
² "The Australian Star", following Wise's defeat at West Macquarie, 23.2.1889.
support in return for legislation. It was inevitable, faced with these conditions, that new strains would appear and divisions become more apparent in a party with such loose structure and with such narrowly based allegiance. Behind this larger scene of community and party life we will follow the personal fortunes of Wise and the development of his ideas as he adapts the principles of his liberal philosophy to these social and political changes. This is a most active period. On top of a full and busy professional career, some of his most important writings are published, he continues to engage in discussion of current issues form the public platform, and, after Parkes' departure, his efforts to influence party policy become centred on an extra-parliamentary reform group of whom he is the leading spirit. Of more personal interest, we can observe his relations with Parkes, the "natural" leader, and with George Reid, the newly elected leader, and observe his political aims and personal motives subject to very critical treatment by some relentless political foes.

It will be convenient to arrange the following chapters on the main dividing lines of the free trade party history - the remaining period of Parkes' leadership; the period of opposition under Reid's leadership; and the last chapter will cover Reid's first free trade government.

The first event of interest is Wise's defeat at the election of 1889. His rejection by the South Sydney voters just two years after such a triumphal entry into parliament was something of a shock to Wise, and the party, but it is not inexplicable. Since he was last before the voters, the free trade cause had undoubtedly receded in this electorate, especially in the eyes of working men to whom Wise had appealed so strongly in 1887. The retention by the Parkes government of duties which still added to the cost of living for the working man, and the

1. Examples of these duties still remaining: 3d. lb - tea; 4d. lb - cocoa, chocolate; 6d. lb - coffee; 6d. gall. - all descriptions of oil; 3d. cwt. - rice; 20/- ton - salt; The "Bulletin" claimed that the yearly customs revenue of (over)
evasion of direct taxation in any form, placed Wise in a rather invidious position, for it was tariff abolition and direct taxation which had been the pillars of his free trade policy two years earlier. The "Bulletin" provided plenty of ammunition for attacking the "moribund hypocrisy" of the free trade government, "which continued to burden the masses in the interests of the importing monopolists, who under free trade were aggregating great wealth and power", and the "Australian Radical", consistently anti-protectionist, now expressed the working' despair of finding "any Free traders to vote for, judged on how they have been raising revenue".

Wise's protectionist opponents made the most of this working-class betrayal. W.H.Traill, the former "Bulletin" editor, and one of the most capable of the city protectionist candidates, returned to take up the contest as Wise's leading opponent. As a protectionist advocate of direct taxation, Traill was well placed to point up the dilemma of Wise who must support Parkes, and at the same time explain away the failure of the government to make even a start on implementing the Wise policy. Wise had also the problem of detaching himself from the vested interests of the merchant group of free-traders whose "spurious freetrade policy" ensured that they prospered while still contributing nothing to revenue in the form of taxation. These were thorny questions for a liberal free-trader. The straight fiscal issue could not be sealed off so effectively as at the last election, and the question of constitutional reform came to the fore and was well used by the protectionist argument identifying free trade interests with opposition to the democratic measures of one-man-one-vote and one-day elections. The argument was that property and wealth could be used, and were being used, to swamp the vote of the property-less man - wealthy city merchants with their homes and club memberships.

ships, with offices, shops, and warehouses in the city, with land investment holdings and tenement ownership in different electorates, controlled many votes which they could use together with the votes of the poor creatures in their employ.

"This black vote of inanimate wealth, the vote of the McKillions and the rest of the mighty landlords and soft goods men goes to the foreign trade party." Traill had long been in the forefront of the one-man-one-vote campaign and, although Wise also supported the principle, this was good political debate and, on the defensive, he was on his merits. He argued that things were better now than they were two years ago, and this with only a slight instalment of free trade. A larger measure would bring greater improvement and reduce taxation burdens; two years was not a long time for recovery, and the budget already showed a surplus. But on the question of performance, he could not get round the real issue, and admitting that "man indeed is left undone", he had to pose the question "Is Mr. Dibbs the man to do what is wanted?" In making this the issue, however, he was reduced to the stock-in-trade of all political campaigns, and his own ideas went into the background.

Another problem for Wise, absent from his first election, was the fact that he had now to account for his own stewardship; as the "Herald" predicted, he was to hear again of his withdrawal from the ministry. Electors might well feel that a representative pledged to their interests could best represent them holding cabinet rank, but the public platform is a difficult rostrum from which to expound one's own personal difficulties; Parkes might declare to the world that he was one of the poorest men in Australia, but the private affairs of an Oxford man were sacrosanct - his heart or his wallet could never be exposed for public discussion.

The contest in 1889, however, did not remain on the political plane, and Wise was now to experience the bitter in-fighting associated with sectarian and

1. "Bulletin", 16.2.1889
2. See Election Manifesto, S.M.H., 26.1.1889.
class animosities. The waves of religious bigotry were set going following a stone cast by the "Evening News" - that the Education Act was in danger as a result of a secret pact between Catholics and Protectionists. After this, political issues became increasingly entangled with the sectarian question: Parkes and free trade became the Protestant cause, and Rome was said to be supporting protection, and the Cardinal reported meeting secretly with Bibbs. Wise, perhaps because of his close association with Parkes, came to be presented as the Protestant man - the "Bulletin" reporting that "through every electorate the cry goes forth that the Protestant faith will be endangered unless Wise and McMillan and Haynes and Three Ball Abigail gain their seats". As far as Wise was concerned it would seem that this was an unfounded association; he had no Church affiliations, and his relations with the Catholic community prior to this appears to have been very amicable. At all events he bitterly resented this claim for he felt that it lost him the support of his Irish followers, many of whom no doubt, once religious allegiance was involved, transferred their support to the Catholic protectionist, James Toohy, who, in his own interests, kept reminding them of Parkes' tax on their beer and tobacco. Thus was the Pope brought into the election to add to the issues of "beer and the Bible".

The sectarian issue, as always, brought in its wake bitter personal attacks, and Wise's family, social connections, and professional life were now all thrown up to him. The matter of his uncle's pension proved a continual embarrassment to him on the platform, for the radical George Black had well stated the

2. ibid., 5.2.1889.
3. 2.2.1889 Further to these claims, see Freeman's Journal, 9.2.1889, and D.T.
4. 4.2.1889.
5. See above (chap. 6), his sympathy with the Irish Home Rule cause. He had expressed his admiration of Cardinal Newman as a scholar and a Churchman, and he had the friendship of Catholic laymen such as Tighe Ryan, the journalist. Ironically, at a later election he was to be accused of Catholic sympathies because of his associations with Cardinal Moran. Protestants were to be advised not to vote for him. See copy of the latter "Wise and the Protestant Vote", 25.9.1889, W.C.
6. See over page.
democratic anomaly of highly paid administrators of the law gaining large pensions while non-payment of members still excluded working men from taking their rightful place in the parliament which made the laws. This was a very delicate question for Wise, as his mother had now been drawing a pension as a judge’s widow for twenty-five years, and the details of this, and the other public monies paid to his family which had recently been published on an order by E.W.O’Sullivan in Parliament, could hardly be expected to stay out of a bitter election contest. The “Bulletin” had no qualms about the matter. Even to his professional work the class twist was given. Following his appearance in Court re an order for the winding up of the Atlas Iron Company, “Hop” depicted him as the heartless lawyer strangling a young Australian industry, “one of the few remaining sources of employment for the poor”: “Ringsrose Wise (to native industry): ‘Much as I regret it, I must strangle you. All in the name of business, mind you!’”

Wise was uncomfortable in this kind of personal warfare. Writing to Parkes after the elections, he referred to organized disturbances and “the personal attacks upon me and my aristocratic connections... Using arguments like this no wonder they would not let me be heard.” But this was politics, colonial style, and if he was to continue in the political world he would have to learn to take it as part of the game. He might well have looked to his mentor, Parkes, at this time as an example of how to handle this kind of situation, for Parkes, brave man as he was, exposed himself to the full fire of his enemies with the grand gesture. In the midst of his election campaign he remarried. He scarcely lost a beat, however, for the day after the wedding he was campaigning in Dubbo, leaving the city.

1. “Payment of Members”, The Australian Radical”, 7.7.1889.
2. See issue, 23.2.1899.
3. Ibid., 9.3.1899.
4. Undated, P.C., Vol. 42, p. Wise’s meetings were very rowdy, and his speeches were often drowned by the disturbance. At times he was forced to retire in the face of stamping, and organized vocal efforts shouting “Parkes’ baby” and singing “Just Before the Battle, Mother” and “Marching Through Georgia”, S.M.H., 28.1.1889, 29.1.1889, 1.2.1889.
to his enemies. The "Bulletin" regaled its readers with pages of choice satire, lampooning the older statesman's rejuvenation, his romantic poetry and baby verses, and speculating upon how his recently acquired testimonial of £8,000 might be settled on the youthful Lady Parkes. The "Freeman's Journal" affected to be scandalized by the vulgarity of an old man who had so recently followed his first wife to the grave, but found consolation in the likelihood that all night debates might not now trouble the House. Unlike Parnell and Dilke, however, scandal wreaked no havoc with Parkes. He could not be destroyed by these means and deflected such slings and arrows with a fine shield of indifference and disdain.

To a Bathurst audience he proudly acknowledged his patriarchal vigour and fecundity, for he had "only now arrived at the summer of his manhood", and promised he would outlive the youngest Protectionist in the room, drawing (his) strength, as he did, from liberty". If there were lessons for the future in this election, Wise was soon to have time to think about them, for when he next mounted the hustings in Belmore Park to hear the poll declared, it was his Protectionist opponents who came forward to reply to the cheers of victory. He had been defeated. Of the eight candidates the first three places were filled by Protectionists with Traill on top of the list. It was a complete reversal of the 1887 result, as only one Free-trader was elected and Wise filled sixth place.

This verdict was clear enough, but the party were not yet satisfied that its young champion was not to keep his seat in Macquarie Street, and, as there were still country constituencies open for a late entry because of the staggered poll, Wise was pressed to try again. He was reluctant to re-enter the lists, however, telling Parkes that apart from personal difficulties he thought it unwise to challenge in a strong Protectionist area, as he was unable to conduct a campaign and was unwilling to have any free-trader stand down on his behalf in a favourable

1. 16.2.1889.
2. 21.2.1889; 22.2.1889.
3. Ibid.
electorate. But the state of the parties on the returns was so close (by February 16th both parties claimed the same number of victories) that Wise placed himself in the hands of the Committee and was nominated for West Macquarie where there was no Free Trader to oppose W.P.Crick. Wise then set off for Bathurst, but in this country electorate he was to add further to his political education. Though Parkes came to Bathurst and hoisted the free trade flag with a large meeting in the town, it was to the farmers of the electorate that the Protectionist appeal was strongest, for the promise of grain duties was a vital issue. To convert them to free trade and a land tax was a real challenge to a city lawyer. Wise was also soon to learn that politics was a far cry from the Oxford Union, for in "Paddy" Crick he met one of the most colourful and resourceful of colonial politicians. Crick knew where his strength lay, and had travelled the electorate, cutting a fine figure on a thoroughbred horse, which he publicly promised to the parish priest when he came upon the Irish farmers around Long Swamp and Trunkey Creek. Crick was also to teach his learned city opponent some of the finer points of "bush" law, not learnt in Middle Temple - as when he told an audience that Hansard, which Wise had quoted, was just another of those free trade city journals, and they couldn't believe a word of it.

The result was a great victory for Crick, and there was great jubilation among his supporters for defeating such a renowned candidate. The "Herald" saw in the loss of Wise one of the remarkable features of the election, but was certain his absence was only temporary. Not so his enemies in the protectionist press who gloated over such a "humiliating defeat", and saw in West Macquarie the burial ground of his political ambitions. If, for Wise, defeat had a bitter taste, then

2. Part of the Crick legend still living in the electorate. Told to me by a former resident of Trunkey Creek.
3. See W.N. Willis, "Life of W.P.Crick".
4. 1889
5. See comments by "Freeman's Journal" and "Australian Star" at head of chapter.
was also consolation and relief—relief from the conflict of interests with which he had been struggling, for he could now apply himself directly to the priority of securing himself in his profession, and there was consolation in the knowledge that he had fought strongly for the party and retained the support and friendship of Parkes, which, he said, "meant more to him than any win. My only regrets are for 1 the cause."

His efforts were for some time now concentrated on his professional work with apparent success, for within three months he could tell Parkes that "out of the House the Sydney attorney estimates me at twice my value. . . I don't leave chambers now till six. . . So much the nearer the time when I can disregard attorneys!" But it would appear, despite this new channel for his energies, that regrets about his election defeat still lingered, as well as a sense of frustration and disappointment that political life could be so disfigured by sectarian and personal issues, for in July he had an article entitled "Australian Politics" published in "McIlvan's Magazine", which was to cause quite a stir. The article is directed to English readers and attempts some objective analysis of the Irish influence and the distribution of the Irish vote in colonial politics, but it was very badly timed, and unfortunately for him the "Telegraph" published a précis of the article, from a cablegram, which was in a highly inflammatory form:

"Mr. Wise asserts that the disorderly members of Colonial Parliaments are generally Irish representatives of Irish constituencies. Going further into detail with respect to the Irish vote, Mr. Wise says '. . . that in New South Wales it is given in favor of Protection, in Victoria it is given in support of the publicans and in Queensland for nationalism'. In any case, however, Mr. Wise states that the Irish Vote will generally be recorded against the existing government. On the question of education, Mr. Wise affirms, that the object of the Roman Catholic priesthood is to secure the control of the Public Service. He also asserts that the lay members of the Roman Catholic body seek to monopolise the public Offices, and that five sixth's of the 'billet-hunters' are Irish Roman Catholics. Mr. Wise gives quotations from Articles in the Melbourne 'Age' to prove that the Roman Catholic Church is a political organisation."

2. l.c. 1889, ibid., p. 258.
3. Cited by Wise in his memoirs, p. 112.
Even Parkes was taken aback by this. When he met the author as he was going into the House that evening he said that "he had been in many scrapes, but he had no idea how he (Wise) was going to get out of this!"

Wise might protest that these extracts did not fairly represent the article, which basically was an attempt to interpret a block vote which appeared to him to follow no fixed political direction in the various colonies, and which had an obvious religious basis. He had the full text published, but he was probably right when he estimated that of the thousands who read the cablegram, not five per cent would read the article. There were mention of the Education Act and Henry Parkes, or the influence of the Clergy, or the Catholic interest in the Public Service, so soon after a bitter election, was flashing the crimson lining and reveals the political immaturity of Wise at this stage, and his need for the guiding hand of experience which Parkes could provide.

The reaction was quick and strong, and indicates the force of the religious undercurrent in the colony at this time. T.M. Slattery, a leading solicitor and representative of the conservative respectability of the Irish Community, cast all dignity aside in the face of this attack on his faith and his fellow countrymen by such an "impatient pup". He accused Wise of "stirring up sectarian troubles, giving rise by his article to racial hatreds, bigotry and injustice and of making misunderstandings and jealousies among honest people". He charged him with "setting out on a course calculated to turn our social and political life into an arena of sectarian war. . . You have in a moment of uncontrollable rage written your own history and destroyed your political usefulness". The vulnerability of Wise to attack on the score of his Englishry and his exclusive education is also well revealed by this rampage of Slattery, who gave full vent to injured national feelings both Australian and Irish. 

1. ibid., p. 112.
"cultchaw", he accused him of being a poseur, self-seeker, and billet-hunter; he revived the personal attacks on the family pension, charged him with attempts to profit from his Attorney-Generalship, and taunted him with his election defeats which, he said, had inspired the article: "You have now, sir, become in this young community a political 'microbe' of the most unenviable class."

This incident was rather typical of those sudden squalls on the surface of New South Wales political life which all prominent politicians encountered in this period of sharp antagonisms and uninhibited criticism, and although time healed the breach it is unquestionable that this estrangement with the Irish would have left lingering antagonisms, adding further to the problem Wise faced in convincing Irish working-class men of his sincerity. In review, he recognized his impulsiveness, describing his article as a "foolish outburst of pique (which), as only just, involved me in much difficulty and unpleasantness". He remarks that many years passed before he was forgiven. "But the Irish are generous foes; and after I had explained my position the leaders of the Church recognized that I was discussing grave questions in an honest spirit, and that my epigrams had been inspired by personal resentment, which did not reflect the tone of the argument. Cardinal Moran gave me back his confidence which I retained until his death."

To return now to events within the Free Trade Party. The election victory was a close thing; on the final figures seventy-one seats were claimed by free trade, while the Dibbs Ministry counted sixty-eight supporters (the House comprised 137 members), but when the House met it was unclear that Dibbs could only remain Premier at the pleasure of the Free Trade Party leader. But, first, the Party had

1. ibid.
2. W.A., p. 112.
4. W.A., p. 113. The Moran Papers show a relationship of mutual respect for the larger viewpoint on politics to have existed between the two men, extending over the period 1894-1909. I am indebted to Mr. A. Cahill for these references.
to decide on its leader, for Parkes who had openly spoken of resignation during the last session now declared himself nothing more than an individual member of Parliament, released from all party obligations. But the pilot was not to be dropped.

At a meeting of the Parliamentary Opposition, chaired by McMillan, Parkes was unanimously re-elected leader. No rival was in sight and, in the face of "this handsome testimony of the confidence of a great party... which came without a single expression of dissent", Parkes consented to resume leadership. This sealed the fate of Dibbs' short-lived ministry, for as soon as he took his place in the Assembly Parkes delivered the stroke which dismissed the ministry, and he was then commissioned to form his second free trade government.

Despite the loss of ground by the Party in the election, this vote of confidence in Parkes makes it the more difficult to accept Martin's assertion that after 1887 "he was soon fumbling to maintain his position among (the party's) new men and methods". At all events, contemporaries, especially his enemies, saw things in a different light. To the "Bulletin", prophecy had been fulfilled. Dibbs had been out-maneuvered, and Parkes was the dictator yet. The "Freeman's Journal" also took this Catoian view of the party situation: "One weak, with a strong head; the other strong, with a weak head", and it saw Parkes as ever strong and dangerous.

Parkes now had his opportunity to create a new cabinet, and he made radical changes, as new untried ministers comprised half of his ministry. One must emphasize here again that this does not imply capitulation to new party forces, he seemed well pleased to make the changes and acknowledged that these young men of

1. See his own account, "Fifty Years in the Making of Australian History", p.258-9
2. ibid.
3. Parkes' amendment to the Address in Reply was carried by 68 to 64 votes.
5. 26.1.1889.
promise had shown "real, ability and political firmness in the elections and... in the previous Parliament". Accordingly, when the party attempted a re-organization soon after coming back into power, I think it can be taken for granted that McMillan, Smith, and Carruthers, who were among the leading organizers, were in close relationship with Parkes as newly appointed ministers, and quite clearly accepted his leadership. The move to bring the parliamentary party and the outside Association into relationship and to set up some permanent party organization which would continue working after the elections was a fairly natural development, in view of the ebb tide in free trade support revealed by the election. It was the point stressed by Wise after the first election, and the experience of another election campaign when forces had to be quickly mobilized following a sudden dissolution would have brought home more strongly to other practical-minded men.

In the month following the election a move was launched to create a permanent party structure, and the blueprint which then emerged has suggested to some historians the arrival of a modern political party in 1889. The form was undoubtedly here. A change of name to the Free Trade and Liberal Association suggested a broader political compass, and the plan to convert existing branches and create new Associations would have given a large network for electoral organization. A Central Council was to be formed which would act as a kind of permanent executive, and would plan an annual conference to which branches would send delegates. But most significantly, a platform was presented and accepted by a representative which included in its financial policy "direct taxation, including a tax on the unimproved value of the freehold in land with reasonable exemptions".

1. H. Parkes, op. cit., p. 264. One might note that this reference to the "new men" is made some time later, after he had experience of working with them. His book was published in 1892.
2. At the 1889 elections the Free Trade Association worked in conjunction with a Parliamentary Elections Committee in co-ordinating the campaign.
3. Item 2. Other items of financial policy read: (1) freedom of trade, (2) economy of public expenditure, (4) efficient and economic control of the (ever)
Finally the party was now to be known as the "Liberal" party. This meeting, attended by a hundred free-traders, was quickly followed by meetings of existing branches and the formation of new ones in the city suburbs, and organizations for a conference was soon under way.

On the surface this development would appear to herald a great change in the Free Trade Party and a movement in the direction in which Wise had been working. His own part in it all can be judged from his work in co-ordinating the parliamentary and outside Association efforts in the recent election, and, although he was now outside the parliamentary party and no longer Association President, his influence in giving a liberal complexion to the policy platform was undoubtedly considerable, as he was probably the strongest advocate of land taxation in the party, and the South Sydney branch of the Association, of which he was president, had already adopted direct taxation as part of its own policy.

This development might be seen as a triumph for the new politicians, as Martin maintains, but it cannot thereby be held that the old party structure had caved in or that Parkes henceforth had "to struggle (despairingly) to establish himself on new political foundations as the old collapsed". In the first place, this was as yet only a prescription for the salvation of free trade. There is no information as to who, among the parliamentarians, accepted this new party arrangement, and the policy enunciated was in no way binding on anyone. At best it can

(from 240) Public Service as well as land, S.M.H., 28.3.1889.
1. Within two days of the general meeting, branch meetings were held in Rockdale, Kogarah, Ashfield, Manly, Glebe, Petersham, and Waverley, ibid., 28.3, 29.3, 30.3.1889.
2. Wise was one of the most active of the Parliamentary Committee. It was to Wise that country telegrams were addressed and he appears to have been the spokesman to the press. See S.M.H., 29.1.1889.
3. See his speech reviewing the history of the work of the South Sydney Free Trade Association in 1885. He claimed that this forward branch, in accepting his principles of taxation in 1889, had helped to force the others along. S.M.H., 10.3.1889.
5. McMillen, the Treasurer, made no attempt to introduce land taxation in his two financial statements.
be seen as a show of unity and an awareness of the need for organized action by the progressive or self-interested elements in the party. As to the leadership, Parkes was not bound in any way by this move, or policy statement, but it is difficult to believe that he was in opposition to it. We would certainly not have accepted a change of party name unless he was in approval, and as we have already noted he took a prominent part in the conference which the new Organizing Committee arranged for the following August. A better explanation, I think, would be that Parkes, ever the opportunist leader, and with such a narrow parliamentary majority, would be watching the lay of the land and assessing the strength of this new movement. This, I think, is the guide to Wise’s efforts to influence Parkes. If Parkes could be convinced that a “liberal” policy was necessary for his own and the party’s survival, then a liberal leader he might well be. In the outcome, however, it was not the Parkes leadership that was undermined, but it was this new framework which collapsed, for two large events broke over the party during this parliament which opened up new and deep divisions and split the Liberal and Free-Trade Association. By the 1891 election, Parkes was still in command but the new “Liberal” party name was gone, the programme had disappeared, and the ambitious electoral organization in the blueprint of 1889 had gone with it.

The first of these events which cut across the fiscal issue was the initiation of the movement for a federation of the colonies which is generally dated from Parkes’ Tenterfield speech of October, 1889. The following events in this movement are well known - the Melbourne Conference of February, 1890, followed by the National Convention in Sydney in March, 1891. In these developments Parkes was the dominant figure, and in the process he became a federalist first and a free-trader second (though he continued to maintain that free trade did not have to be

1. Parkes tells that he had committed himself to “tariff revision and a more scientific system of taxation” at this time, but this is very non-specific, H. Parkes, op. cit., p. 287.
surrendered in the cause of federation). However, his championing of federation at this moment, and his belief that new fiscal legislation would exaggerate colonial differences in this delicate early stage appeared to ardent free-traders as a relegation of their cherished policy to the background. The conflict of contemporary opinion about Parkes' motives for launching the movement at this point has already been mentioned, and historians have delivered opposing judgments ranging from the unerring instinct of the statesman to the strategy of an unprincipled opportunist. Robin Gollan perhaps gets closest to the Parkes mind when he says that Parkes, ever "sensitive to the feelings of the electorate after a lifetime of gauging its reactions", recognized that only a political lead was required at this point to start the train of events which would lead to federation. That it was an auspicious moment there is no doubt. The whole session to this point had been occupied with a rather uncontentious land bill, and there was something of a lull in political conflict.

Nevertheless, Parkes' move cannot be seen as a bolt from the blue. Federation had been under discussion for some time and was heard increasingly on the platforms at the recent election. His bill to restrict Chinese immigration, and the report on defence by Major-General Edwards in the previous six months, had focussed attention on national issues and provided Parkes with the opening to move towards broadening the basis of national unity from the existing Federal Council to a parliamentary structure. That he would want to lead in such a crusade might be explained in terms of his personal ego alone, but whether he coldly calculated the confusion and the cross-currents which this new issue would introduce into the political situation and the division it would create in the ranks of free-traders and protectionists, is another question. Whatever the verdict - whether federation was the statesman's vision or simply a raft to keep himself afloat - it is my view

that it cannot simply be seen as some grand effort to regain lost leadership in his party. His leadership was still unchallenged.

Immediately, however, there was posed a large question for free-traders. Not only would federation overlay the tariff issue and delay a real free trade programme; there was the more crucial question – could New South Wales maintain her traditional free trade if she entered a federal union? Parkes had said that free trade was not endangered, but David Buchanan, the Protectionist lawyer, pressed home the dilemma in which the two principles of free trade and federation became opposing.

"Sir Henry must know that a majority of Protection colonies clinging to that principle through conviction would not resort to the opposite principle once in the Federal Parliament. For Sir Henry to pretend they would is a palpable absurdity... But let Sir Henry Parkes stand as true as steel to his Free Trade principles or refuse to federate unless Free Trade is made the policy of the Federated Colonies, it would avail him and his Free Trade Party nothing. Federation would be carried over their heads by the Protectionists, and Protection would be declared by the Federal Parliament as the law of the land."  
Parkes' sanguine hope that free trade had a better chance in union than in isolation he dismissed, claiming Parkes had left free trade behind: "Free Trade in Sir Henry's estimation is a trifle as light as air in comparison with the great question of Federation."

The rift was soon to be seen. The Free Trade and Liberal Association at its annual meeting extending over four weeks debated the issue. The president, Dr. Andrew Carran, cast the question in its larger concept of freedom and national life, arguing that "Free Trade can never be the whole sum and substance of Australian politics. Our answer from anyone who has drunk deep into the spirit out of which our doctrine grows, is that it must be one that is most consistent with freedom and liberalism – and what would be most consistent?" The problem is to choose between...

1. Martin, in line with his interpretation of Parkes' lost leadership, sees the federation "pother" as a tactical diversionary move.
3. Ibid.
Such a national viewpoint did not prevail in the Association, however, and a motion of J.C. Neild established the priority for free trade. "After all, why are men in the Free Trade Association if they are not to fight for free trade?" His motion, "deprecating any form of federation calculated to imperil the free trade policy of New South Wales", and declaring "that the support of the Association be given only to those candidates who should give a first place to the advocacy of trade", was finally carried by a majority of 20 to 10.

For Wise there was no problem in deciding his stand, nor was it a question simply of loyalty to Henry Parkes. Free trade as a mere fiscal policy did not hold precedence over a national objective; this he had frequently stated, and it was argued in his book, "Industrial Freedom". He had long been a supporter of the federal idea, and he saw no conflict in the broader social concept of free-trade liberalism and the national ideal. In the debate he supported Garran's viewpoint, and in taking this stand he separated himself from the "free traders first" within the Association who henceforth came to represent the core of strong free-trade opposition to the federal movement.

Wise was asked to state his views to a public meeting organized by the Redfern branch of the Free Trade and Liberal Association. To a hall filled almost to capacity, and amidst considerable disturbance he declared that "the time was ripe for federation and the step taken was a great one if not a final one. The change which had come over the colonies was due to the leader of the (Australian) Liberals, Sir Henry Parkes... The effect of federation on each of the New South Wales parties was not a subject to be discussed from a free trade standpoint..."
of 'Yes, it is), nor from a protectionist standpoint (cries of 'Yes, it is), but from an Australian standpoint (loud cheers).'' Wise directed his appeal to the larger sentiment of nationality and argued that federation was a natural extension of liberalism. He said he was not afraid of the issue, for he had no fears for free trade in the long run, but when he asserted that it was provincial to think only of the interests of the colony, uproar broke out and disturbance followed until the police arrived. Federation was now a very live issue.

The divisions in free trade opinion soon widened. The free trade press made its decision - the greater of the two issues right now was federation. The "Telegraph" deprecated the stand of the Association and supported Parkes and the "Herald" declared that such a great object should not be given up "because of the chance that free trade may go to the wall". This was a very elevated view, for such vested free trade interests. Julian Salomons, however, took the occasion of the Lord Mayor's Banquet to express the reasoned fears of free-traders that protection would be forced on New South Wales and free trade doomed, while Sir John Robertson became the mouthpiece of extreme free trade provincialism and demanded: "Why should we — well close our gates to all the world in order to trade with those fellows across the Murray!" The party was divided inside as well as outside parliament. McMillan had voted with Wise in support of Garran's stand in the Association, but Bruce Smith had misgivings which disturbed Parkes, though he later gave federation his support in the House. But those older free-traders who had refused to give personal allegiance to Parkes could now openly oppose him and at the same time justify themselves as unswerving free-traders. J.H. Want, who was to become one of the strongest anti-federalists in New South Wales, prided himself

1. S.H.H., 25.2.1890.
2. D.T., 25.2.1890.
3. Ibid.
4. 29.1.1890.
5. Ibid.
now on being a "free-trader to the backbone", and G.R. Reid preferred to wear his Cobden Club medal rather than any national insignia Parkes might devise. Reid was to present perhaps the strongest opposition of anyone in the House to Parkes when the resolutions for holding a National Convention came before it in May, 1890, and an existing antagonism between the two men deepened from this point.

These divisions within the Association and the parliamentary party nullified completely the earlier attempts to form a united Liberal Party, as common agreement on policy now seemed impossible. The ambitious organization had scarcely passed beyond the planning stage, before it was wrecked by deep disagreement. The in-built limits on a party attempting to build on such a narrow base as the fiscal issue was once again clearly demonstrated.

With these developments the Protectionists might well feel that their time had come, and O'Sullivan gave voice to the idea. "The breach of the free trade emptionment grows wider every day and now it is only a question of time. The upholders of the glorious doctrine of St. Cobden have now abandoned their high falutin nonsense about lights and liberties and untrammelled commerce and boldly declared themselves to be meagre protectionists... Finding that their course is doomed they are now ready to turn their seats in order to be on the winning side."

But if Parkes had foreseen the effects which the new issue would have on his own party, he had doubtless assessed the impact it would also have on the Opposition. The issue was too big for party politics, and the response from Protectionists was also divided. Even among those who opposed the idea, most strongly, there were differing standpoints. Republicans such as Walker and Buchanan opposed the concept because it suggested a closer imperial tie; to others like Slattery Parkes was moving towards separation; while provincial and conservative interests were expressed by W.P. Crock and William Lyne. Dibbs, whose outlook was still tinged with republicanism, led the opposition, opposing the whole federal idea, for he favoured a unitary system. But the real problem was that there were genuine federation supporters in the party, men of influence like Joseph

1. Letter to D.T., 25.2.1890.
Abbott and J.P. Garvan who could argue that protection would achieve its ultimate victory within a union of protectionist states. But it was Edmund Barton to whom Wise attributes the greatest influence in preventing a united stand against Parkes, at this stage, for immediately after Parkes' Tenterfield speech Barton "made a public and unequivocal declaration in favour of Federation at a meeting of the Australian Natives Association". In so doing, says Wise, "he performed the first of his great services to the cause of Union...", and thereafter "was Sir Henry Parkes' first lieutenant in the federal struggle". Thus, whether we view Parkes' federation call as an inspired move or a political gamble, the outcome is the same. He did not come down, and the fiscal question which had dominated two elections was submerged.

The subsequent federal moves in this parliament have been related in detail by some of the leading figures, and need no elaboration. Though there were extreme party men on both sides, and doubts and fears were expressed about all aspects of the problem, Parkes pushed ahead. Delegates were elected to the Convention in Sydney in March, 1891 (included among whom was Dibbs), and when the parliament met on May 19, it had a Draft Constitution to consider and amend.

Parkes' notice of intention to move that the House approve of the constitution was vigorously opposed by G.H. Reid, who proposed a hostile amendment, condemning features of the Bill and expressing once more the free-trader's stand in what is probably his most famous political analogy: "that of the Christian abstainer who suddenly betrayed a rabid desire to live with five drunken neighbours." Thus, said Reid, was Parkes willing to surrender the great principle of free trade. But the fiscal division no longer held and the amendment was lost to 67 votes to 35, with 22 Protectionists supporting the government and 4 Freetraders voting against

1. B.H. Wise, op. cit., p. 33. Barton had not long previously broken with his free trade attachment.
2. Parkes refers to Reid at this stage as the arch-plotter against federation. His amendment was aimed to destroy the government, Henry Parkes, op. cit., p. 373.
the resolution.

The great question as to why Parkes did not now proceed with the Federal Convention Bill, when it appeared the road ahead was open to him, has been discussed endlessly. No one will ever know what influenced his decision to give precedence to a Local Government Bill when the nation was awaiting the New South Wales lead.

1 His own explanation is most unsatisfactory. Perhaps he hoped to realign political parties on the federal issue in a new parliament and regain his lost majority. Deakin suggests the move was strategic - that he was as anxious about the premiership as he was zealous for federation. Wise says there was no general agreement in his ministry on the priority of federation and that in Parkes' view "the cold douche of a general election" may have had beneficial results. Perhaps his accident had affected his health and spirit, and the nerve to push on at this vital point left him. Parkes speaks of this physical set-back as equal to the weight of many years; the buoyancy of life was gone and never more was "I to revel in the freedom of the eagle". In more earth-bound terms, his confidence now seemed missing, and one might well set his decline from this point as his decision was to prove a great error in judgment.

The ensuing motion of censure from Dibbs found the House equally divided as to whether Parkes, having altered the course of political life, should now be allowed to retreat and re-arrange affairs to suit himself. Only the Speaker's casting vote defeated the motion, but Parkes chose to dissolve the House and go to the country with the issue. Thus he cut short another parliament in the long line of those failing to run a full course in New South Wales political history, and at a time when he had a clear view of the road to Federation. One would expect that in all Parkes' experience the one thing he had come to appreciate about New South

1. ibid., p. 375.
2. op. cit., p. 51.
3. E.R. Wise, op. cit., p. 149
4. op. cit., p. 283.
Wales politics was that nothing remains constant, and no one issue could be counted upon to sustain power for any length of time. So it was to be with federation. With this dissolution went the hopes of an early achievement of national unity, for in the ensuing parliament federation was to fade almost from view, and with it the fortunes of its founding father as he entered the twilight of his long political career.

We might now consider briefly the other major question the Free Trade Party faced in this parliament. If, as Deakin suggests, the election of 1891 was tactical - that Parkes hoped to ride back to power at the head of a federation party, as he had done on free trade in 1887 - one must assume that he had decided on a calculated risk, or that his electoral dividing rod was now sadly out of order, for the signs were there to read that the community was becoming increasingly concerned with questions beyond the political range of both these issues. During 1890 there was widespread industrial disturbance, culminating in the famous maritime strike, and, in the atmosphere of this grim struggle and its aftermath of bitterness and enquiry, a strong feeling for political reform and a demand for legislation to redress many deeply felt grievances was manifest in almost all sections of working-class opinion. This was clearly expressed by many witnesses to the Royal Commission which Parkes himself had set up to investigate and report upon the strike.

As far as Parkes was personally concerned, he handled the situation with a good deal of restraint and wisdom. His correspondence abounds in letters of congratulation and thanks for his efforts in securing order and property. But there were deeper issues involved for his "Liberals" party. The question to be resolved was one of opposing ideologies - an individualist and collectivist view of liberty, deriving from the rival principles of "freedom of contract" and "the right to combine". The economic interests of many free-traders of the commercial class
were directly involved by the strike, and when McMillan, acting as government
spokesman in Parkes' absence (this was the time of his accident), promised to "take
steps to secure the liberties of the subjects of this country", it was in defence
of the laissez-faire liberty of businessmen to employ free labour that he spoke.
Parkes quickly rejected McMillan's assumption of authority and his implied threat
to use force, and deliberately detached himself from economic class interests,
declaring that ". . as the government of this country, we have to govern for the
men out on strike as well as for the persons who are their employers". From this
guiding principle of government Parkes was not to be derailed by any free trade
argument about restriction of trade or commercial freedom, and "never for a moment
listened to the rash counsels of 'stamping the thing out'": nor did he accept
McMillan's claim that an attempt was being made to set up "a semi-revolutionary
government in the midst of law abiding citizens".

