'ORDER, ORDER!'

A BIOGRAPHICAL DICTIONARY OF SPEAKERS,
DEPUTY SPEAKERS AND CLERKS OF THE
AUSTRALIAN HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

'ORDER, ORDER!'

A BIOGRAPHICAL DICTIONARY OF SPEAKERS, DEPUTY SPEAKERS AND CLERKS OF THE AUSTRALIAN HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

EDITED BY STEPHEN WILKS

Contents

Figure 1: Joan Child, first female Speaker of the House of Representatives.
Source: Courtesy of the National Archives of Australia. NAA: A6180, 16/9/87/3.

Foreword

It is a great honour and pleasure to contribute the foreword for this most important publication—a biographical dictionary of key figures in the Australian House of Representatives.

During the period I was the Clerk of the House the idea was developed, in conjunction with the then Speaker, the Hon. Tony Smith, to prepare biographies of all the former Speakers, Deputy Speakers and Clerks of the Australian House of Representatives. The thinking behind this proposal was that the House of Representatives had a significant historical tradition which, while it had been very well documented in terms of its practice and procedure in the form of successive editions of *House of Representatives Practice*,[1] had not been as well documented in terms of the personalities who performed in the key roles of leadership in the House.[2] Our hope was that, by compiling comprehensive biographies of all those who had undertaken the roles of Speaker, Deputy Speaker and Clerk, we would 'bring to life' the personalities that lay behind what might otherwise be seen as the dry nature of parliamentary procedure and practice. In addition, it would add a historical perspective to the work of the House, building a sense of tradition and legacy for the House of Representatives as an institution. As I noted when the project was launched, 'It will tell us a much more reflective story about the role of the House and how it works.'

The individual biographies show the diversity of the personalities and backgrounds of those who have held these offices. There is much that is both fascinating and revealing in the individual biographies. For example, there are the circumstances surrounding the collapse of the first Speaker, Sir Frederick Holder, in the chamber of the House during a particularly torrid debate, shortly after Holder uttered the words 'dreadful, dreadful', and leading to his death soon after. Then there is Deputy Speaker (then Chairman of Committees) John Moore Chanter, who made a controversial

---

1   The latest edition is D. R. Elder, ed., *House of Representatives Practice: Seventh Edition* (Canberra: Department of the House of Representatives, 2018).
2   There has, of course, been much political commentary on the House of Representatives and many biographies of prime ministers and other members of the House, but focused on executive rather than parliamentary roles.

(and probably incorrect) ruling allowing private members to propose new taxes or an increase in existing taxes during the committee stages (now consideration-in-detail stages) of bills. The ruling survived for more than twenty years before being overturned by a later Chairman of Committees. And there is the background to the sixth Clerk of the House, Frank Green, who was the only Clerk to publish a memoir on this time in office, and, at least partly, as a result of his disgruntlement with the decision of the House in the 1955 privilege case of Browne and Fitzpatrick.

The individual biographies make for fascinating reading in themselves. The linking pieces about the roles of the Speaker, the Deputy Speaker, and the Clerk, prepared by staff of the Department of the House of Representatives and accompanying the individual biographies, draw together themes from the biographies to illustrate how the respective parliamentary offices have operated and evolved since Federation. They are a critical additional component as they integrate the personalities with the evolution of the House of Representatives as a distinctly Australian institution from its Westminster heritage.

It is probably not surprising to note that a number of Deputy Speakers used the experience to then go on to serve as Speaker. This includes two female Deputy Speakers, Joan Child and Anna Burke, who became only two of three women to have served as Speaker. The biographies and the general pieces also demonstrate the ties between the respective officeholders, with both Speakers and Deputy Speakers being supported in their 'lonely' roles by the Clerks. It would be fair to say that these relationships ranged at times from the very close and friendly to the more distant. Regardless of the nature of the relationship, it was always critical to the way the House was able to perform.

It is a great credit to the National Centre of Biography in The Australian National University (ANU), which was engaged to undertake the preparation and publication of the biographies, that his work has been completed in such a fine way. I note in particular the work of Dr Stephen Wilks, who has coordinated the project.

The project has been overseen by an expert advisory group, chaired by a former Deputy Clerk of the House, Catherine Cornish, and comprising Emeritus Professor Judith Brett, La Trobe University; Emeritus Professor Geoff Gallop, University of Sydney; Mr Ian Hancock, School Visitor, National Centre of Biography, ANU; and Professor Paul Strangio, Monash University. They are to be congratulated for the way in which the project has fulfilled its original intention.

Finally, I believe this publication of the biographies of key officeholders of the House and the general essays about the offices themselves that accompany them, makes not only an important contribution to Australian history more generally, but also

to building the sense of the tradition of the House as one of the key institutions of Australian democracy. The publication will provide a rich source of information for all those with an interest in parliamentary matters. It will also enhance the understanding the general public has of the place of the House of Representatives in Australian society.

David Elder
Clerk, House of Representatives 2014–19

Acknowledgements

This book derives from a project funded by the Department of the House of Representatives and implemented by the National Centre of Biography in the School of History at The Australian National University (ANU). Former senator Dr Michael Macklin played an important role in initiating the project—along with Professor Melanie Nolan, who put the idea to the then Clerk of the House of Representatives, David Elder.

The project was guided in its early stages by an expert project advisory group chaired by Catherine Cornish, former Deputy Clerk of the House of Representatives. Other members included Emeritus Professor Judith Brett, La Trobe University; Emeritus Professor Geoff Gallop, University of Sydney; Mr Ian Hancock, School Visitor, National Centre of Biography, ANU; and Professor Paul Strangio, Monash University. Catherine helped oversee the project throughout, notably by providing expert comments on draft entries.

As project editor, I am particularly grateful to the contributors of the biographical entries, each of whom is identified as the author of their respective entries in the pages that follow. All provided fine drafts, but I wish to record the especially timely multiple contributions provided by Dr Tracey Arklay, Joshua Black, Dr Elaine Brown, Professor Nicholas Brown, Emeritus Professor David Carment, Dr Derek Drinkwater, Associate Professor G. N. Hawker, Dr John Hawkins, Associate Professor Lenore Layman, Dr Sylvia Marchant, Associate Professor Bobbie Oliver, Dr Clare Parker, Dr Brian F. Stevenson, and Kay Walsh.

Thanks also to: those living subjects of biographical entries who agreed to be interviewed or otherwise provided personal information; staff of National Centre of Biography (Professor Melanie Nolan, Dr Malcolm Allbrook, Darryl Bennet, Karen Ciuffetelli, Christine Fernon, Dr Sam Furphy, Dr Karen Fox, Jenny Higgins, Dr Rani Kerin, Dr Nicole McLennan, and Michael Hannaford); Geoff Hunt; staff of the Department of the House of Representatives (Justin Baker, Peter Banson, Natalie Cooke, Peggy Danaee, David Elder, Claressa Surtees, and Dr Glenn Worthington); staff of ANU Press; and Jan Borrie, Dr Bridget Brooklyn, and Dr Stephen Redenbach.

Dr Stephen Wilks
National Centre of Biography, ANU

Introduction—Speakers, Deputies and the Clerks: The Revealing Light of Biography?

Stephen Wilks

Carty Salmon, William Aston, and Bronwyn Bishop have something in common, as do Walter Gale, Ernest William Parkes, and Alan Turner. The first three were Speakers of the Australian House of Representatives, the most important legislative chamber in the nation. The second trio are yet more historically obscure—Clerks of the aforesaid House. The research project that has led to this book has shone a belated historical light on the men and women who have served as Speaker, Deputy Speaker, or Clerk of the House since Federation in 1901, with implications for these offices today.

The Speaker is, as related in that unsnappily titled but otherwise magnificent work of reference *House of Representatives Practice*, 'a Member of the House …[who]… upon election to office becomes its principal officer', fulfilling functions 'constitutional, traditional and ceremonial, statutory, procedural and administrative'. Best known is that the Speaker presides over the debates in the House, ensuring that these are conducted according to standing orders. A Speaker is also obliged to defend the rights and privileges of the House. The Clerk is the senior parliamentary officer 'responsible for administering the Department of the House of Representatives and advising the Speaker and members on parliamentary law, practice and procedure'. Both positions are venerable in the extreme; in Westminster, the first Speaker designated as such was appointed in 1377, and the first record of a Clerk of the House of Commons dates to 1363.

'Order, Order!' is the first full study of past Speakers, Deputy Speakers, and Clerks. It was conducted by the National Centre of Biography, part of The Australian National University's School of History, and funded by the Department of the House of Representatives. The result is sixty-five biographies written by an array of skilled contributors. Entries approximate the style of the *Australian Dictionary of Biography*

(*ADB*), but are considerably longer than the typical *ADB* entry, and include living subjects. The core of each entry is the subject's service as Speaker, Deputy Speaker or Clerk, but they also provide a balanced account of the whole person.

To the extent that these three offices have previously been studied at all, focus has usually been on the rather abstract assessment of the political standing of the Speakership alone. Stephen Redenbach's 1999 La Trobe University thesis, 'Servant of Two Masters? An Exploration of the Speaker's Role in the Australian Commonwealth Parliament', did incorporate a distinct biographical element and, perhaps not coincidentally, is a particularly strong study. *'Order, Order!'* has a yet greater emphasis on what individual lives can reveal. Delineation of any hitherto largely unstudied holders of high office is likely to lead to surprising findings. In this case, it appears that fairly early in the Commonwealth's history a largely unstated understanding was established which balances competing pressures of tradition, fairness, and party politics.

Since Federation in 1901 there have been thirty-two Speakers, thirty-three Deputy Speakers (some of whom went on to become Speaker), and seventeen Clerks. (The latter include the unctuous George Jenkins, who acted in the position for just two months in 1901 before perfunctory thanks from Prime Minister Barton presaged his being handed back to the Victorian parliament.) The Speakership is no sinecure; imagine sitting in the Speaker's chair at the head of the House of Representatives chamber during question time, trying to manage 150 other parliamentarians as they clamorously compete for the attention of their peers and the TV cameras. A Deputy Speaker acts in the Speaker's absence; confusingly, prior to 1994 they bore the unmemorable title of Chairman of Committees. Our sixty-five biographical entries cover all holders of any of the three offices who were no longer active in parliamentary politics or as a parliamentary officer at the time of publication.

A truly effective Speaker can determine the tone of the House. Like a good sports umpire, the most capable had such a seemingly light but sure touch that they tended not to be noticed. Among the best were Frederick Holder (Speaker 1901–09), William Watt (1923–25), George Mackay (1932–34), John McLeay (1956–66), Harry Jenkins (2008–11), and Tony Smith (2015–21). Speakers are chosen by the House, but in practice it is nearly always merely formalising a selection made by the nominee's parliamentary party. It is rare for a Speaker not to be a member of the governing party. The main exceptions were Holder, the United Australia Party's Walter Nairn (1940–43), who carried on for two years following the advent of John Curtin's Labor government, and Peter Slipper (2011–12). And, yes, all Speakers do after retirement have an official portrait painted—but not their deputies, nor the Clerks.

Independent and impartial?

Discussion of Speakers invariably raises issues of independence and impartiality. *House of Representatives Practice* is uncharacteristically stern in proclaiming that they 'must show impartiality in the Chamber above all else', through 'a completely objective interpretation of standing orders and precedents' that necessitates 'the same reprimand for the same offence whether the Member is of the Government or the Opposition'. Much, not surprisingly, depends on the individual and on political circumstances. Bronwyn Bishop (2013–15), for example, showed rare rigour in ejecting opposition members from the chamber during question time.

Politicisation of the Speakership stretches back to the early Australian Commonwealth. Westminster convention has long held that the Speaker on appointment ceases to be an active member of a political party, and subsequently can stand at general elections without facing opponents from other major parties. Holder sought to emulate this ideal by establishing the Australian Speakership as politically neutral in both name and fact, resisting what he described as 'an almost overwhelming desire to step out of the Chair and tear off the gag'. He remained Speaker amid the rise and fall of ministries during the unstable years immediately following Federation, only to become the first of two Speakers to die in office. Yet even Holder's elevation to the Speakership had been at the behest of Barton, who wanted insurance against his joining George Reid's Free Traders. When the House of Representatives sat for the first time on 9 May 1901, Holder was duly elected unopposed, although a free-trader from Queensland, one Bruce Smith, sounded the infant parliament's 'first discordant note' by describing Barton's stratagem as 'wholly unbecoming to the new order'.

One of the medically qualified members who tended to the stricken Holder after he collapsed in the chamber was his successor as Speaker, Carty Salmon (1909–10). Alfred Deakin's anointing of his friend and fellow Protectionist Salmon is seen as the decisive point in determining that the Australian Speakership would not maintain the Westminster ideal. The choice was essentially Deakin's own and was, with misgivings, endorsed by the party room before being put to a vote in the House. This led to one of the early House's angriest debates, with tempers not being aided by the incongruous sight of the Clerk, Charles Gavan Duffy, reluctantly presiding over the chamber during the interregnum between Speakers. At one point, Labor members 'simply flew at the poor Clerk', reported the *Sydney Morning Herald*. The failure of Holder's extended effort to embed the concept of a wholly neutral Speaker was also due to the hardening of the party system, notably the 1909 'Fusion' of the non-Labor Protectionists and Free Traders.

Who were the Speakers and Deputy Speakers?

Speakers are typically individuals with a strong personal presence in the party room and the chamber, and with long experience of parliament. Barring Holder, all had at least five years' experience in the House at the time of their appointment, and twenty-two had ten years' or more. Most seemed unlikely to attain the ministry—not necessarily on grounds of lack of ability, but often due to insufficient party political standing. The Speakership was to be the highest office they would hold. Examples are the tough ex-soldier from Tasmania, George Bell (1934–40), and the first female Speaker, Joan Child (1986–89). Some harboured ministerial ambitions that exceeded their peers' evident estimation of them, such as Aston (1967–72).

Several Speakers were past senior ministers for whom placement on the backbench seemed likely to invite trouble; a suitably face-saving appointment was required. Holder was a former premier of South Australia who dearly wanted to be part of the first federal ministry, but Barton handed the one spot available for a South Australian to Charles Kingston instead. Watt was a former Victorian premier and federal treasurer who had acted as prime minister for sixteen months in 1918–19 when Billy Hughes was overseas, making him a candidate for the unwanted title of 'best prime minister we never had'. There was also former treasurer and opposition leader Billy Snedden (1976–83). Interestingly, all three proved excellent Speakers; indeed, the Speakership partly restored Snedden's political reputation.

A particularly interesting few raised a similar problem of reputedly being unduly opinionated and unpredictable, such as the pioneering Laborite from Queensland Charles McDonald (1910–13, 1914–17). Another was the former Country Party leader Archie Cameron (1950–56), recalled wearily by one of his Clerks, Frank Green, as 'a queer mixture of generosity, prejudice and irresponsibility'. A couple of others, Bishop and Ian Sinclair (1998), were party elders for whom a dignified last position was considered fitting.

Deputy Speakers are an even more mixed bunch. A few hailed from the decidedly eccentric wing of their party room. James Fowler (1913–14) was a bleakly serious Scot who persisted in calling for the selection of ministers by parliament rather than by the governing party; as a frustrated writer, he once hopefully mailed a film synopsis to Cecil B. DeMille. The peripatetic James Garfield Bayley (1926–29) was a schoolteacher, surveyor, advertising manager, film censor, and possibly the first Australian to undertake postgraduate study at Stanford. As a pronounced Americanophile (note his given names), each 4 July he called on the prime minister to send congratulations to the United States president. With characteristic perversity, he was one of the few opposition members to lose his seat when the Scullin government was heavily defeated in 1931. Two talented Deputy Speakers from Western Australia, Joe Berinson (1975) and Ron Edwards (1989–93), were held back from the ministry

by their lack of factional support. Berinson served as Deputy Speaker for a few months before his belated elevation to Gough Whitlam's cabinet, only to lose his seat soon after. He clawed his way back into public office to serve with distinction in Western Australian governments.

Speakers are usually judged by a combination of ability to assert authority over the House and perceptions of their non-partisanship. TV coverage, being highly selective, can give an unduly poor impression of their stewardship. A biographical approach brings out more fully and fairly the importance of personal skills. The pioneering political correspondent D. H. Maling (writing as 'Ithuriel') reflected in 1901 that 'it is pleasant to hear [Holder's] sonorous tones giving out a prompt ruling' as he sought to uphold Westminster practice. Another commanding presence was Watt, who overcame outrage over Stanley Bruce's summary removal of Elliot Johnson (1913–14, 1917–23) to be remembered by Green as 'probably the best Speaker of the House we ever had', aided by 'a great sense of humour which he often used to break tension'. John McLeay, the longest-serving Speaker, was so cool and even-handed that Arthur Calwell claimed that had Labor won the 1961 election it would have retained him in the chair. That Sinclair, a short-serving Speaker, was also among the more capable suggests the merit of the poacher-turned-gamekeeper principle.

Some showed unexpected skill in the Speaker's chair, such as Slipper and Mackay— the latter, probably not coincidentally, being a former auctioneer. A very few others distinctly didn't. Salmon failed to impose his will on the chamber and was burdened by the circumstances of his selection. Child unluckily had to manage simultaneously an ascendant Bob Hawke and a rising Paul Keating. A few deputies, such as Bayley and Edwards, would have made excellent Speakers but for their losing their seats. Significantly for political perceptions of the Speakership, no incumbent has used the office as a stepping stone directly into the ministry. The two Speakers who subsequently attained ministerial office only did so following an appreciable gap, Norman Makin (1929–31), who became minister for the navy and munitions nine years later, and Gordon Scholes (1975), appointed defence minister after seven years.

And the Clerks?