In this conflict of method between Parkes and the Chamber of Commerce
free-traders in handling the industrial strike, there were involved differences
which could be driven back to liberal principles. But it was Wise who put these
differences into philosophical terms, for he rejected the argument of "freedom of
contract", invoked by employers and commercial free-traders as a basic tenet of
their belief in commercial freedom. Wise's view that "freedom of contract" implied
a freedom on both sides - a freedom to refuse employment as well as a freedom to
accept it - has been discussed earlier, as also his view that trades-unions are a
necessary means of securing liberty by placing both parties to the contract on

1. This statement was made following a deputation from the Chamber of Commerce
giving a rather lurid report of the incidents of the so-called Circular Quay Riot,
S.M.H., 20.9.1890.
2. D.T., 20.9.1890. In the opinion of N.B.Nairn, Parkes' action in this crisis
reveals his real statesmanship. "The much-maligned Parkes is in reality one of
the greatest N.S.W. statesmen of the nineteenth century", unpublished thesis, p. 21
terms of equality. Now he came forward to publicly express these views in the name of liberalism. In a party claiming to be guided by liberal principles, this argument was plainly schismatic.

It may well be, as Bede Nairn maintains, that "freedom of contract" was not the vital issue or even a serious issue at all in this strike, but it needs to be said that it was claimed by many so-called "liberals" to be the vital principle, and after the defeat of the unions it became something of a sacred phrase, symbolizing freedom from the tyranny of unionism. To the "Herald", freedom of contract was one of those unassailable rights beyond restriction or interference. "It rests on the same broad basis as freedom of action and freedom of speech, and is not a thing to be conceded by one man to another, or one group of men to another. The destruction of society would be the almost inevitable result of any successful movement for the abolition of freedom of contract. . . ." In April, 1891, the Pastoralists' Association refused to meet the Shearers' Union in conference unless it be agreed that the principle of freedom of contract be reserved from discussion.

Wise, regardless of the effect which his stand would have on the wealthier business supporters of the party, came forward to publicly condemn the Pastoralists' Association for its stand in tabooing the discussion of this principle. He claimed that the principle was being erected into a fetish, and that it was unreasonable "to regard any phrase with such superstitious veneration that its meaning must not even be discussed?" Once more he argued the point that the individual workman lost his freedom in being forced to accept the employer's terms of contract:

1. See his address, "The Labour Question", 1890.
2. "The Maritime Strike in N.S.W.", H.S.A.M., Vol. 10, No. 37. In arguing against the orthodox view that the strike was a pitched battle between the forces of labour and capital, between unionism and freelabour, he says that "freedom of contract" was merely "a relic of an ideal past" revived during the strike, and it was not the basic issue. See elaboration in his unpublished thesis, p. 182 at this.
3. S.A.M., Editorial, 24.4.1891. The extent to which this principle was an issue in the widespread shearer's strike of 1891 can be gauged from the fact that a direct poll of striking shearers and bushworkers was taken to see if they were prepared to accept the principle. The poll resulted in a vote of 8426:91 against accepting this as a clause in any agreement, ibid., 15.4.1891.
4. ibid., 914.1891.
"Those who blame the coercion which unions now place upon the wills of individual workmen to induce them to abstain from work should remember that this is trifling in its social consequences to the coercion which can be exercised by employers under what is called 'free contract' to compel workmen to accept work."

He proceeded to point out that the principle of "free contract" as applied by the Pastoralists' Association was simply a "shibboleth", as "every employer belonging to the Association has bound himself only to employ labor upon terms which the Association approves. To this extent therefore the employer has limited his power of free contract".

In an exposition of his liberal principles Wise went on to further heretical ground in asserting that the development of strong trade unions, with a sense of responsibility, was in the best interests of society and would bring nearer the day when real freedom of contract in industrial matters "was possible". In most uncompromising terms he concluded with the words that

"whatever the future may bring it is enough for the present to protest against unnecessary obstacles to an open conference, and to insist that both reason and experience prove that sham free contract is a social and industrial evil of the first magnitude".1

This letter was published when feelings on the industrial question were heightened by daily reports from Queensland of attacks on "free labourers", the burning of shearing sheds and the arrests of strike leaders charged with conspiracy. At the same time union feeling was very bitter about the recruiting of "free labourers" in Sydney and in Melbourne where a special ship had been chartered by the Pastoralists' Union to transport the "free" labour to the Queensland stations.

Wise must have expected reaction to such a frontal attack on the basic belief of many in his own party, but he says he was totally unprepared for the general storm which burst upon him. Such ideas were scarcely palatable to the free trade press which, without exception, condemned the strikers and supported the

1. ibid.
2. ibid., see daily reports, 1-4.1891, and onwards and letters on the question.
3. A letter to Parkes, 28.4.1891 (cited above), suggests that Parkes was in agreement with Wise's standpoint, at least in respect of "freedom of contract. Wise quotes authorities for his interpretation, but there is no suggestion that he is trying to convert Parkes from an opposing viewpoint, P.C., Vol. 18, p.333
pastoralists' claim. But professionally and socially he was also affected. Dulgety & Co., whose counsel he had been, instructed its solicitor to give him no more work, and even withdrew a brief already delivered. He also relates how his wife was exposed to the displeasure of so-called "Society", and her name taken off social lists. Of greater significance to his political future, however, was the suspicion of his motives by some free-traders; the suggestion "that a man of education and social position must have some ulterior motive in expressing such ideas, which being sedulously propagated, ... infected numbers with an enduring suspicion of my political sincerity". Injudicious or impulsive as this stand may be judged, it is impossible to charge Wise with insincerity, or with motives of personal or political ambition. It reveals rather the forthright character of the man, and in the light of his financial position, a complete disregard of personal advantage.

His own statement of motive is, I think, quite convincing: "If one looks only to material interests (this stand) was the mistake of my life, but can be excused very easily if it be conceded that a political leader has some personal responsibility for the direction of public opinion." What stands revealed again is the recurring problem of his acceptance, this time by his own class.

As far as the party was concerned, Wise's ideas denoted a fundamental division of thought with implications for any future "liberal" policy. This attack on traditional free-trade liberalism could not be written off as coming from some intellectual faddist, or radical extremist. Although out of the House, Wise's standing among free-traders was well established, and the sheer force of his argument (expounded in his book shortly to be published in London) must have had considerable influence among those trying to envisage the shape of a future liberal policy, in such a period of rapidly changing conditions. Wise stands out here as the leading figure in connecting free trade with an advanced liberal philosophy.

2. ibid.
3. ibid., p. 108.
and the measure of his influence will best be seen later in the strength of the radical group which formed on the left wing of the party.

The clarity with which he foresaw the future development of party policy and the trend of his thinking can be seen in a letter written to the Council of the Free Trade Association just prior to this. The Council had nominated Wise as a candidate in a by-election for East Sydney, regarded as the strongest free trade constituency in the colony. Wise wrote declining the honour and expressed the opinion that the interests of liberalism would not best be served by his candidature.

"I fear that my views upon the labour question would not be acceptable to the majority of the wealthier portion of this constituency, because, although I disapprove and condemn as strongly as anyone can the self-seeking and crime which has been so fatally conspicuous in the labour movement, yet I feel unable to deny that the labour party is more right in its principal contentions than the capitalist party which is now opposing them. In a word I do not believe in the present tendency to make a fetish of freedom of contract."

He presents to the Council his argument for trade-union recognition, concluding thus:

"I cannot see how the demand of trade unionists that labour shall be employed through the union, and not by individual bargaining, can be logically resisted.

He then introduced an even more radical note.

"If to this it be replied that private employers cannot carry on their business, such an answer only suggests the further question, "Whether private employers are an industrial necessity?"

This question he didn't take any further, however, remarking that such a question could not be answered, "until we be certain that the present industrial system be working at its best".

Whilst clearly demonstrating his rejection of conservative free trade policy, Wise in this letter gives the Council a timely warning that they can no longer depend on the fiscal issue. He had been closely following the activities of the Trades and Labour Council organizing the formation of Labour Electoral League branches, and points out that the Labour Party is now in existence; if its

1. His name was mentioned as a candidate, S.M.E., 26.3.1891
2. The letter was published in the S.M.E., 27.3.1891.
3. The previous day the Trades and Labour Council had unanimously agreed (over)
support is to be gained than the Free Trade Party must have an advanced policy.

"I have long held the opinion that the questions of paramount importance at the present time are those which affect the industrial structure of society, and the true remedy for social discontent is far beyond the reach of any tariff legislation. In confirmation of this view the Labour party has deliberately rejected the policy of protection and adopted in the place of it the tax on land values, which is a necessary accompaniment in a young country of unrestricted trade."

Thus once more we can observe Wise attempting to find lodgement for his liberalism in the Free Trade Party. His awareness of the arrival of the new political force shows an intellectual recognition of the changing conditions, and in his emphasis on land-value taxation as an index of social policy we can see the continuation of efforts, which began in the last parliament in Parkes, to give to Free Trade a progressive policy. The extent of Wise's influence in the party will best be seen as we follow the future course of events.

It is clear to the historian that as the "Liberal" party approached the election of 1891 its existence as a mere fiscal party was coming to an end. The attempt to unify the party on a tariff policy had been destroyed by larger issues; Parkes had detached the fiscalists from the main body of opinion on the national issue, and Wise had exposed a basic difference on the industrial question. It is important in following the future relations of Wise and Parkes to recognise that on both these questions they shared more common ground than they did with either the "pure" free-traders like Reid and Niel, or with "freedom of contract" liberals like Smith and McMillan. But despite the other large issues, it was still a Free Trade Party that went to the election. After dominating political life for four years, the fiscal issue had engendered such strong convictions that it still remained the name of the party. No attempt was made to present a "Federal" party, and once

(from 255) to begin the formation of branches of the Labour Electoral League in all city and suburban electorates, S.MN, 26.3.1891.

1. ibid., 27.3.1891.
the problem of interpreting the "liberal" label proved too difficult, this nomenclature soon disappeared, and it was back to a Free Trade Party once more.

To Parkes, after presiding over the National Convention in the early months of 1891, federation seemed the dominant issue and, even after holding back in Parliament, it was the question he wanted to put to the country. In this it would appear that, like so many others among the middle-class politicians of 1891, he was not prepared for the great change which was to come over the situation with the arrival on the scene of a third party drawing its strength from working-class support. Wise, with clearer perception, could see that a party of progress would have to provide a policy to meet the changed condition to which the Maritime Strike had given rise, and he was also aware of the new direction of political opinion represented by the policy of the emergent labour party. With the new issues superimposed, and old divisions still remaining, the Free Trade Party could again present no unified policy, but Protection was likewise divided on these new questions, so that there was a high degree of uncertainty about what this election would bring forth.

The key to the future, however, lay outside both fiscal parties at this election, for as Bruce Mansfield puts it: "What all the World has most remarked then and since about the election of 1891 was the return of thirty or so members of the Labour Electoral League." The emergence on the political stage of the Labour party marks a clear dividing line in New South Wales political history. Whether the new party sprang into life as a reflex of the failure of industrial action and a spontaneous desire for political reforming action, or whether its genesis is to be found in the long-range electoral planning and deliberate decisions of the Trades

2. The long-accepted view that organized Labour, having failed in the industrial actions of 1890, turned to the ballot box, and that the Maritime Strike gave birth to the Labour Party, is completely rejected by N.E. Nairn, whose research into the membership and work of the Trades and Labour Council reveals a long-planned (over)
and Labour Council is a debate outside the scope of this study. The important thing, as far as the older parties were concerned, was the immediate recognition that henceforth they could exist only on policies acceptable to the new party whose aim was to make and unmake social conditions affecting the working class which had voted the party in. The state of the parties (supporters of Parkes, 49; of Dibbs, 56; of the Labour Party, 37) clearly defined the new party's power of exacting support in return for concession, and it unashamedly announced this as its modus operandi. The "Harald" deduced from the return of so many "federalists" of both parties, and the relegation of such anti-federalists as Reid and Want to lower positions on the poll, that the federal sentiment was quite strong in the new House, but to Parkes the new situation was a bitter cup. Any hopes he had of continuing to make federation the paramount question were now dashed. The issue had no priority with Labour members; many of them openly distrusted both the Convention Bill and its framers, and they made it clear that, if their allegiance was to be won, it was only by placing electoral and labour questions high on the programme. It was a cheerless prospect ahead for the "Old Hand", who had manipulated elections, controlled factions and for so long held a party in his hands, now to find a new master in this small knot of men, unfamiliar with parliamentary life and procedure, and committed to oppose his highest concept of parliamentary democracy - that a member is elected to represent the community as a whole and not any one group or class. The old eagle might be winged, but few would accept that he could be caged, and an early resignation was freely predicted. It's Parkes' inability, or reluctance, to adapt to this new political situation, and his great weariness to continue with the new struggle, that most clearly marks his decline from this point.

1. The number comprising the Labour Party was first estimated at 37. By the opening of Parliament the figure was set at 34. After the first censure motion in July, 27 remained. See N.B. Nairn, unpublished thesis, Appendix 7.
2. 18.6.1891.
As for Wise, the election was something of a personal triumph, following his defeats of 1889. After rejecting the offer of the safe East Sydney constituency, he decided to once more contest South Sydney. His decision was partly influenced, he says, by the appearance there on this occasion of G.R. Dibbs, the leader of the Opposition, who decided to seek election in this Protectionist stronghold as the election timetable left his own country vote very late in the poll. Wise received a much better reception this time; the sectarian trouble had quietened down again and, with larger issues in question, he had better opportunity to present his liberal and democratic policy. He decided to directly confront Dibbs on the questions of federation, electoral reform, and the eight-hour principle, all making for a strong contest with his more experienced opponent. But it was probably his opposition to the Employers' Association and his support for the trades unions' right to combine that won back for him the votes of many working-class men.

In the result Dibbs was utterly defeated, gaining no place among the four. Two free-traders and two protectionists were elected, Wise coming in second behind Traill. All four were federation supporters. Thus Wise rejoined a Parkes-led government, but it was to be a short-lived experience as the fate of the Ministry was mapped out from the beginning, and within three months the party was on the Opposition benches.

The story can be briefly told. When the Parliament met in July, Parkes decided not to make an immediate issue of federation, and again placed it lower on the list of government business, while giving priority to electoral reform, demanded by the Labour Party. The resultant censure from Dibbs found almost all Labour men in support of Parkes, and the Premier then proceeded with an Electoral Bill. But

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1. It was alleged of both party governments that they arranged the staggered voting time-table to their own advantage.
2. See S.M.L., 16-6-1891.
3. Dibbs was subsequently returned by his former constituency, the Marrambidges, two weeks later.
4. Coglan says six Labour men voted with Dibbs and henceforth were numbered as Protectionists, op. cit., Vol. IV, p. 1851.
support was uncertain, and Parkes' discomfort was great. "The position in which the government found itself placed was, to me, almost insupportable. The Labour members... gave their support after a manner of their own, and very much as an ungracious man gives charity." Meanwhile he had lost McMillan, as the Treasurer had resigned soon after the session opened. He gave as his reason personal grounds and the pressure of work, but it was known that he did not favour making concessions to Labour. In September the Labour party once more stayed with Parkes on a test of strength on the fiscal question, and supported Barton's amendment calling for a fiscal truce till the federal question was decided; but it was for their own priority of social legislation and not federation that the support was given. There was no resolution of the problem for Parkes.

The end of the affair came in October, and over a relatively non-controversial issue when twenty-two Labour members, "many of them with a sneering laugh on their faces", voted against a motion by Barton to adjourn discussion of the Coal Mines Regulation Bill. The amendment was not a party issue (Bibbs voted for the motion), and although Parkes had supported McMillan in opposing the eight-hour clause the Bill itself had Labour in its general provisions. But a majority of eight was counted against the government. Parkes was humiliated by what he felt was a capricious vote, and the Ministry decided it had had enough of this sort of treatment and that the most dignified course was to retire. On October 19, Parkes made his last speech to the House as Premier, declaring that, although there were matters pending which were very dear to him, there were matters of higher moment than retaining office, "that is to preserve the standard of self-respect and that sense of humour which is essential to the governing of a country".

4. See his speech, ibid., p. 310.
5. See S.M.H., 17.10.1891.
hardly believe that, when he handed the key of his office to Dibbs on the following day, Parkes was deliberately closing the door on ministerial life. After nearly twelve years' occupancy of the Premier's chair, at the head of five separate ministries, the crown no longer sat unassailed on his white head — but, although he was to seek it once more, he was never again to wear it. However, this was the unknown future, and for the moment he seemed to welcome the chance of release and speaks of receiving it with "feelings of joyful satisfaction". With his vast experience and skill in parliamentary manoeuvre, it is not inconceivable that Parkes could have split the new inexperienced party (its weakness on the fiscal issue was revealed in the first censure) and held on, but this required energy and just now he was bent down "with a weight of weariness almost insupportable". Wise says at this time he was living in fear of a paralytic stroke.

But why did Parkes not choose to make the statesman's exit, and go out fighting on the large national issue, or on a matter of high political principle? Apart from personal prestige, this would have been good politics and capital for the future. Wise offers an explanation which allows us to keep the image of the noble statesman in view — it was a high sense of duty which had kept him at his post. The Governor, Lord Jersey, had requested him to stay on pending loan negotiations then going on in London, for Parkes was known, and his administration trusted, by the money market. A letter from Jersey to Parkes would seem to confirm this: "I venture to say, if you will allow me to use a strong expression, your duty and your honour demand that you should continue to direct public affairs". However, to accept such silent self-sacrifice would be asking too much of those critics adjusting Parkes' actions to the other image of the "unscrupulous opportunist".

1. ibid., p. 308.
2. ibid., p. 319-20.
4. Wise maintains that experts already had intimations of the coming financial crisis and that Jersey, as a Director of Childs' Bank, was aware of this, op.cit., p. 161.
Once more we are left with the question mark about Parkes' motives. All we can say is that Wise's account makes more rational the Parkes decision not to go out as the hero in a grand cause.

The events of the Dibbs régime we will now pass over. The fate of the national issue - how the Convention Bill was lost in the political maze of colonial politics, and how, under Burton's leadership, federal leagues started the movement afresh outside the parliaments, has been traced in the federal histories. So too the adventures of the new Labour party with its problems of fiscal allegiance and party solidarity have been chronicled by Labour historians, and set against the economic background of deep depression and industrial conflict. How these events affected the Free Trade Party we will consider in the next chapter; our remaining interest here will be with the question of party leadership.

Upon resignation of his government, Parkes declared his unwillingness to continue leadership in opposition. Again the state of his health and a general desire to rest from responsibility and constant parliamentary duty were advanced as his reasons. Accordingly, when the Dibbs Ministry was formed, the Free Trade party members met (November 17) to consider the election of a leader to face the new government. Any idea that Parkes had become an incubus, even in his last months, would seem disproved by the effort now made to persuade him to carry on, and this came from the younger men. The meeting, chaired by McMillan, first heard a resolution from Bruce Smith that Parkes should continue and that he should name a deputy to act in his absence. Wise felt such divided control would be fatal to decisive action, and his view prevailed. McMillan then proposed that any election be deferred until Parkes' intentions were clearly known. To the deput-

1. See his statement, S.M.H., 17.10.1891.
2. See above, chap. VII, letters from Wise and Smith expressing regret at his decision to retire, and the resolution of the meeting expressing its sense of loss at his departure, S.M.H., 18.11.1891.
3. This was also the view of the S.M.H., which took the view that Parkes had not formally retired.
ation, acting on this motion, Parkes again declared his unwillingness: "The leader of the Opposition in the present Parliament should be not only a man of great political capability, but one prepared to remain at his post throughout the sittings. I fear that man would not be found in me at my time of life."

But despite this admission of fading powers, he nevertheless left the door open for a future return. "I do not say - and I do not think that I ought to be expected to say - that whatever circumstances of difficulty may arise in the future I would not accept the burdens of office."

Now came the question: who was the man "of great political capability" to lead the party? Of the former ministers, McMillan, the Treasurer, and Smith, who succeeded him, had senior standing; both had acted as locum tenens for Parkes and both were prominent leaders in the "liberal" re-organization of 1889. The "Herald" would have been happy with either as "their views were fully in accord with the policy of the party". But there was little chance that the Labour party would accept either man. Both had aroused active hostility during the strike and, as employers, their opposition to the eight-hours clause in the Coal Mines Bill was probably decisive. It was Wise's task, he later revealed, to convey to both men the information that they would not have Labour support. When nominated, both declined - McMillan for private business reasons, and Smith said that in the present position his withdrawal would best serve the party. Brunker, the only other ex-minister to be nominated, also declined. G.H. Reid was then proposed by Varney.

1. Letter, Parkes to Bruce Smith, read to the meeting of the party on Nov. 19. P.O. No. 46, p. 229.
2. 17.11.1891.
3. McMillan had been subjected to great abuse at the recent election. "Read the Riot Act" was chanted at his meetings. A report that Smith had advised "shooting the strikers down" gained wide circulation and this charge was made against him in Parliament by W.N. Willis. Smith denied it. "The charge was as false as Hell", said Carruthers (S.M.H., 11.4.1891. It was McMillan who had the Coal Mines Bill re-committed in order to expunge the compulsory eight-hour clause. N.S.W., P.B., Vol. IV, p. 2639.
5. S.M.H. 19.11.1891.
Parkes, and seconded by Wise.

The nomination of Reid was then followed by that of Wise himself, proposed by Jacob Carrard and seconded by James Inglis. As no further nominations were received, it is clear that the opportunity for Wise to assume the role of leadership at this point was very real — he tells us that he had received intimations from Labour members that they would support either him or Reid — and the feeling against Reid at this time was unquestionably very strong. Had the vaunting political ambition of which his enemies spoke been really strong in him, his decision would have been otherwise. But he declined on the ground that Mr. Reid was better fitted to lead an attack on the government. Other considerations, however, obviously wished with him — his financial position was not such that he could yet give himself to politics so unreservedly, and he may well have felt himself to be unsuited by experience and temperament to reconcile the conflicting interests within the party at this time. Certainly compromise with conservative and anti-federal forces would have been difficult, if not impossible, and although some of his policies would have appealed to Labour members, there was always the special problem of convincing class interests of his sincerity. That he had given thought to this evident from a remark he made to the Council of the Free Trade Association, suggesting it would not be wise to promote his candidature in the labour interests: "While in the present unhappy state of suspicion and estrangement between classes" (the Pastoralists' Unions was recruiting "free labour" in Sydney during the Queensland shearers' strike) "it is, I think, better to put forward in the labour interest a candidate who has been more identified by his position and past life than I have been with those who are personally interested in demands of labour." It was on grounds such as these that he probably argued the suitability of Reid. He had to convince a very sceptical meeting, as Reid's history in the

2. ibid.
3. S.H.R., 27.3.1891.
party was not good and his recent vote against the government on the federal issue had built up strong resentment. The "Herald" reported Wise's strong support for Reid, and said that "ultimately all opposition was withdrawn and he was elected unanimously". Wise has given a different version: that opposition remained strong and the vote was not taken till the House was about to meet, resulting in a vote of 14 for Reid, 3 against, and 18 not voting at all. "The result showed that any other candidate would have had a majority." In all events, it would appear that Wise virtually assured Reid his election - by standing down in his favour, and then by his advocacy of Reid's claims.

This belief in Reid at this point helps to explain the bitter disillusionment Wise was later to experience during Reid's premiership. For Parkes it was also a cruel stroke of irony that, having stood down, he should then witness his own son and his unwavering supporter nominate his long-standing enemy to succeed him. That Wise would take this action, in view of his close personal attachment to Parkes does not, to my mind, indicate his unreliability and inconsistency, but rather does it strengthen the idea that he sincerely aimed at promoting a social reform policy in the Free Trade Party. He had been told, he claims, by Labour spokesmen, that the party would support free trade only if it was led by Reid or

1. Wise says that, rather than accept Reid, another alternative was proposed by some members, that a small committee be appointed to direct the party. He says he strongly urged against this and urged Reid's claim as the only man who could attack the government "with any prospect of success", "Catholic Press", 25.12.1891.
2. Ibid., 19.11.1891.
3. The election of Reid was later the subject of much political argument, and different versions appeared. Wise in recalling the events says his facts were taken from a letter he wrote at the time to A.H. Conroy ("The Making of the Australian Commonwealth", p. 174). Wise's version was also published in the "Catholic Press", 25.12.1897, following Reid's claim that Wise had urged him to take the leadership on the retirement of Parkes, that no-one else was apparently thought of, and, after consideration, he consented. At a meeting of the party he (Reid) was elected unanimously" ("Catholic Press", 18.12.1897). McMillan's version, published in 1894, is closer to Wise's - that many members of the caucus, including himself, refrained from taking part in the vote, 14 voting for Reid, and 30 abstaining. The large non-vote must be taken as a protest against Reid's appointment, D.H., 3.3.1894.
himself. Only such a consideration - or the other, that he hoped personally to
gain by Reid's leadership - can explain his nomination of Reid. The other thought
- that the FreeTrade Party may have come under the leadership of the young intellec-
tual radical at this stage - makes tempting speculation. Wise would certainly have
wanted to lead into new political country and one must allow, in the light of the
subsequent labour split, the further possibility that some fusion of labour and
democratic forces, transcending special class interests, might have taken party
form. However, it is doubtful if the party, at this point, would have followed
the radical Wise policies, and it may well have been that only an older politician,
schooled in the faction years, could have controlled the conflicting elements and
kept the party together for its ultimate success in 1894.

That Wise should have felt that Reid was such a man, however, in the
interesting point, for as well as their political differences on such matters as
federation and Parkes' leadership, the background, outlook, and temperament of the
two men were as unlike as it was possible for two free trade barristers-at-law to
be. But on the question of a social reform policy, Reid was perhaps closer in
sympathy with Wise's ideas than any of the other contenders. Reid, moreover, would
not be advancing any established economic interests, nor was he wedded to any
hallowed view of laissez-faire liberalism. One of the earliest causes he had
taken up after entering Parliament in 1880 was that of land reform and he constantly
attacked what he called the land-owning monopolist. On the election platforms he
regularly professed support for the "masses" against the "classes", and as early as
1886 had declared himself to be heartily in favour of land and income taxes. But

2. See his own account of his early interest in the question of land reform, "My
3. Ibid., p. 59.
(he had opposed payment of members in 1889), nor could he, said to express any political philosophy apart from his settled convictions about free trade. But perhaps to Wise this was not a disadvantage at this stage; it could leave him more open to influence.

As the relations of Reid and Wise from this point onwards constitute one of the main strands of this study we might take a moment to look at the man thus elected to step into the shoes of Parkes. A Scotch emigrant now in his forty-sixth year, Reid was a colonial politician of ten years' vintage. In this time he had served as Minister for Public Instruction for a year in the Stuart Ministry of 1883-4, but had not achieved the reputation of being a serious politician, although he was very popular in his constituency of East Sydney. He had been returned at the head of the poll when first elected to East Sydney in 1880 - ahead of Parkes himself - and from this election one can date the long-standing animosity between the two men. Parkes, then Premier, had slightly referred to Reid's greenness as a candidate and Reid had returned the insult with interest, and with that flair for the popular vein which was to prove unfailing, he had won the sympathy of the voters. Henceforth he was to be a favourite with the crowd, and he knew well how to win their favour. His immense physical proportions, a piping voice, a pepping eye-glass, and a never-ending supply of ready-made wit and repartee won his a reputation, and he unashamedly played the role of the demagogue and entertainer: "When the ears of an audience are tickled the approaches to its intelligence and sympathy become easier." Unlike Wise, he could tune in immediately to the ear of democracy and made no pretensions about his methods or his morals. The stories of his election sallies are legion, and on the platform he could handle all situations, even the well aimed flour bag, and in the Assembly, where he constantly fell asleep.

3. "You see the more my enemies attack me the whiter I am". This won over a hostile Newtown audience. "I only called you gentlemen", his sally to a group of...
he was reputed always to have one ear open.

Wise has recorded his impressions of Reid's oratory: "As a speaker he was eloquent, instinctively an orator, and was at his best upon a platform when he was not restrained by rule or custom. His method was to play upon the simplest emotion of his audience, and lacking personal dignity and being devoid of literary taste, he could descend to any depth of sentimentality; yet such is the force of personality, he could at times be very impressive." A brief extract is illustrative: "The battle of life is keen enough, the difficulties of getting the comforts of life are hard enough without making it worse. I am a freetrader because it makes people free. (A voice: 'Because it makes you fat!') Because it makes me jelly and fat. (Renewed laughter.) No man could get fat under Bibbo. (More laughter.) Why is there such a fuss in some quarters against freetrade? Because in shifting the burdens off quivering struggling humanity you have to put them on the big man. My policy is as strong as the sun in the heavens..."

With these platform talents, however, went a good mind and an astute appreciation of political life and personality. Until his elevation to party leadership his career had not been characterised by industry. Deakin speaks of his incorrigible idleness and "indifference in administration". On his own admission, he had been something of a gadfly - a popular orator and clubman - and had spent fourteen years qualifying for his barrister's admission. Nor had he gained any reputation as a party man; he had crossed the House from the anti-Parkes side in 1886, but never formally joined the party of Parkes, or attended its counsels. He claimed that Parkes twice offered him office, but he refused. Though self-styled "freetrader of freetraders", his record was not sound; he had censured (from 267) of miners who began bellowing at his first words. "It takes a good man to get round me", tapping his enormous stomach, "I am solid, as you can see".

1. MS. in the Papers of A.C. Stevens, p. 513, H.L.
2. Speech to the electors of King Division, D.T., 9.9.1894.
Parkes for replacing free trade ahead of local government in 1887, and in the next parliament had joined forces with the opposition in attacking Parkes for giving precedence to federation over free trade. His political title; "Reid the Wiggly" was quite familiar as a caption in the "Bulletin".

At the 1891 election Reid's stocks were not very high with the Free Trade Party, nor with his own electors. His amendment to the Parkes Draft Bill resolution had been badly defeated (67/35), and in East Sydney Barton, the federalist, had been returned at the top of the poll and Reid was relegated to fourth position - a lesson which cynics were later to claim was not lost upon him. Accordingly, his election to leadership of the party came as a surprise to many. The "Bulletin" was sceptical about the prospects of one who had erstwhile "regarded the serious work of politics through a distant and rose-coloured eyeglass"; but the "Herald", though it clearly preferred McMillan or Smith, acknowledged that the new leader possessed many of the qualities necessary for this responsible post: "... strong in argument, damaging in criticism, unswerving in sarcasm and attack with a quality of manner to disarm opponents". Reid, however, was not to show other political qualities - a shrewd appreciation of political opportunity, a high degree of skill in party management, and rare judgment of the currents of opinion. And now that opportunity had opened the door, unsuspected personal qualities also emerged - an energetic application and determination to succeed, which when combined with political resilience and lack of scruples was to carry him to heights of achievement undreamed of by his earlier associates and even by Reid himself.

The task ahead for Reid was made immediately apparent. Since Parkes' retirement, Edmund Barton was regarded as leading the federal movement in New South Wales, but when Barton accepted Dibbs' offer of the Attorney-Generalship free-traders were sharply divided as to whether he should be supported as a federalist or 1. Not to all however - see letter from John Haynes, predicting this result, S.M.H., 7.9.1891.
2. 19.11.1891.
opposed as a protectionist. Barton had many times declared, and as recently as the last election, that "federation was first" and the fiscal question was to be settled by the Federal Parliament. His acceptance of office with Dibbs was now felt by many free-traders to be a desertion amounting to a choice of "provincial protection first and federation in the dim future". The divisions within the Free Trade Party were clearly revealed when Barton came back to East Sydney for his ministerial re-election. There was a sharp division of opinion as to whether the party should support Barton or the rival candidate, Grantham, who opposed him in the name of free trade, but had strong labour affiliations. There were the three large questions of free trade policy all involved. To federalists, loyalty to the cause of national union decreed a vote for Barton, but this was tantamount to a vote for protection in the very citadel of free trade - which loyal free-traders could scarcely countenance. To vote free trade, however, was to vote for the "labour" man, and to some conservative free-traders this was worse than protection.

Wise, though a close friend and federalist, took the view that Barton's action had put back federation and he joined with the free trade press in opposing him. Reid, of course, led the opposition to Barton. In the event Barton won handsomely, but the election had clearly pointed up the problem facing the new leader of the party in shaping future policy. That he was to successfully negotiate this problem, keep the party together, and lead it to success at the election of 1894, is an undoubted testimony to his ability. It was also to testify to his own remarkable resilience, for in the process his convictions underwent a series of radical changes.

It must have become clear to Reid at the very outset that his own special

1. S.M.H. Editorial, 5.11.1891.
2. See letters, S.M.H., 5, 6, 7.11.1891: "If free traders vote for Barton, East Sydney will barter itself into slavery" (John Haynes, 7.11.1891); "A vote for labour will bring the government under the iron heel of trade-unions" ("A Shamch Freetrader", 6.11.1891). For advocacy of the Barton vote, see letter signed "Country Before Party", 6.11.1891.
3. In "The Making of the Australian Commonwealth", Wise puts the case for
problem would be to effect some compromise on the federal question. The strength of his opposition to the Constitution Bill was a barrier, but it was not insurmountable. To one observer at least his calculated course was predictable. Surveying the future of federation on the accession of Reid to leadership, the "Herald" admitted that with "its bitterest enemy leading on one side of the House and its next bitterest enemy on the other, it would appear hopeless". But with an acute judgment of the man and a long experience of colonial politics it added that such a conclusion would be rash: "It fails to allow for the susceptibility of the political mind to new light and the wondrous elasticity of the political conscience."

So it was to be with G.H. Reid. The process by which he first recanted his anti-federalism (November, 1892), became converted to the idea of an elective Convention (the Quick proposal of August, 1893), and finally took the lead in "restoring the subject of federation to a position worthy of its commanding importance" (election policy, July, 1894) has been traced in detail in the federal histories, and needs no elaboration. In the process he outflanked Parkes, and also capitalized on the popular movement which Barton and the Federal League had been promoting since Barton's resignation in December, 1892. At the same time he maintained his opposition to certain Draft Bill provisions, especially those most unfavourable to the Labour Party and those affecting New South Wales particularly, and all the while he kept close to his former associate and leading free trade anti-federalist, J.H. Wunt, who was to become Attorney-General in the Reid Ministry. All told, this was quite an amazing feat of political tight-rope walking which did not bring him to a time of decision until his famous "Yes - No" stand on the Constitution Bill of 1896.

For the present, however, it showed the manoeuvrability of the new leader setting out to advance his own position within the party. In passing, one may note the imperturbable nature of the man who could sail ahead while effecting such changes of (from 270). Barton's acceptance of office, and in retrospect admits his action was probably the sensible course.

1. 19.11.1891.
The "Bulletin" views the new Free Trade Party Leader.
15/9/1894.
course; and also the complete candour with which he could publicly acknowledge his change of mind. To the House in November, 1892, he explained his new outlook: "(Earlier) I said I will not federate until I have a more rational and better idea that my principles will not be sacrificed. I say now that I have a more rational idea that my principles will not be sacrificed." Reid's refusal to waver on political convictions and his serene disregard for contradiction in his speeches and his actions was to prove intensely frustrating to an idealist like Wise. But this was yet to come.

Whilst Reid moved towards the popular sentiment in his party regarding federation, the other question as to how far he should go in the direction of a social reform policy was less easy to determine. His own professions were not to commit him too deeply, and despite the need for Labour support, the opposition to within the Free Trade Party to a progressive policy of social and industrial legislation had to be carefully weighed. In the meantime, his safest ground was the fiscal issue and he began by directing his party's attack to this aspect of the government policy, and when Dibbs introduced his new tariff duties in December, 1891, Reid, as he put it, "exchanged the olive branch for the fiscal revolver", and the old tariff issue was once more in full cry.

The developments which led Reid to the election of 1894 with a radical reform programme will be considered in the next chapter, as we watch the growth of a strong reform group outside the parliamentary free trade party, and Reid's adaptation to new political forces.

1. Speech in reply to Barton's federal resolution, 28.11.1892, cited by Wise, op. cit., p. 179. The event which changed his outlook was the election of Cleveland to the Presidency of the U.S.A, which he thought presaged a free-trade policy for America. In this he was badly mistaken.
PART 5.

Chapter IX

"If Wise and Co. are Liberals it follows everyone else is Conservative. . . . Australia doesn't want any Liberal party and throws back the epithet with derision." 1

"The democratic movement of the Free-trade Party has been completely justified. Many of those who acted with me have been blamed for 'splitting the party'. . . . We demanded that there should be real free-trade with its natural and irresistible consequence of direct taxation . . . I do not hesitate to say that if we had not rallied the democratic sentiment of the people we should have failed. Had our Association not existed there would have been no party at all." 2

The Customs Duties Bill introduced by the Bibbs government in December, 1891, ushered in a very confused period of party politics in New South Wales. That the Protectionist Party, weak and divided, was able to govern for a full three years' life - the first for a long time - can only be explained by the fact that the other two parties, lacking strong leadership, were just as badly rent by divisions. We will first look briefly at the Labour Party. Having expressed a single-minded purpose to sink the fiscal issue for social reform legislation, the party foundered on this very rock as soon as a real division was called for. Individual parliamentarians refused to surrender their fiscal allegiance and the party split when the Customs Duty Bill came up for decision, and for the remainder of the Parliament it remained a disunited party. This division which arose in the party caucus widened, involving the Electoral Leagues and the Trades and Labour Council, and in the attempts to unify and discipline the elected representatives, defections and expulsions weakened the voting strength of the party, its prestige was lowered, and its power greatly reduced. As well as a fiscal allegiance, the individual Labour member was throughout troubled with the problem of loyalty - whether his duty was to his own conscience, his electors in general, his local

2. E.R. Wise, interview with the S.E.H. following election victory, 18.7.1894.
League, or to the Annual Conference. This problem was not resolved when the party went to the election in 1894 and the split was so deep that two rival groups - the "Solidarity" and "Independent" party - presented themselves to Labour voters.

Thus the power which the party had exercised over the government of Parkes gradually slipped from its grasp and the opportunity of directing the course of legislation was virtually lost. An Electoral Act, a priority with the Labour Party, was passed by Dibbs, but in the worsening conditions of depression after 1891 labour feeling turned against the government, and a lot of bitterness followed in the wake of the Broken Hill industrial strike (July - November, 1892). The replacement of the local magistrate, the arrest and imprisonment of strike leaders, and the dispatch of a strong police force to the district antagonized militant labour, but despite all this, a full Labour vote could not be organized to support Reid's censure. Following this, Dibbs came to realize that he could depend upon the protectionists in the Labour Party (numbering at least ten), and by 1893 he felt strong enough to publicly challenge the Party and announce his refusal to appoint any Labour representatives to the Legislative Council.

Given this situation it was to be expected that the Protectionist Party would enact a genuine policy of protection. But when the Customs Bill was presented there was nothing radical about the tariff changes and it was a great disappointment to those ardent protectionists who had waited so long to see their principles put into legislation. Apart from grain duties, and some tariff protection to their iron industry and minor local industries, such as rope, soap, and candles, the tariff seemed designed as much for indirect taxation as for protection; and this was admitted. The reasons for Dibbs' pusillanimity can only be guessed. Undoubtedly 1. The government survived with a majority of four in a House of 132 members. Four Labour protectionists voted to keep Dibbs in office. See N.B, Hairen, unpublished thesis, p. 267.
3. For the tariff schedule see A.W. Martin, "A", Appendix A, and for his analysis of the Bill, pp. 42-6.
the faction-leader's instinct for self-preservation led him to pander to the strong country and agricultural interests, while the revenue emphasis was a concession to conservative and wealthy interests in avoiding any possibility of direct taxation. It must also be remembered that Dibbs had advocated free trade for a much longer period than he had protection, and the strength of his convictions about "pure" protection was questionable. However, we must also consider what were the terms of the agreement he had made with Edmund Barton when Barton agreed to join his cabinet. Barton's claim that he could best further federal interests by belonging to the Dibbs government can only be held to mean that he would try to put a brake on provincial protection and prevent a high tariff wall being erected against the other colonies. Wise says that Dibbs kept faithfully to his promises to Barton on the maximum duty to be levied.

Whatever the reasons, the failure of the Protectionist party to put its policy into operation, provides further proof, if it be needed, as to how deficient was the fiscal issue as a basis for genuine party division. Despite all the argument and controversy neither party when given the opportunity was prepared to accept the legislative implications of its policy. But, while Parkes had temporized in the same fashion, his hold on the party was strong enough to keep it together. For Dibbs such a task was to prove more difficult. The strong radical section of the party was disgusted by such a time-serving device and voiced their disapproval. To men like O'Sullivan, Traill, and Rowe, "a just and holy cause" was imperilled, and the legislation was discrediting to protection. It was, O'Sullivan later declared, "a shallow device to shield the rich and tax the poor."

It took me all I knew to support the Dibbs government when they imposed these

1. Of the total revenue for 1892 (10,800,000 approx.), about one fourth came from taxation, of which Customs provided 80% (2,678,000 approx.). The alternative to these lucrative customs duties was direct taxation in some form. See tables in A.W.Martin, ibid., p. 15, p. 239.
duties. Having just arrived in power, the disillusioned protectionists could not kill the Bill, but such a basic problem could not be masked for too long. As conditions worsened, it became more difficult for radical dissidents to defend a botch policy which was affording practically no help to manufacturers, nor arresting the growing unemployment in industry, while the free traders' charge that the tariff weighed upon the poor could scarcely be denied.

Disaffection took more open form in 1892. No one deserted when Reid moved his censure of the mishandling of finances soon after the Broken Hill strike, but when Cann, a protectionist Labour man, moved an amendment placing the censure on the government's administration of the law at Broken Hill, seven protectionists joined the Labour members in support, including the radicals O'Sullivan, Melville, Walker, and Willis. Soon after this, Chapman, a country member, moved a resolution favouring a progressive land tax, which was represented as a tax to help the small selector and to lift the burden of indirect tax on the working class. Although defeated, it showed the growing strength of the radical group. The discontent took more open form when a retrenchment group was formed among some of Bibbs' followers with the aim of reducing salaries of officials. O'Sullivan was president and Rose secretary, and it was supported by those who claimed to represent the working men. While the unemployed starved, it was unjust, declared Traill, that officials should receive higher salaries. The "Herald" saw this development as

"[Footnote:]"}

2. The Reid censure was defeated 71/63.
3. After 1891, the slump in the colony's trade, production, and employment was rapid. See T.A. Coghlan, "Labour and Industry in Australia," Vol. IV, chap. VII. For comparative tables for the years succeeding 1891, see N.G. Batlin, "The Shape of the Australian Economy, 1861-1900," Economic Record, Vol. 34, April, 1958.
5. ibid., p. 1192.
6. ibid., Vol. LVI, p. 5360.
7. 3.2.1892.
by attacking the Estimates, and in a move to reduce the salary of the Under-Secretary mustered thirty-three votes, including twenty or so original Labour men. This group, although concerned with one single aspect of the growing social problem, represents the widening division of opinion in the Protectionist party. The Dibbs party was gradually taking on a more conservative complexion, and to O'Sullivan the combination of labour and radical protection represented a possible new grouping of democratic forces. But this was now too late; the Labour party, despite its problems, was firmly organized on a class basis, and the radical lead was about to pass to free trade. What is illustrated in the troubles of the Protectionist party is the greater problem we have remarked upon - that of formulating social policy in a party based on fiscal allegiance. Though O'Sullivan always believed Protection could rally the democratic forces, the Dibbs party proved a very poor instrument. Dibbs finally issued an ultimatum to the radical group - support of dissolution - and O'Sullivan's party soon afterwards disappeared into the political limbo.

Despite these internal stresses, the Dibbs Ministry held on to office, but in the final year of its life it had to face conditions which had never previously fallen to the lot of a colonial legislature - a serious economic slump along with a spectacular financial collapse. The boom period of the eighties which was characterized by large-scale overseas borrowing, public works expenditure, and land speculation, first showed signs of weakness when credit began tightening in 1891. But in April, 1893, the whole financial structure - which was resting on borrowed money - began to fall when in a single month twelve banks stopped payment. Bewildered employees and investors added to the discontent of unemployed thrown out of work by falling markets and public works retrenchment. In these conditions of economic hardship and social insecurity, no government could hope to avoid wide-

3. See Galbraith, op. cit.; Butlin, op. cit.
spread censure and the Dibbs government reaped its full measure.

In Goggin's opinion, Dibbs' handling of the bank crisis was "bold, well conceived and successful, and deserving of much praise", but this was far from being a general view, and at the time there was angry criticism, especially from Labour, about a government "which cannot meet its own liabilities, bolstering up other institutions who cannot meet theirs". Dissatisfaction was so general that, as the government's time ran out, its position became rather hopeless and by the end of the year its fate seemed pre-ordained.

The radical wing of Dibbs' Protection party had clearly isolated itself on the tariff and industrial questions, but it was the issue of land taxation that was to reveal the sharpest policy differences. Land reform had long been at the centre of middle-class radical politics, and, on top of the traditional demands for unlocking the land and breaking the land monopoly, the issue of land taxation had come to the forefront during the depression. While many men were without income or work, the non-productive use of so much land held as freehold by a small number of owners gave a new emphasis to the ideas of the nationalisation and single-tax theorists. The visit of Henry George in 1890 helped popularise his ideas and leagues were formed advocating the single tax as the social remedy for the colony's financial problems. Following the disastrous effects of the large-scale land speculation, the question of a land tax came to be represented as a matter of abstract justice as well as a measure of land reform. To its advocates it was at once a source of revenue, a tax on wealth, and a measure to force landowners to use the land. The real problem for the Protectionist party came when the land tax was adopted by progressive free-traders, and presented as the alternative revenue to a free-trade policy of tariff abolition. Inevitably in this context Protection came to be represented as the anti-direct taxation party, and the irony for those

1. op. cit., p. 2945.
protectionist radicals who were in favour of a land tax was that in this situation they became identified with the wealthy land-owners who were now turning to Protection, or with those for whom protection really meant indirect taxation. There was little escape before an electorate which was coming to accept direct taxation as the criteria of social justice, and as the party approached the election of 1894, it wore the badge of conservatism - even though it included men who were really supporters of liberal reform.

To add to the problems of the democrats in his party, Dibbs declared that he was going to make abolition of payment of members an election issue. On this sword "Hop" depicted Dibbs committing "determined" suicide, and in a characteristic analysis the "Bulletin" pointed to the catastrophe that was now the Protection party:

"If the country wants Protection it has for the moment to endure Dibbs... and Protection, but not the abolition of the payment of members' salaries, or wants Protection and the abolition of salaries without Dibbs, or desires Protection without either Dibbs or the other thing, it has no possible way of giving effect to its wishes. Or if it wants a Land-Tax and a State Bank, with or without any, or all of the three, it can't say so. And if it takes Dibbs and Protection and the abolition of members' salaries, it has also to take all of Dibbs' colleagues... Dibbs as a Protectionist has been a fire and an awful failure, but the nation must either accept him and the pallid shadow of Protection, which goes along with him, or go bald-headed for Foreign Trade." 1

As well as renounce his democracy and his protection, Dibbs had also sold his republicanism for a title, which he brought back from England. In the "Bulletin's" eyes he had denied all his past principles "somewhat after the fashion of Peter one cold night in Judea".

That the FreeTrade Party was able to capitalize on the divisions within the two other parties and emerge from this period of confused party politics, as the party with a progressive policy, was due principally to the efforts of an advanced wing of free-traders, and to the astute judgment of C.H.Raid. In tracing this development we pick up the threads of Wise and his free-trade liberalism, for

1. 5.8.1893.
2. ibid.
it was, to Wise more than any other free-trader that the FreeTrade party appeared with a liberal policy at the election of 1894.

It was no coincidence that the FreeTrade and Land Reform Electoral Committee was formed in April, 1893 — the month of the bank crashes — nor was it surprising that soon after its formation Wise was elected President, for of all the prominent free-traders Wise had been most consistent in linking land taxation with complete free trade. Wise was attending the debate in the House on the Bank Issue Bill when the Committee held its inaugural meeting at which no parliamentarians appear to have been present, but as the impulse for the meeting came from South Sydney — his own constituency — he undoubtedly knew of and approved of the move. Referring later to the formation of the League, Wise recalled how it had become necessary for those who wanted to push direct taxation to separate themselves from the old free-traders and strike out on an independent line for themselves: "To put land value taxation in the front of its platform the FreeTrade and Land Reform Association was formed; and I accepted presidency of it."

At the meeting to form the association, the secretary, William Harding, explained its objects: the apathy of free-traders, he said, was partly responsible for the present disastrous state of affairs. The proposed committee would work to secure the united action of electors to return men of pronounced free trade principles in the contest which would sooner or later take place; and it was hoped that such committees be formed in every electorate.

"The fundamental principles that such committees shall work for shall be the immediate abolition of the restrictive taxes at present levied through the Customs Houses, and obtaining the revenue now derived from that source by a tax upon the unimproved value of the lands of the colony."

This resolution was carried unanimously and the

1. Speech at a banquet in his honour given by his supporters, in which he reviewed the work of the South Sydney free-traders; S.M.H., 10.8.1895.
2. ibid., 26.4.1893.
association was not just another League for promoting a taxation theory; its significance, explained W.H. Wilks, was that it was an Electors' League. "It was not directed from Tattersalls' Chambers and the strings were not pulled by interested parties. Every branch would be under the control of the electors." The progress made by the Association in the next few months can be gauged from the unusual public interest shown in its first public meeting. A "monster" meeting in the Protestant Hall was crowded to hear Wise deliver the first public address. The potential of the new body as an electoral organization was clearly recognized by the presence on the platform of a number of leading free trade parliamentarians, and exceptional interest was no doubt taken in the presence there of both Reid and Parkes. This meeting represents something of a watershed in the history of the FreeTrade Party, as it marks a clear line of separation between old and new free trade policies. Because of this some note should be taken of Wise's speech.

Wise began by condemning land speculation as one of the great causes of poverty. He recalled how he had consistently held to this view since his first public speech in 1883, and that for ten years he had insisted that the first duty of parliament - if it wished to carry free trade successfully and do its duty to every class in the community - was to impose a tax on the unimproved value of land. He did not flatter himself that his words had had any great effect on public opinion; but now a change had come over the opinions of the people. It was clear that some permanent reform was needed. He then went on to expound the nature of the problem and the reform to be effected in the resolution he was to move.

Wise pointed to the vast speculation in land which had taken place and the absence of any legislation to control the gambling in land values. The pinch of poverty was now felt in many homes. The real injustice lay in the expenditure of public money which added to the value of land and the wealth of a section of the

1 ibid., 31.8.1893. Wilks was addressing a meeting to form a branch in St. Peters.
community. The value of such land, e.g., in Sydney, had been increased by the silent unrecorded industry of three generations of human beings of whom the greater part lived out their lives of toil without participating to a single farthing in the wealth they were creating. The state had added greatly to the private wealth of landholders, and yet received nothing in return. It had received approximately £47,000,000 for lands sold, the value of which had now risen to £179,043,000.

"Every road, bridge, railway, well sunk, river dammed... every piece of administration performed, directly increased the value of land in all parts of the country... but especially did it increase the value of vacant land in the city. Thus, by the expenditure of state money through all the channels of state activity, plus the natural growth of population and development of resources, land had increased in value. "What this League asked was that those lands which had already received so much advantage from State expenditure, and were destined yet to receive so much more, should give back to the State in the form of taxation a portion of that increment in value which the State had earned for them... " The League wanted to tax this state-earned increment of land, and take the tax off industry and improvement. By doing this, land would be put to a more profitable use, and it would stimulate industry. The reform was in the interests of the whole country.

There was nothing new in this theory of the land tax. The importance of the statement lay in its adoption as the free trade policy, for such a tax would provide the alternative to the Customs House Taxation, and allow a lifting of the tariff. Thus Wise linked the two features of the tax - a measure of social justice and an alternative source of revenue for free trade - and by insisting that this become the policy of the party at the next election he threw down the gage to the party leaders and moved free trade forward as the reform party. Convinced that the Freetrade and Land Reform organization would have the electoral strength to
promote the policy of land taxation, Wise issued what practically amounted to an ultimatum:

"The Free-trade party would insist that every member declare whether or not he was in favour of removing present duties and taxing unimproved values of land. There was a certain section of the Free-trade party who, if they would not come with them, would have to go. They had been carrying that section as an incubus for some time past."

This declaration was received with loud cheers which were obviously not lost on the leader of the party, who rose to second the resolution. Reid was not in the dark about the purpose of the meeting, for he had been acquainted with the platform of the new association at a conference held between its executive and parliamentary members prior to the meeting, and was reported to have promised that if the party came into power after the next election, the first plank in their platform would be land taxation. This promise he now renewed before this large gathering, and in view of subsequent events his statement deserves some notice.

He began in characteristic style: "Two bubbles have burst in this country. ('You are one of them!' laughter and loud cheers). . . The first was Protection and the second was ("Free-trade!"). Yes, Free-trade. The Free-trade that shrunk from carrying out an honest policy of direct taxation. . . " He went on and condemned Dibbs for putting more taxation "on men whose battle for existence from day to day was becoming harder". They must be freed from these unequal tax burdens. The people were being robbed and the land tax was perfectly justified, he argued, "on the plain basis of a return for services rendered". Then came strong political pledges: "A Free-trade government must be true to these principles; it must be prepared to legislate for direct taxation and to reduce all duties but a few corresponding to the English tariff." Then, in words Wise was to recall vividly, Reid exhorted the

1. The resolution was worded: "That this meeting is of the opinion that the equitable adjustment of taxation requires the immediate imposition of a tax on the unimproved value of land with a view to the abolition of taxes upon industry and improvements."

2. This was stated by W.H. Wilks, S.J.P., 31.8.1893.
meeting to send in "a band of men to keep a Ministry to its work - who would say to a Free-trade Ministry: 'You promised certain things to the people and if you don't perform them we will put you out'. (Cheers)". Unfortunately, an awkward question regarding payment of members left this strong democratic flavour somewhat diluted. Reid preferred to regard this question as a matter of conscience, but before he left the platform he was forced to admit that he thought they could get a better House without it. However, those present must have been left strongly with the impression that Reid was right behind the new reform, and that the Free-trade party was now in earnest about the matter of land taxation. Further strength was given to this by Carruthers' speech in which he proposed that branches of the organization be formed as Electoral Committees. The movement of the League was in the right direction, he said, "marching towards progress and liberalism".

What was to be Parkes' reaction to this unequivocal statement of taxation policy which he had failed to implement during his own two administrations? From the loud and continuous cheering which greeted him, it seemed that the meeting still looked to him as the Free-trade leader. Parkes did not commit himself in the same way as Reid. He still held to the broad maxim that no government had the right to levy taxation on the people except to meet the necessity of government. He believed in federation. So soon as they brought about federation, individual colonies would have to face direct taxation, for Customs would be transferred to federal government. ("Ten years' time!") He believed in three years' time. Thus he manoeuvred round the issue by concluding that in promoting federation it would be forcing individual colonies to rely on a direct tax. It was left to the meeting to decide just where Parkes stood in relation to the resolution before the meeting, but he left no doubt as to what he thought of the leader of the new organization which he had come to support. He said he had listened to Mr. Wise with perfect admiration
"... it would assure every mind in the community that they were on the right road when they saw gifted and educated young men devoting their talents and energies to the cause of true liberty and popular government..." He had also been much pleased with the speech of Mr. Reid. Parkes was certainly not disqualifying himself from the prospect of a return to leadership, and in the atmosphere of the large meeting launching a new policy, and intoxicated again by the cheers, the "blessed peace" of retirement seemed forgotten, and the old man may have felt the reins once more in his hands. To a question regarding payment of members, he didn't even refer to the answer Reid has given. No. He would tell them what he would do. "I will submit the question to a plebiscite." (Loud cheers.)

In assessing the impact of this meeting on the Free Trade Party, the first point to be noticed is the absence of any representatives of what the "Herald" chose to call "the orthodox straight-going section of the party", of whom the leading figures were McAllan and Bruce Smith. This fact, when taken with Wise's remark that a section of the party might have to be left behind, led the "Herald" to express fears of an immediate party crisis, precipitating a split between the advanced guard - those resolved to make land taxation an inseparable part of their programme - and the rear guard - those who sought by free trade merely to reduce taxation and liberate trade. A flood of correspondence and comment followed in the press. To those standing fast to the old ways, Wise appeared a dangerous faddist. "Let us not leave solid and well-defined paths to follow the theorists," wrote John Jackson. "Mr. Wise has a remedy for all our evils." The meeting at the Protestant Hall has shocked the public sense of justice," said W. H. M. A.

2. For all the foregoing account of the meeting, see S. H. E., 7.8.1893.
3. 31.8.1893.
5. Editorial, 8.7.1893.
6. ibid., 10.8.1893.
7. ibid., 1.9.1893.
real fear was expressed that the leaders of the party were "coquetting with land-
tax fanatics with socialistic proposals", and letters appeared thankful that McMillan was still faithful. McMillan had not identified himself with this new movement and had not been a party to the conference held between the Electoral Committee of the new association and some parliamentary members. In explaining this, Wilks said that although he (McMillan) was "an able man of well known political sagacity his associations governed him. He failed to feel the pulse of the people, and took his political aspirations from commercial centres". However, he (Wilks) had no doubt that when McMillan saw the feeling of the people he would probably come into line with them. But McMillan had recently added to his antidemocratic reputation by again supporting the abolition of payment of members, and by defending the banking institutions and the government's bank legislation.

Though he had never opposed direct taxation in principle, he was opposed to the land-tax and, when he spoke out against Wise and his policy in a speech at Waverley, this placed the seal on his reactionary politics for the land-taxers. In the eyes of the "Single Tax", McMillan was left behind as the leader of the old school and the prominent upholder of privilege. To the "Bulletin" he remained "god of the revenue tariffists!"

Numbered among the old school of free-traders were parliamentarians like James Ellis and Alexander Campbell (shipping interests), James Inglis (tea importer), Adian Knox (Sugar Co. interests), J.F. O'Callan (newspaper interests), and Joseph Abbott (insurance and pastoral interests). There were vested interests in land and property here, as well as commercial interests, but the real concern of these

1. ibid., CatFile letter, 1.9.1893.
2. E.g., "The Man at the Wheel", ibid., 2.9.1893.
4. 20.9.1893.
5. 19.8.1893.
6. A. W. Martin and P. Wardle, "Members of the Legislative Assembly of N.S.W., 1836-1901."
wealthy free-traders was that expressed by the National Association with which most of them were connected. This was a fear of the radical tendencies of the Free-trade and Reform Association and its connection with men of single-tax and labour interests. Thus one clear result of Wise’s speech was to isolate, and force a closer grouping of the right-wing of the Free-Trade party.

How radical was the newly formed left wing? The assertion that the policy of the Association was the single-tax in disguise was denied. There was no suggestion that all revenue would come from this source; duty on narcotics and intoxicants, for example, was still advocated, but the mere presence of a member of Henry George’s followers on the Committee, including its secretary, William Harding, gave rise to fears of land nationalisation, and confiscation, as well as a heavy land-tax. In addition, the recently baptised journal of the Single Tax League gave the new free trade association its full support and publicised its meetings. It declared that the new organisation had superseded the old moribund Free Trade Association and had separated the genuine free-traders from fiscalists of the stamp of Edward Pulsford. To Wise, it said, had come the opportunity of leading a truly democratic party, and it acclaimed his speech as a brilliant effort which brought the Free-Trade party forward, leaving the conservatives behind.

Another quarter from which some support came was the Australian Shearers’ Union through its voice, the “Worker”. The Union was vitally interested in land reform and Spence, its president, was a strong advocate of a tax on unimproved land values. Spence was also one of the labour men who looked beyond the restricted

2. See speech of vice-president S.I. Stidman when forming branch at Leichhardt, S.M.H., 31.9.1893.
3. A leaflet proposing a tax of fourpence in the pound had been circulated at the meeting but Wise denied that had official sanction, and on a number of occasions subsequently specified the amount of one penny in the pound as the tax first proposed. This allevied some of the “Herald’s” fears of the new association. See Wise’s statement, S.M.H., 19.1.1894.
4. First issue of “Single Tax” was 25.7.1893.
5. Ibid., 20.8.1893 and 20.9.1893.
6. See his speech at Bourke, S.M.H., 13.4.1893. The “Worker”, 9.6.1893 (over)
class composition of the present Labour party to a broader people's party which
would include middle-class men. Though the "Worker" saw no solution in a Free-
Trade or Protection party and was completely cynical of the new reform professions
of the old politicians such as Reid and Parkes, it did acknowledge Wise to be sin-
cere in this new policy, as he had been in his defence of the Union position in the
shearers' strike of 1891. As well as the sympathy it received from such quarters,
there was represented on the Association a number of men with labour affiliations
which in the eyes of the conservative section gave to it an additional radical
complexion.

However, despite these fears of the right wing, there was nothing extrem-
list in the policy or the organization of the Freetrade and Land Reform Electoral
Committee. Its strength lay in a group of younger free-traders who were convinced
that the time had come for a genuine free trade policy which would go beyond fiscal-
ism and face the social problems of the day. The injustice of indirect taxation
and land monopoly and the prevailing conditions of unemployment and poverty had
attracted them to the organization, and they had earnestly taken to the theory of
land taxation as a measure of social justice. "They were determined", said
Whidden, the vice-president, "that the burden of taxation should be taken off the
poor people and placed on the land". A wide range of city interests was repre-
sented by such men as S.T. Whidden (boot manufacturer), W.H. Wilks (fuel merchant),
W.H. Mahoney (solicitor), W.T. Dick (school master), Varney Parkes (architect), David
Storey (businessman), A.R. and J.M. Comrey (solicitors), J.H. Arthur (medical pract-
titioner), and the Rev. F. Rims. And there were also men representing country

(from 287) suggested the Labour party had been taken in tow by the Freetrade and
Land Reform Association.
1. "Worker", 10.11.1893.
2. ibid., 20.1.1894.
3. Wilks, one of the founders, was a former Labour supporter. Cotton, a single-
tax Labour M.L.A., was an open supporter, and following the pledge split in the
Labour party in December, 1893, a number of free trade "independent" Labour men
established close links with the Association. Bivester, Pegan, Cook, Hollis, and
Howman all received the endorsement of the Association at the 1894 election.
interests like James Ashton (newspaper proprietor, Bourke), W. Affleck (farmer, contractor, Yass), and T.J. Hobblewhite (journalist, Goulburn). The significant difference between this group and the right-wing section was the absence of common economic interests and the almost complete absence of parliamentarians who could be identified with previous policies.

That this new group should look to Wise for leadership was very natural. By training and experience he was eminently fitted to lead such a body and his ability as speaker and political organizer was unquestioned. Though only thirty-four years of age, he was by now a mature politician and had established a reputation for defending his own political principles. These principles of free trade liberalism, expounded in his writings, he had applied consistently during his political career. His concept of political freedom had determined his support for the democratic measures of payment of members, abolition of the property vote, and electoral reform; his concept of industrial freedom found him a supporter of the eight-hour principle and the cause of unionism on the issue of freedom of contract; more recently he had applied his concept of the role and authority of the state during the banking crisis. On the fundamental tenet of Green's philosophy that the state should fairly represent the rights of all citizens, and exercise its power to establish conditions of equality, he had opposed the government's banking legislation. The Note Issue Bill, in his view, was protecting the interests of an influential minority, who had not exercised responsibility to the community. The government had no right to guarantee the banks' private note issues, but should have made the issue itself, or at least put a government stamp on all private note issues. This was getting perilously close to advocacy of a state bank, but for those who opposed state intervention in economic life, he pointed out that Bibbe's proposed legislation was intervention by the state in the interests of a special 1. Eight of these men were to be elected to Parliament at the next election. For background details, see A.W. Martin and P. Wardle, op. cit.
group. For its service on behalf of the people to these financial institutions he argued the state did not even impose a tax. Regardless of the financial connections of many in his own party who were supporting the government's measure, Wise accused the government of bowing to wealthy interests. "It is not a popular task I have undertaken and not one that is calculated to advance me socially. There are interests at work forcing this Bill through; it has been forced through not by arguments in the Chamber but by influence outside."

When the vote was taken, Wise was one of the few free-traders who voted with Labour men against the Bank Issue Bill and, in doing so, found himself at odds with his party leader, for Reid in supporting the government's measure, lauded the banks of the country as "magnificent institutions". "Those who are guided in a matter of this sort by some sort of prejudice or opinion about the banking institutions of this country take a most unworthy view." There were free-traders outside the House, however, who took a different view of Wise's politics, for it was immediately after the Banking Bill was passed that he was asked to become the president of the newly formed Freetrade and Land Reform body. For these new free-traders, anxious to embark upon a genuine policy of reform, Wise's radicalism was a positive virtue, and it was very natural that they should look to him now for leadership.

As for Wise, the leadership of such a group was something of a fulfilment of his political aims. It was in the direct Toynbee tradition of the educated and trained thinker helping to direct the course of public opinion, and as the Association was constituted as an electoral organization it was a direct political

1. N.S.W.P.D., Vol. LXV, p. 6610. Following his stand, the "Worker" remarked how once again Wise had reaped the full benefits of "freedom of contract", as he was boycotted by many of his former clients. J.T. Lang recalls how Wise attacked the private banks with all his oratorical ability, remarking that, although he lost, many his connections, he gained the commendation of the people. "The Great Bust", p. 2. ibid., p. 6546.
2. ibid., 6516.
instrument. Thus Wise, with a new burst of political activity, threw himself into
another Free trade organization, this time in the cause of land-value taxation
"which we advocated with a truly unpolitical fervour, more as an instrument of
social reform than as a measure of finance... The land-tax provided just the
battle ground that was required to separate the democrats and the reactionaries,
and (the Association) became the rallying point for the democratic Freetrader".
The efforts of Wise over a long period to disassociate Free trade from the inter-
est of the wealthy class had at last gained recognition, for he now led a truly
"liberal" movement.

To many, however, Wise still remained a mystifier, following the devious
ways of speculative theory. George Dibbs saw the new Free trade movement as a
Wise fad which was not likely to gain much acceptance. "He was a very able and
clever young man, but he wanted that for which many a ship had gone down, namely a
certain amount of ballast. He carried too much top sail... and had dragged the
Freetrade party into the mire by joining them with the land-taxers and single-
taxers." The "Bulletin" still labelled him a theorist who was always such a lot
of things but never quite anything. The "Herald", though it testified to the
"life, energy and confidence" of the new free-traders, was very wary of doctrines,
and feared any departure from the straight-forward paths of practical politics.
But to some of the wealthy members of the party Wise now emerged as a dangerous
radical: he was advocating socialist proposals, he was driving the land-owners
into the Protectionist party, and he was splitting free trade. He was changing
the Free trade - protection issue into that of class-taxation or fair-taxation, the

2. Speech at Oquirindi, S.M.H., 30.10.1893.
3. 11.11.1893.
4. 9.7.1893.
5. See letters, S.M.H., and R.T., 6.8.1893, and succeeding issues, e.g., Joseph
   Palmer; "Wise" actively employed in stirring up dissension between labour and
capital", S.M.H., 10.8.1893.
to be one of the historical achievements of Wise. He was one of the active agents bringing about a more realistic division of party politics in New South Wales.

First within his own party he was forcing a clear liberal-conservative alignment, and this was to effect a further catalysis for both parties at the election of 1894. Though this change is generally attributed to the presence of the Labour party, the influence of this new group of free-traders under Wise's leadership is, I believe, a more significant agency of change, as labour influence at this point was relatively weak.

The wedge driven by Wise between the two wings of the party towards the end of 1893 had an important bearing on the party leadership. Since his election as leader in 1891, Reid had followed what at first appears to be a very random course, but on closer observation can be seen to be a very calculated one. He began with little support, while strong resentment over his earlier attempt to destroy the Parkes government was still felt by men like McMillan and Smith, who regarded Reid's appointment as an unavoidable necessity. He had also to withstand the active hostility of Parkes, which at times broke out in an open display of animosity. However, Reid carefully picked his way through the first twelve months guided, it would seem, by the principle of accommodation to all interests. His first censure on Dibbs, when the protective tariff was introduced, allowed him to mount a strong attack on the safe and tried ground of the fiscal argument on which he could rally all free-traders. But when he next attempted to dislodge Dibbs, there were conflicting interests involved, as the Broken Hill miners were on strike. The government was under strong criticism from the working classes for its administration of the law and use of the police. But vital employer interests were involved for many in the Free Trade Party, and freedom of contract was invoked once again as a vital principle. Reid, however, proved to be quite safe in such a situation.

1. McMillan openly stated he did not feel he could support Reid as leader. See his later explanation, S.M.H., 3.8.1894.
2. See C.E. Lyne, op. cit., p. 520.
and in a speech when moving the censure not even a mention was made of the government's industrial policy. When pressed, in reply he said that he could not condemn the government for its action. That he was going with the strength of the party and had the support of the free trade press is without question. Even allowing that he could not have gained his party's support for the Labour amendment, his attempt to dodge the issue completely antagonised the Labour party on whose support he must depend if the government were to be defeated. On consideration, it is doubtful if Reid would have wanted to see the government fall at this point, for as Bibbs pertinently asked, "Where is the new government to come from if we are turned out?" Bibbs knew a coalition with Parkes was a very remote possibility, and that Reid alone could not as yet be sure of the support of Parkes' followers. And now it appeared that the ranks of the Labour party might be closing, and with a serious industrial crisis on hand, the prospect of office could not have appeared very inviting. Reid was probably happy enough to live to fight another day.

When W. W. nominated Reid for leadership of the party, he probably didn't expect a strong liberal policy from him. There was nothing in his record to suggest this, despite Reid's oft-repeated claim to be "fighting for the masses."

But he did feel Reid was the man to lead a strong attack upon the government.

1. *N.S.W.P.D.,* Vol. LIX, p. 551. Reid's resolution was a censure on Bibbs for his use of a grant from the Treasury to subsidize his trip overseas and on general financial policy. It was moved on the very day that the strike leaders were arrested on charges of conspiracy (15th September). Reid denied any knowledge of the incident, although the news seemed well known to other members of the Assembly. He was constantly interrupted by Labour members demanding to know his attitude, and also his own colleague, J. W. Weart, who strongly supported the legal proceedings. "The coincidence of the two events "was an unfortunate mishap", said the *Herald* 16.9.1893.

2. See *S.M.H.* Editorial, 16.9.1893.

3. W. W. took the legal position - that the arrests having been made, and while the men were awaiting trial, the magistrate's action was sub judice and Barton, the Attorney-General, could thus not be censured in the terms of Cann's amendment. He made it clear, however, that in no way did he support the government's policy.


5. N. E. Mair sees Reid's move as the tactic of an astute politician anxious to gain power untrammeled by Labour party support. Had Labour unanimously...
Strong reservations, however, must have grown in his mind as this Parliament proceeded. Before his second censure, Wise had strongly urged Reid to attack the government's unconstitutional procedure during the passage of the new electoral legislation when the existing Electoral Acts were repealed. He pointed to a grave anomaly whereby the death or resignation of any member would leave the constituency unrepresented since no election could take place. Reid allowed the proceedings to pass unquestioned. This would never have happened with Parkes, and Wise was clearly making a mental comparison between the erstwhile and present leader when he wrote in his letter: "Ought not you, as perhaps the only, certainly the most prominent and serviceable guardian of the constitution now in Parliament, to call attention to this gross violation of public rights?"