Speakers have usually worked closely and effectively with the Clerks of the House. One of the very few exceptions arose from Joan Child's seemingly instinctive dislike of Alan Browning, wryly recalling in her memoirs 'the occasional robust discussion'. The Clerks are invariably individuals of high calibre. They head the Department of the House of Representatives, which appears to have largely resisted the wider decline of the public service (noting that the department operates under its own legislation, the Parliamentary Service Act 1999). Paradoxically, this may be as it is particularly close to the parliamentarians, and so well placed to win their confidence. There is

a very low degree of tolerance of mistakes in the House; the Clerk must be able to offer sound advice to the Speaker at an instant's notice. Like a good Speaker, they make it look easy.

Service as a parliamentary officer is not exactly monastic, but many past Clerks were spotted and recruited young into parliamentary service, and then groomed over many years. One, Jack Pettifer (1977–82), as a boy during the interwar years actually lived in Parliament House with his family, his father being the caretaker. Several Clerks were deeply religious, such as Pettifer (Baptist) and Doug Blake (1982–85, Catholic). Frank Green was the only Clerk to make himself widely known to the general public. His unique courting of publicity extended to commenting in the media on his friendship with members of the Communist Party. Green's memoir *Servant of the House* became a major source of political anecdotes, most famously that of an anxious John Curtin pacing the grounds of the Lodge by night during the darkest days of World War II. The first female Clerk, Claressa Surtees, was appointed in 2019.

Cross-sectioning the House

'Order, Order!' also presents a detailed and fairly wide sample of members of the House of Representatives since 1901. The main development over time is the appearance of women members, hence there having been three female Speakers since 1986, Child, Anna Burke (2012–13), and Bishop. The pre-parliamentary occupations of Speakers are evenly spread, and include seven lawyers, six farmers, and six trade unionists (Sinclair counting as both a lawyer and a farmer). The office only recently started to reflect the rise of the professional party activist turned parliamentarian in the persons of Tony Smith and Milton Dick.

Surveying the ups and downs of individual Speakers also provides some guide to the decline of parliamentary behaviour. Angry debates could and did break out at any time from 1901 onwards, such as that sparked by Salmon's nomination. But these typically were spontaneous, triggered by a perceived injustice in the House, including where a Speaker was thought to have unfairly stymied opposition members. From the 1970s onwards we see Speakers, supported by the Clerks, increasingly having to preside over highly orchestrated set-piece attacks on the government, with matching ripostes by ministers.

There is also a sense gained of what were the roughest periods in parliamentary history. One was 1913–14 when Joseph Cook's government clung to office with a one seat majority in a House presided over skilfully by Elliot Johnson, whose heterodox past was rumoured to have included service as a mercenary in South America during the 1879–84 War of the Pacific. Johnson was again in the chair during 1919–22 when Hughes hung on as prime minister in the lingering wake of the first Labor

split and the destabilising rise of the Country Party. Mackay and Bell were Speakers following the Labor split of 1931 that led to a conservative government headed by the ex-Labor premier and minister Joseph Lyons. 1969–72 was not only a time of decline in reverence for tradition but was also marked by a reinvigorated Labor Party which sensed victory at the next election; a harried Aston struggled accordingly. During the ensuing Whitlam government, Jim Cope (1973–75) failed to constrain an aggressive opposition effectively led in debate by the Country Party trio of Doug Anthony, Peter Nixon, and Sinclair, and resigned in dramatic circumstances when Whitlam declined to support him on the floor of the House. And that's not to mention the hyper-partisanship that dogged the Rudd-Gillard years.

An Australian model?

Salmon's elevation marked a decisive break with Westminster practice, but what came in its place? Is there an Australian model of the Speakership? Yes, in a word, but one based more on tacit assumption than express definition. While certainly falling short of the Westminster ideal, the Australian Speakership does not appear as resolutely politicised as can be assumed. That one Speaker, Neil Andrew (1998–2004), took some offence at a perceived suggestion of the Speakership being dominated by the governing political party is significant. He thought that such deference had been overstated, and argued that the Australian Speakership is counterbalanced by an impartiality that has firm roots in the Australian 'fair go' cultural ethos, unlike the more formal-based British model. Lack of formal independence does not necessarily equate to lack of impartiality.

'Order, Order!' seems broadly consistent with Andrew's view. Its entries suggest that most Speakers (and their deputies) have indeed sought to balance party loyalty with wider expectations of the office, albeit with the occasional outlier. They have been expected to maintain their party identity, yet also to strike a workable compromise between partiality to their own government and keeping favouritism within tolerable bounds. That most post-Holder Speakers have done so is reflected in the fact that only a few, such as Cameron, brought upon themselves persistent opposition attacks and calls for resignation. Most instead usually kept party favouritism to a level compatible with the functionality of the House. Such qualified non-partisanship was probably helped by the Speakership not usually having served as a career stepping stone.

This pragmatic compromise was reached surprisingly early on. Holder's eight-year experiment with Westminster practice had weak foundations as this model was not strongly supported in the colonial legislatures from which many of the new federal members hailed. Labor's antipathy to Salmon left the nature of the Speakership still unresolved during his tenure. It appears that it was the immediately following Speakerships of McDonald and Johnson that served to consolidate the aforesaid

Australian model. McDonald, in particular, so effectively overcame early fears about his likely partisanship that he was applauded by his constituents in Charters Towers for affirming that, as Speaker, 'he endeavoured to follow out the one golden rule, to be fair to both sides'. He was a keen student of parliamentary procedure, with George Pearce noting his having diligently 'tabulated references to and rulings of the Speakers and Presiding Officers of practically every Parliament in the British Empire'. Johnson's record as Speaker was recognised by later commentators as also being 'excellent' and 'perfectly able'.

Some incumbents tried to uphold this balance by being prepared to censure senior members of their own government. Bell in 1937 ruled against a demand by Lyons that Labor's Eddie Ward withdraw an allegation of misuse of public funds. (The ruling was overturned at once following a motion moved by Lyons.) Snedden once 'sat down' his personal nemesis, Malcolm Fraser, primly reminding him that his behaviour and that of Whitlam 'should reflect their status as a leader in the national parliament'. Snedden was an unusually ardent and late advocate of the adoption of Westminster conventions; significantly, this was to little avail. Occasional calls since to embrace Westminster convention have also been without result. Bob Halverson (1996–98) tried to reform question time such as by allowing supplementary questions, but lacked the requisite authority in the party and parliament for this to stick.

Australian Speakers, therefore, operate within distinctly non-Westminster parameters, but good ones – and I repeat that most have performed competently or better in the position—are far more than mere creatures of party. Andrew's blunt, perhaps slightly overstated, rendition of the essentials of what is usually an implicit understanding remains unusual. And how very Australian this all seems!—a pragmatic compromise reached more through early trial and error than observance of tradition. Will this model, if something so rarely expressly delineated can be described as such, continue to stand up to the remorseless encroachment of party politics? I am uncharacteristically optimistic about this, given its deep roots in our admittedly little appreciated parliamentary history and in wider Australian culture. That said, this largely workable conception of the Speakership is something that we should not take for granted, but instead be prepared to defend against creeping partisanship.

This introduction was originally published in a slightly different form on the website of the Australian Policy and History Network in September 2021.

Bibliography

Adelaide Observer. 'Mr Speaker Holder on Parliament'. 7 May 1904, 36

Age (Melbourne). 'Meeting of the Houses', 'House of Representatives'. 10 May 1901, 9

Andrew, Neil. 'The Australian Federal Speakership: The First Hundred Years and Some Future Directions'. In *Peace, Order and Good Government: State Constitutional and Parliamentary Reform*, edited by Clement Macintyre and John Williams, 273–90. Kent Town, SA: Wakefield Press, 2003

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 9 May 1901, 21; 13 January 1926, 14; 10 September 1937, 949–56; 4 May 1977, 1511

Child, Joan, with Graeme Johnstone. *Joan: Child of Labor.* Victoria, 2015

Elder, D. R., ed. *House of Representatives Practice: Seventh Edition.* Canberra: Department of the House of Representatives, 2018

Evening Telegraph (Charters Towers, Qld). 'Mr Chas. McDonald MHR: Welcome Social'. 14 March 1911, 6

Green, Frank C. *Servant of the House.* Melbourne: Heinemann, 1969

'Ithuriel' [D. H. Maling]. 'Among Federal Members'. *Argus* (Melbourne), 25 May 1901, 5

Nethercote, J. R. 'Choosing a Speaker: Alfred Deakin's Flawed Legacy'. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 5 August 2015. Accessed 10 October 2019. www.smh.com.au/opinion/choosing-a-speaker-alfred-deakins-flawed-legacy-20150805-girzdv.html

Redenbach, Stephen C. 'Servant of Two Masters? An Exploration of the Speaker's Role in the Australian Commonwealth Parliament'. PhD thesis, La Trobe University, Melbourne, 1999

Reid, G. S., and Martyn Forrest. *Australia's Commonwealth Parliament 1901–1988: Ten Perspectives.* Carlton, Vic.: Melbourne University Press, 1989

Rodan, Paul K. 'The Speakership: Recent Occupants and Some Present Problems'. In *The Pieces of Politics*. 2nd ed., edited by Richard Lucy, 177–85. South Melbourne: Macmillan, 1979

Sawer, Geoffrey. *Australian Federal Politics and Law 1901–1929.* Carlton, Vic.: Melbourne University Press, 1956

Souter, Gavin. *Acts of Parliament: A Narrative History of the Senate and the House of Representatives, Commonwealth of Australia.* Carlton, Vic.: Melbourne University Press, 1988

Sydney Morning Herald. 'The New Speaker'. 29 July 1909, 7

Australian House of Representatives—the Office of Speaker

Justin Baker

Introduction

The office of Speaker is regarded as the highest honour that the House of Representatives can bestow upon one of its members. Its significance in Australia's parliamentary system is reflected in the Constitution, which makes no reference to the prime minister but expressly provides for the House of Representatives to choose a member to be its Speaker prior to conducting any other business (s. 35 of the Constitution). The prominence of the office of Speaker is also reflected in the Commonwealth Table of Precedence (*Commonwealth of Australia Gazette* 1982), where the presiding officers are preceded only by the governor-general, state governors, the prime minister, and premiers and chief ministers of the states and territories (Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade n.d.). There are certain conventions which the House observes out of respect for the office, such as members acknowledging the Speaker by bowing when entering or leaving the chamber.

The Speaker's authority is derived from the House. As the House's spokesperson, the Speaker's principal duty is to uphold the dignity of the House and to protect the rights and privileges of the House and its members. The most visible aspect of the Speaker's role involves presiding over debates in the House chamber, enforcing the standing orders (rules) which have been adopted by the House and ensuring the orderly conduct of business. The Speaker seeks to protect the rights of individual members to ensure they are treated fairly within the framework established by the standing orders. As a general rule, the Speaker does not participate in legislative debates or policy discussions.

The full range of duties carried out by the Speaker extends well beyond his or her chamber role. When not in the chair, the contemporary Speaker is often occupied with matters which, although less visible, are fundamentally important. For example,

the Speaker, jointly with the President of the Senate, is responsible for the safety and security of Parliament House and its occupants. From overseeing measures to strengthen the physical security of the parliament in times of a heightened security threat, to facilitating meetings of the House during a global pandemic, these duties can be highly demanding of a Speaker's time and attention. The Speaker also performs a range of ceremonial duties as the House's representative, some of which are derived from Westminster traditions. Other duties of the Speaker are prescribed in the Constitution or in Commonwealth legislation.

Origins of office

The office of Speaker has its origins in the early history of the United Kingdom House of Commons. The first member of the Commons designated as 'Speaker', Sir Thomas Hungerford, was appointed in 1377, though earlier forms of the role can be traced back as far as 1258 (Laundy 1984, 11).[1]

The role of Speaker arose from the House of Commons' need for a spokesperson to communicate its resolutions to the King and his lords. Such a role carried significant personal risk when the resolutions being transmitted were unpalatable to the King. Indeed, early Speakers who found themselves caught up in conflict between the parliament and the Crown paid a high price for carrying out their duties. Some were expelled or imprisoned, while others were executed (House of Commons Information Office 2010). The tradition in the Australian House of Representatives in which a newly elected Speaker feigns to struggle as they are escorted to the chair by supporters derives from those medieval times when a Speaker's resistance to take the chair was well founded.

It is not clear when the role of spokesperson was extended to include presiding over the business of the Commons as its chairman. According to Roskell (1965), John Hooker's *Order and Usage*, published in 1571, provided the first detailed description of the Speaker's duties in the lower house. These duties were 'to direct and guide that house in good order and to see that ordinances, usages, and customs of the house to be firmly kept and observed'.

Hooker's treatise also made reference to the Speaker's role in a range of matters which remain relevant today, such as: determining who should be given the call if more than one member rose to speak; ensuring relevance in debate; taking action against members for disorderly conduct; putting the question on bills; protecting the privileges of the House; and refraining from voting except when exercising a casting vote in the event of a tie.

---

1   Early Speakers were variously described as *parlour*, *prolocutor* and *procurator*.

Up until the seventeenth century, Speakers were generally considered to be agents of the Crown (Redlich 1903, 156–57). The Crown is reported to have concerned itself in the appointment of a number of medieval Speakers; moreover, it was in the Commons' interests to elect a Speaker who was known to enjoy the King's confidence. Like the parliament itself, the role of Speaker continued to evolve. As the Commons increasingly asserted its independence from the Crown, its Speakers began to advocate for greater parliamentary independence. During King Charles I's 1642 incursion into the Commons chamber to arrest five members for high treason, the Speaker, William Lenthall, famously refused to reveal their whereabouts (Laundy 1984, 34):

> May it please your majesty, I have neither eyes to see, nor tongue to speak, in this place, but as the house is pleased to direct me, whose servant I am here; and I humbly ask pardon that I cannot give any other answer to what your majesty is pleased to demand of me.

Lenthall's actions are regarded as having established the principle that the Speaker's foremost duty is to the House and not the Crown. Since these events, no reigning monarch has entered the lower house of any Westminster-style parliament, a convention which extends to Australia's governor-general, who, as the King's representative, does not enter the House of Representatives chamber and instead delivers the address to open a new session of parliament in the Senate chamber.

In the period following the Restoration of the monarchy under King Charles II in 1660, it was not unusual for Speakers to be associated politically with governments, or even to hold government office while also presiding over the House of Commons (House of Commons Information Office 2010). Arthur Onslow, the longest-serving Speaker of the Commons (from 1728 to 1761), is recognised for setting new standards for the independence of the office, forgoing his post as navy treasurer (and the generous salary that accompanied it) and instituting a range of practices that came to define the modern Speakership (Laban 2013, ix).

It was only during the mid-nineteenth century that the Speakership evolved into its modern form and the convention whereby the Speaker in the Commons is above party became firmly established (House of Commons Information Office 2010).

The Speakership in the Australian House of Representatives

Of the many traditions and conventions the Australian parliament inherited from Westminster, the Speakership is notable for having evolved to be quite different to its British counterpart. The role of the Speaker has been strongly influenced by the distinctive nature of Australia's parliament and its politics. A significant point of difference is that Australia's Speaker has never been completely divorced from politics

in the manner that the British Speaker is. The Speaker of the House of Commons severs party ties upon election to office and for subsequent elections simply stands as 'the Speaker seeking re-election' (Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 (UK), s. 22). To support the Speaker's continuity in office, the major political parties usually refrain from nominating a candidate for election in the Speaker's constituency. In contrast, the Australian Speaker has always contested and campaigned for re-election as a member of their party.

Bolton (1962, 356) attributes this divergence in part to the fact that at the time the Australian colonies secured responsible government, the British traditions of the Speaker divesting themselves of all party ties and refraining from election campaigning had scarcely been established. Early colonial Speakers actively participated in debates and often voted in committee or exercised a casting vote along factional lines. The comparatively small numbers in the colonial legislatures meant that a single seat could potentially determine which party or coalition of parties was able to form a majority—a situation which continued after Federation, where initially the House of Representatives comprised just seventy-five members.

Although the Speakership in Australia is regarded as a political appointment, as a rule Speakers have sought to keep themselves detached from government activity to the extent that they can perform their duties with impartiality and be perceived to do so.

From time to time, arguments have been made that Australia should adopt the British convention and have the Speaker abandon all party loyalties upon election to office. Speaker Snedden, arguably the staunchest advocate, pursued the matter enthusiastically during his time in office (from 1976 to 1983). Snedden complained that the Australian system demanded impartiality from its Speaker yet maintained structures which impeded it. After vacating the Speakership, Snedden told the House that he believed the adoption of the Westminster convention was 'inevitable if the standing of the Parliament is to be further raised' (H.R. Deb. 21.4.1983, 6).

The Fraser government considered a proposal put forward by Snedden but ultimately determined that the constitutional and political hurdles were insurmountable. More recently, in 2019, constitutional lawyer George Williams AO (*Australian* 2019) advocated for the adoption of the Westminster convention of an independent Speaker in the context of discussion around possible reforms to question time.

Election of Speaker

As previously stated, the Constitution expressly provides for the House to choose its Speaker at the beginning of a parliament prior to conducting any other business. The procedures for electing a Speaker are set out in the House's standing orders. The election is conducted by the Clerk acting as chair, and a nominee for Speaker is required to be present in the House to confirm whether they accept the nomination.

If there is more than one candidate, the House proceeds to a secret ballot. Since 2000, there has been only one occasion that the government's nominee has faced competition by means of a ballot. On that occasion in 2013, Bronwyn Bishop ultimately prevailed over the opposition's Rob Mitchell in the ensuing ballot. In the minority forty-third parliament, following the resignation of Harry Jenkins from the Speakership, the Labor government nominated a Liberal National Party member, Peter Slipper, for the role. The opposition sought to nominate, in turn, each government member present who at that time was serving on the Speaker's panel, all of whom declined to accept, and Slipper was elected unopposed. Upon taking the chair, Slipper announced that he would be resigning his party membership and serving as an independent (H.R. Deb. 24.11.2011, 13797).

The House usually chooses as its Speaker a member who possesses considerable parliamentary experience in addition to those personal qualities necessary to carry out the role with distinction. It is assumed that party considerations also play a strong hand in the selection process, and the government's nominee is typically predetermined in the party room. Reid and Forrest (1989, 38), for example, note that the government's preferred candidate has at times been perceived as having been rewarded for their party service or in consolation for being overlooked for a ministerial role.