When the banking crisis developed, Wise was again disappointed with Reid, who refused to make the debate a party issue, and once more appeared to be courting favour with the commercial group, and McMillan especially. McMillan, supporting the government's proposed measures, urged that "no party spirit should enter the debate" but Reid went right overboard and in a touching display of generosity sympathized with the "troubles, worries and anxieties which had befallen the Premier... We must treat him in the most open manner of courtesy and consideration... I cast all these wretched party tactics aside". Wise had no desire to join in such extentecordiale, and confessed that he did not understand "the very loud appeals we have heard to drop the party feeling". Again he could look to Parkes (from 293) supported his censure, he argues, Reid would have had them in a trap, (unpublished thesis, pp. 268-69). Circumstances hardly justify this view. There was no certainty Reid would have been able to form a ministry at this point; it could not have been a strong one, and although divided, Labour hostility would still have plagued him. He was, I believe, simply accommodating himself to majority interests in his party following a calculated course aimed at gaining acceptance.

1. Wise felt this to be so serious a matter that he telegraphed Reid from Broken Hill, where he was on a case, urging him to set. Wise to Parkes, P.C., undated, Vol. 42, p. 280.
2. ibid.
4. ibid., p. 6516.
5. ibid., p. 6523.
for a real show of strength and leadership, for Parkes had never led from behind,
and now he wasted no sympathy on anxiety-ridden premiers or distressed financiers.
"I pay no attention whatever to this talk about this not being a party measure.
We all know that the dearest interests of all classes are bound up in what has
occurred (this was Reid's argument). The question is whether the proposal will
not be infinitely worse than the disease". Parkes had no doubt that it would!

In view of this close identification with the financial interests in the
party, the presence of Reid on the platform of the Free Trade and Land Reform
Association four months later when he delivered that quite remarkable speech in
support of the resolution to make land-value taxation a first priority of free
trade, policy calls for some explanation. Such an unqualified acceptance of this
new programme would seem to place him badly off-side with the "straight-going"
section of the party whose support he appeared to have been cultivating so carefully.
It would, however, be unwise to search too deeply into Reid's politics for the roots
of his policy. The explanation can, I think, be found in the dictates of opportunist leadership. The residue of ill-feeling following the bank collapse, and the
worsening plight of many depression victims, undoubtedly made timely some gesture
towards social reform. Reid was included in the strong criticism levelled by
working-class journals at politicians in general, and doubtless took due note of a
large open-air meeting, held that very day, sponsored by the Labour Electoral League
to censure the Dibbs government for its failure to do anything "in the direction of
radical reform". If this show of discontent with Dibbs set his mind towards the
prospect of an early election, two other resolutions were rather unsettling. The
second condemned the abolition of payment of members as reactionary, and in the
direct interests of conservatism and class legislation, and the third affirmed that

the meeting had, as well, no faith in the leaders of the Free Trade Party. Another
1. Ibid., p. 6517.
2. Ibid., p. 6518.
3. Ibid.
public meeting two weeks previously had launched a petition to be presented to
Parliament, praying for a tax to be levied on land values. Thus when he found
himself facing a crowded hall including many discontented electors, Reid, with a
demagogue's instinct, may have decided to let himself go in an all-out speech in
favour of the new Association and land-value taxation.

But perhaps it was not just an extempore performance - tactical consider-
ations may have been uppermost. Reid had not taken any part in the old FreeTrade
Association, now almost moribund, and here was an opportunity to attach himself to
a new free trade electoral organisation. The presence of Parkes on the platform
may also have led him to take the great leap forward. His own position as leader
was not secure. The old leader was still regarded by many, especially the radical
press, as the voice of the FreeTrade Party, and there was no certainty as to his
future intentions. Reid was always at a disadvantage with Parkes on the federation
issue, and, if Parkes was there to support the new reform policy, Reid would do
well to ensure that he did not suffer an eclipse on free trade policy. All these
reasons may have been operative if one accepts that Reid was personally ambitious
for the premiership; if not, his speech must be put down as one of those spontane-
ous and irresponsible utterances upon which no permanent store could be set.

Rejection to Reid's speech was mixed. There were conservative fears that
he was going in with the radicals and single-taxers - that he was joining with
None in stirring up class feeling - but this was offset by the cynical view that it
was just another round in the old game of "ins" and "outs", and Reid was using "the
single-tax tail to wag the freetrade dog". The "Single Tax" questioned Reid's
sincerity, but saw the FreeTrade Party being forced along in spite of itself, with

Reid the tactician tentatively putting his foot on the land reform platform.

1. S.M.H., 26.6.1893.
2. S.M.H., correspondence, 10.8.1893.
3. Ibid., 3.9.1893.
4. 25. 8, 1893.
A former colleague, G.L. Garland, assuming the role of "candid friend", wrote an open letter to Reid with some "straight talk", reminding him of his reputation for being a political trimmer and the necessity for him to adhere to some sound political principles. "You must cultivate backbone." In the eyes of the "Bulletin", it was party politics at its most transparent. Henry George was pictured in monkish garb appearing at Reid's bedside offering him the cross of salvation inscribed "Land Tax", and it was suggested to prospective parents with a sense of history that they might consider as a name for their new son "Henry-George-Reid-Parker".

To the "Worker", Reid's effort to lead public opinion was only comparable to that of "a dead cuttlefish leading the incoming tide". However, it was the "Herald", mouthpiece of the moderate centre free trade group, which probably gave to Reid the clearest sign of what his next move should be. The straight forward path of practical politics was infinitely to be preferred to the way of the theorists, said the "Herald", and it dearly hoped these divergent views would be harmonised by the time an election came round.

So the harmoniser Reid then became. His retreat began almost immediately and in a speech at Rockdale at the end of the month he put up a party umbrella under which all could find a place, "the single-taxers and those who favoured no tax at all". Reid abandoned the land tax priority and spoke in general terms of taxing wealth in all its forms: "We must not forget the wealthy usurer." To the "Herald" his speech marked "a complete rupture with the land-taxers pure and simple", and returned the leadership to a position "identical with that held by freetraders who had stood fast on the old ways through the recent discussions. Mr. Reid had re-

established the identity of policy and the unity of the party".

3. 19.8.1893.
4. 8.9.1893.
5. ibid., 30.8.1893.
6. 31.8.1893.
Reid's leadership henceforth followed the principles of adaptation and conciliation, and in this role he came to represent the centre group of free-traders, distinguished not so much by any positive policy but rather by what changes they were prepared to make in the old revenue tariff free trade in order to win an election. As leader, Reid was prepared to move his policy across a broad scale to the point at which it would appeal to the majority of his supporters at any given time. In the confused state of party politics, this was a very difficult assignment. It called for the ability "to get into line without getting in so far as not to be able to get out again, if it didn't seem good enough to stay there". But if such is the art of politics, Reid was now to display unsuspected talents.

As the end of the year approached, and the prospect of a government defeat became every day more likely, unity became the theme of Reid's meetings. "All freetraders should stand shoulder to shoulder in destroying the great enemy."

Reid was back on his old platform attacking Dibbs who was personified as a political desperado, a tramp, a sundowner, "some sort of poxgoot of all the essentialities of all the races of mankind". The necessity for some party organization to handle the problem of an election which would be fought for the first time in single member constituencies led Reid to take a leading part with other free-traders in setting up Electoral Leagues, and branches were established in many suburbs. McMillan, Carruthers, and Wise all took part in this campaign, Wise explaining that the new organisations in no way superseded or clashed with the Free trade and Land Reform Electoral Committees. All this activity on Reid's part served the more to emphasize the problem of leadership, for Parkes gave no indications of what he would do if the government fell. Reid, on the other hand, volunteered his submission to party

2. ibid., 30.8.1893.
3. Address at Ashfield, ibid., 1.9.1893.
4. ibid., 31.8.1893.
5. Wise at Granville, ibid., 1.9.1893.
wishes. "In regard to his own position he would fight as if he were going to be leader to all eternity, but when the battle was over he would let his party place him in any position it pleased, even the humblest, if the party thought that would be the best thing for the cause." He continued to tread carefully, keeping close to as many interests as possible. He spoke at the Commercial Dinner, renewing his pledge to stand down for Parkes if this was desired; he took up the cause of the unemployed, promising more public expenditure - this after earlier demanding retrenchment by Dibbs; he declared the payment of members an open question, remarking that many members in his party, including his friend, Mr. Wise, were in favour of the principle. The policy he settled upon was one for all seasons - "it was the unchanging programme of his political career - the battle between direct taxation and protection". He continued to support a land-tax, but as to the type of tax, the priority of the tax, and the purpose of the tax, he was not explicit.

Such a policy of conciliation of all rival interests was seen by Reid's critics as unprincipled opportunism, and to the "Bulletin" he remained a mere political ephemeron, but to many free-traders Reid no doubt appeared as the man who might paper over the cracks in the party for an election. However, there was still strong support for Parkes to lead the party once again, for in these rather chaotic conditions his strength appealed. Carruthers wrote to Parkes earlier in the new year offering his support "to get rid of this the worst government that I have ever had any experience of in New South Wales". As for Wise, he made no secret of his desire for Parkes to return. Relations between the two men had remained very close since Parkes' retirement, and they stood on common ground on most vital issues in

1. Ashfield speech, ibid., 1.9.1893.
3. ibid., 28.10.1893.
4. ibid., 12.8.1893.
5. S.M.H., 1.9.1893.
parliament, notably on such questions as the banking legislation, the Broken Hill strike, and Dibbs' handling of the electoral legislation. When Barton launched the Federal League, McMillan had supported him, but both Parkes and Wise held back, on the ground that Barton had so recently participated in raising a protective wall that free trade support could not be given without serious compromise.

Whilst Parkes continued to give to federation pride of place in his political policy, his support for Wise and the Free-trade and Land Reform Association gave evidence that there was no serious obstacle to a political alliance. Though Parkes' support for the principle of land-value taxation was greeted with the usual degree of cynicism, he did not renounce it back off the platform as Reid had done. Wise's feeling on the question of leadership is revealed in a letter he wrote to Parkes in December. At this point the political situation was in a most confused condition. The government had been out-voted in the Assembly by a majority of twenty-one, but Dibbs refused to abandon office and parliament was prorogued. The "Bulletin" captioned the situation "Parliament Closed: Destruction", but the electoral machinery was out of working order due to the changes taking place in the electoral laws and no one knew just what would happen when Parliament was resumed. It was generally felt, however, that the government must retire. A guardian of constitutional procedure was sadly needed and Wise naturally looked to Parkes. Parkes had evidently planned to be away from the colony during the recess but Wise requests him to reconsider this.

"If as I anticipate will be the case the Ministry shall be ousted from office by an adverse vote immediately — then I cannot give up the hope of seeing you in office again as Prime Minister. . . . If any man can lift us quickly out of our most lamentable condition of confusion and misfortune it is yourself and I see no-one else who can."

The mentions Reid's positions:

1. See W.C., June, 1893 — Letters Wise to Barton; R.C., Vol. 42, p. 264 — Wise to Parkes; S.M.H., 23.6.1893, Parkes and Barton
3. See his interview with the S.M.H., on the crisis, 30.1.1894.
"Although I have had no talk with Mr. Reid as to his intentions or desires I think from what I have seen of him lately that he would not be entirely insensitive to an appeal to him to subordinate his personal ambitions to the public interest; and I know that if a change of Ministry should occur, strong representations will be made to him to advise His Excellency should he be called upon to give advice, to send for you..." He then suggests that the party wishes might be ascertained, if possible, as to the course to be taken, and expresses his own intention to return a day or two before Parliament met (he would then be in Melbourne) for the special purpose of exercising whatever influence I can in favour of some more permanent administration than is likely, as far as I can judge, to be formed by Mr. Reid. He is now under no misapprehension about my feelings but thoroughly understands that if there is an opportunity for you to take the lead I shall press it."

On such a letter is Wise’s reputation for plotting with Parkes established. There is no plot here; but it is a frank and open declaration of his own feelings regarding the party’s best interests which he was to declare publicly on a number of occasions before the election. Wise was not alone in this concern, and it is interesting to set this letter against one written by Carruthers just two weeks later. Carruthers speaks of “reckless indifference and apathy” under the present leadership: “I fear there is chaos in our ranks. Our party seems to have gone to the dogs entirely, and I fear the result of an election as a disaster.” He then expresses the hope that Dibbs won’t go out at this point “simply because a delay...will offer an opportunity for the party to consolidate”.

As things transpired, there was no change of ministry, for although Dibbs caused further constitutional objections by a very long prorogation, he was saved once more by his Labour supporters when parliament did resume. But this was his last gasp. The life of the parliament was running out, and although he escaped the hangman’s knot he remained in the condemned cell, and even the "Bulletin" refused him a reprieve. Following the deep Labour split over the pledge during 1. 23.12.1893, P.C., Vol. 42, p. 271-4. 2. Carruthers to Parkes, 18.1.1894, P.C., Vol. 7, p. 482.
the recent December conference, the return of free trade now appeared almost certain - provided it could achieve unity.

But if the FreeTrade Party was to achieve even the outward appearance of cohesion, it became more obvious as its hour approached that it must accept a taxation reform policy, for the FreeTrade and Land Reform Association demonstrated that it was to be the dynamic force when it issued its manifesto at a large meeting in Sydney on January 16. At a "monster demonstration", Wise delivered a speech that set the pace, and furthered the claim that the policy of the Association was that of the true FreeTrade Party. To a very large audience he began by declaring that the time had come for action - there were urgent questions pressing for solution and no longer could they be evaded "by undignified trifling, clever speeches or party tactics". He reviewed the failure of the two previous free trade governments to introduce a really free trade tariff or to tax the rich man - the result being that the whole party had suffered odium and ridicule.

"It is to prevent a repetition of similar neglect by the FreeTrade Ministry that the Association had been formed. Circumstances might be again unfavourable to the introduction of a land-tax but if so, they would politely tell the Treasurer of the day that it is his duty to overcome these circumstances, or else make way for someone else who will. (Cheers). It was not members of the Association who were making a split in the party, but those who wanted to draw back... The Association had been attacked from both inside and outside the FreeTrade ranks. It had the "Sydney Morning Herald" against it... But the Association claimed to be the true exponents of the FreeTrade creed!"

Wise then went on to forecast great changes. There were many signs of a new healthy outburst of political activity, and a change in the temper of the people. The constituencies would require more from their leaders than they had done in the past and would insist that problems be faced and not evaded. The credit for this change, he said, was due to the Labour party which had introduced a deeper seriousness and sincerity into the discussions of social questions. Though he differed from some of their aims and methods,

"It would be ungenerous to deny that the Labour party had rendered the community the great service of compelling
attention to social questions... May they hope that the unnatural separation between the labour party and the liberal party would come to an end and those who had at heart the same ideal would unite their forces to achieve it by the same method."

This ideal had been concisely stated by Sir Charles Lilley:

"A social change which will bring the poorer classes more nearly, if not entirely, on a level with all the classes in the distribution of the necessaries and comforts of mankind."

Then stated the urgent questions which a political party must face and give an answer to -

"...much questions as the right of every man to work who was willing to do so - (applause) - the duty of the State towards the unemployed - ("hear, hear") - the power of a Government so to regulate the use of wealth by private persons that a certain standard of life might be established and maintained in the community - (cheers) - this should not only be a standard of material and physical comfort, but should be set by reference also to the moral and intellectual requirements of a noble citizenship."

(Thus did he write the idealist philosophy of T.H. Green into his political manifesto.)

He finally made the declaration in favour of a tax on the unimproved value of land (one penny in the pound); that the proceeds be applied to the removal of taxes on improvement and industry, and the retention, as the other source of revenue, of excise duties on narcotics and intoxicants. "That the Association asked was that the men who for years had had the lion's share of the State expenditure should now contribute something to the State revenue." He denied that the tax on the unearned increment was a form of confiscation and delivered a strong attack upon the conservative free-traders, especially those in the Upper House, who were prepared to join with protectionists to vote against direct taxation, and warned those who "had grown rich and powerful simply through the accident of owning land" that there could only be one answer to the question - and in their own interests they should not pursue the matter of confiscation any further. His long address concluded with a call for unity of the liberal forces.

Following the address, Mr. Whidden moved the resolution. "That this meeting having heard the manifesto of Mr. B.R. Wise, recognises in the same the
expression of fundamental principles which should unite all sections of the community desiring democratic progress and equal justice to all citizens."  1

How far was this policy of Wise merely an academic prescription? The "Worker" spoke of the Association as the "academic party", and the "Herald", though now more reconciled to its existence, was still very wary of its doctrinaire approach. To the historian, Alan Martin, it represents Wise's "Taddism", and, whilst he does not necessarily question Wise's claim to "advanced political opinions", he refers to his "specious theory", and in a rather perplexing statement says that the Association seemed to have attracted to itself a number of men of genuine liberal stamp "... despite the peculiar position of its leader." But there was nothing peculiar about Wise's position - he stated it very clearly. Certainly his ideas about the socially-earned increment were akin to those of Henry George, and he was very close to the Fabian argument on land value. But there was nothing peculiar in his demand that in a colony where direct taxation had never been imposed this tax should have first priority. Wise denied frequently that it was to be a single-tax, but as a first legislative attempt to provide an alternative to customs taxation it was a fair tax, and one that would help redress what, in Wise's view, was a grave social injustice - the long-standing immunity of large land-owners from any contribution to the state, other than that also paid by the lowest wage-earner. If the arguments were theoretical, they were quite familiar to working men at this time, for land-value taxation was the first plank in the Labour Electoral League Manifesto for the 1894 election; and it was the first reform priority advocated by W.G.Spence in the "Worker". But, faddism or not, the significance of Wise's manifesto was that it launched a campaign whose impetus was to carry the FreeTrade Party forward to the election of 1894 with a truly liberal

1. The foregoing report is taken from the S.M.H., 16.1.1894.
2. 20.1.1894.
policy of direct taxation linked to tariff reform. There was no doubt now of the

determination of the advance guard to make land-value taxation the foremost plank
of free trade policy and to win labour support by bringing the party into line with
democratic sentiment.

In 1894, with the depression in its lowest trough, Wise's policy undoubted-
edly carried an appeal to many sections of the community, both urban and rural,
especially to those in the lower middle class income bracket — small businessmen,
salaried earners, tradesmen, etc., who had been affected by falling wages and
retranchment. With these working-class voters who had experienced a loss of faith
in the Labour party due to its failure to act effectively against the government,
this new liberal movement might well have won support, for it held out better
prospects of immediate reform. Martin says that at the meeting Wise was disowned
by the workers. As a total policy his manifesto certainly didn't go far enough
for strong labour supporters, and an amendment to this effect was moved and carried
by a majority of those present. But Wise was not disowned. S.A.Rosa, the
socialist orator who had spoken to an open-air meeting outside the hall before the
meeting began, condemned the fiscal parties as robbers of the workers, but he paid
tribute to what he called Mr. Wise's "democratic propensities" and advised him "to
abandon the old free trade party which had no sympathy with the poor, and to join
the ranks of the Labour Electoral League where he would be appreciated." But
although Wise was not radical enough for Labour, the policy advocated by his Assoc-
iation liberals carried free trade across the boundary separating labour from the
older parties, and he had now gone so far beyond the limits of respectable politics

for the right-wing conservative free-traders, who would probably have readily agreed

1. ibid., p. 83.
2. The amendment read: That in the opinion of this meeting the platform of the
Freerade and Land Reform Committee is insufficient to deal with the present state
of affairs in this country, E.M.K., 16.1.1894. See also the "Worker", 20.1.1894.
3. ibid., The "Worker" also acknowledged Wise's sincerity, 20.1.1894.
with Rosa's suggestion that he should go right over to Labour.

Seldom is the historian presented with such a beautifully clear-cut illustration of vested interests conditioning political allegiance as was now to be demonstrated by the wealthy interests opposed to direct taxation. As the election approached, the representatives of wealth and property, both free trade and protection, joined forces to stem the radical tide. Within the National Association, their efforts produced a manifesto setting out a programme which completely avoided the fiscal and taxation question and gave pride of place to federation, local government, and abolition of payment of members. A list of "good men" was prepared and published which included men from both fiscal parties, and which carefully excluded what Harding called "all those whose views were more in touch with the progressive thought of the people". Even more revelatory were the meetings held in the Wool Exchange prior to the election when a large gathering of influential men representing the manufacturing, mercantile, banking, pastoral, and commercial classes met to consider the political situation. Though free-traders predominated, all fiscal loyalties were set aside in favour of that class of men who would give good government. The confidence "of their friends over the water" must be retained, and this could only be achieved by electing the "very best men", irrespective of political party. The general concern expressed was that of the new movement of advanced liberals and of socialists - "dangerous men like B.K. Wise intent on destroying the rights of property". At the final meeting, a how-to-vote (safely) guide was produced which completely disregarded fiscal allegiance, and upon the elector was urged the absolute necessity of recording his vote in support of "men of known probity and business capacity". In the "Bulletin's"

2. See list of names of those attending, B.M.L., 7.7.1894.
3. See speech by R.J. Black, ibid.
4. Speech by W. Alison, ibid.
5. Points 1 and 2 of the programme. The fiscal question was relegated in favour of other measures "of equal importance", e.g., federation, retrenchment, and irrigation.
opinion, these election guides by "leading citizens" and the "National Association" served democrats equally well. They distinguished the "best men" to preserve the interests of wealth; they told them who not to vote for.

The situation which thus presented itself to the main body of free trade opinion as the party moved toward the election demanded a clear decision: on the left wing, Wise and his group of non-parliamentary free-traders claiming to be the true heirs of the free trade party went forward with a liberal reform policy and endorsed only those candidates accepting the land-tax; on the right wing were the opponents of direct taxation, elder parliamentarians like Knox, Dallen, and Abbott, identifying themselves with class interests and receiving the endorsement of the National Association. But allowing for the political atmosphere of 1894, and the necessity to achieve at least a facade of unity, the movement of the main body of the party towards the left was the only possible development. Thus, for the first election in its history, the FreeTrade Party paid homage to a liberal programme.

No general conversion was involved, for there existed many gradations of political thought, ranging from the liberalism of Wise to the conservatism of Macmillan, but the vital point was that the party did commit itself to a programme of direct taxation and severe tariff reduction, and none more so than the leader, G.H. Reid. Reid was the float in the current. Recognizing that the party dynamic now lay in the FreeTrade and Land Reform Association, that is, possessed the most effective electoral organisation in the constituencies, and that it was strengthening its support in labour quarters by an affiliation with a number of independent labour men who had refused to sign the party pledge, Reid again adjusted his policy. In April, he was still maintaining that there was room in the party for all honest differences of opinion, and could yet agree with those who would economize first and tax afterwards. But as the election drew closer, a more radical complexion

1. 7–7.1894 - 14.7.1894.
2. See his speech at Penrith S.N.H., 19.5.1894.
came over his politics. The emphasis moved from the tariff to the tax. Room in
the ark was denied to anyone who didn't make direct taxation the first principle of
free trade. Land and income taxes became less an alternative to customs duty and
more the social equator. "To take the tax burden off the wrong shoulders and put
it on the strong shoulders", he now declared his mission to be.

Despite this introduction of a class note, Reid appeared to raise no
fears among the moderate group and continued to gain their support. The free
trade press supported his policies - the "Telegraph" as a strong advocate of the
land-tax, and the "Herald" because of his "genuine and straightforward proposals
to offset the duties imposed in the name of Protection". Reid's achievement was
that he helped formulate a policy which drew the two main divisions of free trade
opinion together. These, as distinguished by the "Herald", were "the freetraders
historically so-called", and those "who are freetraders and something more". The
former would simplify and reduce tariffs for commercial purposes and support direct
taxation if necessary for revenue; the latter would attack the tariff and abolish
it altogether if they could, not so much for the purpose of securing revenue as for
that of reaching through artificial processes of taxation, political and social
results. Reid's liberal professions and his support of the land tax were accepted
by the advanced group as a statement of intentions, and acknowledged by the moder-
ates as the necessary policy to meet the election situation. He moreover proved
very successful in using the land-tax to attack the protectionists, who were man-
oeuvred into the position of supporters of land monopoly and wealth. By his very
resilience, his humble surrender to party wishes regarding the leadership, and by
an output of energy and enthusiasm which surprised all his associates, Reid had by
the time of the election established himself in a strong position in the party.

In a display of unity just prior to the election, a free trade picnic -
1. 3.7.1894.
triumphal arch and all - was arranged in National Park, and Reid was presented with a short address by McMillan, the chairman. McMillan spoke of Reid's devoted labours and the fealty of the party, and emphasized his difficulties, adding that "we have every hope that you will successfully pilot the party through the approaching election". Reid replied in characteristic style, handing out bouquets to the chairman, denouncing the chicanery and intrigue of the government, and prophesying unity and success. This stage-managed display of loyalty was rather patent, but engineered by a man like McMillan and attended by most free trade parliamentary members, it does reveal the electoral support for Reid's leadership and the success he had attained in his policy of accommodation. It was, he recalls, "a great encouragement to me".

But if fiscal policy differences could be reconciled in this way, there still remained the leadership problem clearly emphasized by McMillan's careful reference to Reid as "one of the foremost men in the party". Just who the "foremost" man would be once victory was attained was a question yet to be settled. It involved Parkes' future in the party, for the old man, now eighty, had declared his readiness to return to take over the leadership. This question could not be settled until a newly elected body of free-traders decided whom it wanted, but it was most important for the sake of unity that personal rivalry be avoided and old rancours damped down. To this end, Carruthers had written in January seeking Parkes' co-operation in meeting with Reid to decide upon a course of action which will show our leaders are in accord. No such concord came to the public notice, and Parkes remained something of an enigma. He let it be known that he would

2. In a counter-stroke, Bibbs took advantage of the late return of so many Opposition members attending the picnic to pass quickly through the Assembly changes in standing orders which had been on the business page for some time. Cf. G. Reid, "My Reminiscences", p. 101.
3. *ibid.*
return, but he refused to join the Free-trade Council, a body set up by the party to effect some degree of electoral organization and to act as a tribunal in the new single-member constituencies where two or more free-traders might present themselves. Wise had urged Parkes to join, and felt he might well become its president. In such a position, he said: "You will take a notable lead in the direction of party discipline and at the same time assume your rightful place as leader."

He argued a strong case: that Parkes would destroy false charges that he was disuniting the party, that he would demonstrate his readiness to think his personal position for the common good, and that in publicly declaring his readiness to lead he could gain strength in the right quarters. Again it was the solidity of Parkes looked to: "no one but yourself has the clear perception, knowledge and power", qualities which he apparently felt Reid did not possess for the task ahead. But Wise gives a very sympathetic analysis of Reid's position:

"Reid has always recognised and many times admitted that he does not consider he has any claim to my support when it becomes a question of choice between himself and you. He has also preferred publicly and privately a loyal readiness to acquiesce in any decision of the party as to leadership, but he considers that until the General Elections he, as the nominated head of the party, is entitled to the support of all free-traders, leaving to the Liberal members of the new House to determine the question of leadership after the Elections. Of course there is this difficulty - that it will be necessary to let the electors know clearly what points of difference exist between yourself and Mr. Reid in order that members may exercise some intelligent discretion in their choice of leader. At the same time anything like dissension must, if possible, be avoided."

Martin reads this letter as evidence that Wise was encouraging a Parkes plot to regain the leadership. Where is the plot? Parkes' intentions would almost certainly be made known to others among his supporters. The suggestion of his joining the committee was made at a party meeting at which Wise was not present, and Wise reveals again a completely open and frank relationship with Reid. The

4. This is revealed in the letter.
position for Parkes could not be stated more clearly - a declaration of his leadership intentions was both necessary and timely, and a policy declaration should now be made. It can also be inferred that if Parkes was to gain the support of the advanced group he must declare for the reform policy. But Parkes failed to act on this advice, and when the Free-trade Council was announced in May, with Reid as president, neither Wise nor Parkes was included among the thirty-seven members. Wise's absence is probably explained by the fact that the Council was representative of the centre group, and as such its list of approved candidates would not be expected to agree with those endorsed by Wise's own Association. It was later stated by Goldstein, the secretary, that Reid concurred in the deliberate exclusion from the Council of Wise and other land-taxers.

But this was not the position with Parkes. He was elected to the Council but refused to take a seat. Why he refused is not certain. He had never before worked within an electoral organization and may have felt he could still go it alone as an independent leader; he may have still been only half resolved to go all-out for the leadership; as he was sorely beset once more by financial difficulties, but the most likely reason in view of his subsequent actions is that he could not subdue his resentment of Reid, nor accept any position under his leadership. Whatever the explanation, Parkes' refusal to join in any party organization was to prove another great mistake and indicates the perversity of the old man and the clouding of his judgment at this stage of his career, for if he was serious about a come-back, then he badly underestimated Reid's growing strength, or over-

1. See Martin's discussion of the Council, and letters he cites claiming the Council is representative of the "old school", "A", pp. 63-6, p. 98.
2. The device used to exclude Wise was by means of a secret ballot. See Goldstein's letter, Appendix D.
3. This was revealed in correspondence to the press following the formation of the Council when the absence of Wise and Parkes excited comment. See letters from Goldstein and Palsford, S.M.E., 7.6.1894.
4. In its Christmas number, the "Bulletin" had cruelly depicted Parkes as Father Christmas delivering I.O.U.'s. It now said his creditors had the greatest interest in his leadership prospects, 23.6.1894.
estimated the support which he still commanded in the party. His unattached position and his insistence on federation as the central issue of the election created what the "Telegraph" described as a "cave" in the party front. However, while the personality conflict involved in the leadership question could not be kept entirely hidden, the necessity for an outward display of unity was sufficiently recognized by all party leaders for the problem to be masked and the question left in abeyance until after the election. Parkes, however, remained the unknown factor in all discussions of the future.

And so to the election of 1894. Little need be said of the contest, as Alan Martin has made such a thorough analysis. Completely new conditions prevailed - single-member constituencies and the one-day election, together with the abolition of plural voting and the £40 nomination fee - created a new atmosphere, and a flood of candidates came forward. In this situation a degree of uncertainty hung over all candidates, but when the results were announced, no question was left in doubt. Free trade had won an impressive victory. Protection had suffered a great defeat, and the Labour party a severe reversal. One of the most significant features was the return of so many Free trade and Land Reform members and endorsed candidates. Of the newly elected, Wilks, Whidden, Ashton, Millen, Storey, and Dick were members of the Electoral Committee and of the sixty-three free trade members twenty-eight were endorsed by the Association, including six independent Labour party men - henceforth to be numbered among the free-traders in the House.

A number of issues had been introduced into the contest and federation had again occupied a prominent place, but undoubtedly the vital question was taxation. The appeal of the free trade policy was emphasized by the defeat of many Labour men by free-traders, and the defeat of such radical protectionists as Traill.

1. The "Bulletin" kept referring to the free trade vessel with its "rival captains", and the circumstances of Reid's election to leadership was recalled in letters to the press, S.M.L., 4.7.1894 et seq.
2. These were Hawster, Cook, Fagan, Gardiner, Hollis, and Newman.
and Melville, while two of the most prominent protectionist labourists, Barton and W.P. Manning, also lost their seats. "The principle of direct taxation is triumph-

ant", said the editor of the "Telegraph", and he fully acknowledged that "it was

those who came out strongest and boldest in favour of a land-value tax that secured

the largest majorities. They proved instrumental in winning the victory".

Wise had contested "Flinders", a division of the old South Sydney electorate, where he swept the poll, gaining an outright majority over the combined vote

of his three opponents. When he mounted the platform after his win was announce-

ed, he was applauded and carried shoulder-high through the crowd. Wise had

thrown himself into the contest with tremendous zeal. In one letter to Parkes he

speaks of his busy programme: "Off to Newcastle to speak at four meetings, con-

cluding a series of addresses extending over six consecutive nights, discussions

and interviews. I have not a spare hour to visit or a moment to write." When

the final results were announced his enthusiasm knew no bounds. He was fairly

bubbling with optimism when he spoke to the crowds gathered in King Street: "I

congratulate you on the greatest triumph that democracy has ever won at the polls

of any Australian colony" and to a reporter he exclaimed: "Victory! It's not a

victory, it's a massacre!"

In quieter mood later he spoke of the part played by

the Free Trade and Land Reform Association:

"The democratic movement of the free-

trade party has been completely justified. Many of those who acted with me

have been blamed for 'splitting the party'. We demanded that there should

be real free trade with its natural and irresistible advantages in the long term.

I do not hesitate to say that if we had not rallied the democratic sentiment of the people we should have failed. Had our Association not exist-

ed there would have been no party at all."

"And the future? The future... Well the Free Trade Party has never had an opportunity as is offered to it now. Liberal principles have prevailed and we are about to enter upon a new era, in which probably the most notable characteristic will be the adoption of democratic finance... I pledge myself

1. 1871.

2. Wise 657; Kippax (Protection) - 286; Debnam (Labour Party) - 99; Cliffe (Free Trade) - 77.

3. 6.7.1894.


5. S.R.B., 1871.
for my party to support no ministry that will not make the taxation of land values the first object of its internal policy."

(These words uttered in the exultation of victory were later to be echoed, in a more deliberative manner, in the Legislative Assembly.) When questioned by the reporter on party leadership, Wise once more stated that he was individually bound by feelings of personal friendship and party loyalty to Parkes.

"I have never concealed from anyone my opinion that Sir Henry Parkes is the natural leader of the liberal party, whenever he is willing to lead it."

But, he added that if Parkes was not to be the leader, then he had confidence in Mr. Reid, "a man of strong democratic sympathies."

It is important for any real appreciation of Wise's politics during the next twelve months to recognize the strength of his feelings at this point. There was the genuine glam of victory, for unquestionably he was one of its principal architects; there was a real sense of fulfilment as the policy endorsed by the electors was the policy he had advocated from the outset of his political career; finally, as an idealist, there was involved in the free trade programme basic principles of his political philosophy. Twenty years later he could recall this emotion and sense of achievement:

"This success set the coping stone to the edifice which I had been raising for the past seven years by connecting Free-trade indissolubly with a democratic policy... I had striven unceasingly to prevent the association of Free-trade with the policy of the wealthy classes (and) the land tax provided just the battleground that was required to separate the democrats and reactionaries."

The optimism and high hopes for the future which Wise felt at this moment was not just a personal condition. Others, too, expressed the same sanguine outlook and the justification for their hopes was underlined by the "Telegraph". "Every free-trade party member elected stands pledged to the principle of land value taxation. Wealth and monopoly must now be prepared to bend its back for the burden that belongs to it."

1. Interviews published in B.M.E., and D.A., 18.7.1894
3. 18.7.1894.
This general elation in the first flush of victory had to give way to more sobering considerations. Behind the election facade of unity, the party divisions were still apparent, for many of the standard-bearers of the old revenue tariff free trade were back – ex-ministers McMillan, Young, and Brunker, and wealthy conservative interests were again represented by the return of men like Knox, Abbott, and Cullen. Though they had, perforce, identified themselves to some extent with Reid's policy of direct taxation, the difference in outlook with that of the new men was in the matter of priority. To the advanced guard, the land-tax was a reform of urgency and part of a wider programme; to the "moderate" or "straight-going" men it was allowed as a legitimate tax, but urgent only if the Treasury was vitally in need of the money – and this would be so only if there was a severe and immediate abolition of customs duties. Though the land-taxers had charted the course into new waters, the vital question now was who was to direct the vessel. The election had decided nothing regarding leadership. Reid had worked in great style and impressed all with his spirited campaigning and his new-found industry. He had defeated Barton in King division and assured his electors that "he was the only chap who could do the business for the country". But Parkes too had secured a resounding victory in St. Leonards, and drew expressions of great enthusiasm from the election night crowds. Although he continued to make federation the "ideal of his life's work", he did not, as Martin says he did,

2. I feel Martin distorts the picture regarding Parkes at this point. He speaks of his "melodramatic posturing among the cheering crowds on the declaration of the poll, with the object of securing credit for the Freetrade victory". ("A", p. 69). Evatt likewise refers to this "crude device" on the eve of the election "to steal the credit for the victory". (op. cit., p. 10). As a corrective, we might simply quote from the press report: "Returning from St. Leonards, Sir Henry Parkes drove up in a carriage and pair to the edge of the throng in King St. This was a signal for unrestrained enthusiasm. Scores rushed to grab Sir Henry by the hand. The veterans rode through with his hat off beamingly acknowledging the ovation. With difficulty he restrained some of the ardent spirits from unharnessing the horses and drawing the carriage through the city." (*D.T.*, 18.7.1894). Both Martin (p.69) and Evatt (p. 70) quote Reid's reference to this "touching incident of Parkes in (over)
"advocate a policy quite opposed to that put forward by other leaders," nor did he 
commend land-tax proposals from all he had to say. How could he? It is impossible 
to accept that Wise could be so utterly credulous, or disloyal to his own 
followers, that he would support at this point any leader who was not prepared to 
accept the policy of his Association. He publicly stated Parkes' willingness to do this, 
while Parkes for his part declared "Mr. Wise to be one of the best men in the 
country."