In the chair: The Speaker's procedural role

The most visible of the Speaker's duties are those performed in the chair, presiding over the debates of the House. The Speaker ensures that meetings of the House are conducted in an orderly manner, consistent with the standing orders, relevant provisions of the Constitution and traditional practice. The Speaker supervises rather than participates in proceedings; he or she does not normally take part in debate or vote, except in the event of numbers being equal, in which case the Speaker has a casting vote (s. 40 of the Constitution).[2]

---

2   The provision for a casting vote also extends to the Deputy Speaker or Second Deputy Speaker if they are deputising for, or acting in, the position of Speaker, but not to other members who may serve in the chair at the request of the Speaker.

The Speaker is supported in his or her role by the Clerk of the House, who is the principal adviser to the Speaker and the House on parliamentary law, practice, and procedure. The Speaker does not occupy the chair at all times during a sitting. When the Speaker is not present in the chamber, one of the Speaker's two deputies, or a member of the Speaker's panel, takes the chair. Traditionally, the Speaker has taken the chair at the commencement of each sitting, for question time—the focal point of each sitting—and for the adjournment debate, which usually rounds out each day's proceedings. The Speaker also takes the chair for important occasions, such as addresses by foreign leaders, statements by the prime minister, and the budget speech and reply. In the event of a minority government or when the government enjoys only a narrow majority on the floor of the House, it has been the practice that the Speaker has taken the chair for all divisions, so that the otherwise occupant of the chair at the time a division is counted can exercise a deliberative vote. This practice also ensures that a casting vote can be exercised if required.

It is the role of the Speaker to maintain order in the House. Disorderly conduct by members includes persistently and wilfully obstructing the House, refusing to conform to the standing orders, disregarding the authority of the chair, and using objectionable words and refusing to withdraw them. There are sanctions available to the Speaker to deal with disorderly conduct. For a minor infringement a member may be called to order or warned. A member who repeatedly infringes or commits a more serious offence may be directed to leave the chamber for one hour. In the event of more serious disorder, including persistent defiance of the chair, a member may be 'named' by the chair and a motion for the member's suspension from the service of the House is moved (usually by the leader of the House). If a member is named and suspended, the term of the suspension is twenty-four hours on the first occasion, three consecutive sittings on the second occasion during a calendar year, and seven consecutive sittings on the third occasion during a calendar year.

The naming of a member is, in effect, an appeal to the House to support the Speaker's authority in maintaining order. On only one occasion, in 1975, has the government of the day not supported the Speaker's naming of a member, leaving the opposition to move for the member's suspension. This motion was defeated, and the House's lack of support for the authority of the Speaker led Jim Cope to resign as Speaker later that day. In 2011 the minority Gillard government failed to attract sufficient numbers to support a motion for the suspension of Bob Baldwin (LIB, Paterson, NSW) following his naming by Speaker Harry Jenkins. After Jenkins indicated that he would consider his position, opposition leader Tony Abbott promptly moved a motion of confidence in the Speaker, seconded by Prime Minister Gillard, and Jenkins continued in office.

The Speaker is often called upon to rule on members' points of order on matters of procedure. Under the standing orders, a member may move a motion of dissent from a ruling by the Speaker, a practice not permitted in certain other Westminster

parliaments. While it is a serious matter to challenge the Speaker's interpretation and application of the standing orders, a dissent is not equivalent to the more serious criticisms of the Speaker in the form of a censure or want of confidence motion. Harris (2006, 3) notes that whereas a motion of dissent from a Speaker's ruling is an expression of opinion on the merits of a decision, a motion of want of confidence is an expression on the capacities of the chair. Since Federation, just six motions of dissent from a Speaker's ruling have been agreed to by the House, the last occasion being in 1955.[3] A recommendation by the House Procedure Committee (1986, 67) to remove the provisions which enabled members to move dissent from a ruling of the chair was not supported.

It is only through these substantive motions (dissent, want of confidence, or censure) that a Speaker's actions can be criticised by a member. It is otherwise highly disorderly for a member to reflect on the chair in or outside the chamber, including on social media. Prior to the enactment of the Parliamentary Privileges Act 1987, such reflections on the chair could attract the exercise of the penal powers of the House of Commons (Elder 2018, 201). Nevertheless, today, they are regarded as important matters of order.

The nature of the job makes it unavoidable that the Speaker's actions will from time to time attract external criticism, most commonly by observers of question time, the most politically charged period of a sitting. Such criticism tends to relate to the Speaker's party allegiances and associated perceptions of bias. The rules for questions are much more prescriptive than the rules for answers, and oppositions of all political persuasions have tended to use question time in a way that tests the standing orders as they seek to put forward their views and hold the government to account. While the standing orders are designed to give all members the right to participate, they also ensure that the important functions the House performs can be carried out efficiently; that is, they ensure that the majority (by definition, the government of the day) almost always prevails.

The Speaker's representative role

As the title suggests, the Speaker is the House's spokesperson, formally representing the House in its dealings with other bodies including the Senate, the sovereign, the executive, and the judiciary. On formal occasions the Speaker plays a central ceremonial role. In the event of an address to parliament by a visiting head of state, the

---

3   Additionally, two motions of dissent from rulings by a Deputy Speaker / Chairman of Committees have been agreed to.

Speaker takes precedence over the prime minister, and is responsible for announcing and introducing visitors. The Speaker regularly receives delegations from visiting parliaments on behalf of the House.

Official communications from the House are signed by the Speaker, and the Speaker receives and reports official communications to the House. These most commonly include messages from the Senate in respect of its consideration of bills and amendments or seeking the concurrence of the House in a resolution of the Senate, and messages from the governor-general recommending appropriations or notifying assent to bills. The Speaker also presents bills which originated in the House, and have been passed by both houses, to the governor-general for royal assent.

The Speaker's statutory, constitutional, and administrative roles

The Speaker has statutory powers and functions in relation to staff of the parliamentary departments which parallel those of a minister appointed to administer a department of state. The Speaker has overall responsibility for the Department of the House of Representatives, and joint responsibility with the President of the Senate in relation to the Department of Parliamentary Services and the Parliamentary Budget Office. Staff of the parliamentary departments are employed under the Parliamentary Service Act 1999 which recognises the independence of the parliamentary administration from the executive. The Act gives the Speaker responsibility for appointing, after consultation with members, the Clerk of the House. In addition to being the principal adviser to the Speaker on matters of procedure, the Clerk advises the Speaker on matters relating to the Department of the House of Representatives. The standing orders permit members to direct questions without notice to the Speaker at the conclusion of question time on any matter of administration for which the Speaker is responsible.

The Constitution requires that the Speaker issue the writ for a by-election when a vacancy occurs in the House. Additionally, the Speaker has a variety of duties set down in statute. For example, the Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918 gives the Speaker responsibility for sending to the Court of Disputed Returns a statement of any question the House wishes to have determined by the court and any associated documents in possession of the House. The Parliamentary Precincts Act 1988 gives the Speaker (and the President of the Senate) responsibility for control and management of Parliament House and its immediate surroundings, including overall responsibility for security services. When the office of Speaker becomes vacant due to resignation, or when the House is dissolved, the Parliamentary Presiding Officers Act 1965 gives the person who was Speaker at the time of resignation or dissolution continuing authority for certain administrative actions until the House chooses a new Speaker.

Conclusion

The office of Speaker embodies the dignity of Australia's House of Representatives. While each of the House's thirty-two Speakers since Federation has inevitably brought their own characteristics and personality to the role, the office is above the individual. Although, in Australia, the Speakership is recognised as one of the spoils of electoral success for the party or coalition of parties that forms government, generally, during their time in office Speakers have commanded the respect of all members. The role of the Speaker has continued to evolve since Federation, and while presiding over debates remains the most visible of the Speaker's duties, particularly during the highly charged atmosphere that often permeates question time, the modern Speaker performs many other important duties away from the glare of the House chamber.

Note: The following standing orders (as at 2 August 2022) relate to the duties of the Speaker—3, 4, 7, 8, 10 to 12, 15 to 19, 24, 28, 30 to 32, 38, 41, 43, 46, 51, 52, 54 to 57, 60 to 62, 65, 66a, 67, 68, 75, 77, 78, 85 to 87, 91, 92, 94 to 97, 101 to 103, 105, 109, 114, 117, 125 to 131, 133, 135, 137, 150, 152, 168, 175, 176, 182, 198, 199, 215, 222, 222a, 229, 247, 249, 255, 257, 259, 261, and 268 to 270. Sessional order 65A, as amended on 5 September 2022, also relates to the duties of the Speaker.

Speakers of the House of Representatives

Name	Period(s) in office
HOLDER, Hon. Sir Frederick William, KCMG (knighted June 1902)	9.5.1901 to 23.11.1903; 2.3.1904 to 5.11.1906; 20.2.1907 to 23.7.1909
SALMON, Hon. Charles Carty	28.7.1909 to 19.2.1910
McDONALD, Hon. Charles	1.7.1910 to 23.4.1913
JOHNSON, William Elliot	9.7.1913 to 30.7.1914
*McDONALD, Hon. Charles	8.10.1914 to 26.3.1917
*JOHNSON, Sir William Elliot, KCMG (knighted June 1920)	14.6.1917 to 3.11.1919; 26.2.1920 to 6.11.1922
WATT, Rt Hon. William Alexander	28.2.1923 to 3.10.1925
GROOM, Hon. Sir Littleton Ernest, KCMG, KC, (knighted Jan. 1924)	13.1.1926 to 9.10.1928; 6.2.1929 to 16.9.1929
MAKIN, Hon. Norman John Oswald	20.11.1929 to 27.11.1931
MACKAY, George Hugh	17.2.1932 to 7.8.1934
BELL, Hon. George John, CMG, DSO, VD	23.10.1934 to 21.9.1937; 30.11.1937 to 27.8.1940
NAIRN, Walter Maxwell	20.11.1940 to 21.6.1943
ROSEVEAR, Hon. John Solomon	22.6.1943 to 7.7.1943; 23.9.1943 to 16.8.1946; 6.11.1946 to 31.10.1949
CAMERON, Hon. Archie Galbraith	22.2.1950 to 19.3.1951; 12.6.1951 to 21.4.1954; 4.8.1954 to 4.11.1955; 15.2.1956 to 9.8.1956
McLEAY, Hon. Sir John, KCMG, MM, (knighted Jan. 1962)	29.8.1956 to 14.10.1958; 17.2.1959 to 2.11.1961; 20.2.1962 to 1.11.1963; 25.2.1964 to 31.10.1966

Name	Period(s) in office
ASTON, Hon. Sir William John, KCMG, (knighted Jan. 1970)	21.2.1967 to 29.9.1969; 25.11.1969 to 2.11.1972
COPE, Hon. James Francis	27.2.1973 to 11.4.1974; 9.7.1974 to 27.2.1975
SCHOLES, Hon. Gordon Glen Denton	27.2.1975 to 11.11.1975
SNEDDEN, Rt Hon. Sir Billy Mackie, KCMG, QC (knighted Jan. 1978)	17.2.1976 to 10.11.1977; 21.2.1978 to 19.9.1980; 25.11.1980 to 4.2.1983
JENKINS, Hon. Dr Henry Alfred	21.4.1983 to 26.10.1984; 21.2.1985 to 20.12.1985
CHILD, Hon. Joan	11.2.1986 to 5.6.1987; 14.9.1987 to 28.8.1989
McLEAY, Hon. Leo Boyce	29.8.1989 to 22.12.1989; 8.5.1990 to 8.2.1993
MARTIN, Hon. Stephen Paul	4.5.1993 to 29.1.1996
HALVERSON, Hon. Robert George, OBE	30.4.1996 to 3.3.1998
SINCLAIR, Rt Hon. Ian McCahon	4.3.1998 to 31.8.1998
ANDREW, Hon. John Neil	10.11.1998 to 8.10.2001; 12.2.2002 to 31.8.2004
HAWKER, Hon. David Peter Maxwell	16.11.2004 to 17.10.2007
JENKINS, Harry Alfred	12.2.2008 to 19.7.2010; 28.9.2010 to 24.11.2011
SLIPPER, Hon. Peter Neil	24.11.2011 to 9.10.2012
BURKE, Anna Elizabeth	9.10.2012 to 5.8.2013
BISHOP, Hon. Bronwyn Kathleen	12.11.2013 to 2.8.2015
SMITH, Hon. Anthony David Hawthorn	10.8.2015 to 9.5.2016; 30.8.2016 to 11.4.2019; 2.7.2019 to 23.11.2021
WALLACE, Andrew Bruce	23.11.2021 to 11.4.2022
DICK, Hon. Dugald Milton	26.7.2022 –

Source: Based on Elder 2018, Appendix 3.

*Second period in office.

Bibliography

Australia. *Commonwealth of Australia Gazette*, no. S206, 5 October 1982, 1–2

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 21 April 1983, 6

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 24 November 2011, 13797

Australia. House of Representatives Standing Committee on Procedure. *The Standing Orders and Practices which Govern the Conduct of Question Time: Third Report*. Parliamentary Paper no. 354/1986. Canberra: The Committee, 1986

Bolton, Geoffrey. 'The Choice of the Speaker in Australian Parliaments'. *Parliamentary Affairs* 15, no. 3 (Summer 1962): 355–64

Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. 'Protocol Guidelines'. n.d. Accessed 18 June 2019. www.dfat.gov.au/about-us/publications/corporate/protocol-guidelines/protocol-guidelines

Elder, D. R., ed. *House of Representatives Practice*, 7th ed. Canberra: Department of the House of Representatives, 2018

Harris, Ian. 'Question Time: Impartial Speakers and Dissent from Rulings, Some Comments on the House of Representatives' Experience'. Democratic Audit of Australia, March 2006. Copy held on file

Laban, Matthew. *Mr Speaker: The Office and the Individuals since 1945*. London: Biteback Publishing, 2013

Laundy, Philip. *The Office of Speaker in the Parliaments of the Commonwealth*. London: Quiller Press, 1984

Redlich, Josef. *The Procedure of the House of Commons: A Study of Its History and Present Form*. Vol. 2. London: Archibald Constable and Co., 1908

Reid, G. S., and Martyn Forrest. *Australia's Commonwealth Parliament, 1901–1988: Ten Perspectives*. Carlton, Vic.: Melbourne University Press, 1989

Roskell, John S. *The Commons and Their Speakers in English Parliaments, 1376–1523*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1965

United Kingdom. House of Commons Information Office. 'The Speaker', Factsheet M2. Revised August 2010. Accessed 7 July 2019. www.parliament.uk/documents/commons-information-office/m02.pdf

Williams, George. 'A Vital Westminster Convention We Somehow Overlooked'. *Australian*, 31 July 2019, 12

Australian House of Representatives—the Office of Deputy Speaker

Catherine Cornish

Introduction

Considering the contribution that the Speaker's deputy has always made to the work of the House of Representatives, it is surprising that relatively little has been documented about the office since it was established in 1901. This scarcity may be explained by the low profile of the role itself and the tenure of most members who have taken it up, whether as Chairman of Committees in the early days, or as Deputy Speaker.[1] The collected entries in *'Order, Order!'* will facilitate study of the work of individual deputies and their impact as a cohort.

This essay refers to some of the challenges faced by individuals but focuses mostly on that collective aspect, outlining the purpose and evolution of the role. Along the way it notes the professional distinctions between those two senior officeholders of the House, the Speaker and the Deputy Speaker, and also makes some comparisons with arrangements in other parliaments.

The essay will seek to discern any defining features of the office as it outlines:

- the role today, including its responsibilities and powers
- the evolution of the role, including its original purpose and history
- people who have held the role and some perennial issues
- how the Deputy Speaker's role and personal attributes might be characterised.

---

1   The role was first titled 'Chairman of Committees', became 'Deputy Speaker and Chairman of Committees' on 3 November 1992, then 'Deputy Speaker' on 21 February 1994. The equivalent role in the Senate is the 'Deputy President and Chair of Committees'.

Throughout, the Deputy Speaker's role is considered from two broad perspectives. First is the formal framework set by the House's own rules, the standing orders (see note below) and their associated conventions. The second perspective is informal, focusing more on the people involved and the impact that the human element, including pragmatism, can have when combined with rules and conventions. The human element has had its impact from the very beginning, as John Chanter's time as the first Chairman of Committees exemplifies.

Does a study of the whole reveal any 'universal' features that bind or divide the cohort neatly, such as a typical parliamentary career path or personal characteristics? Two features of the group are clear immediately, and these may have as much to do with social history and practicalities as with anything formal. A glance at the names (see table below) shows that, to date, thirty-three members have served as Deputy Speaker or, the earlier incarnation, Chairman of Committees. With two exceptions— the Hon. Joan Child AO and Ms Anna Burke AO—all are men. This is despite the changing composition of the House over the last twenty years or so (see Parliamentary Library 2020, 578 for an analysis of the number of women in parliament).

The second striking feature of the group relates to traditional notions about a deputy's role. A comparison of the names of Deputy Speakers with those of Speakers (see Elder 2018, Appendix 2) shows that making the transition from Deputy Speaker to Speaker is an unlikely prospect for members of the Liberal Party of Australia or The Nationals.[2] While those Speakers who did serve first as Deputy Speaker were most likely grateful for that preparation, their low numbers mean that the Deputy Speaker role cannot be characterised generally as part of a procedural career stream, creating a kind of apprentice or natural successor to the Speaker. This is different from the United Kingdom House of Commons, for example, where it is likely that the Speaker will have served as the Chairman of Ways and Means (the principal Deputy Speaker).

The role today

The following outline of the current functions and their associated rules will help place in context the later discussion of the role's evolution and people.

Election, resignation, and in between

What is the formal foundation for the role? While the Constitution provides that the House will elect a Speaker before the 'despatch of any other business', it makes no mention of the Chairman of Committees, much less the Deputy Speaker. However,

---

2   Speakers Salmon, McDonald, Scholes, Jenkins, Child, L. McLeay, Jenkins, Slipper, and Burke held both offices. A longstanding arrangement between the coalition partners means that, when they are in government, the Speaker is nominated from the Liberals and the Deputy Speaker from the Nationals.

one part of the Deputy Speaker's role is found in section 36: 'Before or during any absence of the Speaker, the House of Representatives may choose a member to perform his duties in his absence'.

It is the House's detailed internal rules, the standing orders, that provide a practical solution to the need for a deputy and they establish a remit that involves much more than acting for an absent Speaker. A Deputy Speaker is chosen by the House at the beginning of each parliament or when the office becomes vacant.[3] In a new parliament, the election is conducted after the Speaker has been elected and it determines the role of Second Deputy Speaker as well. If a government member is elected as Deputy Speaker—and this would usually be the case even though it is not prescribed in the standing orders—only a non-government member may be elected as Second Deputy Speaker.[4] When a Deputy Speaker wishes to resign from the office the path is similarly formal: he or she may make an announcement, or write to the Speaker who will make an announcement to the House and conduct the election of a successor.

Currently the role established through the standing orders and practice involves three main areas of responsibility and these are directed mostly towards the efficiency and continuity of House proceedings:

- working as the Speaker's deputy
- taking specific responsibility for chairing the Federation Chamber[5]
- serving as Acting Speaker in the Speaker's absence.[6]

The Speaker's deputy

Each sitting week the House sits for thirty-six hours and the Federation Chamber meets for up to nineteen and a half hours, making it essential to have systematic arrangements to assist the Speaker as chair. This aspect of the Deputy Speaker's role includes daily duty as the next most senior chair to the Speaker in the chamber, and as day-to-day manager of the Speaker's panel of chairs (the fourteen or so members who take the chair in the House and Federation Chamber). The Deputy Speaker, together with the Clerk, also assists the Speaker in the professional development of Speaker's panel members. The Deputy Speaker also chairs the Liaison Committee of Chairs and Deputy Chairs, an informal group of the leaders of the parliamentary

---

3   S.O. 13.

4   The party affiliation of the early Chairmen of Committees was not so critical. Occasionally in recent times there have been some different choices when members were nominated for the Deputy Speaker role. See VP 2010–13/9 (28.9.2010) and VP 2019–20/665 (10.2.2020).

5   The Federation Chamber (formerly known as the Main Committee) is the House's second chamber. See S.O.s 16 (b) and 17 (b) and (c).

6   Constitution, s. 36. See S.O.s 16 and 18 and Elder (2018, 204–6 and 184–86) for an overview of current arrangements. Early developments in what constituted the Acting Speaker's role are discussed in Pettifer (1981, 216–18).

committees that are supported by the Department of the House of Representatives. The Liaison Committee first met in 1997 and currently meets several times each year to discuss current issues affecting the operations of committees, and to provide advice on these matters to the Speaker, through the Deputy Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker may also take on some administrative and advisory responsibilities at the Speaker's request, but the overall scope of their responsibilities is very different from the Speaker's. The Deputy Speaker would not usually take on a share of the whole range of that office's responsibilities. Instead, their role is very procedural, focused on practical support for the Speaker's leadership of the operations of the House.

Chairing, and deciding the question

Along with members of the Speaker's panel, the Deputy Speaker is likely to be rostered to take the chair in the chamber at any time during the sitting day except for question time, the most contentious time, and for the opening. In exceptional circumstances the Deputy Speaker might also chair at these times.[7] In the chair, the Deputy Speaker has the same challenges and powers as the Speaker, including being able to exercise a casting vote (only), if the numbers in a division are equal.[8] The Deputy Speaker has the same obligation of impartiality as the Speaker (and any chair), with the same rules to enforce, and the same challenges in doing that, including the potential to have his or her rulings dissented from.[9]

In the Speaker's absence, the Deputy Speaker attends the House Selection Committee meetings, where arrangements are made for business time in the House and Federation Chamber for committees, delegations, and private members.[10] The Deputy Speaker is also an ex officio member of the Joint Standing Committee on the National Capital and External Territories. Once elected to the office, Deputy Speakers usually relinquish their roles on other parliamentary committees, simply because of the pressure of time.

A voice and a vote

When away from the chair, the Deputy Speaker's role is much less restricted than the Speaker's. Whereas the Speaker's voice is a guiding one, and their vote a deciding one—always for the whole House—the Deputy Speaker is much like any other

---

7   For example, during the forty-third parliament, at the Speaker's request, Deputy Speaker Burke took the chair at question time and other times throughout the day.
8   The Constitution (s. 40) refers to the Speaker for the exercise of this power; S.O. 3 (d) enables only the Speaker, Acting Speaker, Deputy Speaker, and Second Deputy Speaker to exercise it.
9   S.O. 188. See Elder (2018, 194–96) and note the comment about the possible impact on the authority of the chair and the absence of dissent provisions in the Canadian, United Kingdom, and Indian lower houses.
10   S.O. 222 (b).

member in terms of participation. Although he or she will have a heavy commitment to the roster of the Speaker's panel of chairs, the Deputy Speaker may choose to speak in debates and would expect to vote in divisions in the same way as other members can.

The freedom enjoyed by the Deputy Speaker is not always enjoyed by colleagues with similar roles. In the Canadian House of Commons, the Deputy Speaker (chosen from a different party to the Speaker) generally avoids participating in debate but would usually vote when not presiding. The degree of participation in political activities, debate, and voting is considered a matter for the individual (Bosc and Gannon 2017, chapter 17). In the United Kingdom House of Commons, the Chairman of Ways and Means (the principal Deputy Speaker) is chosen from the opposite side of the House to the Speaker. Like the Speaker, the Chairman of Ways and Means does not become involved in party political matters. While the Chairman may occasionally speak on motions relating to private business, he or she would not ordinarily participate in debate or divisions (Natzler and Hutton 2019, 4.34). In the New Zealand House of Representatives the Deputy Speaker does not participate in debate as frequently as other members. While it is considered a matter for the individual's judgement about which debates to participate in, it is the 'practice for a presiding officer not to speak in a debate over which he or she has been officiating' (McGee 2017, 81–83).

Federation Chamber

The subordinate nature of the Federation Chamber in relation to the House is shown in the way it receives and disposes of business, and deals with disorder. At the same time, its significance to the work of the House is clear. Its existence has enabled the House to debate high volumes of legislation with fewer time restrictions on members who wish to speak than was the case in the past, and it provides substantial opportunities for debate on committee and private members' business items each sitting week.[11] The opportunities provided to all members through the operation of the Federation Chamber has much to do with the House's status as a modern democratic institution.

In the House, the Deputy Speaker takes the chair when asked by the Speaker and he or she exercises the same procedural powers as the Speaker, but their role is a more exclusive one in the Federation Chamber. There the Deputy Speaker is the chair, sets the meeting times, and takes the same responsibility for maintaining order as the Speaker takes in the House.[12] The Deputy Speaker's significance to the work of the Federation Chamber is clear in form and practice. He or she takes the chair regularly and is also supported there by the Second Deputy Speaker and the Speaker's panel.

---

11   S.O.s 183, 187–90, 197–8; Elder 2018, 781–91.
12   S.O.s 16 (b), 17 (c), and 187 (a).

In some ways the Federation Chamber has similarities with the committee of the whole, over which the Deputy Speaker's predecessor, the Chairman of Committees, presided. Both were established as committees of the whole House, to which all members belong, intended to operate with fewer formalities and to consider a restricted range of business. There are also significant differences, including in the Speaker's role: although the Speaker could always attend, debate and vote in the committee of the whole, the Speaker has only spoken once in the Federation Chamber.[13]

Acting Speaker

As Acting Speaker, the Deputy Speaker exercises the full scope of the Speaker's role, including Commonwealth statutory powers and functions, as well as powers and responsibilities under the standing orders. In certain circumstances the Deputy Speaker may be deemed to be Speaker, to provide the necessary continuing administrative authority in the Speaker's absence due to ill health, absence from the country, and so on.[14]

Second Deputy Speaker

The Second Deputy Speaker assists the Deputy Speaker in the Federation Chamber, takes the chair in the House when requested, and acts as Speaker when the Speaker and Deputy Speaker are absent. If a government member is elected as Deputy Speaker, only a non-government member may be elected as Second Deputy Speaker (and vice versa).[15] The office was created in 1994, when the Federation Chamber was first established.

Evolution of the role

As is often the case with House roles and procedures, the Deputy Speaker's role is a hybrid one, beginning in Westminster and then being adapted to meet current circumstances in the local environment. From 1610 on, the Speaker in the House of Commons would leave the House from time to time to enable it to consider matters of detail as it met as a committee of the whole House. Another member would be chosen to preside as Chairman, and the Speaker's absence was considered to enable greater freedom of discussion as well as greater consideration of detail.

---

13   See Pettifer (1981, 222); and H.R. Deb. (26.6.2013) 7192, where Speaker Burke spoke during members' constituency statements.
14   Parliamentary Presiding Officers Act 1965, in particular, sections 5 and 7. See also Elder (2018, 184–86).
15   S.O. 13 (c). Appendix 3 to Elder (2018) includes the names of Second Deputy Speakers.

In essence, the Chairman of Committees' role in the House of Representatives was to preside during certain stages of the House's operations. When the House met as the committee of the whole House it would consider the detail stage of bills and other matters that the House might refer to it. The Chairman presided over the committee of the whole House and, up to 1963, also presided over two committees that were crucial to financial legislation. The Committees of Supply (to consider proposed expenditure), and of Ways and Means (to consider proposed taxation measures, that is, the ways and means to raise supply), comprised all members. When ministers proposed measures, the committees would debate them and, once they were approved, the relevant bills were introduced to the House immediately.[16]

When the House met this way, the Speaker left the chair (but may have stayed in the chamber to speak or even vote), the Chairman moved to the table with the Clerk and Deputy Clerk and proceedings were less formal. The Chairman's powers to regulate the 'conduct of business' and preserve order were similar to the Speaker's in the House. The Chairman had a casting vote only, could rule on points of order and interpret standing orders but, if disorder did occur, could not suspend a member. Instead, he needed to name the member and report to the House, where the Speaker would preside over proceedings to suspend the member.[17] The Chairman of Committees' principal role was to preside at these stages of the House's work, the relief role for the Speaker in the chair at other times being much more incidental than today. The Chairman's work was supported by Deputy Chairmen.

People who have held the office

The collected entries in *'Order, Order!'* show the diversity of those members who have held the office of Deputy Speaker and Chairman of Committees. All of them will have taken the chair from time to time when the House has been engaged in robust debate. Most have had extensive experience as chairs of parliamentary committees, and many will have served on the Speaker's panel or as Temporary Chairmen of Committees. Many will have faced the challenges of chairing when the numbers in the House were evenly balanced, or the government or opposition adjusting to new roles. Those who have been in the role for many years will likely have had some extensive experience as Acting Speaker (for example, Chairman Lucock) and some will have had long periods in the chair (for example, Deputy Speaker Burke). The early Chairmen did not have the benefit of lessons learnt by predecessors or a body of

---

16   See Pettifer (1981, 345–46) for a detailed discussion of the complex early financial procedures that were reformed in 1963.
17   For a full discussion of the Chairman of Committees role see Pettifer and Browning (1989, 233–38).

local precedents and authorities to guide them, although they would have had ready access to advice from the Speaker and assistance from the Clerk. Their individual experiences have all contributed to the evolution of the role.

The first role, first occupant, and first major challenge

The House of Representatives first met on 9 May 1901 and elected Speaker Holder that day. Over the next few sitting days, the House debated the proposed address-in-reply to the governor-general's speech on the opening. The first Chairman of Committees, John Moore Chanter, was elected, unopposed, on 5 June 1901 as the House prepared to consider legislation the following day.

The member who moved the motion, James McColl, referred to Mr Chanter's sixteen years' experience in the New South Wales parliament, his familiarity with the forms of the assembly, and experience as a minister. McColl said of this new role, 'Of course, in a Chairman of Committees we do not require a man versed in constitutional law so much as a man of good business capacity, tact, and good nature, combined with the necessary firmness to push through the business' (H.R. Deb. 5.6.1901, 745). Mr Chanter, a former farmer and auctioneer, had been aligned with many parties and was to be aligned with more in the future. He acknowledged the honour and pledged to act impartially always (H.R. Deb. 5.6.1901, 746).

As it happened, he was to quickly gain some familiarity with constitutional law. In November 1901 he presided over the Committee of Ways and Means as members considered the first tariff proposal and, following a protracted debate, he allowed a backbench member to propose an increase to the rate of duty on an item. The relevant standing order at the time was not absolutely clear, and the Chairman sought guidance from United Kingdom authorities as well as experiences in state parliaments before explaining his own views on the impact of the constitutional provisions and the standing order. To some people (then and now) his decision enabled an unwarranted interference with the financial initiative of the executive, the constitutional and parliamentary principle that only the government may initiate or move to increase appropriations or taxes. For others (then and now) it was a simple acknowledgement of the rights of all members of the House and its direct effect was on a preliminary proposal, not a bill.

As Chairman he reported back to the House and referred to a point of order that had been made in the committee on his ruling (H.R. Deb. 12.11.1901, 7136). Speaker Holder made a statement revealing his own extensive reflection on the matter, noting that while he ultimately supported the ruling: 'I am bound to decide that the Chairman has correctly determined the practice in this House … I may say I should have been better pleased to have decided the other way …' (H.R. Deb. 12.11.1901, 7139; VP 1901–3/237). The member withdrew the amendment but the course had been set and the ruling remained until 1927.

Overall, Chairman Chanter served for some nine years. This probably confirms the opinion of his tact and good nature, and some ease in maintaining an impartial stance. His proposer had also indicated a regard for his parliamentary experience and familiarity with procedure. Similar remarks about useful personal and professional attributes might be made today when a member is proposing another member for the role.

The more things change

Chairman Chanter's ruling came under challenge from time to time and in 1927 another Chairman of Committees, James Bayley, overturned it in the Committee of Ways and Means. He would not accept a private member's proposed amendment (to a minister's amendment) to a tariff: 'I decline to accept the amendment, on the ground that to do so would increase the amount of money received under the tax' (H.R. Deb. 14.12.1927, 3204). During a long debate in which the arguments advanced for and against the Chanter ruling of 1901 were reprised, Chairman Bayley acknowledged his concerns for members' rights and privileges, citing the relevant standing order that was by now more explicit, and House authorities as well as those from the United Kingdom. He confirmed his ruling and this time there was no informal appeal to the Speaker by way of a late point of order. A formal motion of dissent was defeated easily (VP 1926–27/481) and there do not appear to have been appeals to the Speaker.

Those exchanges in 1901 and 1927 were based on the detail of processes that are now long gone. The very nature of the role of Chairman of Committees and the immaturity of House processes meant those early Chairmen were unfortunately bound to encounter significant constitutional and procedural challenges. Deputy Speakers today are unlikely to be in the chair when constitutional issues are considered by the House. Nevertheless, the issues of those early days and the way they were dealt with are still relevant. Clearly the financial initiative of the executive is always a live issue and often a source of tension for members seeking to advance their causes as fully as possible. The House and chairs now have access to an extensive body of authority on the issue but its continuing relevance springs from more than that. It relates to the people, the human element.

There can be no doubt that the Chairmen then, and the Speakers, anticipated the issues, seeking advice and views but ultimately taking responsibility. They reflected on the relevant constitutional and standing order provisions and precedents and withstood considerable pressure on them in the chair, displaying courtesy to each other and to members who, in some cases, could have been more courteous to them. These instances also show the beginnings of institutional maturity: House processes and authorities were being built over time to ensure integrity, clarity, and relevance to their environment.

Characterising the Deputy Speaker's role and personal attributes

The Speaker's powers and duties are very broad in scope. They can be grouped as constitutional; traditional and ceremonial; statutory; procedural; and administrative. By comparison, the Deputy Speaker's role is not so multifaceted. Their focus is highly operational whether they are in the chair or working behind the scenes. Theirs is more a complementary, supporting role than a constitutional one, more practical than ceremonial or traditional.

While the Deputy Speaker is chosen by the House and in that formal role acts for the whole House, there is still the opportunity for them to participate as an ordinary member. The Deputy Speaker can take an intermediate stance, supporting the Speaker and panel in the operations and culture of the House but also having more immediate contact with members—and bringing that additional perspective to their supporting role.

The entries on Deputy Speakers make for interesting reading, not least because of the diverse membership of the cohort. No 'universal' personal features can be identified although a calm disposition and familiarity with standing orders must certainly be desirable, particularly when in the chair. Chairman Chanter's tact and good nature would be as helpful today as in 1901.

Some things can be said with reasonable certainty about the people. A Deputy Speaker will typically:

- come from no particular background, being equally likely to have been a business person, a trade unionist, a public servant, or a farmer before coming to the House
- certainly reserve their right to a 'voice and vote', participating fully in debate and decision-making when not presiding
- understand the essential requirements for impartiality in the chair and cooperation with the Speaker in managing conduct in the House and the work of the Speaker's panel of chairs
- know about the possibility of going on to become the Speaker or a minister.

As for the role, some parallels can be drawn with the Deputy Speaker's particular domain, the Federation Chamber. Both have a profile that does not reflect adequately their role in enabling the House to 'push through the business'. This is certainly not about facilitating a rubber stamp approach to the work of the House. Rather, it is about helping to ensure all members have the opportunity to be heard, whether in debating their own or the government's proposals. The success or otherwise of the proposals is then a matter for the whole House to decide.

Note: The following standing orders (as at 2 August 2022) relate to duties of the Deputy Speaker—13, 14, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 183, 184, 185, 186, 187, 188, 189, 190, 191, 192, 192b, 193, 194, 195, 196, 197, 198, and 230.