But things had changed since Parkes stood down in 1891. Remaining 
unattached to either electoral organization, his position in the party was a rather 
isolated one. His federation policy did not stir the political pulse at this 
election, and his increasing age and infirmity must have raised many doubts as to 
whether he now possessed the necessary strength to give vigorous leadership. His 
support in the press was also moving away from him. The "Herald" remained impartial; it admitted to the great value of Parkes' experience and knowledge in any new 
situation, but it recognized that Reid had borne the heat and burden of the day, 
and Reid's record of compliance with the commercial free trade interests no doubt 
enhanced his appeal. But the " Telegraph" pointed clearly in the direction of its 
preference when it said that "the natural leader may be Sir Henry Parkes - the 
rightful leader is Mr. Reid." The cynical voices of course declared that there 
was no hope of either changing his spots. But clearly the leadership question was 
the first to be settled by the new party members, and it is with their decision - 
destined to prove so vital to Wise's whole political career - that we will commence 
our final chapter.

(from 315) the open carriage. "He had the open carriage. I had the open air 
fighting to do". But Reid's ability to add his own colour to historical incident 
for special effects renders his version very questionable. But this is the very 
stuff of which legend is made.

1. ibid., p. 68.
4. 19.7.1894.
"The only way we can carry this legislation through to a successful issue and to overcome all the obstacles which prejudice and self-interest will place in its path is to be able at all times to appeal for support to some high and intelligible principle. I see no principle, just or intelligent, in the proposals of the government... That is the reason why I have taken the stand to-night, indifferent to charges which may be brought against me, careless as to who may associate themselves with me, or their motives, but anxious to do my best to redeem the pledges I have given to all those who have trusted me outside this House, and to establish, without delay, a just, simple and universal application of the principle of Betterment."  

"The hon. member for Flinders is an untrustworthy and dangerous man."  

The life of the free trade government which came into office in August, 1894, was destined to be short—scarcely eleven months. They were, however, dramatic months. They were to witness the last appearance in the Assembly of the two old leaders, Parkes and Dibbs; they were to set the seal of success on the career of G.H. Reid and see him placed firmly in the saddle for a long term of party leadership; and for Wise, the parliament which opened with such auguries of success and achievement was to end in personal disillusionment and defeat, while his own efforts were to earn him all the scorn and denunciation which in Australian politics is reserved for the unfaithful. It was in this government that Wise’s reputation as an insincere and shifty politician was established, a reputation which clung to him ever after and has been set into the pages of Australian history. Developments following on the election victory came quickly and our narrative must proceed likewise, for the events have been recorded, and the crux of the matter as it bears upon this study of Wise can be found for the most part in Hansard and the

3. Evatt, Martin, Nairn, and Mansfield have all covered the events of this parliament in their respective studies.
Parkes Correspondence.

First we will take up the problem left unsolved by the election - the leadership of the party. The division of opinion was revealed by the stand taken up by the two leading free trade papers. The "Herald" quickly showed signs of retreat from the party's forward policy and began to emphasize Parkes' historic qualifications; the "Telegraph" backed Reid's own contentions that he was "the chap to save the country", and emphasized that the election had been won under his leadership and that he was pledged to the land tax. "When the question is fought out," said the "Bulletin", "it ought to decide for many years to come which is to be the leading daily in the province". Obviously the party would soon have to come together to settle the matter.

In the outcome, circumstances so ordered things that the decision was virtually made for the party by the new governor, Sir Robert Duff. Despite the clear verdict of the election and the declared policy of all Labour men to support land-value taxation, Dibbs decided to remain in office and meet Parliament. The charge of "office hunger" did not deter such an old campaigner who had his own interest in the free trade family problem, since a split over the leadership might well offer him new possibilities. However, a conflict arose between Dibbs and the governor who refused to appoint some of the premier's new Legislative Council nominees, and Dibbs resigned. The governor then upon sent for Reid to form a ministry. How well considered this move was, or on what advice it was made is not certain. Dibbs would offer no advice regarding his successor, and the governor was reported to have acted on his own initiative. Duff had been in office a year and was probably well aware of the party background, but it is most unlikely that his predecessor, Jersey, would have acted likewise, knowing that Parkes was ready to return. Writing to Parkes later, Jersey remarked: "I was a bad prophet as I

1. 25.7.1894.
made sure you would resume your old position."

Unlike Reid's election to party leadership, the Labour party does not seem to have influenced the decision. As in other matters, it was divided on this question also. The "New Order", the recently launched journalistic venture of the Homan-Hughes "solidarity" group, chose Parkes "as the chief from whom the Labor Party could expect most"; The "Australian Workman", the voice of the Trades and Labour Council, preferred the untried Reid, "a man of some promise", while Griffiths, a new parliamentarian, probably expressed a general opinion when he said that it was immaterial who was leader: "If Beelzebub could and would give the reforms (Labour) wanted, he would support him."

Reid, in his turn, might also have been expected to await the party decision, but he accepted the commission and then called a meeting of the party for the next day. This was to inspire Wise to write later that "the impetuosity of a Premier and the mistake of a Governor was to oust (Parkes) from his place and mar the crowning achievement of his long life". This view expressed by Wise, long after the event, and his claim that a majority of party members had declared their preference for Parkes must be accepted with reserve, for as we have shown Reid's position as official leader of the Opposition was quite strong, and one correspondent expressed the view that "because of his straightforward pledges to the masses Reid had no moral right to resign even if he was willing". But certainly Wise was right when he said that Reid's commission placed him in an unassailable position. It was no longer a question of choosing a party leader; it was now a

1. 26.5.1895, P.C., Vol. 19, p. 381. Jersey, like Carrington before him, had a high regard for Parkes' leadership, and was convinced Parkes was the man to advance federation. He was one of the voices encouraging Parkes to return to leadership. "Unless you take it (federation) seriously in hand as Prime Minister I am afraid that it will drift hopelessly about." (Ibid.)
3. 4.8.1894.
matter of deposing a premier. At the meeting (at which only four members, includ-
ing Parke, declined to attend), Reid's leadership was endorsed unanimously.

Before these events took place the "Bulletin" was making another of its claims to political clairvoyance by giving its readers the inside story of an intrigue between Parke and his "Jugeman", Wise, who were pictured waiting for Reid's eyeglass to drop so they could destroy him. This story was probably founded on Wise's public declarations that Parke was the natural leader. Wise was aware of the implications of this rumour and his sensitivity is revealed in a letter to Parke who, obviously appreciating the public support and loyalty Wise had given him, sent him a "kindly note". In reply Wise reveals that he had purposely kept from seeing Parke "during this last week lest my visit should be observed and misinterpreted. . . . We are fallen undoubtedly on evil days". At the meeting, Wise was completely open about his position and clearly stated his willingness to accept the party decision.

"Personally he would have preferred the leadership of the party to be in the hands of Sir Henry Parke, but he was willing for the sake of freetrade and the cause of direct taxation, and in the interests of a policy that was far greater than individual leadership to loyally support and assist by every means in his power whoever might be chosen as leader of the Freetrade party."

There are no grounds for believing that any enmity or opposition existed between Reid and Wise at this point, for although Wise declined Reid's offer of a ministerial post, the "Herald" acknowledged his "cordial relations" and "good understand-5

5

opinion, of course, cannot be regarded any more seriously than other declarations of unity, but it does represent a balance to the "Bulletin's" suggestion that Wise was working against Reid. We might best look to Wise's own statement, as to his.

1. D.T., 1.8.1894. The strength of the party was put at 62 following this meet-
ing; for the independent Labour men also attended.
2. 23.7.1894. The "Bulletin" reported a Parkes government, 21.7.1894.
5. 3.8.1894.
reasons for rejecting office. These, he said, were "sound, calm, perfectly thought out, and no pretext... the claims which my profession entails are such that at present this would be so if Sir Henry Parkes had been leader. As a private member I will give Mr. Reid every support when I can conscientiously do so - every support that is to say when the action of the Ministry does not run counter to my views expressed at the elections".

When asked directly whether he was holding back with a view to joining Parkes subsequently, Wise denied this suggestion, and again repeated that both Parkes and Reid knew he was unavailable for a cabinet post and that he was on the best of terms with Mr. Reid. In view of the public character of the man, established by his many statements of honest political conviction, this declaration must be taken as characteristically straightforward.

But for Parkes, defeat was very bitterly received. He did not attend the party meeting and when formally invited to a banquet in Reid's honour, he revealed the strength of his resentment over the party's rejection of his services by a public rebuke to McMillan, the Chairman. He rejected the invitation as an insult to his position and his dignity, denied Reid's claim to leadership, or that the victory was won under his guidance, and affecting an "et tu, Brute!" attitude to McMillan, accused him of disloyalty and "of cherishing a benevolent desire to suppress my political existence". This turbulent attitude, and the animosity shown to a former friend and colleague, did Parkes great harm, and clearly marks a further stage in his decline. McMillan's reply was restrained, but more effective thereby. He freely admitted his earlier refusal to accept Reid's leadership, but

1. ibid.
2. Wise represented the new government at the formal opening of Parliament on August 7, since all ministers had to be re-elected. Byatt's version is that Reid omittedBruce Smith, McMillan, Wise and Parkes from his cabinet. "They supposed that Reid would soon tire of the task of constructive legislation" (op. cit., p. 79). Such misleading statements are typical of a chapter in which errors of fact abound (Smith had not been elected to this Parliament).
3. Refer to letter, Goldstein to Wise, Appendix D.
4. I feel that here once again Martin has applied too much of his own colouring to events involving Parkes. He speaks of this letter "couched in the most (over)
was saddened by Parkes' breach of confidence. Of the letter he remarked that "it does not seem to me to denote in a very high degree either the wisdom of the statesman or the unselfishness of the patriot".

The publication of these letters must have alienated many of Parkes' sympathizers, and gave great scope to his enemies. His long-standing enemy, the "Bulletin", later took great pleasure in reminding Parkes how "sour grapes" had ruined his chances, and carefully explained to the one-time master of political strategy how he could have played a better hand: had he gone to the banquet and used the occasion for a federational speech he would have made Reid uncomfortable and kept himself in touch with what used to be his party. When the Reid party began to crumble he could have swept the fragments up into his basket.

"Now that's impossible. It doesn't do to hopelessly lose your temper when you're eighty and can't afford to wait and time is fighting on the side of younger men."

It concluded that Parkes had once too often presumed upon the weakness of Reid and the kick-enduring capacity of the hind-quarters of the "Great N.S.W. Free Trade Party"... Henry Parkes can now be counted right out". Whilst this assessment may have paid too little regard for Parkes' own kick-enduring capacities from the studded boots of the "Bulletin", there was a lot of plain truth in what was said, and history was finally to endorse it.

The question of Parkes' being offered, or accepting, office in a Reid government was quite impossible. But Reid had other troubles in constructing his Cabinet. The presence of Wise and McMillan in the Ministry had been looked upon by some as essential to the success of the government, but McMillan also declined (from 321) sacrificial terms", and refers to Parkes' "selfish and treasonable conduct" ("A", p. 70-1). It becomes a matter of word usage, but it should be recorded that despite the strain in the relation which this letter caused, mutual confidence was restored again before the year was out. See over, Parkes' letter to Wise.

1. Both letters were published in the D.T., 3.8.1894. Parkes had first forwarded his letter to the "Herald".
3. 11.8.1894.
Reid's offer. Brunker, a close friend of Parkes, kept him waiting till 11 p.m. (the Cabinet was to be announced at 4 p.m.) before accepting the post of Colonial Secretary. The Cabinet was not considered a brilliant team, and there were some rather incongruous appointments. The Lands Department was given to Carruthers, a city solicitor, and Public Instruction fell to an engineer and one-time trade unionist, Jacob Carrard. Experience was represented by the former Parkes ministers, Gould (Justice), Sydney Smith (Mines and Agriculture), Young (Public Works), Simpson (Attorney-General), and Brunker, but there were no liberal pathfinders among this group. The absence of an acknowledged expert on finance led Reid to take the key position himself. The appointment of Joseph Cook, ex-Labour leader, to the P.M.C. Department was generally regarded as a sop to Labour, but it may well have been Reid's move to deepen the rift between the independent and solidarity groups. Although Cook and Carruthers were strong land-taxers, the Cabinet on the whole represented the safe-going centre group weighted on the conservative side. Clearly the progressive character of the government would rest with Reid's own performance, for by controlling the financial administration he held the initiative and the responsibility for going ahead with the major reform to which the government was pledged.

On the threshold of his new labours, and perhaps as yet not fully appreciative of what exactly they entailed, Reid gave every assurance that his Ministry would be true to the trust the electors and the party had placed in him. We might note his words spoken at the banquet. Speaking of the future, he said he anticipated difficulties:

"It may be that in the attempt to carry out our programme we may come to a premature end, but of this you may be sure that you have at the head of affairs men who consider it part of their personal honour and personal character to observe their public pledges... What is the use of all the personal integrity in the world if a man stands up before his fellow countrymen and deceives them... We want to see loyalty and devotion to principle; we want in the Ministry men who think not of mere glory and fame, but who will fight for principle. We want men who, if Parliament fails to follow its
"Hop at the Free Trade Banquet."

"The Chairman—"Steady, George! He'll make a great man of you yet."

"Well, why not go on the road?"

"The Political Situation in Bulgaria."

pledges, will have the courage to take that parliament to the people of the country. Whether this ministry lives long or whether it is short-lived, the great principles of reform which we have indicated will find in us their champions." 1

Taking all due regard to the nature of the occasion - the victorious premier basking in the glow of praise and congratulations, and probably under the influence of some good wine - it might be allowed that his words were occasional also. Too much reality is never good for the digestion, and sentiments of loyalty, courage, and devotion are much more conducive to a satisfied after-dinner feeling. But one must also allow that as this was the first public statement of the new premier on behalf of his ministry, men might well take Reid's words seriously and believe that he sincerely intended to do what he said.

Further evidence of the premier's good faith and intentions was forthcoming when the programme of the new government was announced in the Governor's speech on the re-assembly of Parliament, August 28. The programme was ambitious, but neither the advanced guard of free-traders nor the Labour Party could quibble about its democratic character: the first item proposed was an amendment of the land laws to effect some long-needed reforms in relation to agricultural settlement and grown tenants. Second on the programme was the central item of Reid's policy: 2... members would be invited to recast the fiscal policy of the country in accordance with the mandate of the constituencies at the recent general election... in order that the burdens of taxation may be more equitably distributed". Duties created by the customs tariff of 1891 and many other duties previously in force were to be repealed, taxes upon the unimproved value of land and upon incomes taking their place. Along with these financial arrangements went proposed changes in the Treasury accounting - to alter the date of the financial year and to effect a long-overdue reform by establishing the public accounts on a cash basis.

1. S.M.H., 7.8.1894.
2. Up to this time claims were carried over to the next financial year as the Treasurer's Advance Account, or charged against Supplementary Estimates, so that it was virtually impossible to gauge the true state of cash receipts and payments at
"Estimates of revenue and expenditure for the six months ending 30th June will be presented to you without delay."

Another major piece of legislation was to follow as the government proposed to provide for the establishment of a permanent local government system, and some earlier attempted legislation was to be pushed forward - a Mining on Private Property Act, a Local Mines Regulation Act, and an amendment to the Trades Disputes and Conciliation Act of 1892 so as to achieve some compulsory investigation of trades disputes. There were bills proposed for factory and workshop regulation, to amend the navigation laws; medical and pharmacy bills, law reform, and the establishment of a department of Labour and Industry. A new public works programme was to be initiated and an Enquiry into the Public Service, with a view to effecting economy, was to be undertaken. Finally, there was the declaration on federation which, it was immediately recognised, "drew old Parkes' teeth": "No time would be lost in asking the other Australasian Governments to concur in restoring the subject of federal union to a position worthy of its commanding importance. It is to be hoped that this national movement will speedily be placed upon a popular basis."

Tactically, this was a very well devised programme. There was enough legislation of a non-controversial nature to allow Reid to make some good progress; there was legislation in the mining and factory bills to continue to attract labour; and the ground had been cut from under Parkes' feet by the intention of re-starting the federal movement on a popular basis while also capitalizing on the work of

Barton's Federal League. Finally, his clear declaration to implement free trade (from 324) the time of commission. Thus deficits were often hidden in the Treasurer's book-keeping, and true estimates often not shown. Each in-coming administration usually declared the deficit to be much greater than assessed by its predecessors, and Reid claimed to have inherited a deficit of £1,356,000. See Reid's Financial Statement, N.S.W. P.R., Vol. LIII, p. 2190.

1. ibid., Vol. LXXIII, p. 10.
2. ibid.
and direct taxation brought the new free trade members solidly behind him. Even the cajoliers in the protectionist press and the cynical "Bulletin" allowed that Reid should have his chance to prove himself, and Reid's own speech during the Address in Reply again carried conviction. He expressed a determination "to honestly do our best to give effect to our public promises", and although he admitted it was an ambitious programme, he was confident the party would measure up to it. "I came into this position to carry out our promises... It remains for us now to show ourselves capable of realizing (them)."

The opportunity was certainly there for Reid to make a bold step forward. His position in the House was very strong, the mandate from the country was clear, the Opposition party was weakened and discredited, and the Labour Party was divided into two groups, both of whom supported his programme. Moreover, more than a third of the House comprised new members from whom Reid might expect a more earnest desire to get on with useful legislation. The "Australian Workman" expressed guarded terms the general feeling of expectancy:

"The workers can look forward to the new government with sober optimism because it can claim to be genuinely more democratic and sympathetic towards reform than its predecessors. Reid represents someone new after the years of Parkes and Dibbs and broken promises... With a solid working majority and an immense popular task to perform... he has the opportunity of making splendid history."

But a feeling of doubt, born of past experience, tempered this hopeful disposition:

"He has likewise the opportunity and perhaps the inclination to simply add another chapter of shifty intrigue and drifting incompetence to the records." 2

But even with such portents of success Reid knew that he had yet to face problems, and he well knew what they were, for he had helped to create them: it was the old question of party division.

Despite the increased representation of younger progressive free-traders, the three main groupings within the party remained clearly defined. If Reid

1. ibid., p. 52.
2. 4.8.1894.
proceeded to implement his "liberal" policy, he would almost certainly encounter opposition from the right wing — defined by the "Bulletin" as the "National Ass section". The strength of this group in the Assembly would not nearly balance the labour vote, but it was in the Council that the real conservative strength lay, and it was openly predicted that a contest with the Upper House was inevitable. If Reid earnestly desired to overcome this opposition, it would be necessary for him to move quickly with the contentious legislation — the taxation issue — so that the opposition would be isolated, its strength gauged and time allowed for it to be challenged and constitutionally overcome.

Though opposition from the right-wing group could be counted upon, Reid could not be certain of the reaction of the centre group — the "Hybrids", to the "Bulletin" — of any immediate move to wipe out the revenue tariff and impose direct taxation. Support for the election promises was virtually forced upon many of these so-called moderates, and now that victory was won, the inclination, if not the desire, to hold back was probably quite strong. The urgency of a "readjustment of taxation as a social reform" was confined only to the advanced guard. The "Herald", over the voice of moderation, was already offering the government the benefit of its philosophic approach to the social problem:

"If the experience of the world is worth anything it teaches the lesson that such evils (the inequalities of our social system) will not be cured by hasty and ill-considered compulsory legislation."

But perhaps the best hint Reid received to hasten slowly came from McLellan when he defined his own position at the banquet. It would be his pleasure, he said, "if he could in any way be the welding force in divergent elements, if he could bring together those who wanted to go too slowly

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1. This conservative grouping soon showed in its opposition to Reid's early legislation. During the passage of the Coal Mines Regulation Bill, Knox, Callan, Abbott, and McLellan opposed the compulsory eight-hours clause. Their support was not vital, however. **N.S.W.P.D.,** Vol. CXXII, pp. 350 et seq.
2. See its classification of free-traders, 29.7.1894.
and those who wanted to go too quick". However, the determination of the progressive wing to see its policy put into practice had not weakened now that the first part of its mission was accomplished. This was made clear when the Freetrade and Land Reform Electoral Committee under Wise's presidency held its first post-election meeting. It resolved that despite the pledges of all elected members, efforts to secure a consolidation of liberal forces were still necessary, and that in order to secure the best progress of democratic legislation the Association should concentrate on one great question at a time. Reid could well calculate the opposition expected from this group if he dishonoured his promises, and there were signs that any delay would also be dangerous. The idea that the real free trade party was represented by Wise's group was again put forward following an effort to keep the Freetrade Council going, after the election. This was described by one correspondent as a move by Reid and "the old school" to try avoid carrying out the programme. "Mr. B.R. Wise and his association will see that the wishes of the country are carried out." Another warning came from Charles Garland suggesting that the country was in no mood for temporising with free trade. "The people have voted freetrade and meant it... let the leaders keep faith this time, promptly, and to the letter." Any serious rift might give his rival the opportunity to "gather up the fragments", and there was always the chance, if the financial measures broke down, that Parkes might revitalize federation and try to regroup the party once again on the national issue.

All these considerations undoubtedly passed through Reid's active mind as he planned his future course, but there was one factor above all others which in the final analysis was paramount and should have been deciding. He held the key in his

1. S.M.H., 7.8.1894.
2. D.T., 23.7.1894.
4. Ibid., 31.5.1894.
own hand, for the alternative facing all free-traders, if they didn’t like his policy, was Disbanded Protection. He had pledged the party to follow the policy shaped by the advanced guard, and it had agreed, even if reluctantly, and then endorsed his leadership. All members of the party had understood his declaration to put into speedy practice his election promises, and his own personal honour was the collateral. But perhaps they also understood their man, C.H. Reid.

Before passing on to Reid’s legislation, we might record an interesting development which took place within the FreeTrade Party with which Wise was closely connected. The day before Parliament re-assembled, a confidential circular was sent to all free-trade members inviting them to attend a special meeting “to consider the best methods of organizing the democratic forces of the country”. The circular was signed by five members of the Freetrade and Land Reform Association—Wise, Bristow, Ashton, Millen, and Varney Parkes—and it was obviously intended to enlarge the scope and purpose of the Association by forming a parliamentary group for united action within the party caucus. That this was felt to be necessary was stated in the circular:

“IT IS APPARENT THAT THE DEMOCRATIC PROPOSALS OF THIS OR ANY OTHER MINISTRY WILL BE STRONGLY ASCSALED IN PARLIAMENT AND INSIDIOUSLY ATTACKED OUTSIDE. THE SUCCESS OF THESE REFORMS IN FAVOUR OF WHICH THE CONSTITUENCIES PROCLAIMED SO CLEARLY AT THE LAST GENERAL ELECTION CAN ONLY BE ASSURED BY CONSTANT WATCHFULNESS AND UNREMITTING CAUTION.”

The hand of Wise is clearly seen in this move. The subsequent meeting (August 30) which was attended by twenty-one members, appointed a committee to consult with the Freetrade and Land Reform Association with a view to enlarging the organization and to decide upon its own platform. Wise reported back that the Association was in agreement with the move, that its name was to be changed to the Freetrade and Land Reform League, and that the suggested platform was agreed to. The parliamentary group which was declared to number twenty-seven members would form a branch of the League.

1. The circular is reproduced in Appendix B.
The final platform produced was a clear statement of free trade and taxation priority, together with land and constitutional reform items. It was simple, clear, and tersely stated, concentrating on six items. The significance of this development as a growth within the Free Trade Party has been well analysed by Alan Martin; but it also has considerable interest for our study of Wise the politician. We can see him again giving effect to his ideas on the necessity for some form of continuing party organisation which can be traced back to his work in the Free Trade Association. His familiarity with the English party system and his appreciation of the weakness of the loose Free Trade Party of the past convinced him that members should be bound in some way to support the policy of the party. Writing to Parkes of this development, he said: "We hope to constitute a permanent electoral organisation, the want of which has been so often felt. I doubt whether the danger in this country does not lie rather in the absence of any party discipline, than in the excess of organisation." Secondly, Wise is shown here coming closer to the Labour idea of a party caucus in which policy decisions would not just be left to the premier and his cabinet, but by a well-organised internal grouping, and attachment to an outside electoral organisation, the ideas of a majority of party members would be felt. By framing their own programme these "new free traders" would clearly indicate to the cabinet what was the feeling of a significant group of the party. (Twenty-seven members were reported on the roll by September 8). In the current situation it was obviously designed to impress upon Reid the united determination of the advanced wing to see that policy was implemented. That such an organisation pledged to its own platform could evolve within the main body of the party, and yet remain in support of the premier, might appear puzzling, indeed inexplicable, in any modern concept of party forms. But in 1894 it serves simply to

1. See Appendix B. The whole development is reported in the "Armidale Chronicle", 8.9.1894.
illustrate once more the looseness of party structure, a weakness we have noticed inherent in the Free Trade Party since its formation. It should also be noted that members of the right-wing had identified themselves with the policy of the National Association, and McMillan had closely attached himself to Barton’s Federal League, while other free trade leaders had stood apart.

Finally, there may be seen in this move "to organize the democratic forces of the country" an attempt to fulfil the hope Wise had expressed at his manifesto speech in January: "that the unnatural separation of the labour party and the liberal party would come to an end and that those who had at heart the same ideal would unite their forces to achieve it." It was the dream of O’Sullivan to create such a democratic party; that it was by now also embedded in Wise’s thinking can be judged from his letter to Parke in which he expresses quite optimistic hopes of securing the support of certain labour leaders:

"If we can succeed in establishing some strong and democratic association, a movement which is on foot to turn the Australian Labour Union, a most powerful body, into a political association will probably be suspended and the best part of the labour forces will join with us. There was no time for delay; since the Labour movement which has nothing to do with the L.E. Leagues or Trades and Labour Council but is directed by the Federated Trades of N.S.W. . . . is being pushed on very earnestly and very quietly. We have strong friends among the leaders who support us in the step we are taking."

It will be argued that with Wise this was also just a dream— that such a grouping of middle-class and trade-union interests was never possible. But this is using hindsight, and even to a politician as perceptive as Wise, closely involved in the trend of events, such a combination of liberal and labour forces was by no means unrealistic or dream-like at the time; it had already been achieved to some extent.

1. See S.M.H., 11.1.1894.
2. 31.8.1894, P.C. Vol. viii, p. 162. It seems that Wise is referring to the activities of those union leaders connected with the attempt to push ahead the idea of an Australian Federation of Labour. A number of Unions, mostly of country workers, had amalgamated in February, 1894, as the large A.W.U. They had expressed dissatisfaction with the parliamentary representatives of labour at a conference in August, 1893. Just prior to Wise’s letter, District Councils had been formed among country unions. W.C. Spence was a key man in these moves, and possibly Wise was in contact with him as we have already noticed Spence’s idea of a ‘people’s (over)
extent with the accession of the independent free-trade labour men to Reid's party, and one was in the cabinet. Nor was the future of the Labour Party so clearly mapped out at this point for all to see. The "pledge" split and the election reversal had no doubt destroyed some earlier confidence, and the future political development of the Australian Labour Federation at this point was an open question.

It should also be remembered that the policy of this new Free Trade and Land Reform League had come much closer to labour than anything previously. The position was well stated by Wilks, one of the newly elected men, in Parliament:

"The dividing line between those who call themselves free-traders of the new school and those who call themselves advocates of the Labour party is almost imperceptible, and a lot of honorable men who sit here were returned on that issue." 2

Though wrong in the event, Wise's concept of such a "liberal" party gives to his ideas and efforts a special interest for those tracing the development of party forms in New South Wales history. This development should not be interpreted as a move to undermine Reid's new government; the idea was rather to carry Reid along in

(from 366) party", and a letter in the Wise Correspondence shows the two men were in communication. For this development, see N.B. Nairn, unpublished thesis, pp. 286 et seq.; L.F. Pitchardinge, op. cit., pp. 42-3.

1. N.B. Nairn argues that the Labour party future was firmly established following the conferences which separated the "independents" from the "solidarities". The official (pledge) position "received widespread support from the rank and file of labour... and the electors put their seal on these developments (op. cit., p.287). He says that the return of 15 "official" candidates as against 12 "independents" indicates the electors' approval of conference decisions (p. 297). This is hardly a clear approval, especially as there were 73 "pledged" candidates against 22 "unpledged" contesting the election. (See Former White, "William Morris Hughes, His Life and Times", p. 45). His statement that the return of 15 official Labour men "was a notable achievement" and the return of the 27 Labour members was clear affirmation that the electors wanted progressive legislation to continue" (p. 297), is open to strong argument. The real setback can be seen in the total vote:

In 1893, 38 members out of 45 candidates were successful - total vote, 104,000; in 1894, 27 " " " 95 " " " 51,000.

(Former White, op. cit., p. 44). The electors in many cases obviously preferred the progressive policy of the free-trade candidate. For a contemporary, the impression that, rather than being strengthened, the Labour Party had been weakened is not unrealistic, and uncertainty as to its future was naturally prompted by this loss of voting strength.

consolidating the victory, for Wise maintained that the premier was informed of all
that was taking place and nothing was done of which he disapproved. However, we
might also remark that such a grouping as Wise envisaged here would represent the
only possible democratic alternative if Reid were to remove.

One further observation might be made of this development as it concerns
the Wise-Parkes relationship. It may seem that Wise in taking Parkes into his
confidence was attempting to ride two steeds in opposite directions, as Parkes
would have no sympathy with such a move. This idea has been challenged in earlier
chapters, and we have also noted the support Parkes gave when Wise first publicly
launched the Free Trade and Land Reform Association. At the elections he had not
opposed the Wise policy of land-taxation and his federation priority did not pro-
clude interest in the Reform programme. Moreover Parkes, although he had not
implanted a land tax did not oppose the principle. He stated his position quite
clearly in the Assembly.

"If we are not to tax land what are we to tax? . . . The
land of a country if anything is a just subject for taxation. . . to say that
it is to be specially shielded from taxation is to state a monstrous untruth."

But political considerations apart, the personal relations of the two men were such
that Wise continued to seek advice and guidance from Parkes which the old leader
was ready to give. If Parkes' influence was on the wane, it made no difference to
Wise who continued to acknowledge his wisdom and experience. This special rela-
tionship, now established over a long period, can be seen in a letter written soon
after the first meeting of this new parliamentary group. Parkes had evidently
offered Wise certain words of caution regarding the future, for Wise assures him
"that I will not neglect your words of warning and indeed have already had resort
3
to the corrective influence of historic studies".

Wise was to remark that he
could not always accept Parkes' advice, but concealed from no-one how highly he

valued the store of wisdom open to him in Parkes’ friendship. 

Fortunately for many of us Sir Henry Parkes possesses that distinctive mark of greatness which allows a man’s friends to draw profit and satisfaction from his companionship even when they cannot see through all his field of vision. . . If personal attachment and a sense of the highest political obligation could be enough to determine my course. . . no stronger influence could be laid upon me.”

These words were stated in a public letter to the electors of Flinders following charges that he was only voicing the opinions of Parkes and not delivering his own honest criticisms. This personal bond we have discussed; it was to become a matter of the deepest significance in this first government of Reid and was to be seized upon by enemies as the motive for his political actions. But this is to anticipate, and we must go to the heart of the matter — Reid’s legislation.

Reid’s legislative programme was to prove a masterly piece of political strategy. The first two bills of a serious nature were the Navigation Acts Amendment Bill and the Coal Mines Regulation Bill. Although not now, these were quite important reforms involving labour conditions, especially the latter, as it contained the compulsory eight-hours clause, the issue on which both Parkes and McMillan had previously objected. Neither bill was treated on party lines, and things looked very propitious as they both made speedy progress — so much so that Parkes complained that he could not remember anything like it: “It was not simply rapid but precipitous.” This legislation allowed Reid to get an early score on the board; it created a good impression with the Labour party and Parkes was manoeuvred into the conservative camp by his traditional opposition to the principle that the state had a right to fix the hours in which a man might choose to labour. Both bills had cleared the House by September 12th, by which time it was expected that one of the major bills would be ready for presentation.

It was to be the Crown Lands Bill which was then introduced by the new Minister, Carruthers. This was necessarily a very complex piece of legislation.

1. "A Year’s Stewardship", letter to the Electors of Flinders, p. 11.
and it was obvious from the minister's speech on the resolution that its numerous provisions would involve the Assembly in many long weeks of discussion. Immediately Wise rose to question the wisdom and the policy of this arrangement. He said he did not intend to offer any criticisms upon such a bold and comprehensive measure, nor did he question its importance or the minister's wisdom in putting the Bill forward at this early stage so that it could be well considered by members.

The minister, he said, would have his best support. But he did feel obliged to recall to the government the fate of precious land bills, less complex than this, which took many months to pass through the Assembly. Because of this, he took the earliest opportunity of calling attention to a misapprehension which may arise that the ministry intended to do nothing else during the session than consider the Land Bill. He diplomatically but forcibly reminded ministers that there were certain measures which they were returned to pass, and warned them against those false friends who might urge the government to put the present legislation forward to keep back other legislation. He rose, he said, as an independent supporter of the government simply to ask "if some member of the ministry will make perfectly clear their intention in the matter."

The opposition were quick to follow this up and pressed Reid to know whether they were to fight the Land Bill out to a finish or to have a running fight with other legislation as well. But Reid was not prepared to be explicit; he declined "to deal with any other subject, or to enter into the discussion of any subject unconnected with the Bill". He added, however, that he felt the House was in the humour for work, and in reply to Cameron who reminded him of Wise's request, he replied that there was time enough "to remind me of my promises when I

1. See Curruthers' speech, ibid., p. 433 et seq.
2. Ibid., p. 447-8.
3. Ibid.
4. See speech of Chapman, ibid., p. 448.
5. Ibid., p. 453.
begin to break them". He predicted progress and an early passage and suggested three or four weeks as a likely period for debate - "I will not waste a night!" Reid could argue that he had not departed from his programme, and as a new Treasurer he might well have been allowed time to work on the details of the large financial reform with which he was entrusted. But the suggestion that he was also strengthening his own position and following once more his policy of accommodation to party group interests was not put to flight by his own statements, nor by that of his senior Minister, Brunker, who represented the country interests in the party and also voiced the opinion of the more conservative centre group: "We could not be engaged in a higher duty to the people of this country than settling the question we now ask honourable members to discuss." Wise was uneasy, and his concern persisted that the Land Bill might squeeze taxing legislation right out of the first session. On his testimony, he put this view to the Premier and received an assurance that the financial statement would be made in the first week of November. "With this assurance I was content."

Wise's contentment was destined to be brief; it did not outlast the spring, and was completely shattered when Reid delivered his financial statement on November 7th. Reid had to interrupt the Land Bill which was still before the House in order to present his statement. He began with a characteristic flourish: "I stand here tonight to remember every pledge and every promise which I gave to the people of this country. . . ." He then acknowledged the "fair and generous treatment" which members had shown towards the Land Bill, and announced that the government was on the threshold of the next item of its announced programme.