Deputy Speakers and Chairmen of Committees

Name	Period(s) of office
CHANTER, John Moore	5.6.1901 to 10.10.1902; 4.6.1903 to 22.10.1903
SALMON, Hon. Charles Carty	17.3.1904 to 15.12.1904; 2.8.1905 to 21.12.1905
McDONALD, Hon. Charles	20.6.1906 to 12.10.1906; 10.7.1907 to 19.2.1910
POYNTON, Hon. Alexander	1.7.1910 to 23.4.1913
FOWLER, Hon. James Mackinnon	9.7.1913 to 30.7.1914
CHANTER, Hon. John Moore	9.10.1914 to 26.3.1917; 14.6.1917 to 3.11.1919; 27.2.1920 to 6.11.1922
BAMFORD, Hon. Frederick William	28.2.1923 to 3.10.1925
BAYLEY, James Garfield	14.1.1926 to 9.10.1928; 7.2.1929 to 16.9.1929
McGRATH, David Charles	20.11.1929 to 27.11.1931
BELL, George John, CMG, DSO, VD	17.2.1932 to 7.8.1934
PROWSE, John Henry	23.10.1934 to 21.9.1937; 30.11.1937 to 27.8.1940; 21.11.1940 to 21.6.1943
RIORDAN, William James Frederick	22.6.1943 to 7.7.1943; 24.9.1943 to 16.8.1946
CLARK, Joseph James	7.11.1946 to 31.10.1949
ADERMANN, Charles Frederick	22.2.1950 to 19.3.1951; 20.6.1951 to 21.4.1954; 4.8.1954 to 4.11.1955; 15.2.1956 to 14.10.1958
BOWDEN, George James, MC	17.2.1959 to 7.3.1961
LUCOCK, Philip Ernest, CBE	8.3.1961 to 2.11.1961; 20.2.1962 to 1.11.1963; 25.2.1964 to 31.10.1966; 21.2.1967 to 29.9.1969; 25.11.1969 to 2.11.1972
SCHOLES, Gordon Glen Denton	28.2.1973 to 11.4.1974; 9.7.1974 to 27.2.1975
BERINSON, Joseph Max	27.2.1975 to 14.7.1975
JENKINS, Henry Alfred	19.8.1975 to 11.11.1975
LUCOCK, Philip Ernest, CBE	17.2.1976 to 10.11.1977
MILLAR, Percival Clarence	21.2.1978 to 19.9.1980; 25.11.1980 to 4.2.1983
JOHNSON, Hon. Leslie Royston	21.4.1983 to 19.12.1983
CHILD, Joan	28.2.1984 to 11.10.1984; 21.2.1985 to 11.2.1986
McLEAY, Leo Boyce	11.2.1986 to 4.6.1987; 14.9.1987 to 29.8.1989
EDWARDS, Ronald Frederick	29.8.1989 to 19.2.1990; 8.5.1990 to 8.2.1993
JENKINS, Harry Alfred	4.5.1993 to 29.1.1996
ROCHER, Allan Charles (Second Deputy)	3.3.1994 to 29.1.1996
NEHL, Garry Barr	30.4.1996 to 31.8.1998; 10.11.1998 to 8.10.2001
JENKINS, Harry Alfred (Second Deputy)	30.4.1996 to 31.8.1998; 10.11.1998 to 8.10.2001; 12.2.2002 to 31.8.2004; 16.11.2004 to 17.10.2007

Name	Period(s) of office
CAUSLEY, Hon. Ian Raymond	12.2.2002 to 31.8.2004; 16.11.2004 to 17.10.2007
BURKE, Anna Elizabeth	12.2.2008 to 19.7.2010
SCOTT, Hon. Bruce Craig (Second Deputy)	12.2.2008 to 19.7.2010; 28.9.2010 to 9.10.2012
SLIPPER, Hon. Peter Neil	28.9.2010 to 24.11.2011
BURKE, Anna Elizabeth	24.11.2011 to 9.10.2012
SCOTT, Hon. Bruce Craig	9.10.2012 to 5.8.2013; 12.11.2013 to 9.5.2016
GEORGANAS, Steven (Second Deputy)	10.10.2012 to 5.8.2013
MITCHELL, Robert George (Second Deputy)	12.11.2013 to 9.5.2016; 30.8.2016 to 11.4.2022
COULTON, Mark Maclean	30.8.2016 to 5.3.2018
HOGAN, Hon. Kevin John	26.3.2018 to 10.2.2020
O'BRIEN, Llewellyn (Llew) Stephen	10.2.2020 to 11.4.2022
CLAYDON, Sharon Catherine	26.7.2022 –
GOODENOUGH, Ian Reginald (Second Deputy)	26.7.2022 –

Source: Based on Elder 2018, Appendix 3.

Note: Title changed from Chairman of Committees to Deputy Speaker and Chairman of Committees on 3 November 1992 and to Deputy Speaker on 21 February 1994. The position of Second Deputy Speaker was created on 21 February 1994. Before 10 July 1907 the Chairman of Committees was appointed on a sessional basis.

Bibliography

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 12 November 1901, 7136–39

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 5 June 1901, 745–46

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 14 December 1927, 3204

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 26 June 2013, 7192

Australia. House of Representatives. *Votes and Proceedings*, 1901–3, 237

Australia. House of Representatives. *Votes and Proceedings*, 1926–27, 481

Australia. House of Representatives. *Votes and Proceedings*, 2010–13, 9

Australia. House of Representatives. *Votes and Proceedings*, 2019–20, 665

Bosc, M., and A. Gagnon, eds. *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, 3rd ed. Montréal: Éditions Yvon Blais, 2017

Elder, D. R., ed. *House of Representatives Practice*, 7th ed. Canberra: Department of the House of Representatives, 2018

McGee, David. *Parliamentary Practice in New Zealand*, 4th ed., edited by M. Harris and D. Wilson. Auckland: Oratia Books, 2017. www.parliament.nz

Natzler, D., and M. Hutton, eds. *Erskine May's Treatise on the Law, Privileges, Proceedings and Usage of Parliament*, 25th ed. London: LexisNexis, 2019. erskinemay.parliament.uk

Parliamentary Library, Department of Parliamentary Services. *The 46th Parliament. Parliamentary Handbook of the Commonwealth of Australia*. Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia, 2020

Pettifer, J. A., ed. *House of Representatives Practice*, 1st ed. Canberra: Department of the House of Representatives, 1981

Pettifer, J. A., and A. R. Browning, eds. *House of Representatives Practice*, 2nd ed. Canberra: Department of the House of Representatives, 1989

Australian House of Representatives—the Office of Clerk

Natalie Cooke
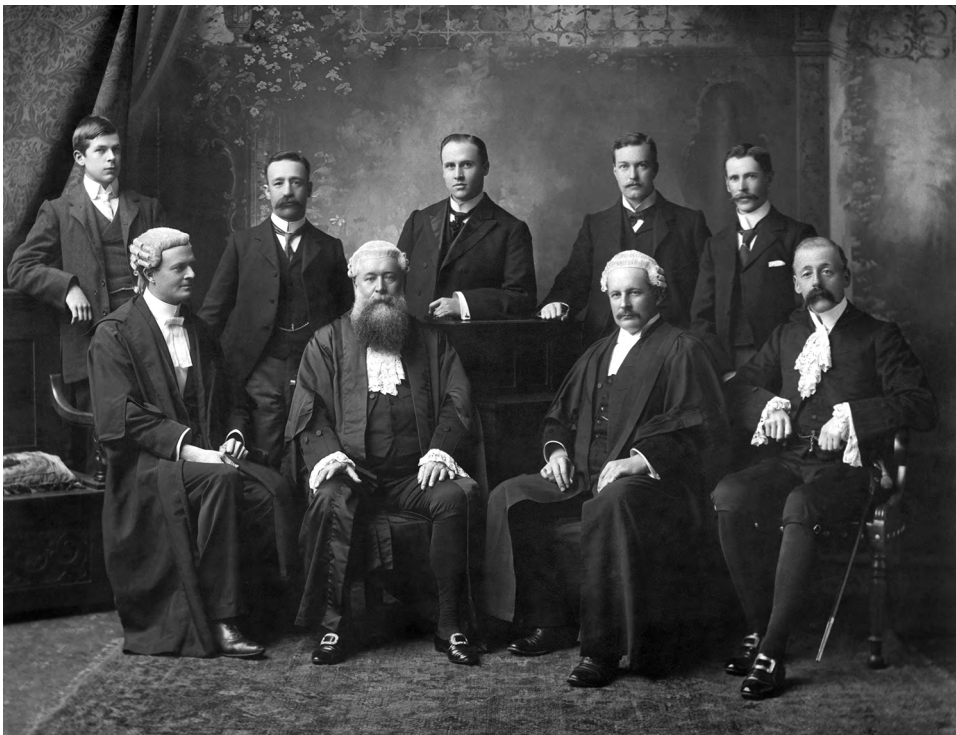
Figure 2: Officers of the House of Representatives, first parliament, 1901.

Front row, from left: Walter Augustus Gale (Second Clerk Assistant); Sir George Henry Jenkins (Clerk of the House); Charles Broughton Boydell (Clerk Assistant); Thomas Woollard (Serjeant-at-Arms and Clerk of Committees); back row, from left: Harold Anderson Ross Berry (Junior Clerk); Edward Theodor Huber (Clerk of the Records); Francis Laurence Clapin (Clerk of Papers and Accountant); John Robert McGregor (Reading Clerk and Assistant Clerk of Committees); Ernest William Parkes (Assistant Reading Clerk). Gale, McGregor, and Parkes each later became Clerk of the House.

Source: Courtesy of the National Archives of Australia. NAA: A8465, 1 4025026.

Introduction

At the right-hand side of a table just in front of the Speaker's chair in the chamber of the House of Representatives sits a figure in a black gown, who has variously been described as 'guide', 'counsellor', 'true and faithful servant of the House', 'guardian of the procedural equity that is the touchstone of any real parliamentary assembly' and, both poetically and rather mischievously, a 'wise old owl' (H.R Deb. 28.9.1927, 23; H.R. Deb. 28.9.1927, 24; H.R. Deb. 6.5.1982, 2342; O'Keeffe 1990, 54; Menzies 2012, 3). This is the Clerk of the House.

Australia's system of government draws many of its structures and traditions from the United Kingdom, including the appointment of a Clerk to serve each house of the parliament. The Clerk has many responsibilities: from keeper of the House's formal records to its principal adviser on parliamentary law, practice, and procedure, from certifier of documents to chief executive of the department which supports the House, the Department of the House of Representatives. It is a remit which has expanded significantly since the first Clerk was appointed to the British House of Commons in the fourteenth century.

On 9 May 1901, the acting Clerk of the Australian House of Representatives read the proclamation and announced that he had received from the secretary to the prime minister a letter forwarding the Writs of Election to serve in the House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Australia. Members then attended the Senate chamber, and His Royal Highness the Duke of Cornwall and York declared Australia's first parliament open. Since then, the Clerk has been a constant presence in the House each sitting day.

Appointment of the Clerk of the House

Since the first sitting of the Commonwealth parliament, there have been forty-seven parliaments, thirty-one prime ministers and twenty-seven governors-general—and only seventeen Clerks. Clerks are in effect the institutional memory of the House.

The longest-serving Clerk, Frank Green CBE, served for more than 18 years. The shortest-serving Clerk was John McGregor, who sadly died in office in 1927 on his first sitting day as Clerk, having just succeeded Walter Gale CMG, who had died in office only two months before that. (A full list of the Clerks is below.)

The Clerk, as an impartial servant of the House, is appointed by the Speaker after the Speaker has consulted members of the House about the proposed appointment. In practice, party leaders are consulted. Without exception, a person who is appointed as Clerk has been in the service of the House and has served at the table

as principal adviser on parliamentary procedure for a long period. A person cannot be appointed as the Clerk of the House of Representatives unless the Speaker making the appointment is satisfied that the person has extensive knowledge of, and experience in, relevant parliamentary law, procedure, and practice. Since 1999, this requirement has been enshrined in the Parliamentary Service Act 1999, under which the Clerk is appointed. The same Act preserves the independence of the Clerk in giving advice and also limits a Clerk's term of office to ten years.

At first, Clerks of the House of Representatives assumed their role having gained the extensive parliamentary experience required through working in the colonial and state parliaments. Indeed, George Jenkins CMG, who acted as the Clerk during the opening of the Commonwealth parliament, resigned a mere two months later to resume his office of Clerk of the Parliaments of Victoria (Elder 2018, 807). His successor, Charles Gavan Duffy (Clerk from 1901 to 1917), had also previously served in the Victorian state parliamentary arena (S. Deb. 27.8.1920, 3931). Walter Gale (Clerk from 1917 to 1927) had been Clerk and Librarian of the Western Australian Legislative Assembly, while his all-too-brief successor, John McGregor, had begun his career in the New South Wales parliament. Ernest Parkes (Clerk from 1927 to 1937), who became Clerk after Mr McGregor's sudden death in office, had also transferred from the Victorian parliament when the Commonwealth parliament was established (H.R. Deb. 17.6.1937, 22). Frank Green (Clerk from 1937 to 1955) transferred from the Tasmanian House of Assembly in 1921 (H.R. Deb. 10.6.1955, 1669).

More recent Clerks of the House have gained their experience through long careers in the federal parliament. For example, Norman Parkes (Clerk from 1971 to 1976), the son of Ernest Parkes, began working in the parliament as an accountant in the Parliamentary Reporting Staff in 1934, before moving to the House in 1937. He subsequently worked in every section of the department before becoming Clerk in 1971 (H.R. Deb. 9.12.1976, 3579).

All the Clerks have brought a wealth of House experience to the role, sometimes gained through what one Speaker referred to as a 'long and arduous apprenticeship' (H.R. Deb. 14.3.1991, 2041). Most recent Clerks—Allan Tregear, Alan Turner, Norman Parkes, Doug Blake, Alan Browning, Lyn Barlin, Bernard Wright, David Elder—had all worked for the House for at least thirty years before becoming Clerk. (Claressa Surtees, who became the Clerk in 2019, with twenty-six years of prior service, and Ian Harris, Clerk from 1997 to 2009, with twenty-five years of prior service, were not far behind.) Of note is Jack Pettifer, who became the Clerk in 1977. He served the House continuously in various roles from April 1939 to his retirement in July 1982, save for an interruption for war service, but his association with Parliament House was even longer than that. His father had been housekeeper when the parliament moved to Canberra and the family had lived in a flat within the precincts (H.R. Deb. 6.5.1982, 2341).

The Clerk's procedural roles

The first record of an appointment of an official to attend parliament in a clerical capacity in the United Kingdom dates from 1315 (Harris 2002, 2), while the House of Commons acquired its own Clerk in about 1363 (Ryle 1981, 501). Clerks—who could both read and write, which many members could not—kept a record of decisions and proceedings and informed members of what was going on. Over the centuries, they recorded the progress of bills and noted resolutions.

In the sixteenth century the Clerks began to undertake a wider range of functions. In the first half of that century, the Clerk's journal acquired statutory recognition as the official record of the House of Commons (Thrush and Ferris 2010). At first mainly a record of motions and bills, it was later expanded to include such things as the election of the Speaker, records of attendance, divisions, and decisions on matters of privilege (Elder 2018, 209). The Clerk also performed several other functions, the most important of which was to look up precedents from the books in his keeping (Thrush and Ferris 2010). Today the responsibility for recording all proceedings and decisions of the House of Representatives is vested formally in the Clerk, who records them in the official record, the *Votes and Proceedings*.

The operation of the House is governed by rules and conventions which provide the procedural authority exercised by the Speaker. The three main sources of procedural authority are the Constitution, the standing orders, and traditional practice. In many ways the provisions of the Constitution and the standing orders reflect traditional parliamentary practice which applied in the House of Commons in the years before Federation, and which was also followed in various ways in parliaments in the Australian colonies prior to Federation (Elder 2018, 190).

The Clerk plays a key role in advising the Speaker and members on these rules and conventions. To do this, the Clerk must have extensive knowledge and experience in the interpretation of the standing orders, in parliamentary practice and precedent, and in the requirements of the Constitution which affect the role of the House and its relationship with the Senate and the Crown. He or she is also required to be informed on the law and practice of other parliaments and in particular that of the United Kingdom House of Commons.

While sitting at the table, the Clerk may be called upon to give immediate advice to the chair or other members when a procedural or technical matter arises. Therefore the Clerk must always keep an ear to the debate (Elder 2018, 211). One member of the Speaker's panel once noted in the chamber 'how much it means to me that … when we sit in the chair … we can press a little button which shows a green light … and we can get the advice we require' (H.R. Deb. 6.5.1982, 2345).

The Clerk's advice is offered not only to the chair but also to governments, oppositions, individual members of the House, and House and joint committees. Advice is given to members on the range of aspects of the role of a member, including their participation in proceedings. The Clerk serves the House above all else and must maintain complete impartiality in dealing with all members of the House.

In the early years of the parliament, when the House relied heavily on House of Commons practice, Erskine May's *Parliamentary Practice* was the standard reference text on the law, privileges, and proceedings of parliament used when the orders and practice of the House were silent. The House gradually developed its own body of practice, procedure, and precedent, and in 1975 the Standing Orders Committee recognised the need for the House to have its own equivalent of Erskine May's text (Pettifer 1981, vii). The Clerk accordingly became the editor of *House of Representatives Practice*, the first edition of which was published in 1981. The Procedure Section (later becoming the Procedure Office) of the department was established to prepare the text. Now in its seventh edition, *House of Representatives Practice* is relied on by all those who participate in or follow the work of the House as the authoritative source on the practice of the House (Elder 2018, v).

While the principal role of the Clerk is to provide procedural advice to the Speaker and members, the Clerk plays other important roles in the chamber. The Clerk is the only non-member to have a speaking role in the proceedings of the House. In addition to announcing or 'calling on' items of business, the Clerk also 'reads' bills at each stage of their progress through the House—that is, when the bill is introduced (first reading) or when the House orders that the bill be read a second or third time. At each stage the Clerk in fact reads out only the long title of the bill. This procedure also has its origins in Britain, where, before printing and widespread literacy, the complete text of proposed laws had to be read out to the members, as many times as required.