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1. Ibid., p. 455.
2. Ibid., 455.
3. Ibid., 455.
4. "A Year's Stewardship".
stood second on the programme in the Governor's speech. Reid continued:

"We propose without delay - I gave this notice this afternoon - to ask the House to take up another great question which has been too long neglected... We ask the House to take up with a determination to achieve the task, the great and pressing work of local government." 1

The impact of this announcement on New Zealand was probably no less than stunning, but there were further surprises when Reid came to discuss his future financial intentions. There was to be no taxing bill at all in the near future:

"I propose to press on with my Land and Income Tax Assessment Bill, and to get the material ready for my land and income tax proposals in my second financial statement in the months of March or April... I propose to begin by a fair system of estimates, by a rigid scrutiny into public expenditure so that I shall know the amount honestly required to carry on the government of the country. Until I know that I cannot recast our financial system." 2

All the election talk about the urgency of re-adjusting taxation, all the certainty as to whose strong shoulders should bear the taxes, all the sense of injustice which he felt about allowing the iniquitous system of indirect taxation to remain another single day, had now disappeared before the greater sense of responsibility "for carrying out these reforms in a well considered deliberate way," and avoiding the risk to the government's reputation "of rash and unconsidered measures". The concern for the poor and the working classes was now transcended by a greater concern for "all the people of the country without discrimination... If I desired to impose taxation... without any regard to a fair adjustment of the burden upon the respective classes of the community, and without any regard to the state of the financial affairs, nothing would have appeared more easy, to come down to this House and propose a tax of 1d or 1d in the £. But I should consider myself unworthy of my position if I made a definite taxing proposal to the House affecting every man in the country until I had thoroughly worked out the question in all its bearings." 3

Thus were Reid's new principles enunciated. The practical difficulties were also enumerated: public service expenditure must be first investigated; a good measure of municipal administration laid down; the Treasury accounts must be

1. ibid.
2. ibid.
3. ibid., p. 2126.
4. ibid., p. 2130.
put in order - "dirty as the water is that honourable gentlemen have left me, I cannot throw it away until I have a pure running stream of direct taxation". But despite all these difficulties and delay, prospects for the future remained bright, and Reid, assuring his supporters of his own earnestness, spoke of how devotedly he was applying himself to the task of laying down a fair, honest and well considered land and income tax "that one task that fills the day-dreams of my honourable friend". (Mr. Crick: "It is wearing the honourable member to a shadow.) He then promised that before the government closed for the session "the country will be brought face to face with a straight freetrade programme and a straight land and income tax system." He then concluded a remarkable financial statement in which there was not one definite proposal on future income or expenditure by another platitudinous roll about carrying out his gigantic task with solemnity and thoroughness, and repeated his hope that the "loyal and generous party which support me will give me the opportunity.

The question Wise posed later to his electors regarding this speech was:

"What under these circumstances I ought to have done? ... I had given the most definite promises when I was last before you to alter the incidence of taxation without delay. ... The prospect for the future was that the premier was proposing to make another financial statement in April, and then to pass into law before June 30 three contentious measures of the first importance, viz., tariff reform, a land tax and an income tax. The reason offered for this delay - 'that an Assessment Bill must be passed before a land-tax could be introduced' - seemed to me a complete misconception of the necessities of the case because it was ridiculous to set up a costly machinery for collecting taxes which had never been approved by parliament." 4

Whatever the answer his electors may have given to this question, Wise's own decision was made immediately, and it was set forth in a speech which perhaps more than any other became the basis for his later reputation as a political adventurer, party deserter, and "bottle-ended" politician. The historian, however, reading this speech, unprepared

1. To this point Reid claimed that the Treasury was left hundreds of thousands of pounds worse off than anyone could imagine, ibid.;
2. ibid., p. 2129.
3. ibid., p. 2129, p. 2141.
4. "A Year's Stewardship."
as it was, might see it as one of the clearest examples of a man placing loyalty to principle before party tactics. It is worthy of some notice.

Wise received the Speaker's call immediately after Dibbs, whose speech had taken up a general criticism of the nature of the statement and a reply to Reid's charges of neglect and incompetence by his predecessors. So soon after the impact of Reid's speech Wise clearly spoke under the influences of strong feelings. Whether he would have made the same speech a week later when the adjourned debate was resumed and he had conferred with his associates makes interesting but idle speculation. The speech was made and recorded, and subsequently never once went back from a word of it. And, as he remarked, little time was needed to study the details of the Premier's speech for the proposals were simple — "it was not a speech of great complexity regarding principle" but was chiefly confined to "an elaborate postponement of everything which a few months ago he declared to be necessary for the salvation of the country".

Wise first attacked the Treasurer's proposals on practical grounds: that the order of business would leave no time for the promised legislation; that the Land Bill was yet to go through, the Local Government Bill was to be introduced, Estimates for six months had to be given, an Assessment Bill dealing with two important taxes was yet to come, and then another financial statement; and only then would the measures of taxation and the reform of the tariff be seen. He calculated that with the time left and allowing for the smoothest passage and the absence of any unexpected matter of urgency the chances of seeing the tariff altered or a tax imposed within twelve months had practically vanished. This was a clear breach of promise.

"When we promised last August to deal with this matter immediately, did we mean our constituents to believe that we did not intend to touch it for eleven months? Instead of giving us clear practical measures of reform this policy is a huge premeditated note payable not at twelve months, but at an indefinite date, and upon doubtful conditions, and then with probably very large exemptions. . . They (the Ministry) have not only dealt unfairly

1. ibid., p. 2142.
with their supporters... but they have done much to lower the public life of the country. The speech of the Premier shows he has very little appreciation of the greatness of the cause he advocates. 1

Next Wise attacked the omission of details. It was, he maintained, seriously necessary to indicate the amount of the tax proposed and to indicate in some way or other the basis on which they intended to calculate the tax.

"Is it to be a tax on unimproved value or capital value? Are there to be exemptions or not?" This information, together with some idea of the duties to be removed, was vitally necessary for commercial institutions in making future arrangements. It was simply creating confusion and doubt to give not one word of explanation. Why could not a land tax, at least, be brought in at this stage? He was aware that by delay the government would gain a temporary political advantage - it would please the fiscal-miners and others - but

"I decline to sacrifice the principles I have professed, and by the profession of which I have received the confidence of large members of electors, in order to suit parliamentary expediency or to give a temporary advantage to those Ministers". 2

There was then the whole question of political honesty involved in the proposal of the Minister that a local government bill should precede the land-tax imposition. This was, he said, the very policy advocated by the Opposition at the election, and he reminded free-traders that

"we told the electors that the cry of those who seek to shield the land-owning class was that 'a land-tax must not be levied until a local government bill is passed'. We told the electors this. We are now within a little over three months asked to change our opinions, but I for one decline to change mine... We told them the longer the tariff remains the more difficult it will be abolish it. I still endorse this. It is because I have given straight-forward pledges that I intend to keep them". 3

To Wise, it was the Ministry that had deserted the party and had sacrificed its principles. He expressed his personal difficulty at opposing his own party Ministry and taking up a position for antagonism with men with whom he had been closely associated for many years -

1. ibid., p. 2145.
2. ibid.
3. ibid., 2144.
"but I feel that if the honour and integrity of public life are to be preserved one cannot profess one thing to one's constituents and do another thing here . . . For freetrade I am prepared to fight as a matter of principle, and I decline to look upon it as a matter of expediency or parliamentary tactics. The speech of the Colonial Treasurer has lowered this contest. It is no longer one of those strenuous struggles upon principles which form the character of the nation, but it has become a matter of calculation, tactics and expediency . . . I decline to be dragged in the mire". 1

Such a speech of condemnation by the leader of the "progressive" wing, the man who, perhaps more than any other, could claim credit for the strong position of the Ministry, was bound to have profound implications. What these were was made fairly clear before the debate was adjourned on the first night. The Opposition, sensing an open revolt, moved in quickly to press home the advantage. Crick, the "Eagle of West Macquarie", now swept down upon Reid and, neglecting protectionist policy, completely, capitalized on Wise's arguments and taunted the government with its broken promises, reminding Reid of his promise to remove duties in twenty-four hours. The financial statement was just "wretched twaddle", the Ministry's only concern was to stay in office, and the explanation for the lack of financial statement at all was Reid's inability to handle the Treasury. "He took the job because he had to, and can do no better."

Support from this quarter, however, did not strengthen Wise's argument with free-traders, and Carruthers came back strongly in defence of the Ministry. Stung by what he termed Wise's disloyalty, he defended the government's course as being the only prudent and businesslike way to proceed. He hoped the House would not be led away by Wise, but thought it better that the government should know who its friends were. "Just at the verge of time . . . the man who stands above all others pledged to the country as the champion of land reform stands here to oppose the government." Wise in his speech had reminded those free-traders who had so recently supported the new platform of the Freetrade and Land Reform League of how

1. ibid., pp. 2145-6.
2. ibid., p. 2152.
3. ibid., p. 2146-6.
their objects were being thwarted; Carruthers now called upon the loyalty of true, sincere party men" and struck a vital point when he said of Wise: "If he does not believe he will get it (his land-value taxation) from this government, from whom then does he expect to get it?" Thus the main lines of the debate were laid down before the week's adjournment during which members might study the statement and assess the position. Obviously much would depend upon the new free trade members, confronted so early in their career with such a clear-cut decision for party or principle; but no matter how strongly Wise's words may have lived with them, the question of an alternative to Reid was a crucial question.

While the Assembly was taking stock of this opening round in the financial debate, two intervening matters came before it which undoubtedly influenced the thinking of many members. First, Parkes was given leave to introduce as a matter of urgency - a resolution on federation. There was no connection between this and Wise's attack on the government as the resolution had been standing in Parkes' name for some time. More plausible is the idea that it was a well timed suspension of sessional orders by Reid, for on the previous day he had met a deputation from the Federal League and had given them assurances of his support for their plan for a convention springing from the people; and his arrangements were already made to meet the Premiers of the other colonies during the Christmas recess to press this proposal forward. Reid had drawn Parkes' teeth before the resolution came on.

Parkes, however, used the occasion well. It was to be the last lofty oration of the old statesman to be heard in the House, and, despite the rather electric party atmosphere and some strong provocation, he rose above factious debate and kept to his expressed intention of keeping free "of any party or personal

1. ibid., p. 2149.
2. The resolution read: It is in the highest sense desirable that Parliament, without loss of time, should resume the consideration of the federation of these colonies under one national government. That the above resolution be communicated by address to the Governor.
3. S.M.H., 13.11.1894.
feeling that can live in the House." He argued the general case for urgently taking up the question of union again, and expressed his conviction that if the people's parliamentary representatives could not do the work then "the time had come for a council of founders elected by the people to take it over". The speech was generally well received, but the implications few wise lay in the support and opposition as to the urgency of the proposal. Reid, in a special position of advantage, complimented Parkes on his eloquence, the tone of his address, and acknowledged Parkes' earlier efforts to consummate union. He even praised the efforts of the 1891 Convention framers: "I cordially accept the proposition and I am personally indebted to him for having chosen the means of breathing life into this great question." But Reid then deftly trumped Parkes' cards by outlining his own plans to push forward a People's Convention and praised the work of National Federal Leagues from which Parkes had held apart. If Parkes had gained anything, Reid had lost nothing, and could view the course of the debate to follow with obvious satisfaction, for the strongest support for Parkes' motion came from the Opposition and Reid, repelled by Reid's bland hypocrisy, delivered a bitter denunciation which roused all the party spirit Parkes had so carefully eschewed.

One protectionist after another rose to support Parkes, and when they were joined by the ultra-conservative free-trader, J.P. Cullen, it was not surprising that the radical John Haynes warned free-traders that the artful Parkes and others were trying to force federation to the front and "stifle the demands of the people... I would as soon cut off my right arm as follow the honourable member for St. Leonards for one day in politics". Haynes delivered a vicious attack on Parkes,

2. Martin's assessment of this speech differs. In his view it was composed of "stupid generalization", an assessment which adds further to his developed idea of the "ineffective Parkes", "A", p. 207.
3. ibid., p. 2208.
4. ibid., p. 2209.
5. ibid., pp. 2209 et seq.
6. ibid., p. 2242.
and provoked McMillian to a spirited defence, for he could not stand by and see Parkes' name dragged down by such "a swollen, bombastic politician." He spoke strongly, supporting the resolution, claiming the country was "ripe for federation."

All knew how Haynes, a former "Bulletin" editor, held Parkes in abomination, but although his malevolent spirit was deplored, his arguments struck home with his Free-trade and Land Reform colleagues. If they had intended to follow Wise in attacking Reid's policy, they showed in this debate that they were going to have nothing to do with federationists as an alternative. It was strongly emphasized by the advanced group that reforms came first, and the Labour Party were equally determined that if the fiscal issue was to be sunk, it was not for federation.

Wise was absent from the Assembly during the debate, but his position was clearly established. He had placed federation below social reform in his election manifesto, and the very point of his criticism of Reid was that nothing should be placed before the mandate given by the electors. Federation should go hand-in-hand with the reform policy. However, the debate did point up problems for him in the Parkes association, and disc recently formed Land Reform party revealed a division on the question of federation which seriously weakened their unity as an effective voting group in keeping Reid to his promises. As for Parkes, the shape of things to come was to be found in the strong protectionist support for his resolution.

Allowing for a genuine desire to see his ideal achieved, a practical assessment of his own position must have led him to the conclusion that even though there was a strong majority for his resolution (55/10), he had no chance of a return to freetrade leadership with the federal issue. Reid had the checkmate, the new men would not be drawn, and the Labour Party were set against it. This left only two

2. See speeches by McGowan, Sleath, and McDonald. McGowan objected at the outset to the suspension of orders to hear more discussion on this abstract question, ibid. p. 2192.
3. See speeches of Wilks (anti), Storey (pro), Whidden (disinterested).
4. Martin does not deny that Parkes was sincere in his belief that federation (ever)
alternatives: to play a waiting game for Reid's failure or to fish in the murky waters of a fiscal alliance. The emotional strain of watching his enemy take over what he considered to be his rightful claim to federal leadership, his old age, and his impatience - all operated no doubt in deciding Parkes' future course, a course which was to bring such an inglorious end to his long career. It was also to bring Wise down with him.

The other event intervening before the House took up the financial debate was Reid's introduction of the Land Income Tax Assessment Bill along with the Local Government Bill. He merely sought leave to introduce the Bill late at night after the Parkes' federation debate "so that it might be in the hands of members". There was no commitment as to when it would be read, but doubting Thomases in his party would now know that the Bill was framed. This move was shrewdly timed; but even more advantageous to Reid's position was the unusual opposition which the mere request to introduce the Bill called forth. The Opposition of such conservative Protectionists as Dibbs, See, and Lyne, and conservative free-traders such as Campbell and Cullen indicated the struggle which lay ahead and called forth a defense of the direct taxation principle in a minor debate next day from men like Hallis of the Land Reform League and Hughes of the Labour Party, quarters from which Reid knew the strongest opposition to his delaying tactics would come. The total effect of this early exposure of opposition was to underline Carruthers' call for party loyalty and to make more difficult the dilemma of the disappointed land-taxers. This was to be well stated in the ensuing debate by Wilks when, speaking for the new school of free-traders, he said how irksome he found it to have to vote for a government which month after month was continuing to dis honour its promises, but

\[\text{\textit{from 379} ought not to be delayed, "A", p. 202.}\]
2. \textit{ibid.}, p. 2321.
3. \textit{ibid.}, p. 2335.
The debate on the financial statement, when it was resumed, proved to be an involved, tortuous marathon extending over five nights, the final session ending at 6:02 a.m. on November 22nd. With little financial material to debate, discussion ranged far and wide and the main theme became caught in cross-currents of all kinds, so that to determine any clearly defined reaction to the Premier's speech is almost impossible. Bitter personality conflicts flared and on such a theme as "loyalty to election promises" the records of all leaders were examined, attacked and defended, and the force of Wise's criticism of the government became blurred by extraneous issues of all kinds. The degree to which political opportunism characterized the debate was established by the Protectionists, who continued to attack the sincerity and capability of Reid in failing to bring in free trade, and compared his procrastination to the speed with which Dibbs brought in his protective tariff. With a strange application of logic they alleged that "the freetrader of freetraders" when confronted by the practical exigencies of government finance, showed himself to be a protectionist in disguise. O'Sullivan complimented Reid on retaining the tariff; Reid in turn complimented Wise on becoming "the white-haired boy of the opposition. It is beautiful to see the two poles coming together!"

From the solid supporters of the government came much talk of party loyalty, and a general echo of Reid's own justification that time was needed for well thought-out and carefully designed measures. MacMillan's stand was interesting. He emphasized that the success of the government depended on party fealty and reminded Wise that problems looked different from the inside and said the government should be shown a great deal of consideration. However, he was unhappy about Reid's reflections on former Treasurers, and his own strong sense of truthfulness led him to point out the weakness of Reid's argument about the need for

1. ibid., p. 2455.
2. ibid., p. 2527.
preliminary assessments - it was not till a tax was imposed, he said, that Reid could assess at all accurately what revenue would come in; Reid knew he would need at least £1,000,000, and duties would not come off till June; he saw the greatest possible danger in delay and he admitted that with an enthusiastic party behind him "I would have imposed the taxation and trusted to see if it needed re-adjustment". But he in no way wished to encourage general criticism and he, too, reminded all free-traders, "even the most rampant land-taxers", that it was better "to take half a loaf from this government than take over another government which will give them no bread at all".

There were, however, many free-traders who clearly showed that the half loaf was a pretty poor offering, after all the undertakings given by the Premier. Much disappointment was expressed by the advance guard. Wilks reminded Reid that his very presence there was due to the groundwork of the Free-trade and Land Reform League, and he had let them down; Hollis was against a combined tax and opposed the proposal of a machinery bill before a land-tax; Affleck said that he would give the government more time but reminded ministers that "they should be kicked out like another government which broke promises". Similar feelings were expressed by Millen and Whidden, but it was clear that the newly formed Land-tax party was not going to follow its leader or place any real pressure on the government. In fact, the group showed a decided split in its attitude to Wise. Unquestionably his influence with some members was very strong. Wilks, although he agreed Wise's criticism came at an ill-judged time, testified that it came from "a man whom, although misunderstood, I am willing to believe is one of the most cultured democrats in the country - a man who is thoroughly sound on those principles which he has advocated."

But another member, Mahoney, threw Wise overboard and objected to his attempting to

1. ibid., p. 2410.
2. ibid., p. 2411.
3. ibid., p. 2464.
4. ibid., p. 2465.
hold twenty-seven members in bond to his own ideas. Close as their friendship had been, he now declared Wise himself to be one of the false friends of the govern-
ment. Haynes went further and said Wise was hypocritical; he was really in the other camp -

"Wise, Parkes, and McMillan were all in the one pack; he was trying to drive a wedge between sections of the party and he would, if let in with his friends, "another the very reforms he pretends he is attached to." 2

These sudden changes of position and re-orientations are one of the real problems facing the historian in this period; they indicate the confusion and the problems of men, earnestly trying to achieve some consistent set of principles but constantly faced with the fragmentation of party politics. It is the consistency of Wise, whose principles are based on a well established political philosophy, that stands out in contrast.

But though he be questioned, on the matter of policy, and criticized for an untimely, injudicious, and disloyal attack on the government, it was the suspicion of his motives once again that was to prove most damaging to Wise's standing and reputation. This distrust, always present in the minds of those who could not reconcile his social position and his political ideas, was now fanned afresh by Parkes, who distinguished himself in this debate by delivering one of the most acrimonious and sarcastic speeches of the week. This bewildering change within a couple of days from the elevation of the national statesman to the very lowest level of partisan politics can only be explained by Parkes' intense frustration and resentment of Reid's tactics - tactics which Parkes could appreciate to the full. He unleashed a tirade condemning the policy, the past record and the political character of the Premier, vaunting his own achievements and contemptuously denounc-
ing the Ministry, including his former associates. Affixing a mocking tone, he attempted satire on the grand scale: "the chap to save the country, the pilot of

1. ibid., p. 2652.
2. ibid., p. 2650-3.
the storm; the Pitt of Macquarie Street; the financier to rank with Gladstone and Salisbury." There was plenty of material and the running fire of interjections from Reid provided the House with a spectacle of an all-in political fight with insult heaped upon insult. In all this, the point of issue — Reid's financial policy — was lost completely and the further it went the less effective Parkes became. The assault, in fact, fell flat and old colleagues like Brunker, Young, and Sydney Smith might well have felt saddened rather than aggrieved to hear their old master pathetically exclaim:

"I speak as an outsider. I have been ejected by these gentlemen. I have been separated by them. I am compelled to stand alone." 1

(These effects on his own son, Varney, a supporter of Reid, as he listened to this speech and the trenchant counter-attacks on his aging father can only be imagined.)

Parkes' speech was another great error in judgment. It proved distasteful to many moderate free-traders, and such an open display of jealousy lowered his own prestige and did his cause harm rather than good. It drew many bitter reprisals. Haynes characterized it as

"the effort of a dying gladiator with the difference that the wound from which he was dying was not inflicted by an adversary. The honourable member was perishing from his own poison." 2

Many recognized it as the speech of "sour grapes", and Carruthers pointed to the bitter irony in Parkes' reference now to the Wretched fiscal squabble", and his "dog in the manger" attitude to Reid, having failed to promote real free trade policies himself.

For Wise, such an ill-conceived attack following his own criticism had most unhappy implications and the repercussions were immediate. The natural assumption that the two attacks had the same origin and that Wise had common cause with Parkes did him great harm as it threw off the attack from Reid's policy on to

1. ibid., p. 2556.
2. ibid., p. 2651.
a personal conflict. Carruthers, who was by now so identified with Reid's programme that he could forget his own earlier approaches to Parkes to save the day, reacted emotionally and alleged collusion:

"The people of this country are not blind. They have been watching all these intrigues and all this treachery that has been going on."

Parkes, said Carruthers, had made it clear that he was against the government, but Wise had not this quality of candour and openness.

"No excuse can be offered for those who, whilst pretending a fair face and offering the hand of friendship, are yet prepared to reach out for a knife in order to assassinate those who look upon them as their friends."

Wise had now become enveloped by the faction conflict, and his ideas and principles were dragged into the mean arena of political feud and personal vendetta from which he could not hope to emerge without dark stains. His personal loyalty to Parkes now brought allusions, both open and covert, to a more sinister purpose, and he was accused of being a Parkes minion. Haynes now said Wise's stand was only a pretence and his purpose was to destroy the party, while to another new free trade member, Morgan, the suggestion of treachery was so readily received that he designated Wise the "Judas" of the party - "he comes into this House and does the Judas business, and very well too... I am very glad he has shown out conspicuously in these colours". This extravagant talk reflects the strength of feeling among these free-traders. Undeniably there was strong support in the House for the taxation objectives of Wise, and a good measure of sympathy with his disappointment, but the Parkes overtures were very strong and even with the Labour men it seemed that distrust of Parkes outweighed any belief in the sincerity of Wise. The origins of the campaign to neutralize Wise and to blacken his name as a party traitor, plotter, and false friend of free trade can be found in this debate, and

1. ibid., p. 2563.
2. ibid., p. 2653.
3. ibid., p. 2683.
4. See speech by Slaeth, ibid., p. 2667.
his position, even among his own group, henceforth became more and more isolated. In effect, the point of Wise’s criticism was turned aside from his target and, in the words of one of his own associates in the Freetrade and Land Reform League, “These attacks on the government have really done more to coalesce the party than any other action.”

Wise spoke again towards the end of the debate. He denied that his purpose was to split the party or that he wished to prevent the government putting its legislation into law, and dismissed all the “melodramatic talk about assassins, daggers and all the rest of the paraphernalia of the stage”. He would not be drawn aside by such allusions. “I will discuss no public matter in a personal spirit and I will never attempt to answer personalities with personalities.” Although more restrained, there was no retreat, nor any desertion of Parkes, despite his blundering speech. Regarding the party leadership, he recalled that notwithstanding his allegiance to Parkes, he had accepted Reid as the party choice, as the man more in earnest and eager for the immediate adoption of free trade. But he didn’t know then that the Premier would delay for eight months a statement as to when free trade may be enacted. This was a longer period than ever suggested by Parkes.

He accepted that differences existed between himself and some members of the Ministry as to the principle of a land tax. “I look upon it as a far-reaching reform – others do not share my views,” but he once again warned the Ministry that the movement in favour of a land tax would go on whatever the treatment it might receive at the hands of any parliamentary section. “The people are tired of seeing the measure dealt with by clever tactics... they will insist that it become law, not as an expedient of finance but as a simple measure of social justice.”

He concluded by assuring the government that if they were in earnest he would assist them in every way – but he had no enthusiasm for a policy of marking time.

1. Mahoney, ibid., p. 3839.
2. ibid., p. 2648.
3. ibid., p. 3630.
"Hope observes the movement of political bodies."
It might be reasonably held that Wise's stand was too inflexible and high-principled for the realities of political life, and that he manoeuvred himself into an impossible position vis-à-vis his own party. This, in part, derives from the unalterable character of the man and his whole political training - he could not stand aside while legislation of such a vital nature directly affecting so many people was made to serve personal or party ends; but it must also be allowed that Wise was expressing an earnest and genuine desire felt by many men for a social reform which merited the highest priority. In this the whole debate mirrors very well the political conditions of this interesting period. That such a debate could even take place emphasizes the point we have stressed earlier - the undeveloped state of these fiscal parties. That a premier's policy would remain unknown to his party before a major debate, and no move made to have differences discussed, if not settled, in a party caucus, simply made for the public exposure of dissension which was presented by the Free Trade Party in this debate. It was just such a weakness the Labour Party was working to eliminate. The weakness was recognized by Wise, but he was a victim of it.

There were many men in this Parliament, and they were by no means restricted to the Labour Party, who recognized the new economic and social forces and who genuinely demanded a new response from the parties and from the legislature. There were others, from self-interest and also from conviction, who felt themselves bound to resist these changes. But there were also politicians, including a number of the old leaders, schooled in years of faction politics, who still viewed parliamentary life as something of a contest for place and power, and for whom manoeuvre, stratagem, and personal alliance were the accepted methods. Frustration was greatest for those men seeking to effect a change in the social order, or inspired by a national ideal, who were yet forced to accept the party forms and methods that were a legacy of the past. This was the frustration of OSullivan
with Dibbs and of Wise with Reid, while others felt the same about Parkes. That
men should express such vehement criticism of their leaders and at the same time
invoke such a strong sense of party loyalty is a paradox only explained by the
confusion of a transitional period. It also imparts the strong colour and spirit
to political life in this remarkable decade.

The other point about Wise is that he recognized perhaps more clearly than
anyone else the tactical motives behind Reid's course of action. Among the welter
of opinions, many reasons had been advanced for Reid's policy of delay - that he
was really conservative at heart; that he was incompetent or indolent and couldn't
support the legislation; that he was in Treasury difficulties and couldn't afford to
let customs revenue go; that he was under the influence of McMillan, "the power
behind the throne"; that he was afraid to challenge the conservatives; especially
the Legislative Councillors. But it was Reid himself who provided the guide, and
gave substance to Wise's charge that by parliamentary tactics the Premier was
seeking to strengthen his own position. In reply to criticism, Reid defended the
priority given to the Land and Local Government bills as a gesture to the country
supporters:

"Although we are a city party when we got into power we thought of the
great pressing needs of the country districts - land and local government. . .
We would start our career by achieving these two great wants. . ."

This was politically sound, as over a third of the members of the party, including many new
1
men, were elected from country districts, but the real point was to follow:

"We may perhaps have to fight the battle again. Surely we will go back to
the country districts stronger with such a record." 2

Why was a government, in office less than three months, and with a large majority, talking of going back
to the country? The answer provides the key to Reid's tactics. It was that a

1. The 63 electorates returning Freeradical were distributed as follows: Sydney
2. ibid., p. 2415.
taxation issue, held a number of dangers to his leadership. An open conflict and
ultimatum might lose him the support of his own party conservatives; an impasse
would be dangerous as Labour might press for its plank of abolition, and the Free-
trade and Land Reform League had also placed Council reform on its new platform;
and finally in any constitutional crisis, Parkes with his store of knowledge and
experience would be standing by waiting for any false move.

Clearly Reid saw the necessity of strengthening his position both in the
party and the electorate before the election mandate was tested, for without any
other legislation to his credit his position was vulnerable. Thus the design of
his programme. First, Labour support was encouraged by his two early bills, and
there was yet the promise of a Trades Disputes Bill and factory legislation to
come; then smaller land-owners and country interests in his party from whom opposi-
tion to a land tax might be most likely were propitiated; and then the federal
issue was tastefully used to disarm federalists. Having successfully negotiated
the financial debate, and strengthened by the poor showing of Parkes and the con-
fusion of the Land Reform League, Reid was then in a position to plan just how and
when he would bring on the contentious legislation. It cannot be said that he was
opposed to democratic legislation, nor that he intended to avoid direct taxation,
but he was prepared to use it to serve his own best purposes, and the electorate
would have to wait until he was ready. And wait it did, for the delay was in his
best interests.

The total design became more apparent when the Land and Income Tax Assess-
ment Bill came forward in late November. Although it was a machinery bill without
any stipulated tax, Reid very shrewdly included the question of tax exemptions in
the bill. Apart from the difficulty, which Wise pointed out, that the Council was
asked to approve a tax bill while in ignorance as to what the tax was, the exemption
clauses introduced a further difficulty. The ostensible reason given by Reid for
introducing exemptions into the machinery bill and not the tax bill proper was to be fair to the Council and allow it the opportunity of amendment. "I admit the right of the Council to deal with the machinery of taxation but not with taxation itself, as I have sent the machinery bill up separately... The Bill imposing direct taxation is being sent up as a separate measure, and that they cannot touch. The exemption is in the machinery bill and they can do what they like with that." 1

But the problem for the Council was not so simple. If it did amend, by lowering the exemption figures - and these were the most contentious clauses in the bill - then it was open to the charge of interfering with a money bill, and its action could also be interpreted as a desire to increase taxation on the lower income groups. If it rejected the bill completely as Reid clearly expected, then it left him with the strong case that the Council was directly thwarting the recently expressed will of the people, by not allowing him to even start on his free trade and taxation measures. There was nothing incidental about the problem facing the Council; it was astutely planned, and the hostility it naturally felt towards such tactics was intensified by a campaign started by Reid quite early in the session to brand the Council as the repository of conservatism and the enemy of democracy. "These dynasties of royal mummies" was one picturesque expression he used in the Assembly, and another less scholarly allusion was to the "ruthless appetite for slaughter existing within the walls of the Council Chamber", which, he said, "exceeded even that found in the abattoirs". This kind of attack was scarcely designed to win sympathy for his legislation in the Upper House.

Even with this preparation, it was still to his advantage to delay for as long as he could the Bill's passage through the Assembly and its consideration in

2. The President of the Council, in fact, was to rule that the Council was not competent to amend the Bill. Cf. Martin, op. cit., p. 170.
the Council, for once he was reasonably sure that the Bill would be rejected, he was in the strongest position to make another financial statement and introduce his actual taxing and tariff legislation into the Assembly. This done, he could claim his promises fulfilled, and with his own critics thwarted and the Council represented as blocking the will of the people, he could then face any crisis, or even an election.

That all fell out in this way does not mean that Reid followed some master plan from the outset; it unfolded as he went and circumstances aided him. Such adventurism was also not without its risks, for despite the safe delivery of his first financial statement, there were still many disappointed men, and he was not dealing with a naive press. Though the free trade press continued to support him, his tactics did not pass without comment. When Parliament adjourned at Christmas, the Assessment Bill was still stranded in the Assembly. Reid then went off to Hobart to promote his newly adopted federal scheme at a Premiers' Conference and the House did not meet again for nine weeks. The "Bulletin" exposed what it saw as Reid's anomalous position — while living on the assertion that protection is an iniquitous system, he continued to peacefully administer a protectionist tariff.

... "He professes a desire to push on his direct tax yet he closes the Assembly for nine weeks... and leaves the Bill stranded as if to get away from it as long as possible." Even the "Herald" questioned such prolonged adjournment and agreed that it was an "arguable contention" that the failure of the government "to use the fresh young forces of the newly elected parliament to carry the fiscal changes may have weakened the chance of ever carrying them". The tactics of delay and the

1. As part of his tactical campaign of delay in the Council, Reid was greatly assisted by Jack West, whom he appointed to the Council simultaneously with his appointment to the ministry as Attorney-General (Dec. 18). West, now the government's representative in the Council, departed almost immediately for an overseas trip, and his absence proved difficult for the Council. See N.S.W. Parliamentary Record.

2. 2.3.1895.

3. 26.2.1895.
appointment of such a conservative as Watt to the Ministry also made the Labour Party more suspicious and uneasy. Hughes, soon after the resumption, attacked the long recess and questioned the bona fides of the Ministry and their palpable motives in delaying a struggle with the Upper House. "It is a government of promises", he declared, and hit at the crux of the position - Reid's desire to hold office. "What does the Premier care about a tax on the unimproved value of land? Does any man believe that it is a deep-seated part of his creed? But he cares a great deal about retaining office and he will do it. Do you think he does not know when to go to the country and when not?" Hughes threatened to turn the government out and Watson supported him, declaring that it deserved to be thrown over South Head.

But if Reid appeared to be getting into some deep water with his policy of drift, circumstances again came to his aid when Dibbs moved a censure motion immediately on resumption. The censure, although it provided for another airing of Reid's broken promises and shuffling tactics, in fact strengthened his position, since it emphasized once again the problem of an alternative. To call back Dibbs' party so recently rejected by the electorate, and to re-impose a condemned policy could only represent a complete perversion of democratic government. Again, the spectacle of a Protectionist party leading an attack on the government for failing to implement a policy of free trade carried such a strong suggestion of blatant opportunism that "the country had a right to say that its institutions were being brought into contempt". The attempt to eject Reid at this stage was interpreted as an

2. ibid., p. 4081.
3. S.H.H., 28.2.1895. The motion itself was in the most general terms: "That the administration of the country by the present Government does not meet with the approval of this House." Particular issues deemed censurable were the new Attorney-General's absence overseas on a salary of 2600; the long adjournment instead of prolongation; Reid's "wild goose chase to Hobart"; but the general issue brought up by most Protectionist speakers was Reid's failure to redeem his promises to repeal the Dibbs Customs Duty Act of 1891. N.S.W.P.D., Vol. LXXV, Dibbs' speech, pp. 3965 et seq.
impotent move by protectionists "falling over themselves in a mad scramble to get
back into office", and won no support outside its own ranks. Labour voted with
the government and the motion was lost, 66/27.

Reid also gained from the debate in another way. It proved to be another
of these long formless uncontrolled discussions in which the broad issues became so
elaborated by repetition and recapitulation of past history, that when the vote was
taken by an exhausted and exasperated House, the central issues lay buried in pages
of words. Once the floodgates were opened the debate rolled on carrying with it
all kinds of extraneous political flotsam - so much so that the "Herald" saw it all
as a futile and irresponsible obstruction to parliamentary business and a pervers-
ion of its rules, forms and privileges.

The absence of the restraining traditions of English politics and the
clouding of the issue by days spent in factious debate was one of the real problems
His own speeches are marked by an absolute refusal to be drawn by personal issues
or distracted by irrelevant matter, and when one comes upon a speech in which he is
addressing himself to an issue involving strong conviction it stands out as a
rivulet of clear thinking often to be lost later in the turgid waters of the main-
stream debate. As for Reid, he was completely at home in the faction debate, and
with an ever-full quiver of satiric salutes and repartee, and by constant inter-
jections during an opponent's speech, his own contribution to the combative spirit
was considerable, and he incited much personal provocation. As he was almost

1. ibid., p. 4100.
2. 5.3.1895. The "Bulletin" described the debate as a stupid "political
scrimmage".
3. Wise once described a debate he had heard in the House of Commons on the
subject of the unemployed. "The whole debate only lasted two and a half hours,
and one of the four speakers was Mr John Burns whose speech only lasted 40 minutes.
If in Sydney we had a Parliamentary debate on the "Unemployed Question", there
would be forty members instead of four speaking, and we have at least fifty speak-
ers who can all of them speak for four hours." Newspaper Cuttings, No. 29 (over)
completely immune to personal criticism, and as delay was so much to his advantage, he could view such a censure debate with perfect equanimity, and he was greatly strengthened by the dismal failure of Dibbs' weak attack. With Parkes and Dibbs both discredited by their failure to unseat him, Reid's only danger would now seem to lie in a combination of their forces. Such an alliance when it did come about, however, was to witness his greatest victory, for in the face of such an unholy combination the real censure lay with him.

Before taking up the final attack launched on Reid, we might review Wise's own position following his break with the Ministry. His position became an increasingly isolated one, even with his own group, who were clearly confused as to where their allegiance lay — to their own platform or to the party. Wise was completely convinced now that Reid was insincere. Writing to Parkes soon after the Land and Income Tax Assessment Bill had been introduced, he said he was convinced that neither free trade nor direct taxation would be carried in the session by such "weak and insincere professors of liberal principles". His role henceforth was to be that of a watchman and censor within the party, with the object of forcing the taxation issue and watching to see that the legislation as it was framed incorporated the principles of the Free-trade and Land Reform League. A difficult role it was to be and one that was wide open to misinterpretation and attack.