Another of the Clerk's responsibilities is carried out when the House proceeds to elect a new Speaker. The Clerk assumes the role of Chair of the House, calling on the proposer and seconder and putting such questions as are necessary until the Speaker's chair is filled.

The Clerk also performs essential functions in the legislative process. As each bill is passed by the House, before it is sent or returned to the Senate the Clerk must certify on the bill that it has passed the House. Whenever the House deals with Senate amendments to a bill or disposes of a bill, the Clerk is also required to certify the action taken by the House. The Clerk must also certify bills which originated in the House and have been passed by both houses, before they can be forwarded to the governor-general for assent.

Another of the Clerk's roles in the House is to activate the bells which, along with the associated flashing green lights in all rooms and lobbies of the building, summon members to the chamber. The Clerk causes the bells to ring before the commencement of each sitting or the resumption of a sitting after a suspension. Before any division or ballot is taken, the Clerk rings the bells for the period specified by the standing orders, as indicated by the sandglasses kept on the table for that purpose. The bells are also rung to summon members to the chamber to establish a quorum.

The standing orders set out other responsibilities for the Clerk, including the safe keeping of all records and documents of the House, the arrangements for bills, production of the Notice Paper, and the signing of motions of thanks, orders of the House, and addresses agreed to by the House.

The Clerk outside the chamber

The Clerk is also the chief executive of the Department of the House of Representatives. Today, this is a department of some 185 employees. The first Commonwealth parliament, which had only thirty-six senators and seventy-five members, was supported by a total of fifty-three officials (Reid and Forrest 1989, 398).

Since 1999, the Department of the House of Representatives has operated under the Parliamentary Service Act 1999. This Act provides for a non-partisan parliamentary service, comprised of the Department of the House of Representatives together with three other parliamentary departments: the Department of the Senate, the Department of Parliamentary Services, and the Parliamentary Budget Office.

The department supports the House, its members and committees, and some joint committees. In addition to this direct support for the House, the department seeks to increase awareness and understanding of the work of the House and helps the House and the parliament maintain institutional relationships with their state, territory, and international counterparts.

The Clerk is supported by the Deputy Clerk, the Serjeant-at-Arms and three Clerks Assistant, who oversee the work of particular areas of the department.

Changes that affect the parliament affect the department by extension, and Clerks have played considerable roles in leading and managing change. Significant transitions in recent decades include the introduction of information technology, which has had a substantial impact on the way that parliamentarians and parliamentary staff work, and the construction of a 'new' Parliament House in 1988. During the design phase for the new building, the Clerk, along with the other heads of the parliamentary departments, prepared detailed submissions on the future requirements for accommodation to be occupied by the House of Representatives (Joint Select

Committee on the New and Permanent Parliament House 1970, 13). In 1988, the then Clerk, Alan Browning, oversaw House aspects of the move to the new building, which involved a total of 370 people, including members, members' staff and departmental staff, and carriage of approximately 900 cubic metres of material (Department of the House of Representatives 1988, 3).

However, the Clerk's focus is not only domestic. By agreement between the departments of the House of Representatives and the Senate, the House of Representatives administers the International and Parliamentary Relations Office which serves both houses (Wright 2015, 29). The Clerk keeps abreast of international parliamentary best practice and shares the House's experiences. For example, the Clerk and a number of senior departmental staff are members of the Australia and New Zealand Association of Clerks-at-the-Table (ANZACATT) and the Association of Secretaries General of Parliaments, a consultative body of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, the association of national parliaments. Many Clerks have also been honorary or branch secretaries to the Australian branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association.

The Clerk is also involved in supporting parliaments of other nations to build their institutional capacity. Some of this is done directly. For example, in recent years Clerks have delivered workshops and training to parliamentarians and parliamentary staff in countries ranging from Myanmar to Tonga (see Department of the House of Representatives 2018, 57; 2009, 40). As the first president of the Association of Secretaries General of Parliaments to come from the southern hemisphere, Mr Harris helped to support the establishment of parliaments in East Timor, Cambodia, and Laos (H.R. Deb. 26.11.2009, 13090). The Clerk, in overseeing the work of the International and Parliamentary Relations Office, supports the ongoing development of parliamentary democracy through a range of programs for parliamentarians and parliamentary staff. This includes study visits, broader parliamentary strengthening projects, and seminars and workshops. Many of these programs are delivered in partnership with international parliamentary associations, such as the Inter-Parliamentary Union, and other international bodies, such as the United Nations Development Programme.

Conclusion

By the time the first Commonwealth parliament opened in 1901, the role of the Clerk had already evolved from its beginnings as a scribe and reader for the English parliament. Since Federation, the role of Clerk in the House of Representatives has developed further still. The Clerk is now not only a procedural expert and keeper of records but adviser, capacity builder, and leader of a team of professional staff all working in the service of the House and the parliament. The Clerk is a steward of

the parliamentary institutions, maintaining knowledge and records about decisions and processes so they are available to the House long after individual members have departed.

Both the membership and the workload of the House have increased significantly over the years—for example, through the expansion of the committee system and the introduction of a parallel chamber, the Federation Chamber, to allow two streams of business to be debated concurrently (Elder 2018, 781). This has come with increased responsibilities for the Clerk. But it is not only the size of the House and the number of staff supporting it that have changed. The focus on high standards of stewardship and accountability across all public sector agencies, as set out in the Public Governance and Accountability Act 2013 (and previously in the Financial Management and Accountability Act 1997), has brought with it increased and more diverse formal responsibilities for the Clerk.

The role of today's Clerk has expanded well beyond anything that a Clerk of the House a century ago could have imagined. While the Clerk continues to be the chief adviser to the Speaker and members on matters of parliamentary practice and procedure, the Clerk's role now encompasses all of the duties that would be expected of the chief executive of any professional organisation. Underpinning this evolving role, throughout the House's history the Clerk's focus has remained on, as one parliamentarian put it, 'pursuing the dignity of the House and the consistency of the rules' (H.R. Deb. 1.8.2019, 1846).

Note: The following standing orders (as at 2 August 2022) refer to specific duties of the Clerk—4, 8, 10, 18, 19, 21, 22, 25, 27, 28, 50A, 102, 105, 106, 108, 110, 129, 135, 137, 156, 157, 164, 167, 171, 175, 176, 199, 200, and 254.

Clerks of the House

Name	Period of office
JENKINS, George Henry, CMG (acting*) (Sir George after retirement)	1.5.1901 to 6.7.1901
DUFFY, Charles Gavan, CMG	8.7.1901 to 31.1.1917
GALE, Walter Augustus, CMG	1.2.1917 to 27.7.1927
McGREGOR, John Robert	1.9.1927 to 28.9.1927
PARKES, Ernest William, CMG	27.10.1927 to 22.3.1937
GREEN, Frank Clifton, MC (CBE after retirement)	23.3.1937 to 25.6.1955
TREGEAR, Albert Allan (CBE after retirement)	27.6.1955 to 31.12.1958
TURNER, Alan George, CBE (Sir Alan after retirement)	1.1.1959 to 10.12.1971
PARKES, Norman James, CBE	11.12.1971 to 31.12.1976
PETTIFER, John Athol, CBE	1.1.1977 to 15.7.1982
BLAKE, Douglas Maurice, VRD (AM after retirement)	16.7.1982 to 30.7.1985
BROWNING, Alan Robert	31.7.1985 to 22.3.1991

Name	Period of office
BARLIN, Lyndal McAlpin, AM	23.3.1991 to 26.7.1997
HARRIS, Ian Charles, AO	27.7.1997 to 4.12.2009
WRIGHT, Bernard Clive (AO after retirement)	5.12.2009 to 31.12.2013
ELDER, David Russell	1.1.2014 to 11.8.2019
SURTEES, Claressa Anne	12.8.2019 –

Source: Based on Elder 2018, Appendix 3.

* Mr Jenkins was never formally appointed Clerk of the House, was paid no salary during his term as acting Clerk, and resigned to resume his office of Clerk of the Parliaments of Victoria.

Bibliography

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 28 September 1927, 23–24

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 17 June 1937, 22

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 10 June 1955, 1669

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 9 December 1976, 3579

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 6 May 1982, 2341–45

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 14 March 1991, 2041

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 26 November 2009, 13090

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 1 August 2019, 1846

Australia. Senate. *Parliamentary Debates*, 27 August 1920, 3931

Department of the House of Representatives. *Annual Report 1987–88*. Canberra: The Department, 1988

Department of the House of Representatives. *Annual Report 2008–09*. Canberra: The Department, 2009

Department of the House of Representatives. *Annual Report 2017–18*. Canberra: The Department, 2018

Elder, D. R., ed. *House of Representatives Practice*, 7th ed. Canberra: Department of the House of Representatives, 2018

Harris, I. C. 'The Role of a Clerk in the House of Representatives'. Address to Juris Doctor students of the University of Melbourne, June 2002

Joint Select Committee on the New and Permanent Parliament House. *Report on the Proposed New and Permanent Parliament House for the Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia.* Canberra: Government Printing Office, March 1970

Menzies, Sir Robert. 'To the Clerks at the Table'. *Table Talk*, 41 (September 2012)

O'Keeffe, P. A. 'Clerks and Members of Parliament: A Personal View of the Relationship in Australia'. *The Table* 57 (1990): 51–63

Pettifer, J. A., ed. *House of Representatives Practice*, 1st ed. Canberra: Australian Government Printing Service, 1981

Reid, G. S., and Martyn Forrest. *Australia's Commonwealth Parliament 1901–1988: Ten Perspectives*. Carlton, Vic.: Melbourne University Press, 1989

Ryle, M. T. 'The Legislative Staff of the British House of Commons'. *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 6, no. 4 (November 1981): 497–519

Thrush, A., and J. P. Ferris, eds. *The History of Parliament: The House of Commons 1604–1629.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010

Wright, Bernard. 'The Federal Parliament 1988–2013'. *House of Representatives Research Paper*, October 2015

Biographical Entries

Adermann, Sir Charles Frederick: Chairman of Committees 1950–1958

John Hawkins

Sir Charles Frederick Adermann (1896–1979), farmer and Chairman of Committees of the House of Representatives, was born on 3 August 1896 at Vernor Siding in south-east Queensland, eighth child of Carl Friederich Adermann, farmer, and his wife Emilie, née Litzow, both migrants from Germany. Having settled at Wooroolin, in 1909 the Adermanns founded the first congregation of the Churches of Christ in the Kingaroy district. Educated at Lowood and Wooroolin state schools to age thirteen, Charlie later took correspondence courses in farm management. He tried to join the Australian Imperial Force in 1916 when he learned that his brother Robert had been killed in action, but was rejected on medical grounds. Another brother, Ernest, became member for New Plymouth in the New Zealand parliament (1943–66).

Working on his parents' farm, Adermann began to emerge as a primary industry leader. Farmers in the South Burnett region had turned to peanut-growing, seeking an alternative cash crop to maize. When increased production led to a sharp reduction in price during the 1924 season, the farmers refused to sell their product and approached the state government under the terms of the Primary Products Pools Act 1922–23 to form a Peanut (later Peanut Marketing) Board. As chairman of the board (1925–31, 1934–52), Adermann presided over the gradual stabilisation of the industry; through a compulsory collective marketing system, the board treated, stored, and sold annual crops on behalf of growers. On 7 April 1926 at St Andrew's Anglican Church, Wooroolin, he married Mildred Turner, and from 1931 they worked their own farm in the district.

A man of deep religious faith, Adermann was president of the Queensland and federal conferences of the Churches of Christ. Beginning in 1938, as 'Uncle John' he delivered a popular Sunday school broadcast on radio 4SB in the hope that 'a children's session of this type, with children's voices, would have a tendency to encourage others to read

Figure 3: Charles Adermann.
Source: National Library of Australia, PIC Box PIC/4144 #PIC/4144.

the word of God' (*Charleville Times* 1943, 5). He continued these broadcasts until the last year of his life. Other service was as chairman of the local wartime patriotic fund and as a councillor of Kingaroy Shire (1939–46).

Convinced that farmers needed their own political representation, in 1943 Adermann was the Country Party candidate for the federal seat of Maranoa. His success was the only conservative gain in an election that otherwise saw a pronounced national swing to the Australian Labor Party government led by John Curtin. Adermann signalled what his electors could expect by laconically telling the local press that 'all this publicity business is not for me' (*Charleville Times* 1943, 5). He nonetheless consolidated his hold on Maranoa at the 1946 election with a swing of over 10 per cent. Another peanut farmer from the region, (Sir) Johannes (Joh) Bjelke-Petersen, was secretary of the Country Party's local branch; in 1947 Adermann encouraged him to run for the state seat of Nanango. At the 1949 election Adermann moved to the newly created federal seat of Fisher, which he was to hold at the following eight elections, including being unopposed in 1955. He fought for an improved wool marketing scheme and greater Commonwealth extension service grants to encourage improved agricultural techniques. His earnestness and stridency in parliamentary debate grated on Labor members. In June 1949 Arthur Calwell alleged that Adermann had organised a cooperative society which he later disbanded at the behest of the agricultural company Dalgety & Co. Ltd and other interested parties, and also had used his position as chairman of the Peanut Marketing Board to attempt to influence classification of his third-grade peanuts as first grade. Adermann vehemently denied the allegations, but Prime Minister Ben Chifley declined his request for a formal inquiry.

After (Sir) Robert Menzies led the Liberal–Country Party coalition to government in December 1949, Adermann was elected unopposed as Chairman of Committees on 22 February 1950. His tenure did not begin well. During a debate the following month on a ruling by Speaker Archie Cameron he condescendingly questioned Dr Herbert Evatt's appreciation of the law by telling him what 'the right honorable member should know, because of his legal training' (H.R. Deb. 14.3.1950, 683). In April the opposition tried to censure him for disregarding a longstanding arrangement whereby the chair's call during contentious debates would alternate between the government and the opposition. Things improved temporarily when he acted as Speaker while Cameron was visiting London for the October 1950 opening of the restored House of Commons chamber. Some commentators found his approach a welcome relief from Cameron's unremitting rigour, with Adermann behaving as 'a disciplinarian or a diplomat as the occasion demands' (McDonnell 1950, 8). Adermann was also praised by the press for upholding the right of lobbyists to approach members in King's Hall, a public area.

Yet in 1951 when the government proposed Adermann for re-election as Chairman of Committees, Labor's outspoken Eddie Ward excoriated him as 'bitterly prejudiced against members of the Labor party, and brutally unfair and incompetent' (H.R. Deb. 20.6.1951, 132). Adermann continued when not presiding to enter into debates on motions challenging Cameron's rulings and, in so doing, may have attracted some of the disdain in which Cameron was held by the opposition. This was not helped by his occasionally drawing on the scriptures, such as by proclaiming that 'I should be justified in making a charge against them [opposition members] in the terms of chapter 9, verse 3, of Jeremiah, because the usual term would not be allowed under the Standing Orders' (H.R. Deb. 21.5.1952, 634). He made use of the controversial standing order 303, which allowed him to readily exclude an unruly member. His reappointment as Chairman by the House after the 1954 election was also opposed, with the Labor member Bill Edmonds, angry at having been suspended for interjecting, claiming that Adermann had 'demanded of me an apology but could not tell me why' (H.R. Deb. 4.8.1954, 19). Edmonds's colleague Bill Bryson, the member for Wills, added that Adermann was 'incapable of acting without bias' (H.R. Deb. 4.8.1954, 20).

From August 1955 Cameron's ill health resulted in Adermann again acting as Speaker, this time for five and a half months. In 1956 Labor opposed his re-election as Chairman of Committees, the member for Batman, Alan Bird, describing him as 'too temperamental for the position', leading to 'too many unnecessary incidents' (H.R. Deb. 15.2.1956, 28–29). After Cameron's death in August of that year, Adermann received unexpected encouragement to accept nomination for the Speakership from the Labor member Rowland James on the grounds of 'the principle of seniority of employment, which the Miners Federation has always stood for' (H.R. Deb. 29.8.1956, 5). (Sir) John McLeay, however, was chosen in line with the Liberal Party's senior status in the coalition.

Following the 1958 election, Adermann left the Deputy Speakership and was appointed minister for primary industry, marking the return of this portfolio to the Country Party after the tenure of the Sydney Liberal (Sir) William McMahon. Adermann was prominent in his party's successful push for further subsidies, grants, and other assistance to rural producers. His Country Party colleague Doug Anthony recalled him as a minister 'of great tenacity' who fought in cabinet repeatedly for an improved wool marketing scheme, 'no matter how often he was defeated' (H.R. Deb. 9.5.1979, 1985). He was regarded as dogged and an avoider of pitfalls rather than as outstanding. Even as a minister he liked to spend as much time as possible in the paddocks of his farm near Kingaroy. He was elevated to cabinet in February 1960, still holding the primary industry portfolio. In December 1963, following the retirement of (Sir) Charles Davidson, Adermann was elected deputy leader of the Country Party. Described by Anthony as 'first and foremost a parliamentarian' (H.R. Deb. 9.5.1979, 1985), Adermann attended three conferences of the Commonwealth Parliamentary

Association. In December 1965, the day after he returned from leading the Australian delegation to an association conference in New Zealand, the press gallery was surprised to observe him in the House as 'he made a funny face, poked out his tongue and, waving his arms about, did a little dance' (*Canberra Times* 1965, 8), probably an attempt to demonstrate the Māori haka.

Adermann reached the peak of his political career in 1966, when he rose to fifth in cabinet seniority under Prime Minister Harold Holt and was appointed a privy counsellor at a ceremony in Buckingham Palace. But at about this time his party leader, (Sir) John McEwen, was becoming increasingly concerned about the need for a leadership succession plan. Adermann, four years older than McEwen, did not seem a suitable successor. McEwen pushed him out of the deputy leadership after the 1966 election in favour of the much younger Anthony. At McEwen's further urging, and in recognition of his wife's poor health, Adermann the following year also stood down from his portfolio, with Anthony again succeeding him. Adermann was appointed KBE in 1971 and retired from politics at the 1972 election. His son Evan succeeded him as member for Fisher; subsequently, as a minister in the government of Malcolm Fraser, he was responsible for the granting of self-government to the Northern Territory.

'Tall, lean and suntanned' (*Bulletin* 1959, 14), Adermann was a teetotaller and non-smoker, a dedicated community worker, and a life member of Kingaroy Rotary Club. In retirement he enjoyed playing lawn bowls and watching Test cricket, sometimes in the company of Menzies. He died on 9 May 1979 at his daughter's house at Dalby in the Darling Downs region of Queensland, and was survived by his wife and their two sons and two daughters. His funeral at Taabinga cemetery, Kingaroy, was attended by Anthony as acting prime minister and by Bjelke-Petersen as premier. Clyde Cameron, not known for insincerely praising political adversaries, judged Adermann to have displayed not 'even a streak of meanness in his makeup' (H.R. Deb. 9.5.1979, 1987) and to have possessed a livelier sense of humour than he was commonly credited with. The Labor leader and fellow Queenslander Bill Hayden, who had not been in parliament when Adermann was Chairman of Committees, added that he was 'one of the most highly regarded parliamentarians to have held this post over the past forty years' (H.R. Deb. 9.5.1979, 1987). McMahon recalled Adermann's determination to teach him how to pick peanuts. In his last speech to parliament Adermann had reflected that 'when the Press or other media or any person denigrates Parliament or when members of Parliament act with less dignity than they should … something is taken away from that right which is ours in a democracy to accept the rule of the people through Parliament and so give a fair, equitable and just decision of law' (H.R. Deb. 26.10.1972, 3367).

This article supplements the original Volume 13 ADB *biography, published 1993, authored by Margaret Bridson Cribb. adb.anu.edu.au/biography/adermann-sir-charles-frederick-9313/text 16343*

Select bibliography

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates,* 1 June 1949, 406–18

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates,* 14 March 1950, 668–86

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates,* 20 April 1950, 1712–19

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates,* 20 June 1951, 132–34

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates,* 21 May 1952, 632–43

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates,* 4 August 1954, 19–21

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates,* 15 February 1956, 26–31

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates,* 29 August 1956, 5–7

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates,* 26 October 1972, 3367–68

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates,* 9 May 1979, 1985–90

Bulletin (Sydney). 'Personal Items'. 30 December 1959, 14

Canberra Times. 'I Could Have …'. 11 December 1965, 8

Canberra Times. 'Peanuts' Stand'. 8 December 1966, 3

Charleville Times. 'Maranoa Seat'. 3 September 1943, 5

Laverty, J. 'Organized Marketing and the Development of the Peanut Industry'. *Historical Society of Queensland Journal* 5, no. 1 (1953): 833–40

McDonnell, Leo. 'Canberra Commentary'. *Brisbane Telegraph*, 28 October 1950, 9

McDonnell, Leo. 'Canberra Commentary'. *Brisbane Telegraph*, 18 November 1950, 8

McEwen, John. *John McEwen: His Story*. Privately published, 1983

South Burnett Times. 'Homage to Sir Charles from National Leaders'. 16 May 1979, 1

Whitington, Don. *The Rulers: Fifteen Years of the Liberals.* Melbourne: Cheshire-Lansdowne, 1964

Andrew, John Neil: Speaker 1998–2004

Clare Parker

John Neil Andrew, farmer and twenty-fourth Speaker of the House of Representatives, was born on 7 June 1944 in Waikerie, South Australia, son of John (Jack) Clover Andrew, farmer, and his wife, Elsie. John senior was later chairman of Waikerie District Council, chairman of the Waikerie Producers Co-operative, and national president of the Australian Council of Local Government Associations. His son, using his second given name, grew up among the fruit-growers of his home state's Riverland region. He studied at Waikerie High School and then at Urrbrae Agricultural High School in Adelaide, where he completed the year eleven Leaving Certificate. On returning to Waikerie, Neil grew crops that included peaches, citrus, and grapes, and became a member of the local gliding club. He also became active in politics, joining the Liberal Party in 1967 and chairing its Waikerie Branch (1971–74). In 1971 he married Carolyn Ayles, a mathematics and science teacher at Waikerie High; they have three children.

In 1972 Andrew joined the Liberal Party State Council and chaired the electorate conference for the state seat of Chaffey (1972–75). He also played a leadership role among his fellow farmers, serving as a member of the South Australian Advisory Board of Agriculture from 1973 and later becoming its chair (1980–82). In 1975 he was awarded a Nuffield Foundation travelling scholarship to undertake a study tour of the British fruit industry.

Andrew's first experience of elective office was as a councillor for the District Council of Waikerie (1976–83). He chaired the Liberal Party federal electorate conference for the seat of Wakefield (1980–82) and, at the election of March 1983, was the party's successful candidate for this safe Liberal seat. Wakefield was then a rural electorate that stretched eastwards from the Yorke Peninsula through Andrew's native Riverland region and up to the state border with Victoria and New South Wales; it had once been held by the first Speaker of the House of Representatives, Sir Frederick Holder. The coalition's national loss at the March 1983 election meant that Andrew entered parliament as an opposition backbencher. He vigorously represented the interests of

Figure 4: Neil Andrew.
Source: Australian Government Photographic Service (Auspic).

Wakefield, drawing on his professional knowledge of agricultural, regional, and small business policy, and becoming the first rural South Australian federal member with an electorate office within their electorate rather than in Adelaide. As opposition deputy whip (1985–89, 1990–93), he gained an early grounding in the administrative and disciplinary skills required of a Speaker. He was Deputy Chair of Committees three times (1985, 1989–90, and 1993–94) and, as a member of the Speaker's panel in 1994, gained valuable experience presiding over the House.

In 1996, following the election of the Howard government, Andrew ran as a candidate in the party room election for Speaker but came third behind Kathy Sullivan and the winner, Bob Halverson from Victoria. Halverson had previously been opposition chief whip, and Andrew's elevation to government chief whip in July 1997 further strengthened his own credentials for the Speakership. The resignation of Halverson in March 1998 was followed by the brief tenure of former National Party leader Ian Sinclair. Sinclair's retirement at the election of October 1998 opened the way for Andrew's endorsement as his successor by Prime Minister John Howard. Andrew ran against the Victorian member David Hawker in the party room vote, arguing that his experience on the Speaker's panel showed that he was 'someone who's able to make bipartisan and fair judgments' (Lagan 1998). He won the ballot and was elected Speaker by the House on 10 November 1998, making him the first South Australian to hold the position since Sir John McLeay in 1966. Andrew publicly promised to celebrate with sparkling wine from the Barossa or Clare Valleys in his electorate. He continued to attend party meetings, arguing that it was in the interests of his constituents.

On his first day as Speaker, Andrew vowed to fully honour his obligation to 'apply the standing orders equally' (Denholm 1998). He believed that members of the House 'come into this place with a great deal more in common than we have dividing us', and called on them to work together to 'raise the standards of this parliament' (H.R. Deb. 10.11.1998, 8). Yet in just his second question time he condemned the disorder he saw before him as 'quite absurd' (H.R. Deb. 12.11.1998, 311). In August 1999, he ordered a security review after a man threw petrol bombs at the front doors of the parliament building and another member of the public suffered a fatal fall from its roof. Shortly before Christmas, he chose to overlook three members having briefly donned reindeer antlers in the House in fulfilment of a bet with journalists—a fleeting departure from his ruling that male members when in the chamber must wear jackets and ties, and that all members should dress suitably for 'the board room of the nation' (H.R. Deb. 11.3.1999, 3788). The introduction of the goods and services tax in mid-2000 spurred heated discussion, and on one occasion he suspended six members for unruly behaviour. This included the then employment services minister, Tony Abbott, the first suspension of a minister since 1961. Andrew also insisted that answers during question time be kept relevant—once in September 2000 ruling the acting prime minister, John Anderson, out of order on this basis.

By the end of 2000, Andrew was under pressure from both major parties—perhaps an indication of his impartial approach. Prime Minister Howard sought clarification of some rulings, and there were reports of dissatisfaction within the wider Liberal Party. Andrew responded that he was 'delighted if some of my own crew are unhappy' as 'I'm the umpire and there is always going to be distress on both sides' (Maiden 2000). His party colleagues stood by him during the most significant challenge to his Speakership, initiated by the opposition in November 2000. He had declined to require Abbott to withdraw a comment seen by Labor as implying that opposition member Cheryl Kernot had inappropriately received money when leader of the Australian Democrats. Labor moved that this ruling be dissented from, leading to controversy as the bells summoning members rang for only one minute instead of the customary four, preventing some from reaching the chamber in time. The result was a 57–57 tie, meaning that the Speaker had the casting vote (VP 1998–1999–2000/1935, 30.11.2000). Andrew declined to exercise this vote, stating: 'I do not believe that I should vote simply to maintain myself in office' (H.R. Deb. 30.11.2000, 23117). Because of the issue with the bells, he called another vote, which was resolved without a formal count because all opposition members had left the chamber in protest. Their leader, Kim Beazley, subsequently moved a motion of no confidence in the Speaker, telling Andrew that this 'unprecedented day' was the result of 'faults in your own rulings' (H.R. Deb. 30.11.2000, 23117). The opposition saw no proper basis for his having called a second division and alleged that in the first vote two coalition members had been wrongly permitted to enter the House after the doors were closed. Its confidence motion failed along party lines, 60 votes to 78 (VP 1998–1999–2000/1936–37, 30.11.2000).

Andrew soon admitted that the one-minute division was a 'wrong decision' (Crabb 2000). He had considered voting against his own position as Speaker, but decided that the issue involved was 'a pretty flimsy excuse to say "I'm off"' (*Australian* 1 December 2000, 1). Six months later, Labor moved an unsuccessful motion of dissent against another of his rulings, when he judged that a question from opposition frontbencher Anthony Albanese to the aged-care minister Bronwyn Bishop was out of order as it contained 'a specific imputation or inference' (H.R. Deb. 4.6.2001, 27141). Andrew presided when, in May 2001, the House of Representatives met in Melbourne to celebrate the centenary of the Commonwealth parliament; reflecting on the intervening century, he thought that, in 2001, 'the House is more accommodating of change and more tolerant of diversity' and 'the rules of the House are not as rigid as they once were' (*About the House* 2001, 19, 20).

Despite controversies, and the press opining that Andrew's performance 'severely undermines his authority' (*Australian*, 28 November 2001, 14), he was re-elected as Speaker after the Howard government was returned at the 2001 election. He defeated three other nominees in the party room ballot, again including Hawker. Opposition frontbenchers greeted his re-election by proposing major changes to the Speakership.

The new opposition leader, Simon Crean, suggested that the position should 'alternate, by nomination from either side, for two terms' (H.R. Deb. 12.2.2002, 5), with the Deputy Speaker being nominated by the other side of the House. Andrew responded guardedly that too much focus on parliamentary reform risked implying 'that this chamber is some sort of disaster in legislative terms' (H.R. Deb. 12.2.2002, 12).

The first several months of the new parliament were another testing time for Andrew, marked by accusations of bias against Labor. On 28 May 2002, he faced a series of challenges in the House. The opposition's Wayne Swan moved a motion of dissent from a ruling that a question from one of its members was out of order. A second dissent motion arose from Andrew's decision to expunge some words from the *Hansard* record of a few days earlier as being inappropriate language. After both motions failed, Swan attempted to move a censure motion against the Speaker but was quickly gagged by government members.

Andrew never supported wholesale change in how the Speaker was elected, believing that 'whoever chairs the House of Representatives … depends on a majority on the floor to stay in office' (Oakeshott 2004, 22). A fully independent Speaker 'wouldn't change a thing', as they would still be 'philosophically more comfortable with one side than the other' (Oakeshott 2004, 23). But he did during his second term consider some less drastic changes. A Labor proposal for a four-minute limit on answers during question time was 'not a bad idea' (Harvey 2002). He proposed the introduction of a question-and-answer period at the end of second-reading speeches to encourage more members into the House during such debates. Reportedly, he asked Abbott as leader of the House to temper his attacks on the opposition and to curtail the proliferation of 'Dorothy Dixers' during question time.

Security for Parliament House continued to be progressively tightened in response to such incidents as the discovery of a quantity of white powder in November 2002 that triggered an anthrax scare. Andrew hoped that this would be 'carried out as unobtrusively as possible because I don't want to upset the architectural integrity of Parliament House' (*AAP General News* 2002). From February 2003, members were obliged to pass through metal detectors when entering the building. In March fifteen anti–Iraq War protesters were ejected from the public gallery of the House, and others draped banners from the roof of the parliament building. Andrew—'distressed that this privilege of watching the parliament in action … is abused by some who come simply to disrupt the parliament' (*AAP General News* 2003)—joined with the President of the Senate, Paul Calvert, in introducing further security measures, including limiting public access to the grassy roof of parliament to individuals who had been screened when entering the building. Later that year, security concerns briefly acquired an international dimension when debate on Australia's participation in the Iraq War and the visits on consecutive October days of United States president George W. Bush and Chinese president Hu Jintao sparked protests from visitors and

some parliamentarians. President Bush addressed a joint meeting of both Houses in the House of Representatives on 23 October 2003, during which two Greens senators, Bob Brown and Kerry Nettle, interjected. After refusing to leave, both were named and consequently suspended for twenty-four hours. This prevented them from attending the address by President Hu the following day, and both senators queried the right of the Speaker of the House of Representatives to expel them. Andrew responded that the Senate had agreed to follow House procedures and that he had the full support of the President of the Senate.

The Bush and Hu visits also reignited an issue that had followed Andrew for much of his Speakership: press photography inside the House of Representatives chamber. The media had long complained about restrictions preventing both filming and still photography of members who were not currently speaking or of any form of unparliamentary behaviour, in order, as Andrew had told the press, to 'protect the dignity of proceedings' (Steketee 2000). Television images were available only from the parliament's official in-house broadcast. However, an American media crew that had been allowed into the press gallery during President Bush's speech took and subsequently broadcast footage of the Greens senators' suspension, which was shown overseas but not, initially, in Australia. This prompted the press gallery to again petition the Speaker to ease filming restrictions; Andrew remained firm, responding that 'what we are doing is fairly lenient and liberal by world standards' (Oakeshott 2004, 23).

Despite his reputation as a stickler for parliamentary rules, Andrew could be flexible. In 2003, he permitted a 'stranger in the House' during a division in the small shape of the eleven-month-old daughter of Labor member Michelle O'Byrne, who had not had time to find another carer in the rush to vote. The same year, he allowed members to text one another on mobile phones within the House, ruling this to be akin to the already permitted sending of emails via laptops. This balanced approach was consistent with Andrew's view of House traditions as 'silk threads of our democratic system of government' that 'possess the important qualities of strength and flexibility' (Andrew 2003, 287).

Andrew also contributed to important changes in the parliament's relationship with the public. He encouraged Australians to better appreciate its workings, particularly that much more went on than raucous behaviour:

> If we allow the public to develop an image of the House based on snatches of Question Time incorporated into news and public affairs programs, we have only ourselves to blame if the public has a distorted view of the Parliament. (Andrew 2003, 284)

He supported the Parliamentary Education Office, the House's *About the House* magazine, and the establishment of the Liaison and Projects Office in the Department of the House of Representatives, which organised such programs as guest lectures at universities by parliamentarians and parliamentary officials. He was proud of his role in the 2004 amalgamation of the departments of the Parliamentary Library, Parliamentary Reporting Staff, and Joint House into one Department of Parliamentary Services, following a review by the Parliamentary Service Commissioner.

At the election of October 2004, Andrew retired from parliament. A redistribution had transformed Wakefield from a predominantly rural electorate into one that took in much of Adelaide's northern suburbs, making it nominally a Labor seat. He had already been considering leaving politics and felt that he had reached a suitable time for a change of career; as he told ABC Radio, 'I'm not looking to retire in the sense of going fishing' (*PM* 2003). True to his word, he then worked in roles that drew on his knowledge of government and his professional experience as a horticulturalist. He served on the boards of the Crawford Fund (chair, 2005–10), an organisation that supports international agricultural research; Citrus Australia (2014); and the Murray–Darling Basin Authority (chair, 2015–19). Keen to broaden his skills, he qualified as a mediator in 2008 and subsequently worked at the same law firm in Adelaide as his daughter.

Seen as 'sober and punctilious' (*Australian* 10 February 2001, 8), Andrew was long 'mystified about the level of negativity' (Starick 2003) among the public about parliament, yet resolutely 'proud of the role that the parliament plays' (*Australian* 7 May 2001, 7). He was elected an Honorary Fellow of the Australian Academy of Technological Sciences and Engineering in 2006, and was appointed AO in 2008 for 'service to the Parliament of Australia through the advancement of parliamentary administration and reform, and to the community in the areas of agricultural research, development and education'. His portrait by Robert Hannaford that hangs in Parliament House had, thought its subject, successfully made a 'silk purse out of a sow's ear' (Oakeshott 2004, 23).