The relations between Wise and Reid steadily worsened. Wise remained ever alert to expose Reid's evasion and delaying strategy, and although this was apparent to many others, it was now difficult for him to get any expression of opinion in the Assembly for, as he remarked to Parkes, the government was not likely to give a motion of his any precedence. Reid, in his turn, found attack the best

(from 393) Mitchell Library. To fellow members such a comparison might sound offensively patronizing but the element of truth in the remark was incontestable.
2. 20.2.1895, ibid., vol. v, p. 165. See this and an earlier letter (over)
defence, and made good capital out of the Parkes association: "The marvel concerning Mr. Wise", he told a North Sydney audience: "was that he was to be an implicit follower of that political comet, Sir Henry Parkes, in all his political gyrations. It is notable that the prejudice which had always surrounded Wise's social background and education now began to appear in the criticism of those who claimed that they could not understand his position. "What's the matter with Wise?" asked one correspondent to the "Bulletin": "Is it his upbringing, his English education or his social connections that gets in the way of his democracy?" and Hughes of the Labour Party, even when re-stating the very criticisms which Wise had made of the government could not resist a characteristic class ancer, remarking that Wise, born an aristocrat and posing as a democrat, was "by inclination what is termed a hermaphrodite".

The clearest illustration of the problem of acceptance Wise now faced was when he introduced an amendment to the Assessment Bill while it was in Committee. He opposed the tax exemption clauses, firstly, on the ground that the Council would not accept them before it knew the actual amount of the tax, but also on the more theoretical ground that the tax should apply fully and equally on all property, exempting only those moneys paid or contracted to be paid to the state. His amendment was designed to do away with the exemption and define the "unimproved value", so as to provide a clear basis on which assessment could be made. Speaking to the amendment he expounded again the theory of the state-earned increment and advocated the principle that the levy should fall on the additional value the land had gained from "the silent growth of the accumulated energies of all". This exposition was one of his best speeches in the House. He argued the principles both from the theoretical angle of economic justice, quoting Mill and an array of other political economists, and from the practical viewpoint of (from 394) (15.1.1894) for Wise's appreciation of Reid's tactics of stalling with the taxation legislation, and of his dealings with the Legislative Council.

3. ibid., p. 4428.
reaching by a land tax all the urban land speculators. It was an important amendment, as it was getting at the very basis and meaning of the tax on the "unearned increment" which had figured so prominently in all discussions of land-value taxation, and attempted to bring down to a practical level discussion of just how such a tax could be framed in legislation. The contentious aspect of his amendment was his advocacy of the "betterment principle". In law, he argued, the increment of value has strictly been earned by the state and should go to the state. But were the state to assert its full rights, after allowing them to remain dormant for so long, and confiscate the whole unearned increment right off, it would cause a sudden and disastrous disturbance of the whole industrial fabric. Hence to begin with only a portion of the increment should be taxed, and this should be established by exempting the money already paid or contracted to be paid to the state. This would allow the original purchase price to be deducted from the assessed value of the land.

That the proposal would be strongly opposed was to be expected; there were good practical reasons why it would not satisfy many members - many large land-owners whose lands had no value increment would virtually escape the tax, and in the depression conditions, it was felt to be oppressive on small selector farmers. It can also be understood how the natural distrust of all "gospels, prophets and apostles" would produce a reaction to the theoretical argument and bring forward the general criticism of Wise as a "Yaddist". The Labour Party was, apparently, quite confused as to its attitude to this amendment - it had previously called for a tax without exemptions and the single-taxers supported this - but it finally decided to oppose the motion. The theoretical approach obviously worried some Labour members. Wise was a "theoretist living in a region entirely celestial", 1

1. Reid recalled later how the Labour Party had first decided to support the amendment and he laid the claim that he personally persuaded the party to revise its decision, as its success would have killed the land tax and the government, ibid., pp. 111-2.

"My Reminiscences"
said McDonald, and Hughes advanced the view that they were there "to cure social evils, not to fight abstract wrong". Wise, he said, was only posing.

Wise endeavoured to have the amendment discussed on a non-party basis, although it was vital to the government's bill. Reid himself acknowledged that it was moved by "a man whose sincerity in connection with this matter is unimpeachable. I receive the amendment with the greatest candour and respect". Support and opposition for Wise's amendment came from both the government and opposition side, but the interesting division was among the Free Trade and Land Reform League members from whom Wise might have expected full support, since the "betterment tax" had received the attention of the League. Wise had delivered at least two public addresses on the principle, and had published an article in "Cosmos Magazine".

James Ashton had supported the idea in lectures in Albury, and William Harding, the secretary of the League, had set out the principle in an article in the "Single Tax". From Ashton, Milner and Beverley he received outright support, but Haynes said he had never heard of the principle, and Whidden asserted that no meeting of the League had been called to discuss it, and whilst he felt Wise's speech the "best I have ever heard on land taxation", he would not vote for the amendment. Storey acknowledged Wise's sincerity but did not agree with him, while Wilks, the vice-president, though willing to argue against him, said he would not be "hypnotised by Wise and would not support his principle. The single-taxers were also

2. Ibid., p. 4239-40.
3. Ibid., p. 4120. Reid revealed later that Wise had given him personal notice of his amendment beforehand, "My Reminiscences", p. 113.
6. Wise had advocated this principle during the election. See his "Manifesto", S.M.H., 3.7.1894.
9. Ibid., p. 4244.
divided. Hellis and Affleck joined in the vote against the exemption, but Frank Cotton felt the amendment was diluting the whole idea of the land tax. Of Wise he said: "Personally I do not believe he willfully tries to delude by sophistry, but rather I think he is hampered and biased in his judgment unconsciously by social environment and conventional habits of thought." But distrust of Wise had entered the consciousness of some men, and so strong was the party spirit that personal criticism reappeared, his motives were claimed to be obstructionist, and he was accused again of "underground engineering". Haynes, although an advocate of land-value taxation, presented the unusual view that as Wise had exhibited such a shifty attitude to the party, "I venture to say now no one considers him an authority on the subject". To Haynes, Wise was now untrustworthy and dangerous.

Once again Wise refused to take any note of personal aspersions, nor was he distracted by the political argument; but with singleness of purpose declared an unwavering adherence to his own ideas and philosophy. This marked disdain for the party squabble, the detached argument, and the aloofness of his address set Wise apart from many of his contemporaries in the Assembly, and when to this was added his cultivated style and manner, the impression of superiority so strongly felt by some of his opponents can be better appreciated. His concluding words in this debate, reproduced at the beginning of the chapter, are characteristic of Wise as a parliamentarian. The amendment was defeated 53/34.

This debate marked a further step in Reid's mastery of the situation; for the Free-trade and Land Reform League had splintered. Now virtually leaderless and in disagreement on principle, its strength and unity were broken and its members soon became absorbed into the general party ranks. The Assessment Bill when it finally went on to the Council on March 20th, four months after its introduction in the Assembly, had written into it quite large exemptions, and Reid

could well calculate now on its rejection. With the Bill in Council, it only remained for him to introduce the long-awaited taxes into his next financial statement, and with his promises redeemed, and his party ranks strengthened, he was ready for the constitutional issues.

These tactics were so patent to Wise that he could not believe they would continue to meet with success, and when Reid's second financial statement finally came forward (May 9) with the taxes duly announced, he again felt impelled to expose the fencing strategy and deception, and to point out the dismal prospects for free trade. The Premier's speech added its own bitter rub with its unblushing cant and self-laudation. After a lengthy preface in which he reviewed the colony's fiscal policy and emphasised how the genuine democratic legislation had been blocked by the Legislative Council in which resided the friends of the moneyed class, Reid announced that he now came forward to bring about a great change in the financial policy of the country:

"I stand here to-night as the head of an administration which is prepared for the first time in the history of the colony to stake its political existence upon the carrying out of that policy. . . to bring in the legislation to which the party is pledged and to which I am dedicated. . . We propose to take the burden off the wrong shoulders and put it on the strong shoulders. . ." 2

Reid obviously expected a reaction from Wise, and when it came in the form of an interjection that the expected tariff reforms still weren't coming, he delivered an immediate shot regarding Wise's loyalty to the party:

"May I remind the honourable member for Flinders that it is much easier to sit below the gangway than to fight for these reforms." 3

The issue was joined when Wise in his turn accused Reid of betraying the greatest trust that was ever put in the hands of a party leader and with

1. The exemptions finally decided on were: land £475 and income £300.
2. ibid., p. 6015.
3. ibid., p. 6022.
"having destroyed that great combination of liberal forces, which if it had been kept together would have established a parliamentary record which would have held it up for admiration... I cannot acquit the Ministry and all those who support them for the loss which we must all deplore." 1

But the facts were somewhat different. The liberal forces had not so much been destroyed by Reid; they had joined him, and Wise’s own position now was very much weaker. Reid was proposing, for a beginning, to do away with specific duties, worth £500,000 and others were to be tapered off over a number of years. The revenue was to be replaced with a land tax of 1d in the pound, and an income tax of 6d in the pound (exemptions already passed). Even if this was only half a loaf, and offered on time payment, it was more than any other government had ever proposed, and it was soon clear that free-traders would accept it. The pragmatic viewpoint was put by Hollis:

"Is it a time to find fault with the Ministry for doing what they ought to have done at first; even though late in doing it?"

When the debate adjourned for the week’s consideration of the statement, it was fairly clear that Wise had isolated himself still further from moderate opinion.

If we were to rely only on the printed word, our interpretation here might be relatively simple - the idealist refusing to compromise his principles and accept expedient leadership, drifting out into the no-man’s-land of party politics. But politics is the work of men, and in all these situations the human element enters to give another dimension to the action which cannot be found in the formal evidence. The historian is often left merely to guess at the thoughts, feelings and psychological pressures behind the decisions of a man in a crisis - some believe it impossible to determine and hence don’t admit such human factors into historical judgment. But how can this be when history is made perhaps on one man’s vital decision? Fortunately, in our case we are given the opportunity of looking behind the Hansard copy into the personal life of a man wrestling with conflicting loyalties and his own moral conscience. The problem for Wise was not just a

1. ibid., p. 6031.
question of party or principle; there was also the strong pull of personal loyalty for at the very time Reid was redeeming some of his promises, Wise knew that Parkes was gathering a dissident force, under the banner of federation, to try to overthrow him and form a new government. The genesis of the Parkes "plot" was probably born soon after his failure to regain leadership of the party immediately after the election. There is evidence that he was working upon men of his own party at the time of Reid's first financial statement, for there is a letter from the conservative J.C. Ellis, advising him that "any attempt to unseat the government at the present moment could prove disastrous". Ellis had clearly sounded out others, following Wise's first attack on Reid's policy, for he mentions that the party behind Wise did not intend to follow his lead. A letter to Wise in December indicates that Parkes was looking to McMillan as a possible leader of another free trade ministry. Wise's reaction was that he could not join such a ministry, and he pointed out the serious differences in outlook existing between himself and McMillan. However, he declared his willingness to support such a government if it included Parkes "in preference to the present weak and insincere professors of liberal principles".

Nothing came of this, for it was really quite evident after his federation resolution that Parkes would not win back the Free Trade Party on the federation issue. His only hope lay in an alliance with federalists in the opposition. Though there were many ardent federalists among the Protectionists, the continued success of Reid and the abject failure of Dibbs' cause made it clear that if any effective move was to be made against the government, Parkes was the only man to do it. Lyne dates the beginning of the coalition to February, but we can chart

2. As early as 1893 Parkes was in contact with P.H. Morton, regarding the formation of an Australian National party, 4.8.1893, Papers of P.H. Morton, p. 3.
3. 10.11.1894, P. Co., Vol. de o.
4. 4.12.1894, ibid., Vol. 42, p. 266. It is not clear how far McMillan had gone with this suggestion as it would appear that his plans to go overseas early in 1895 may have already been made. However, it is unlikely that Parkes could discuss such a move without his approval.
5. Ibid.
an earlier course in Parkes' correspondence with Thomas Ewing. Ewing, an able and sincere federalist, had long been in close personal terms with Parkes, and he now became the "honest broker". The party lines were crossed as early as September when Ewing was in contact with the Free-trader, P.H.Morton, regarding Parkes' proposals for a new national party, and the origins of his federal party can be found in these letters: "There must be a new platform, a new start and a new name". Lyne records the anxiety of many Protectionists to press Parkes forward, and undoubtedly he was also under pressures from influential men outside the Assembly to restore the national issue to its foremost place.

But how to bring Dibbs into a working partnership was the greatest problem. Apart from the sheer audacity of such an alliance, a bitter personal relationship had to be overcome, for theirs had been a long-standing feud, and relations had reached the point where civil courtesies had long been abandoned. On the practical side, there was the question of rival leadership. A candidate could scarcely be envisaged. Dibbs was naturally reluctant to become Parkes' lieutenant, but Parkes knew that it was he who must run the gauntlet of public opinion, and posed the question whether it was his fate to once more jump into the gulf after he had been so recently deserted and thrust aside: "Am I the man to be called upon to kill the rattlesnake?" was his own view of the task.

The movement, however, gained impetus, and after a meeting of the Opposition, at which support for Parkes was agreed upon, the pressure on Dibbs became stronger. Lyne says some Protectionists were talking of going over in a body to

2. See letter which Ewing forwarded to Morton with a note: "Keep these out of sight till they become history." Papers of P.H.Morton, pp. 55-62. Despite the imputations about Parkes' motives to regain the premiership, and overthrow Reid, it must be stated that in this correspondence leading up to the move, the ideal of federation is always to the fore.
4. C.R.Lyne, op. cit., p. 559
5. Ibid.
Parkes. By the time of Reid's financial statement the position was becoming urgent as Reid was consolidating. Parkes as a private member could not move a censure motion without the support of the leader of the Opposition, but once it was moved he would have to take over leadership of the Opposition elements. But Dibbs could not keep his party now unless he went with it. As the budget debate approached overtures were made to both men to "bury the hatchet", and in the interval following Reid's statement "deliberations and consultations went on over a number of days and the rapprochement was affected. Rumour and speculation were rife. The "Herald" affected to be scandalized and declared any such coalition or alliance of Parkes with Protection to be "an act of flagrant political immorality - an insult to the country", while the "Bulletin" had been inviting its readers to find the head of the "Protection Party" with a choice of Parkes, Dibbs, or Wise. Federation, it declared, was merely the whitewash for the "black flag of political buccaneering".

It was in this atmosphere and against this background that Wise had to determine his position, for by May 12 he knew that an offer from Dibbs (to Parkes) had been received. To understand his actions during the next few days, one must try and appreciate the mental perplexity and emotional stress to which he was subjected, for all the conflicting strands of his political life were now gathered together and entangled in his mind. He was faced with four clear yet competing considerations: there was the demand of party loyalty which, despite his criticism, still bound him - and he also lay under an obligation to advance the objectives of his own Association; there was his loyalty to his own constituents and supporters.

1. ibid., p. 541.
2. 13.5.1895.
3. 7.4.1895.
4. Who made the first formal approach is not certain. Dibbs sent a formal reply to Parkes dated 21.5.1895 agreeing to submerge all personal animosities, to defer all questions of policy or leadership until after Reid's downfall, and to work together "in order that the interests of the country would be best served". P.C., Vol. d-e, pp. 338-9. By this date, however, the censure on Reid had been launched and it is certain that Parkes acted on the knowledge of Dibbs' support.
who had elected him on his pledges to support a liberal free trade policy; there
was his strong belief in the ideal of national unity and a genuine desire to
advance federation; and finally there was his loyalty to Parkes, the man in whom
he believed, who had been his guide, friend and patron throughout his political
life and for whose leadership he had fought. Now Parkes was making perhaps the
last great throw of his life, and Wise believed absolutely in his sincerity. To
add to these loyalty problems, there was the conviction that Reid had betrayed him,
and his belief that the ill-fated programme could not be enacted in the near future.
Finally there was the moral problem as to whether he could in clear conscience join
in such an ignoble political combination.

While these warring influences were exercising his judgment, there was
also the emotional strain involved in contemplating the bitter personal conflict
into which he must inevitably be drawn. Detraction and abuse would fall upon him
no matter what decision he made. This he knew and had to face, but no matter how
disdainful of press and personal criticism he may have appeared, the cumulative
effects on continued thrusts at his own honour and political integrity, as well as
the taunts about his social background, must have added greatly to the tension he
now felt. We knew of his sensitivity and something of the insecurity he felt,
suspended between his own class, by many of whom he was rejected, and "masses"
whose trust he could not win. The political loneliness of the man at this point,
and his special relationship with Parkes - his political father - must be appreci-
ated in order to understand the working of his mind during this crisis. Though
there is a high level of rationality in his letters, the psychological pressures
and emotional conflict show through, and his judgment is clearly affected.

On May 12, at the height of the press speculation, Wise wrote a long
letter to Parkes offering his views on the situation. Parkes had already shown
him the draft of his proposed resolution, but the import of Wise's letter was
caution; and advice to delay. His opening words, however, reveal his inner struggle:

"My dear Sir Henry,

'Reflection sickness o'er the hue of resolution in ever despairing shades.' I will see you tomorrow, but meantime I write to urge again the very strong (as it seems to me) reasons for delaying to move any hostile motion until the Upper House has thrown out the Land and Income Tax Assessment Bill. At present neither electors nor members understand the situation, but are captivated by a profusion of promises. Nothing but time and the opportunity for criticism which time alone can give - can show the Budget in its true colours. Every night of debate on the Financial Statement must make the imposture more evident."

He then goes on to argue the tactical advantages of a confidence motion timed to coincide with the rejection of the Assessment Bill by the Council (about three weeks, he estimates). He argues that it would prevent the Ministry from escaping their just deserts in the tumult of a dissolution as the Governor could not grant a dissolution while a hostile motion was before the House; it would have additional force as the "treachery" of the Ministry would then be plain to all to see; much suspicion would be evaporated, and the alarmists who were getting up a new Parkes scare would be disarmed:

"The more I consider the matter the less do I think the chances of success at present, and the more certain of it am I in the immediate future... I hope you will forgive this plain speaking."

Yours very sincerely,"

The above was written in the evening at his home, Glenora. Next morning he wrote another long letter from his Chambers in Macquarie Street. Evidently he was in receipt of letters from friends, and there was a fresh press agitation in the morning papers in which it was suggested a Parkes move was imminent. The "Herald" hoped no such scandal would be brought to a close and declared that if it were done in the name of federation it would be palpably a pretence, for "no honest politician could betray his cherished principles at the moment when they are, by force of circumstances, being put to the test". Parkes, however, was not to be overawed.

2. 13.5.1895.
by a newspaper which had so often employed its own palpable pretence in supporting
his policies. He declared it "a base insinuation" to suggest he was joining the
Protectionists. He took his stand "on the broad platform of anew national policy
under the name and the banner of the Progressive Federalists and he would accept
support from any quarter."

The second letter from Wise supplemented that of the previous evening in
argument, but the complexities of the situation and his own personal dilemma are
shown to be worrying him greatly and the disturbed state of his mind is more evid-
ent. He again counsels delay until the position is better understood "as men's
vision is at present obscured by ignorance and prejudice."

"Few see the facts as they are. . . time is needed for your words to bear fruit. . . .and misrepres-
sentation to be cleared away."

Three advantages of delay are urged - calming
the public mind, "consolidating your forces", and exposing Ministerial trickery.
This is clear thinking, but when it comes to his own position it is apparent that
the evening's reflection has shown him no clear path through his sea of troubles.
He compares his position with that of Parkes:

"You of course stand in a peculiar position of advantage because the situation
is coming round to you and events are proving your forecasts right. I, on
the other hand, with many others refused a year ago to postpone internal
fiscal reform even for federation, and we cannot whilst there remains any
possibility of the Upper House passing the measure, which for social as well
as fiscal reason we put first on our programme, incur the charge of deserting
our principles, even though we may be individually convinced that the real
traitors are those who by their procrastination and incompetence have
manoeuvred to escape from the fulfilment of their promises. . .

I cannot tell you how grievously I feel the irklessness of the situation.
I have pondered long and anxiously since seeing you upon the course I ought to
take. I do not think I am influenced by the press agitation - indeed my
letter of last night will show that my judgment was formed independently; but
I cannot altogether ignore the urgent representations which I have received
this morning by letter, and personally from my most clear-sighted friends in
my constituency, and when I find them, in some instance themselves misled, in
others hopeless of removing the misunderstandings of those about them, I am
forced to reconsider any determination which will destroy the confidence I
value so highly. If my judgement thoroughly supported the course, which
rendered such a determination necessary, I would not hesitate to act upon it at any risk. But in fact my judgement does not approve of its expediency, except in so far as it is swayed by your wider experience and influence."

But whilst loyalty to his own principles and promises is here declared to be paramount, it is also clear that he views his allegiance to Parkes as something of a sacred trust to be abandoned last, as revealed by his concluding words:

"I may say that if you do move any resolution I should feel unable to vote against you — I would resign my seat in Parliament.

Yours very sincerely, B.R.W.

P.S. I will be with you this evening about 5.30."

Despite Wise's difficulty in charting his own course, the weight of his arguments in these two letters against precipitate action by Parkes is very strong and quite convincing. Yet, at 12.30 p.m. he writes a third letter. This is quite an astounding episode for he now reverses completely his considered opinion and advises Parkes to act immediately:

"My Dear Sir Henry,

You will, I fear, think me very changeable, but in truth the writing of my letter to you this morning clarified my ideas. (You will probably not have received that letter.) I was bewildered by the unconscious consideration of two distinct objects, viz. what you ought to do and what I ought to do. My course I feel certain should be as I have written to you; but I am not so clear that you should delay your resolution. To do so would be perhaps to slight Dibbs' offer... Besides, immediate action is constitutionally right and you would at least know your friends. Finally, my acting independently of you would increase my power to aid you later when, as we anticipate, the failure of the Ministry should be palpable to all. While such a course should kill much of the silly gossip and ridiculous inventions by which the force of my criticism is turned away. I shall be with you at 5.30. At present I have not seen Millen and Ashton." 

How do we explain this letter? It can only be seen, I think, as the product of an anxiety-ridden mind. His words from "Hamlet" may well point to his own condition, with the difference, that, unlike the Dane, he suddenly determined that an enterprise of great with and moment should not lose the name of action because of the pale cast of his own thought. His rational mind had determined that action should be held back, but in these couple of hours his resolution

1. 13.5.1895, ibid., pp. 167-71.
2. 13.6.1895, ibid., p. 185.
evidently faltered, and perhaps in a moment of desperate decision he put an end to the suspense by driving matters to a decision. It seems clear from his letter that there were no intervening events to throw him off balance - it was simply a sudden mental turning to take him out of the maze. That he should write three letters within eighteen hours, having already made an appointment to see Parkes at the end of the day, would seem indication enough of his troubled state. (One wonders whether Parkes could possibly have received them beforehand - unless perhaps they were despatched by a special messenger. That they appear in the Parkes Correspondence, however, shows that they were in fact received.)

But while the reasons for his action have psychological fascination, history lies in the outcome. Two days later Parkes made his move against the Government. It is difficult to determine just what influence Wise's decision had on events. It is possible that his was the critical decision - Martin believes it to be. But I think this is attributing too much to Wise's influence. There were other councillors, and Parkes, ever his own master, would make his own final decision. He was after all in receipt of all three letters. The blank spots in the story cover the meetings and private conference about which we know nothing, but the interesting point is whether Parkes' decision, which was to affect so vitally the lives of all the leading actors, would have been the same had Wise's earlier arguments had been overruled.

There were strong pressures on Parkes to act. It must be acknowledged that he felt a real sense of urgency about federation, and he was also gripped with the fear that his hands were running out rapidly. The impatience of Protectionists, anxious "to pluck the fruit before it was ripe", may have applied additional pressure and there were many misleading predictions which may have given him a false feeling of success. Wise in his moments of calm deliberation saw the

2. The "Herald" actually reported at one stage the opinion that only from (over)
vortex into which all might be swept by such an ill-timed stroke, but whether in
the last analysis he was powerless to prevent it, or an active agent in its pro-
motion, is an unanswered question. At all events, on May 15 the die was cast:

"The Rubicon is crossed, and the general who once marched to victory as chief
of the Free-traders comes back to the Capitol as the accepted leader of the
party of Protection." 1

Political coalition in Australian history are seldom regarded as holy;
unholy is the term more generally reserved for them. But of all alliances, this
coming together of the two old fiscal leaders who had fought one another in and out
of the Assembly for twenty years was acknowledged to be the unhappiest of them all.
The resolution of censure which Parkes moved on the Reid government and the venomous
speech which supported it let loose a political avalanche, which, when the dust
finally cleared away after days and days of upheaval, left buried, not the future
career of G.H. Reid, but the last hopes and ambitions of Parkes himself. The
career of Hibbs was buried with him, and the reputation of Wise so blackened that
the stain remained upon him for the remainder of his career and blighted all his
subsequent achievements.

There was a strong case to be made against Reid for legislative failure.
Apart from his tariff failure, his Land Bill was the only important measure to have
gone through both Houses, and Local Government Bill, for which he had made such
great claims, he abandoned in the Assembly when the Committee refused to withdraw
a Labour amendment to abolish the plural vote of property owners. Reid would not
accept the amendment and the Bill came to a sudden end. But the censure debate
was to be on other grounds and the tone was set by the speeches of the two princip-
als. Parkes' speech was not conclusive to any proper consideration of the issues
at stake. Beside some of his impressive speeches it was a relatively poor effort

(from 408) Labour votes were necessary to ensure Parkes' success, 15.5.1895.
1. S.H.H, 16.5.1894a5
"Political Twilight."

"Betsy and I are out": or, "Hurry in haste and repent at leisure."

"Bulletin", 22/6/1895.
rejection. The elements of his political character were all revealed. He attempted the elevated statesman’s pose on federation, but he had nothing new to say and he made a poor show of it to justify his alliance with his fiscal opponents. Ironsich cheers greeted his claim that he still stood there “as true a free-trader as ever breathed the breath of heaven”, and his appeal to get above the fiscal issue was only leading more charge into his opponents’ guns. There was pathos in his last appeal to friends and supporters, but the touch of egotism which sustained his belief in himself was also there. He said he could ignore the press and his enemies, for now

“he stood there as a man with the winters of eighty years on his head – more than half of which were given to his country. He knew that there were thousands upon thousands of men for whom his name was a living principle and whose support he had.”

The total effect of the speech was probably summed up by George Black when he said that Parkes had indeed influenced members of the House who were wavering, but influenced them the wrong way.

Reid now had the very situation in which he revelled – his only difficulty was to know just where to begin. Parkes had thrown the debate on to his own ground and Reid, affecting a patronising air, began by excusing him for the weakness of declining years. But scant respect was to be shown for his age and venerability, and as Reid warmed to the task he added blow upon blow – Parkes and his anti-protection speeches, his free-trade policies and performance, his leadership “sour grapes”, the brilliant support from the Honourable Member for Flinders, “Gladstone Parkes”, Parkes the plotter, Parkes the old tom-cat. He spoke of the sudden reconciliation of old enemies – “how their mighty backbones were twisted together in this mad scramble for office”. And finally the deepest thrust of all – how Parkes had now dragged federation into the mire of party politics as a means of destroying the liberal cause in New South Wales. At this level Reid was destructive; thereafter his advantage was great and he used it to the best of his

1. [<i>The Age</i>, report 16.5.1895.
2. <i>Newspaper Division</i> Vol. LXXVII, pp. 613 et seq.
abilities, which were perfectly suited to this type of context.

Following such an overture, the future course of the debate was completely predictable. It became a Roman holiday, and all-in context in which the rapier thrusts of satire, wit and irony were abandoned and the lethal work was done by insult and sarcasm with the cynics reveling in the opportunity of resurrecting the abuse which the two reconciled old warriors had heaped upon each other in former contests. The allusions became extravagant as the "beargarden" scholars, seeking an original parallel, turned to the pages of history, mythology, and scripture, to describe the union of the two fiscal princes. Wise was enveloped in it all and now found himself in the very centre of the arena of party warfare. He was cast in the role of Cassius of the party, the traitor and political fox. He was one of the principals (which is not certain) in the alliance Griffith described as that of 1 Martin Luther with the devil and Shakespeare. When O'Reilly, with a touch of scholarship, invoked Pitt's words and asked the House "to forbid the bands of this ill-conceived and unnatural marriage", he accused Wise of joining with Parkes and Dibbs in driving out a man with whom he cannot be said to have differed on any important question. Perhaps it was Alf Edden, the Labour man and Methodist lay preacher, who delivered the coup de grace, by calling in St. Luke:

> "And the same day Pilate and Herod were made friends together; for before that they were at enmity between themselves."

To a question "What about Judas?", he went on to make the accusation that Shore was a Judas in the affair and that was Wise.

Despite the bitter personal exchanges, it became clear as the debate proceeded that the ranks of Reid's party were standing firm and that Labour was supporting him. Reid did not escape criticism from some of his own supporters, but the one question above all others which was posed by many speakers and which made the outcome certain was: what possible future lay in the opposing coalition?

1. ibid., p. 6257.
2. ibid., p. 6257.
3. ibid., p. 6374.
It was obvious from the speeches of many Protectionists that federation was just a
pam - Parkes was forced to complain of Bsc's speech landing protection: "You are
supporting me very badly", and Black got to the very nub of Wise's problem when he
asked him the unanswerable question: if there was no hope of getting his programme
of progressive legislation from Reid, what hope of getting it at the hands of men
who do not believe in it? In fact some members of his own Association now took
up the point underlined so strongly by Carruthers that Wise had actively hindered
the government: "He has endeavoured with all his power, despite his specious
reasoning, to stop us from action and confine us to words." Wilks expressed the
great disappointment of those who saw Wise as the natural head of the advanced
guard, but said he had now played into the hands of the Opposition and had barrassed the government.

Wise's own speech did not come till five days after the censure had been
delivered. He faced the crisis of his career as he stood in the small crowded
Chamber, denounced by his own party, spurned by the Labour Party, and embarrassed
by the sham support of the Opposition. Close by were the two men whose individual fortunes had become so interwoven with his own - the one to whom he was bound by the strongest ties of personal loyalty; the other for whom he entertained the strongest distrust. He had decided in advance what his course should be: he would not cast a vote. In another letter to Parkes before his speech he once more affirmed that he could not vote "for any resolution which may prevent the passage
of the land tax through the Upper House". But he also promised Parkes assistance
by setting out a full record of the facts and performance of the government, and

1. ibid., p. 6224.
2. ibid., p. 6306.
3. ibid., p. 6240.
4. Wise's speech was awaited with great interest, as revealed by the "Herald's" account that as soon as the personal interest of the conflict between Mr. Wise and the Premier evaporated, the House thinned, 22.5.1895.
said that he would not make his own course known except to one or two close personal friends. However, he was clearly worried by the prospect of having to try and explain such a difficult position and spoke of the irksome task of searching through the "mud-heap of Hansard" in the library: "Set speeches are, however, very troublesome to me and I heartily echo your kind words for a safe delivery." With a satirical gesture, perhaps to relieve his own tension, he added a postscript: "You must dine with me afterwards, and to check the D.T., I must ask Dibell!"

He began his speech by an admission of his extreme discomfort: "I have never addressed myself to any resolution with greater difficulty", but he did what he said he would. In a long speech he presented a strong indictment of the Reid Ministry and exposed the tactics of the Premier in manipulating the liberal programme and antagonizing the Upper House, and he predicted a fatal outcome to the taxation legislation. which he said was being purposely sent on to the Council at the "fag-end" of the session "amidst much talk of inevitable conflict". Had the speech been delivered in a different atmosphere, or following the more detailed analysis of the budget, which was soon to be shown as both faulty and misleading, or had it been timed as he had first suggested to coincide with the breakdown of the tax legislation, its impact must have been very damaging. But in these circumstances, ulterior motivation was ascribed to all he said. He reviewed his own history in relation to the liberal principles involved, but again refused, despite interjections and a jibe from Reid that he "was in another man's pocket", to engage in personal exchanges. Undoubtedly he was under strong emotional stress, and the perversity of the situation in which he was defending principles to which he had remained steadfast all his political life, and yet was now numbered among those who

1. 15.5.1895, P.C. Vol. w'y, p. 167.
2. 20.5.1895, ibid., p. 172.
4. ibid., p. 6186.
opposed them most strongly, must have been galling in the extreme. But apart from a few of his closest associates such as Ashton, Millicent, and Martin, whose confidence he still retained, his party was in no mood to offer sympathy, and in the prevailing mood of bitterness Wise was condemned as the renegade. Law, the very last free trade speaker in the long debate, summed up a general opinion by declaring Wise the desecrator who had put himself first and principles second.

But Wise sought no sympathy. Throughout his life, going back to his school days at Rugby, he had long been conditioned to stand apart from popular opinion and to defy the majority viewpoint, and this was never more revealed than in this speech. Deakin may have pointed to a serious weakness when he said Wise was too self-respecting to stoop to a crowd when he thought them in the wrong; but there was also moral courage and real intellectual honesty in his refusal not to compromise in the face of certain ostracism. The political character of the man, his strength and his weakness as an Australian politician, here stand revealed, and in the concluding passages of his speech we can find drawn together all those strands of his political career with which we have been concerned in this study. He summed up by saying that he was pretty well aware of the secret of the present opposition and criticism of himself, and why it was that the Prime Minister and those behind him were so bitter. It was not his views on the land tax but because he had ventured to stand alone and criticize them and because he did not choose "to join that yelping pack of curs which bark about a great man's heels."

"It is because I have chosen to have some regard for the services of men who have made this country what it is, because I have refused to join the torrent of personal abuse levelled at an individual of whom, since he is present, I will say nothing; because I have chosen to urge as strongly as I could the claims of the people as expressed at the election - and these claims I am not urging now for the first time - it is because I have done this that I have been vilified, misrepresented, and maliciously abused, both directly and by means I do not wish to describe. I cannot of course expect the sympathy of the Prime Minister. The bitterest enemy of that gentleman would not accuse him of having any solid ground of principle or of strong political conviction."

1. ibid., p. 6433.
If ever there was a man in the political history of this country who answered to the description of Neighbour 'Pliable, in 'The Pilgrim's Progress', that man is George Houston Reid. But although I do not choose to waiver with him, I none the less claim to be consistent in my support of principle. The land tax is the pivot of the honourable gentlemen's whole scheme, and I claim that he has played with land-value taxation, as to make it impossible to obtain a land-tax before the end of the year . . .

I do not mind if in this crisis, I incur the charge of being an impractical fanatic. I will face that because I believe that in the long run that man will do the best for the country and will command the greatest popular support, who moves steadily upon a clear consistent line of policy without deviating to the right or left, or permitting himself to be dimmed either by press criticism or by the passing gusts of popular caprice . . .

I do not know what the result of this vote may be . . . but whatever the result, let me tell the Prime Minister and hon. members on both sides of this House that this question of land-value taxation had gone beyond the control of any particular party. It has sunk deeply into the intelligence and conscience of the people, and there are hundreds and thousands of thoughtful men, of every rank in every part of this country, who to-day look to this measure as a remedy for the greatest of the social evils under which the country suffers. I also indulge that hope, and whatever may be the combination of party here, however the majority may be prepared to overlook evasion of pledges and neglect of duty, I, although I stand alone, will be faithful to the obligations I undertook when I came here to place this question far above all others, and yet not unfaithful either to the mighty movement in favour of Australian unity.

This was to be Wise's last speech to the Free Trade Party. When the vote was taken it showed a majority of thirty-three for the Government, as only two free-traders supported Parkes, and the Labour Party stood firm for Reid. The debate had two important results. It was to prove the fatal news which the careers of Parkes and Dibbs both foundered, and it was to leave Wise henceforth to sail a lonely course in New South Wales politics, cut adrift from the party with which he had been associated since he first entered parliament and in whose principles his political faith was founded. In the other result lay the mockery of History, for this debate represented that conjunction of event and circumstance which finally bound the Free Trade Party together after years of loose and uncertain

1. Ibid. p. 6187. Martin interprets this speech as revealing Wise "hesitant and apologetic about his desertion of his party", "A", p. 154. Allowing for Wise's own admission of his difficulty, I view the speech in completely opposite terms.
2. The two free-traders were Ellis and Martin.
allegiance. The very problem which had preoccupied Wise in his efforts to provide a truly liberal policy for the party was now overcome at the very moment of his leaving it, for the Parkes-Dibbs alliance was to be the last desperate act in the old disintegrating system of faction politics. Out of this "phantasmagoria of dissolving parties and conflicting policies" emerged a cohesive Free Trade Party, united, if only by a process of defence and elimination. That this should be the inheritance of George Reid was for Wise the unhappy epilogue of eight years of fighting for the liberal free trade cause.

Following the failure of the Parkes censure, events moved rapidly to the end Wise had predicted. The Assembly returned to the financial statement, but it was an anti-climax: the real struggle was over and the future of the budget was overhung by the fate of the Assessment Bill in the Council. Reid quickly moved to introduce his major taxing and customs duty bills into the Assembly, and the Income Tax Bill was in its second reading stage when on June 22, Reid received the expected information that the Council by a majority of 41/4 had rejected the Bill which was the "pivot of the whole legislative programme". The last obstacle had now fallen into place and Reid was ready to tackle the constitutional question and go to the country. Accordingly, just as soon as the last of his three measures, the Income Tax Bill, had gone through the Assembly, Reid advised the Lieutenant-Governor to dissolve the Parliament, as "the Government felt it could not accept such a humiliating and unconstitutional position". Thus, after one session of less than twelve months, Reid was presenting himself again to the electorate as the Prime Minister of a great Liberal Party who was prevented from carrying out the will of the people by the vested interests of the conservative Council. The great issues now were constitutional reform - to reduce the power and status of the Council - and a true liberal policy, represented by a united Free Trade Party ranged

against those enemies who had tried to prevent the taxation burden being placed on
the right shoulders. The recipe was simple and all-powerful—the Council versus
the people and the rich against the poor. And the redeemer—the man to save the
country once again—was G.H. Reid.

In these last five weeks of the Parliament, Wise had come to appreciate
just what price he had to pay for political independence. He now stood at bay
before some of the strongest attacks he was ever to experience on his public and
private character. He could expect his enemies to assail, but some of the bitter-
est criticism came from erstwhile supporters and admirers. The free trade press,
clinging to the party, threw him overboard, and the radical press now turned upon
him as the traitor to the "party of reform". The "Australian Workman" said it was
now able to appraise Wise's true position—it was that of the "tik-tok" of the party.

"He is merely an impotent sneer on the face of politics."

In the Assembly, the campaign to blacken Wise was led by Reid for, as
the "Bulletin" observed, it had become a political necessity for Reid to repudiate
Wise and manoeuvre him out of his parliamentary seat.

"A man who saw as clearly as Wise did the whole game of humbug being played by Reid, and who did not
hesitate to depict it in naked terms was too dangerous... In the midst of
the Reid crowd Wise was a missing shell."

Wise, now virtually in the
position of an independent critic, remained on to fulfil his role of watchdog, and
pressed Reid to a close examination of the budget. Reid, who had been so much at
home in the high and wide debate on policy and performance, proved to be very un-
comfortable when pin-pointed on close legal and financial detail—and the budget
was wide open to criticism, as £500,000 was unaccounted for in the statement.

1. 6.1895.
2. 24.8.1895.
3. The facts of Wise's charges of budget manipulation are revealed by P.H. Morton,
who was very concerned at this charge and pressed Reid privately for an explanation.
Reid's answer was that it was necessary to cook the budget in this way so as to
make it acceptable to the Council. Morton subsequently set these facts out in
a letter to (over)
The embittered relations between the two men now became deeply set. Wise was relentless in quest of detail and Reid became splanetic. Reverting to his best hustings style, he called Wise "a black snake" and "a slippery oel", and spoke of "the sickening sensation" he experienced at the sight of Wise's "friendly gizzard."

Reid: "I would much rather have a black snake crawling over me. You can deal with a snake according to his kind."

Wise: 'You will find that I am very difficult to deal with.'

Reid: 'Everyone finds that...

Wise: 'I will stay here and keep your nose to the grindstone and make you pass a land tax.'

Reid: '. . . I begin to think that the hon. member ought after all, to have that ring through his nose."

This kind of performance from Reid revealed, in fact, his vulnerability and underlined the extent to which circumstances had come to his aid in shielding him from any close examination of his administration and methods. But while Wise might make Reid's position uncomfortable, his own had become rather hopeless. He voted with the Government on the tax and customs duties bills, but his ties with the party were broken, and his position was virtually that of excommunication.

As for Parkes, he had gone doggedly ahead and formed a Federal Party (June 7), the object of which was to put the fiscal question aside until it could be settled by a federal government. Though Wise retained his close links with Parkes, he declined to join the new party, explaining, in Gladstone's historic phrase, that

"while the proposals of the government hold the field, I could not, in view of my past promises, aid in turning the current of public opinion into a new channel at the present time." 2 However, in this letter he gives a very perceptive analysis of the situation, and acknowledges that federation (from 419) fell in a letter to Reid. Reid's admission is also corroborated by Asheton in a letter to Morton. (Papers of P.H.Morton, Morton to Morton, 10.7.1895 pp. 83-6; Morton to Reid, 31.7.1895, pp. 87-90.
1. MS. H.P.R., Vol. LXXVII, p. 6480.
2. 4.6.1895, Vol. wey, p. 173.
might be the only alternative:

"If, as I fear, the fine talk of the Ministry results in nothing, and it (becomes) clear that none of the measures asked for last July can be enacted in their lifetime of the present Parliament... It might be that under these circumstances Reid will endeavour to escape from his deserved punishments for broken pledges by raising a conflict with the Upper House in the hope that the issue of constitutional reform will absorb and confuse all others. This, if it happens, will then leave serious people a choice of two alternatives: either we must be prepared to enter upon a confused and protracted struggle with the Legislative Council... or we must agree to a truce upon the tariff question for eighteen months, and concentrate our energies during that period upon the highest work of Australian statesmanship which is the construction of a federal union." 1

Thus Wise resolved in his own mind the conflict between free trade and federation. When this constitutional crisis Wise predicted brought on the election, he may have felt free, in view of this last letter to Parkes, to join him in the "Federal" party. He did not do so, however, and sought re-election again in Flinders as an independent free-trader. But party-less, his task was difficult in the extreme. The Council of the Liberal Party, Reid's new electoral organization, nominated an official FreeTrade candidate to oppose him, and Labour and Protection candidates joined the contest as well as another Independent. When a conference of the FreeTrade and Land Reform Leagues resolved to heartily support the Government's proposals, his isolation was complete, and his lone allies pledging support were the Darlinghurst Harriers (Athletic Club) and the Invincible Cricket Club. Within the constituency, however, members of his own FreeTrade and Land Reform League retained their faith in him, and formed an active election committee. But in this five-cornered contest Wise had strong opposition, and he

1. Ibid., p. 174.
2. Although Wise could see so very clearly Reid's course of action, he was in error in assessing its outcome. Reid did use the Upper House issue as Wise had predicted, but it was only to be an election smoke screen. There was to be no long and protracted struggle as Wise had feared, for after the election little more was to be heard of constitutional reform, and in the new situation the Council was prepared to pass democratic legislation. Wise also failed to anticipate Reid's own shrewd appraisal of federation as a new issue in the next parliament.
3. Martin is in error here for he says that Wise "believes his old election promises joined Parkes openly and contested the election with the Federal Party", "A", p. 156.
4. Ibid., 17.7.1895.
was at a great disadvantage in that he had nothing to offer; Reid had taken over
his whole policy and Wise must perforce explain his opposition to the government.
He had published and circulated a document in the form of a "Letter to the Electors
of Flinders", which set out an elaborate defence of his actions, but it was the
detailed argument of a political barrister and Wise was now at the Bar of public
opinion. In the heightened atmosphere of the election it all sounded rather
abstruse and academic.

As it developed, the contest for Wise soon became a personal defence, and
he had to handle the charge of "traitor", and relentless interjections such as
"rail-sitter!", "you're too tricky", and "you're a fraud". He was in special
difficulty explaining what his policy would be, and had to fall back on a reiteration
of his free trade and land taxation policy and a promise to follow the same
1
independent course he had always taken. But in this election the contest in
Flinders, as in most other city constituencies, was overshadowed by the heroic
struggle taking place in King division. The drama of Reid's first premiership
continued to the very end, for Parkes decided to make the election a personal
challenge, and leaving St. Leonards he nominated in Reid's own constituency. For
Parkes, his last election had all the elements of a grand opera finale as he was
urged on by a combination of supporters, and the entreaties of a dying wife, to
bring Reid down in his own home ground. Ten years earlier, he had thus swooped
upon Dibbs in St. Leonards, and he was now to attempt such a coup again. Such a
contest naturally aroused tremendous interest, and it was waged relentlessly.
Huge crowds gathered at every meeting, many of which had to be abandoned in disor-
der; flour and eggs were liberally added to the "saturnalia of malignant abuse"
which the two free trade leaders heaped upon one another from hotel balconsies.

Reid revelled in such an imbroglio, and using all the arts of the demagogue, tore

1. ibid., 9.9.1895.
2. C. E. Lyne, op. cit., p. 551.
Parkes' public character and political record to his, — Parkes, "the prince of
darkness", "the prophet from the desert". His was "the worst, most barbarous and
neglected statute book in the country — a disgrace to a community of blacksellers".

But really, he is an awful sham!" Parkes asked for no quarter and gave none.

His was a sacred mission to defeat the Prime Minister:

"At great sacrifice to myself I place myself in your hands to defeat. . . a
man of low disposition. . . only fit to degrade our institutions. . . a feeble
beaster. . . bogus democrat. . . a man who with arrogant and abusive tongue
. . . with his arts and artifices. . . had gained the offices of the State and
brought the country to the edge of a precipice. . . If God gives me strength,
even if I die in it, I will do my best to defeat him." 2

But the odds were against the old man, and all the strength was with Reid. 3

The party was united, the Labour Party was in a compact, and Reid's policy was
triumphant over federation. The powerful free trade press was also behind him.

At the height of the campaign; Parkes' wife died, leaving him in widowhood a second
family of five young children, but asking only time to bury his "dear departed", he
returned to the contest. However, the campaign was going badly, and the portents
were showing. After a large meeting in Balmain, a resolution on the "urgency of
federation" was put to an audience of 1,000 people, but it was negatived by a large
majority and greeted by loud cheering for the Premier and free trade.

Faced inevitably became drawn into this struggle. Reid saw to that. In

1. S.M.H., 13.7.1895, 15.7.1895.
2. Ibid.
3. Reid's Council advised free-traders not to oppose Labour members and the Labour
Party caucus decided to support the government.
4. If ever the truth of Delano's dictum - that the press knows past - was evident
it was at this election, and never more so than with the "Herald". The Labour
Party, once condemned as the class party and the destroyer of democracy, was now
praised "for its straightforwardness in Parliament" (3.7.1895). For so long the
critic of the low tone of political life, the "Herald" could now produce a beauti-
ful eulogy to cover the style of Reid's campaigning - "the public should allow a
liberal discount on the Premier's oratorical amplification and the undefined exten-
sion of his mere unguarded expressions" (15.7.1895). This allowance made, his
speeches were said to be animated by the qualities of courage and straightforward-
ness which had characterized his manner of dealing with the crisis on hand. "Mr.
Reid had not sought the quarrel; it had been forced upon him". (1.7.1895). Three
years later, after a spell of Reid government, the "Herald" had again switched com-
(over)
the concentration of interest on the personal struggle, his case against the
government was neglected, and the Parkes association became the whip of his oppo-
ents. Reid naturally included Wise in the Parkes camp and lost no opportunity to
discredit him as the "traitor". By sarcasm, mockery, and outright name-calling
he kept up the campaign. Wise's education, his associations and "culture" were
made the butt of Reid's platform attacks, and he played upon his audience with
subtle omission and snide references:

"I must not forget a remark made by a singular individual, Mr. B.R. Wise (cries of 'Oh, the traitor!') that we must not allow the great question of
land taxation to be overshadowed by any other issue."

"I say that you will never get justice until you lay your hands on the founda-
tions of the Upper House (cries of 'He knows that!') Mr. Wise knew a great
many things but he is not, I'm afraid, on the square. (Cheers)"

He then declared that had he taken Wise's advice it would have ruined him:

"But do not let us forget his brilliant services in past times. I do not
believe in forgetting these things. . . . But you know that when a man is
perpetually touching you, trying to trip you up, stabbing you back or front
or anywhere else, you have no overwhelming affection for him. (Cheers).
Of course, I have nothing I desire to say about Mr. Wise. . . . for the rest he
will leave him to the electors of Flinders. My conflict is not with him;
he is best relegated to his constituents - men who are quite intelligent
enough to deal with him. (A voice: 'Oh! we will deal with him!') I will not
say a further word in reference to Mr. Wise. (Voices: 'We will!') I deeply
regret that this cultured individual should have felt it necessary to pledge
his allegiance to an old gentleman who was surely clever enough to do without
his assistance. (Cheers)"

Even stripped of all Reid's platform manner and rhetorical arts, the impact of this
kind of oratory is not hard to gauge. As propaganda it was unchallengeable, as
entertainment it was first class.

The attacks became more concentrated when Reid came to Flinders in
support of Waine, the party candidate. Against Wise's charges of betraying free
(from 421) plottely. It now condemned the tactics, the principles, and "chaotic-
omic changes" of the gentleman who allied himself with a "fanatical conservatism" in
order to delay "by every device fair and otherwise" the federation of the colon-
ies. (20.7.1895).
5. (from 421) S.M.L., 10.7.1895.
1. Ibid., 2.7.1895.
trade he simply explained how: "as a young captain on a new ship, and with a new ship's crew, he wanted to take them on a few trial trips before he went into real warfare. That kind of thing didn't suit Mr. Wise. Mr. Wise wanted to run smack into something or other and get utterly smashed up and then he would have said: 'I told you so' (Cheers). But they must know Mr. Wise was a very highly educated young man... '"

Reid's men carried on the campaign of his leader and the Labour man Buckley, joined in, but he preferred the direct "black snake" approach. Wise asked the electors to judge his character:

"Could it be that a man's previous record, his labours, his character for truthfulness and honesty, his trust repeatedly renewed, were not to serve him as a shield against malicious rumour?"

The answer to these questions was not forthcoming until election day, July 24. There were many in Flinders who evidently still believed in Wise and cast their votes for him. But to triumph over the combined efforts of opponents and press and to overcome the personal prejudice so strongly fanned by the Premier and his associates, would have called for something of a political miracle. There was no miracle. Wise was defeated. The result, though expected, was somewhat unusual, as neither Free-trade nor Labour topped the poll. It was the protectionist, Nelson, who finished ahead of Wise. Down with Wise went Parkes and Dibbs (Reid 608, Parkes 468), and the two free-traders, Ellis and Martin, who had joined in the revolt. For Reid it was a celebrated victory. His convincing win over Parkes was a personal triumph, and the return of his party with a large majority was "an endorsement of his liberal policy".

The result provided the press with material for a number of sermons. The "Bulletin" saw further proof of its aphorism that "Anarchy Doesn't Pay", and the "Herald" philosophized on the fact that prominent politicians who had lost

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1. Ibid., 3 July 1895.
2. Ibid., 9 July 1895.
3. Ibid., 9 July 1895.
4. The result was Nelson (Protectionist) 333, Wise 296, Weine (Free-trade) 275, Buckley (Labour) 118, Eden (Independent) 14.
popular favour could disappear from public life as completely as though they had been withdrawn through an trap in the floor. Of Wise it hoped that the lesson would "conduce to his better reading in the future of the duties and responsibilities of public life". Of the vanquished, Dibbs never returned; Parkes, unable to accept the verdict, made a last pathetic attempt to win a by-election in Waverley, and following a crushing defeat died soon afterwards (April, 1896). Wise was the only one to re-appear, but the reverberations of the Parkes "affair" were to echo throughout the remainder of his political life. The door of the Free Trade Party now was closed to him, and his future lay in the federal movement. The paradoxical outcome of Wise's eight years' effort to implant his free trade liberalism in the party was that when achievement came he was in exile. History has not recognized his work. It is not on his career in the party, but his reputation has been established, and his manner of leaving it, that the judgment has been made. Describing the scene at the declaration of the poll in Flinders, the "Herald" reported:

"Mr. Wise was received with cheers and grans and a well-directed flour-bag. . . He said that though there were many exciting in his defeat he was content to leave the judgment to time."  

Seventy years later, this study attempts to deliver that judgment.
Conclusion

In this thesis we have examined the political ideas of B.R. Wise and followed his fortunes as a politician in the Free Trade Party of New South Wales. In an attempt to re-assess historical judgments of Wise we have kept in view the well established tradition that he was a disappointing political failure. If the basis of this judgment is that Wise failed to occupy the highest offices of State or achieve the political leadership that his talents and opportunities would seem to have destined him, then the judgment is not disputed. Many of his contemporaries drew this conclusion, and with the man himself a strong sense of having failed remained with him after he left political life. But the historian, with the advantage of the backward view, can often apply other criteria. If it also be held that a man's achievement is a measure of the impact he made on the life and thought of his time, and his influence on the future progress and development of his society, then what might appear as failure in the close view can often be seen in perspective as achievement.

The importance of Wise in Australian political history is that he was one of the few men actively engaged in shaping the future outline of our political life whose ideas were based upon a well established political philosophy. In applying the principles of a modern dynamic concept of political liberalism to the changing social and economic conditions of a dynamic period of history, Wise emerges as a most significant political thinker. He was not "ahead of his time" - the cliché used by his more generous critics to explain his failure - but he was especially equipped by intellect and training to understand the historical forces at work in his time. His achievement was that he made others aware of them, and helped to apply through legislative action a prescription which was an advanced expression of political liberalism involving the rights and obligations of the state to act in establishing better conditions of economic equality and social justice. That
his aims and purposes were misunderstood, that he aroused animosities and provoked hostility, is nothing more than the fate of many an advanced thinker who challenges entrenched ideas and established interests. To the mechanically minded, and those clinging to old ideas he was an ultra-radical; to those engaged in protecting propertied interests and social privilege he was a dangerous man. That he should also arouse the suspicion and distrust of men with whom he shared common purposes is more difficult of explanation, but then it lies, we have suggested, in the special conditions of late nineteenth-century colonial life and society which Wise entered from the rather exclusive environment of Oxford University. A special problem facing Wise, reflecting the social history of his period, was that he could not break free of class attitudes. Without any tradition of aristocratic radicalism behind him, Wise could not win acceptance from the class in whose welfare his political efforts were dedicated.

Historians generally have failed to recognize the significance of Wise as a political thinker, and his ideas and purposes have been badly misinterpreted. Those who label him a conservative fail to understand anything of the man's ideas and politics; others have failed to recognize that Wise played any part in the political reform movement of his time. In his study of radicalism and working-class politics of this period, Robin Gollan gives Wise barely a mention, and none of his writings appears in his bibliography. Manning Clark in his recent history refers to Deakin in Victoria as the liberal whose ideas had been shaped by the reading of T.H. Green and the politics of Gladstone; in New South Wales the politician he nominates as representative of this new liberalism is G.H. Reid. A.W.Martin recognizes Wise's intellectual radicalism, but does not see the total view of his philosophy, and he remains perplexed by Wise's "peculiar position". N.B. Nairn can discern the advanced ideas of Wise, and his appreciation of the changing nature of

1. op. cit.
industrial society, but he yet remains in his view an "enlightened déclassé". One of the aims of this study, then, is to enlarge the historical view of Wise and to gain due recognition of his significance as a political thinker.

Another explanation for Wise's failure which has found ready acceptance by a number of historians, and is still being perpetuated, is found in personal factors - over-riding ambition, lack of political morality, personal insincerity and political inconsistency. A stain has been placed on the personal character and political integrity of the man. Against this interpretation we have argued strongly that history has delivered an unjust verdict. As to his selfishness and ambition, his whole career shows a complete disregard for his own personal advantage. Far from prospering from his political efforts, he lost professional opportunities and personal fortunes. Had his quest been for political power and prestige, we have shown that the opportunities came his way; had he sought such renown he would never have advocated the causes he did, or stood opposed to his party when his own best interests were at stake. He once made the remark, when speaking to a hostile audience, that he had no desire for popularity. "In fact, I think it the first duty of a public man to despise popularity." There is truth in this remark, for his whole career illustrates a certain disdain for the popular judgment. For a man who would lead public opinion, this might well be seen as weakness, but against the picture of the ambitious opportunistic politician it is the judgment here that Wise was motivated by a high ideal of political service, an ideal which derived from the earliest influences of home and school, and which drew inspiration from the idealism of Arnold Toynbee.

In what was one of the last speeches of his career in parliament, Wise can be found making the same adherence to this principle of public responsibility as characterized his politics at the time of the industrial strikes, the banking crisis.

2. E.g., L.F. Fitzhardinge, "William Morris Hughes" was published in 1964.
3. S.M.F., 25.2.1890.
and the Reid government's tax policies. Having initiated, as Acting Premier, a large movement for local government reform, Wise is withdrawing his support from Waddell, the new leader of his government, who has refused to continue the work:

"I would serve readily as a humble private in the ranks of any party which would advocate this reform. I believe these reforms to be of paramount urgency, and politics having been always the chief interest - almost the religion of my life - I feel it to be a matter of simple duty to urge their adoption."

As to Wise's political morality - the treachery and intrigue - these charges we have traced to their origin in 1894 when he first turned critic on his own party government. The events which led to the dissolution of Reid's government marked a crisis in his life, a personal as well as a political crisis, involving his loyalty to a man in whom he believed and to a party led by a man whom he now distrusted. Whether his action was morally right or wrong is for the reader to decide, but judgment can only be made with an understanding of the human problems involved, for this study of Wise's career in the Free Trade Party is a human history as well as a political chronicle. Certain historians have left a picture of Wise as an unscrupulous and immoral politician; but Wise believed strongly that politics do involve questions of right and wrong - this was the great lesson, he has told us, which Gladstone's victory at the election 1880 taught him. It is his own sense of loyalty to his principles, his electors, and to a long-standing personal friendship that we must also consider. That he was a "plotter" (Evatt); that he "revelled in political intrigue" (Piddington), or possessed "a passion for intrigue" (Fitzhardinge) are opinions which are as devoid of truth as they are of evidence.

That Wise had personal failings and weaknesses no one would deny, least of all the man himself. Impatience and impetuosity affected his judgment, and there were faults of temperament. He recognized that his failure to achieve the results he aimed for could be laid partly at his own feet. Writing to E.W.

O'Sullivan in 1906, after four years' absence from Australia, he could reflect on his frustrated endeavours:

"This absence has been of great service. I have learned much and forgotten much... Besides a view from a distance and leisure for reflection must show one the faults of character and temperament which frustrated earlier efforts."

That Wise would have made a successful leader of an Australian political party is also open to question. He found compromise with expediency difficult; and his desire to race ahead into new fields of action might well have disturbed followers who did not share his own intellectual perception. Once again he has acutely defined this problem:

"Like Alexander Hamilton, I have made always the mistake, of appealing too much to the reason of men, and taking too little account of their passions and prejudices. I have forced every issue in its most strict form; and so turned rivals into enemies and irritated the smaller fry of politicians. At the same time I have not been understood by the mass, but have inspired in them a vague sense of alienation and mistrust. A man, who goes remorselessly to the bottom of things, will hardly obtain much influence over men, who live in an atmosphere of assumption, traditions, phrases and current opinions. He leaves such men behind him, and appears a mystifier or an extremist."

This may well be too severe a judgment on himself, for there were positive qualities in this "failing", and it was Wise's determination to force issues to their ultimate logic and reality that contributed greatly to the adoption of the taxation policy of the Reid government and the acceptance of compulsory arbitration by a sceptical community. Whatever his failings, selfishness or dishonesty were not among them. That the opportunist politics of G.H. Reid should be so successful and earn him the title of "A Great Premier", and that Wise should be known in history as the "Bassins" of his party, suggests that there may be some truth in James Baldwin's remark that what is cultivated in a country is honoured therein.

Finally, there is the question of Wise's political instability and inconsistency with which we have been most concerned in this study, as this judgment involved an interpretation of the political history of this period in New South

2. W.M., p. 129.
Wales. It is the thesis here presented that it was Wise who remained consistent, while the two parties sharing the government simply felt their way forward, propelled this way and that by electoral pressures, internal compromises, and adaptations to a third party. We observed, with Wise, how strong were the traditions of Gladstone's liberal party, and we followed his efforts to build some such party organization in the FreeTrade Party and to translate his Oxford-derived liberalism into party policies. But we also observed how narrow was the basis of the two fiscal parties under faction-type leadership in terms of any guiding philosophy of social progress. The fiscal issue did not divide political opinion on any radical, liberal, conservative lines, so that on such large questions as social reform, industrial conflict, and financial policy the full range of opinion could be found within both parties. We observed how the centre of propertyed conservatism moved from FreeTrade in the early period towards Protection when Reid adopted a liberal tax policy, and back again to Reid when the Lyke government offered a reform policy at the end of the decade. The Labour Party support went in the reverse direction.

In these circumstances, the pressure of Labour as a third party is seen as the driving force and its policies and its publicity the vital factors in compelling reluctant middle-class parties to adopt progressive policies. The earlier argument that alone and unassisted Labour did it all has been effectively argued down by such historians as Martin and Mansfield. But the view of Manning Clark that there were progressives like Reid who, though believing in the liberal ideal, needed to be goaded and prodded into action by Labour, is still I think a well accepted interpretation. This, too, I feel needs revision, for it is my view that as well as believers in the liberal ideal there were men in the non-Labour parties whose aims for the future ordering of society were based on just as sound a set of ideas as were those of Labour men. Among these, Wise stands pre-eminent.
By his writings and addresses, by the clear and forthright application of the principles of his philosophy to the problems of a changing society, and by his leadership in organizations such as the Free Trade Association and the Free Trade and Land Reform League, Wise must take his place among the major influences at work in this key decade.

Unquestionably it was Wise and his organization, more than any Labour influence, that brought an advanced taxation policy to the Reid government in 1894. Bratt's statement that it was on Wise's undertaking to advance social reform policies that Holman and Labour transferred their support from Reid to Lyne is without evidence; but Lyne had no reputation as a reformer, and this claim is consistent with Holman's later tributes to Wise. Wise's work in the Ministry certainly justified such a belief on Holman's part.

By the end of the decade, the Labour Party had moved from its earlier ideas of changing the basis of the capitalist society to an acceptance of Fabian-type gradualism, with instalments of progressive legislation by democratic methods within the existing structure. In this transition it became clear to an intellectually inclined Labour leader like Holman that in the liberalism represented by such men as Wise and O'Sullivan lay the best prospect for a Labour alliance. Once that alliance was effected, it could be seen that neither Wise nor O'Sullivan were simply moving under pressure of support for concessions, but were in the same stream of thought as Labour men, and in such legislation as the minimum wage and compulsory arbitration could move into new fields on their own initiative. It would be as true to say that Labour turned to the liberal policies which Wise helped greatly to implant in both these governments, as it is to say that these governments turned to Labour policies in order to gain support.

The truth is that the special economic conditions of the time, Labour
Party pressure, and the impact of new ideas within the older parties were all part of a general change, and all acted upon an evolving party structure in this very complex decade of our history. The interpretation of this period can best be seen in the final coming together of the liberalism of Wise, the democracy of O'Sullivan and the socialism of Holman in a real reforming government which pushed ahead with such legislation as Old Age Pensions, Early Closing, Minimum Wage and Industrial Arbitration, Land Tenure Acts, and Women's Suffrage; and Wise had also prepared a Children's Welfare Bill and Local Government Reform legislation. Once the fiscal issue had been removed to the federal sphere, and federation had ceased to divide men's opinions, the natural confluence of the radical, liberal elements of nineteenth took place in this reforming Parliament in which Wise held the senior post under two Premiers, neither of whom could be called reformers.

It is Wise's consistency to the end of his career with policies laid down at the outset which distinguishes him as a politician in this confused period of political history. There is no sharp break in the backbone of his ideas as there is with a deserter or renegade. While it can be said that he belonged to two parties, it is much truer to say that he belonged to one set of ideas. "History," he once wrote, "pays little attention to . . . political catastrophes (of men and parties), but judges by achievements, weighing these in just scales with opportunities."

It is hoped that this thesis will justly weigh his achievements.

Note on the Wise Memoirs

These memoirs were made available for my use by Mr. Anthony Foster Wise of London, only son of B.R. Wise. They were written about 1914, and carry the heading: "Reverie and Reminiscence."

To his son, to whom they are addressed, Wise writes:

"I have wished often that I knew more about my parents; and, perhaps, you may someday wish the same. Therefore I will write to you of what I have seen and heard; and hopefully, you and your children, and those who follow them, may read with understanding.

Your father,

B.R. Wise."

Though a personal record, and in incomplete form, Wise's memoirs throw much light on his own career and the events which he witnessed during his political life, and it would appear that he had eventual publication in mind. The papers have remained in the possession of Mr. A.F. Wise since then. Fortunately, a metal box preserved them when the home of Mr. Wise was destroyed during war-time bombing raids on London. The papers were then taken to Hain in Northern Scotland and were finally brought back to London by Mr. Wise, where they were photographed by Dr. E.C. Fry. The meeting of Dr. Fry and Mr. Wise in London was one of those rare coincidences with a most fortunate outcome, as the arrival of the papers in my possession in January, 1964, marked the end of a long and frustrating search, as I had never abandoned the idea Wise had left some such record. I should like to acknowledge and thank Mr. A.F. Wise and Dr. E.C. Fry for their co-operation and assistance.

I should also like to acknowledge the practical guidance and help I received from the suggestions and criticism of Mr. B.F. Mansfield of the University of Sydney, whose interest in this work proved a stimulus and encouragement to me.
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Appendix A

Free-trade Association Manifesto

1. Under free-trade New South Wales has reached its present flourishing position, which a small but growing body of protectionists are endeavoring by fallacious arguments to undermine.

2. The prosperity of New South Wales may be seen from the following table of imports and exports:—New South Wales, 56 19s 9d. per head of population; Victoria, 36 13s 3d.; New Zealand, 25 15s 3d.; France, 8 3s 9d.; United States, 5 19s.

3. The objects of the Free-trade Association are: To advocate freedom of trade; to oppose, by all constitutional means, any attempt to levy taxes through the Custom House for the benefit of one part of the community at the expense of the bulk of the population; and to refute the misstatements and expose the frequent misrepresentations of protectionists.

4. The council of the Free-trade Association propose to form a library of economic and statistical literature for the use of the members, free of charge, and to collect and distribute information upon the free-trade question and the condition of the various branches of our national industries. Members will be entitled to receive gratis copies of all works and leaflets published by the Association.

5. The Free-trade Association is in no way connected with any political party, and its membership is open to free-traders of every shade of political opinion.

6. The Free-trade Association is constituted to promote, not the interests of a class, but the welfare of the whole community; for free-trade, being the natural course of commerce, enlarges markets, steadies prices and increases the product and wages and labor. Most of the grievances of which protectionists complain are independent either of protection of free-trade.

7. For the furtherance of these objects the Free-trade Association will enter into communication with the Cobden Club in London, the American Free-trade League, and with kindred associations.

8. All who are desirous of becoming members, or of forming branches of this association, are requested to communicate with the secretary, at the head office of the Free-trade Association, 4 Moore-street, off Pitt-street, opposite the General Post-office, Sydney.

S.M.H. 5.10.1885.
Circular

Legislative Assembly, N.S.W.
Sydney, August 27th, 1894.

Dear Sir,

You are invited to attend a Meeting of Members of Parliament to be held at No. 1 Committee Room at 4 p.m., on Thursday next August 30th to consider the best means of organizing the Democratic forces of the country.

Proposals will be submitted for renting central offices to serve as the headquarters of the party and the establishment of an Association upon the following (suggested) platform.

(1) The removal of all duties of Customs and Excise except those on narcotics and stimulants.

(2) The imposition of a tax of (say) 1d. in the £, upon the unimproved value of land.

(3) The execution of all improvements in calculating the rental basis of Crown Leases.

(4) The gradual substitution of a system of perpetual leasing of Crown Lands for the present system of alienation.

It is apparent that the democratic proposals of this or any other Ministry will be strongly assailed in Parliament and insidiously attacked outside. The success of these reforms in favor of which the Constituencies pronounced so clearly at the last General Election can only be assured by constant watchfulness and unremitting exertions.

Consequently we venture to invite your attendance at the Meeting to be held as previously stated in order to arrive, if possible, at a definite basis for united action both in Parliament and the Constituencies.

We have, sir, the honor to be
Your obedient servants,

E.L. Wise.
Verney Warkes.
Thomas Davister
E.D. Miller
James Ashton.

N.S.W. Parliament Petitions etc. (A.283) p. 251. (By permission of the Mitchell Library)
Appendix C

PLATFORM ISSUED BY THE FREE TRADE, LAND AND REFORM LEAGUE OF N.S.W. Sept. 1894.

Free Trade

The abolition of all duties of customs and excise, save those on narcotics and stimulants.

Land Reform

1. The imposition of a tax upon the unimproved value of land.

2. The substitution of a system of leasing Crown lands for the present system of alienation.

3. The exemption of all improvements in assessing the rental of Crown lands.

Constitutional Reform

1. Reform of the Electoral Act to effectively secure majority representation.

2. Reform of the Upper House.

(Armidale Chronicle, 8.9.1894)
Appendix D

Extracts from a letter of the Secretary of the
Freetrade Council

My Dear Mr. Wise,

I am glad that the opportunity is given to me of asserting in the full
and particular knowledge of all that took place prior to, and immediately after
the last general election, which my position as secretary of the Freetrade Council
afforded me...

... I can state emphatically that, despite the assaults of intrigue and misrep-
resentation, you never swerved from the standpoint you openly favoured, nor
wavered from your announced attitude. You ask me for a recital of the incidents
of the party organization for the last general election, and the part you played
therein. This is what took place.

When I was first appointed Secretary, the administrative body for election
purposes was known as "The Freetrade Organizing Committee," and consisted of
nine members of the then Opposition. Of these, you, Mr. McMillan and Mr. Reid
were the acknowledged leaders. The work of supervision was, however, really done
by Mr. Reid and you... About April last, Mr. Reid felt that the Organizing
Committee as then composed, was inadequate to the occasion, and asked me to think out
and submit a proposal for a more efficient body. I suggested the substitution of
a more influential and generally representative body. My suggestion was prac-
tically adopted in all its detail but one, and the effective and successful Freetrade
Council was instituted. The one particular in which my scheme was not followed
was that by which I provided that all the members of the Committee should be
unquestioningly ascertained as members of the new body. This provision was rejected
by Mr. Reid, and all - with one exception - were subjected to ballot.

I did not, at the time, understand the reason of this. I learned it in
the end. An intrigue must have been afoot for your exclusion as a too-ardent
apostle of the land - value taxation principle. At the time I suspected Mr. Reid
(but only on the ground of his exclusion of the most natural and reasonable pro-
vision I have referred to) of complicity in this little plot. It is significant
that you would believe that, and freely exonerated him.

I never met anything more admirable than the unruffled dignity which you
faced this undoubted "slap", or the quiet fortitude with which you resisted certain
violent demands that you should at once resent the insult and, on the principle of
coup pour coup, renounce your allegiance to Mr. Reid.

That Gentleman himself in my presence more than once acknowledged the
genuine and undeniable loyalty to party and principle you then displayed, and
expressed right up to, and after the formation of his Cabinet, his sense of his, and
the party’s obligations to your high-minded, effective, and consistent support.

The council ceased to exist in October last, since that time my knowledge
of political matters is only that of an interested observer with certain special
opportunities for having peeps behind the scenes. But I declare that, however people may differ from you on principle, any accusation that you have been at any time politically disloyal, or wanting in straightforwardness is ludicrously opposed to the truth. It can only recall to the dishonour of the accuser.

Yours truly,

JACOB GOLDBEIN

Late Secretary to the Free-trade Council of N.S.W.

Letter published in "A Year's Stewardship", M.L.