Select bibliography

AAP General News (Sydney). 'Fed: Parliament Visitors to Pass Security Checks to Walk on Hill'. 17 December 2002

AAP General News (Sydney). 'Fed: Parliamentary Speaker Accuses Protesters of Abuse'. 25 March 2003

About the House (Canberra). 'History to be Created and Repeated'. 35, no. 18 (2001): 19–20

Andrew, Neil. 'The Australian Federal Speakership: The First Hundred Years and Some Future Directions'. In *Peace, Order and Good Government: State Constitutional and Parliamentary Reform*, edited by Clement Macintyre and John Williams, 273–90. Kent Town, SA: Wakefield Press, 2003

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 12 May 1983, 538–41

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 10 November 1998, 4–9

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 12 November 1998, 310–11

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 11 March 1999, 3787–88

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 30 November 2000, 23110–35

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 4 June 2001, 27141

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 12 February 2002, 4–13

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 28 May 2002, 2468–86

Australia. House of Representatives. *Votes and Proceedings*, 1998–1999–2000, 1931–37

Australian. 'PM Orders Question Time over Speaker's Rulings'. 9 November 2000, 10

Australian. 'Revolt Floors Speaker'. 1 December 2000, 1

Australian. 'Called to the Bar, So To Speak'. 10 February 2001, 8

Australian. 'Speaker Defends Standard of House—Federation Celebrations'. 7 May 2001, 7

Australian. 'New Speaker Must Get Order in the House'. 28 November 2001, 14

Coorey, Phillip. 'Speaker Listens to Question Time for Fun'. *Advertiser* (Adelaide), 2 July 2001, 24

Crabb, Annabel. 'No-Confidence Vote No Crisis: Speaker'. *Age* (Melbourne), 1 December 2000, 9

Denholm, Matthew. 'No Favors for PM, Says New Speaker'. *Advertiser* (Adelaide), 10 November 1998, 2

Dodson, Louise. 'Speaker Rebukes Acting PM'. *Age* (Melbourne), 7 September 2000, 8

Gawler History Team. 'Andrew AO John Neil'. Last modified 12 February 2020. Accessed 20 August 2020. gawlerhistory.com/mediawiki/index.php?title=Andrew_AO_John_Neil. Copy held on file

Harvey, Michael. 'Time Gentlemen, Please'. *Herald Sun* (Melbourne), 10 June 2002, 13

The House Magazine (Canberra). 'Profile'. 6 September 1983, 3

Hudson, Phillip, and Louise Dodson. 'Speaker Admits to Making Mistake'. *Age* (Melbourne), 1 December 2000, 1

Lagan, Bernard. 'Andrew Holds Whip Hand for the Speaker's Plum Position'. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 4 November 1998, 2

Maiden, Samantha. '"I'm Delighted if They're Unhappy": Speaker Fires Back at Liberal Critics'. *Advertiser* (Adelaide), 13 December 2000, 2

Maiden, Samantha. 'No Division This Time over Baby in the House'. *Advertiser* (Adelaide), 22 August 2003, 14

Oakeshott, Georgie. 'Plain Speaking'. *About the House*, no. 21 (June 2004): 22–23

PM. 'Speaker of the House of Reps Has Announced Retirement'. ABC Radio National, 16 September 2003

Price, Matt. 'Speaker Tells Abbott to Tone It Down'. *Australian*, 19 August 2002, 1

Starick, Paul. 'Speaker Quits and Then Has a Parting Shot'. *Advertiser* (Adelaide), 17 September 2003, 2

Steketee, Mike. 'Banned! Photo-Shy MPs Snap Back'. *Australian*, 4 May 2000, 1

Aston, Sir William John (Bill): Speaker 1967–1972

Donald Boadle

William John Aston (1916–1997), mayor, milliner, and fourteenth Speaker of the House of Representatives, was born on 19 September 1916 at Mascot, Sydney, elder son of locally born Harold John Aston, barber, and his wife, Annie, née McKeown. Bill's father was 'quite content to go to the hotel and gamble and mix' (Aston 1986), leaving his wife and his sister, Ethel George—later a successful antique dealer—to manage the impact of the Depression on the family. Annie took in washing to earn enough to help clothe her children. The childless Aunt Ethel and her husband took young Bill in for eighteen months and, during the worst of the Depression, provided him and his immediate family with rent-free use of a cottage in the Sydney suburb of Waverley.

The Astons were Labor supporters—'rabid' in Harold's case, according to his son—but were not active in party politics. Ethel, far more purposeful than her brother and holding different political views, instilled in her nephew 'principles and her way of life' (Aston 1986), including taking pride in personal appearance and exercising care with money. Looking back, Aston felt that 'she had a greater influence on me than any other person' (1986). Following the family's move to Waverley, it was Ethel who insisted that he end two years of truancy by enrolling in Waverley Public School. From there, he progressed to Randwick Boys' High School to belatedly complete his Intermediate Certificate. Encouraged by an inspirational economics and business teacher, (Sir) Hermann Black, later chancellor of the University of Sydney, Aston secured employment with Jones Brothers Ltd and qualified as an accountant. Initially a company clerk, he gladly switched to commercial travelling, seeking out orders for millinery from country town department stores. He was mobilised in the Citizen Military Forces on 10 August 1940. On 22 December 1941, at St Mary's Roman Catholic Cathedral, Sydney, he married Beatrice (Betty) Delaney Burrett, a milliner. He transferred to the Second Australian Imperial Force on 30 July 1942 as a gunner. Promoted to lieutenant on 4 January 1943, Aston served in Port

Figure 5: Bill Aston.
Source: Courtesy of the National Archives of Australia. NAA: A1200, L21661.

Moresby the following November with the 82nd Australian Mobile Searchlight Battery. He returned to Australia in June 1944 and, when his unit was disbanded, was discharged on 15 November 1944.

The immediate postwar years were beneficial for the enterprising Aston. He and Betty established a successful millinery business, Astyle Pty Ltd, and in 1948 he was elected president of the Bronte branch of the Returned Sailors', Soldiers' and Airmen's Imperial League of Australia. A long-running dispute with Waverley Municipal Council over rent charged to the RSS&AILA drew him into standing for public office. A Waverley alderman (1949–53) and mayor (1952–53), he was approached by Wilfred Dovey, a Supreme Court judge and former Waverley alderman, and Jack Cassidy, vice-president of the Liberal Party's New South Wales division, who enquired about Aston's 'political persuasion' (Aston 1986). He replied that, although a Liberal supporter, he was not a party member, whereupon Cassidy arranged for his wife, Gwen, a party branch secretary at Vaucluse, to sign him up.

Aston narrowly won preselection for the eastern-suburbs federal seat of Phillip at the general election of December 1955. His campaign was aided by well-resourced party colleagues in the neighbouring blue-ribbon electorate of Wentworth, contributing to him winning 51 per cent of the vote in a two-party contest. During the campaign, he had left door-to-door canvassing—'not a very nice thing to be doing'—to his supporters, but as the member for 'a rough, scruffy old seat', he discovered that he sometimes had 'to give more attention to the seat itself than you do to the Parliament' (Aston 1986).

A further realisation concerned the lack of camaraderie among Aston's fellow parliamentarians; everyone was 'an ambitious man and everybody thinks that somebody else is coming in as a threat' (Aston 1986). He was avowedly ambitious himself and served on the Joint Parliamentary Committee on Foreign Affairs in the hope that it would provide a stepping stone to the ministry. On 10 March 1960, the prime minister, (Sir) Robert Menzies, appointed him deputy government whip, but his initial tenure in this first-rung office was short-lived. At the election of December 1961, he was unseated by a 3.3 per cent two-party preferred swing to his Labor opponent, Syd Einfeld. He regained Phillip in November 1963 with a 4.2 per cent two-party preferred swing, and the following month was reappointed deputy government whip. Aston had misgivings about resuming what now seemed an inconsequential position as deputy to Peter Howson—someone with whom he struggled to gel, being 'from the Melbourne Club, very pukka English' (Aston 1986). But Howson was soon elevated to the ministry and, on 10 June 1964, Aston became government whip.

The new whip adapted quickly to a position he found akin to that of a sergeant major. As the parliamentary executive's go-between with the backbench, he gained 'a terrific insight into fellows' human nature' (Aston 1986). He and the Speaker,

Sir John McLeay, often invited government and opposition backbenchers to drinks at the end of a sitting day, creating opportunities to build support for Aston's growing interest in the Speakership as he continued to be passed over for the ministry. When McLeay retired at the November 1966 election, competition to succeed him was strong. According to Aston, McLeay favoured him as successor, but in the party room ballot on 14 February 1967 he was one of nine contestants. Aston narrowly defeated his main rival, Fred Chaney senior of Western Australia. He was elected Speaker on 21 February 1967, defeating the opposition's nominee, Bill Fulton, 78 votes to 43 (VP 1967/6, 21.2.1967).

The new Speaker soon established his authority in the chamber, but his tenure proved far more contentious than that of his popular predecessor. Aston's personal dignity suffered in January 1968 when he was involved in a supposed 'glassing' incident at Randwick Rugby Union Club. His right hand required twelve stitches, and a Waverley Council building inspector received seven stitches to a facial wound. Although a witness reported hearing words exchanged, Aston assured reporters that the whole incident was a mere accident. Meanwhile, his relations with a revitalised opposition became increasingly uneasy. Anger greeted his re-election as Speaker on 25 November 1969 when the House of Representatives sat for a single day to commence the twenty-seventh parliament. Opposition frontbenchers Kim Beazley senior and Clyde Cameron launched a blistering attack on Aston as a partisan 'lackey of the Prime Minister' (H.R. Deb. 25.11.1969, 9). As was then customary for Speakers who had served two terms in office, Aston was appointed KCMG in the 1970 New Year's Honours.

During his Speakership, Sir William faced two major outbreaks of disorder in the House. The first, and more serious, occurred during a late-night sitting on 8–9 April 1970, and was preceded by (Sir) Billy Snedden, leader of the House, controversially hindering the opposition's contributions by moving the closure of debate twenty-one times in the previous eleven sitting days. After he did so yet again, opposition member Gordon Bryant called Aston a disgrace and was duly named, whereupon Bryant's party colleagues defied the Speaker by refusing to act as tellers and then protectively crowding around Bryant to prevent the Serjeant-at-Arms from enforcing his removal. Proceedings were suspended and resumed at 2.15 a.m., just long enough for the Speaker to call on the opposition leader, Gough Whitlam, to use his influence to ensure compliance with the orders of the House. At 10.30 am, the House reassembled and Bryant apologised before complying by withdrawing from the chamber; Whitlam soon after admitted to having acted wrongly (Bennetts 1970, 1; H.R. Deb. 8–9.4.1970, 883–85; VP 1970/75–76, 8–9.4.1970). The second incident of disorder was on 11 June 1970 when five anti-conscription protesters chained themselves to the railings of the public gallery. Aston suspended the sitting while bolt-cutters were employed to release them. No charges were laid because of uncertainty about the applicability in the parliament of Australian Capital Territory law.

Aston took considerable interest in procedural reform, but was not successful in extending question time, nor in establishing House standing committees to inquire into policy issues, akin to those recently created in the Senate. Addressing the party room on 2 September 1970, Prime Minister (Sir) John Gorton made clear his objections to such committees, which Howson saw as 'a slap' at Aston and the Clerk of the House, (Sir) Alan Turner (Howson 1984, 654). Aston was chairman ex officio of the House Standing Orders Committee, which proposed major and controversial procedural change in a report that the House considered on 3 September 1970. A long debate, which 'left the House in a complete shambles' (Howson 1984, 654), began with Snedden circulating memoranda detailing a proposed new three-week cycle for future sittings, reduced time for speaking, and a smaller quorum requirement, indicating as he did so his own disagreement with some details concerning sitting times. Members were allowed a free vote, but the resultant amended three-week cycle that commenced on 13 October was not as efficient as anticipated, and in August the following year the committee successfully proposed a return to the previous arrangement (H.R. Deb. 3.9.1970, 987–1022; VP 1970/287–90, 3.9.1970). Reduced speaking times and smaller quorums proved relatively uncontroversial.

On 9 March 1971, Aston presided during one of the more notorious incidents in House history when the journalist Alan Ramsay shouted from the press gallery 'you liar' at Gorton during his response to Malcolm Fraser's dramatic resignation as minister for defence. Whitlam moved that Ramsay be taken into custody by the Serjeant-at-Arms and brought before the Bar of the House the following day. Ramsay soon produced an abject apology, which he later recalled that Aston—not by this time a Gorton admirer—had helped him draft (*Late Night Live* 2018). The following month, Aston was the subject of a no-confidence motion during which the deputy leader of the opposition, Lance Barnard, denounced him as 'arbitrary, capricious, inconsistent and undeniably partisan', falling well short of the desired attributes of 'dispassion and judicial calm', and 'fairness and impartiality' (H.R. Deb. 21.4.1971, 1764, 1766). After a long debate, which included reference to the alleged 'glassing' incident, the motion was defeated along party lines (VP 1970–71/524–25).

As Speaker, Aston did not eschew a continuing party-political role. He told a June 1971 conference of parliamentary presiding officers and Clerks from the South Pacific region that a Speaker can, 'to a great extent, wear two hats' (Aston 1971, 34). One concerned responsibility for the orderly and impartial conduct of House business and the other—reflecting his experience in a marginal seat—arose from being 'entitled to be the member for his own constituency' (Aston 1971, 34), justifying campaigning for re-election, voting in committee of the whole, and speaking in the House on matters affecting the electorate. A Speaker may also, he added, choose to attend party room meetings, but he maintained that he did not regularly do so himself and never spoke at them. He instead made direct representations to the relevant ministers, including the prime minister, if warranted. One such minister was Snedden, who

considered Aston 'a bit of a wheeler-dealer, always trying to settle things' (Snedden and Schedvin 1990, 215). Another serious clash with the opposition occurred on 14 October 1971, after Aston accused Whitlam of having uttered 'untruths' during a televised interview on the Australian Broadcasting Commission current affairs show *This Day Tonight* about Aston proposing to use the issue of abortion law reform for political gain. A tense but inconclusive public exchange followed.

Aston remained Speaker until he was defeated in Phillip at the election of December 1972. In retirement, he was a director of a small public relations company, Neilson McCarthy, and chairman of Kolotex Holdings Ltd, Australia's largest manufacturer of women's hosiery. He died from heart failure and dementia at Vaucluse Nursing Home on 21 May 1997, and was buried at Waverley Cemetery. A large, portly man who cut an imposing figure in the Speaker's chair, he was blessed neither with a notably impressive voice nor with his predecessor's lightness of touch. His portrait by William Pidgeon hangs in Parliament House. Aston was survived by his wife and their two daughters; his son, Raymond (1943–88), was the member for Vaucluse in the New South Wales Legislative Assembly and minister for corrective services at the time of his early death.

Select bibliography

Aston, Sir William John. Interview by Ron Hurst, 1986. Parliament's Oral History Project. National Library of Australia

Aston, Sir William John. 'The Speaker and his Participation in Politics'. In *Fourth Conference of Presiding Officers and Clerks of the Parliaments of Australia, Cook Islands, Fiji, Nauru, Papua, New Guinea, and Western Samoa, Parliament Chambers, Suva, Fiji, 22–24 June 1971*. Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia, Parliamentary Paper no. 157, 1971

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 25 November 1969, 8–12

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 8–9 April 1970, 883–85

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 9 April 1970, 942–54

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 3 September 1970, 987–1022

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 21 April 1971, 1763–81

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 26 May 1997, 3949–52

Australia. House of Representatives. *Report from the Standing Orders Committee together with Recommendations, 10 June 1970*. Canberra: Government Printer, 1970

Australia. House of Representatives. *Standing Orders Committee Report together with Recommendations, 19 August 1971*. Canberra: Government Printer, 1971

Australia. House of Representatives. *Votes and Proceedings*, 1967, 6–7

Australia. House of Representatives. *Votes and Proceedings*, 1970, 75–76, 287–90

Australia. House of Representatives. *Votes and Proceedings*, 1970–71, 524–25

Australian. 'Speaker Says Club Incident Was an Accident'. 26 January 1968, 1

Bennetts, John. 'Bitterness and Anger in Parliament'. *Canberra Times*, 10 April 1970, 1, 9.

Canberra Times. 'Women in Chains Protest'. 12 June 1970, 1, 3

Gaul, Jonathan. 'Mr Aston to be New Speaker'. *Canberra Times*, 15 February 1967, 1

Howson, Peter. *The Life of Politics: The Howson Diaries*. Edited by Don Aitkin. Ringwood, Vic.: Viking Press, 1984

Late Night Live: 'You Liar!, Alan Ramsay Pt 2'. Radio. Hosted by Phillip Adams. Sydney: ABC Radio National, 2 November 2009

National Archives of Australia. B883, NX110619, Aston William John

Redenbach, Stephen C. 'Servant of Two Masters? An Exploration of the Speaker's Role in the Australian Commonwealth Parliament'. PhD thesis, La Trobe University, Melbourne, 1999

Snedden, Billy Mackie, and M. Bernie Schedvin. *Billy Snedden: An Unlikely Liberal*. South Melbourne: Macmillan, 1990

Solomon, David. 'Whitlam and Speaker Clash'. *Canberra Times*, 15 October 1971, 1

Bamford, Frederick William: Chairman of Committees 1923–1925

D. W. Hunt

Frederick William Bamford (1849–1934), publican, politician, and Chairman of Committees of the House of Representatives, was born on 11 February 1849 at Dubbo, New South Wales, son of Frederick William Bamford, builder and publican, and his wife, Mary Ann, née McKay. He was educated to primary level at Drayton, near Toowoomba, Queensland, where his family lived from 1854. Apprenticed to a carpenter at the age of fourteen, Fred worked for nearly twenty years around Toowoomba, where he married Irish-born Mary Ann Miller on 7 September 1871.

Bamford and a partner began a cabinet-making and carpentry business at Mackay, Queensland, in July 1882. The firm foundered the following year and he was declared insolvent in April 1884. In September 1885, he was employed as an inspector of railway bridges at Cairns and was discharged from bankruptcy in November. Transferred to Bowen in 1888, in July 1892 he was among many railway employees who lost their jobs due to government financial cutbacks. He then edited the *Observer* newspaper and became licensee of the Sportsman's Arms early in 1894. In December 1895, he helped form a local branch of the left-leaning Democratic League and was its candidate for the Legislative Assembly seat of Bowen in the Queensland general election of April 1896, only to be defeated narrowly. Taking over the Railway Hotel, he became local secretary of the Licensed Victuallers' Association and joined the Chamber of Commerce. In 1897 he was elected to the municipal council and the following year became mayor of Bowen (1898–99). In March 1899, he again stood unsuccessfully for state parliament, this time under the tag of 'Independent Labour'. He moved to Townsville in July 1899, worked as a journalist, and established a short-lived weekly 'democratic newspaper', *The Tribune*, but by early 1901 he had returned to Bowen.
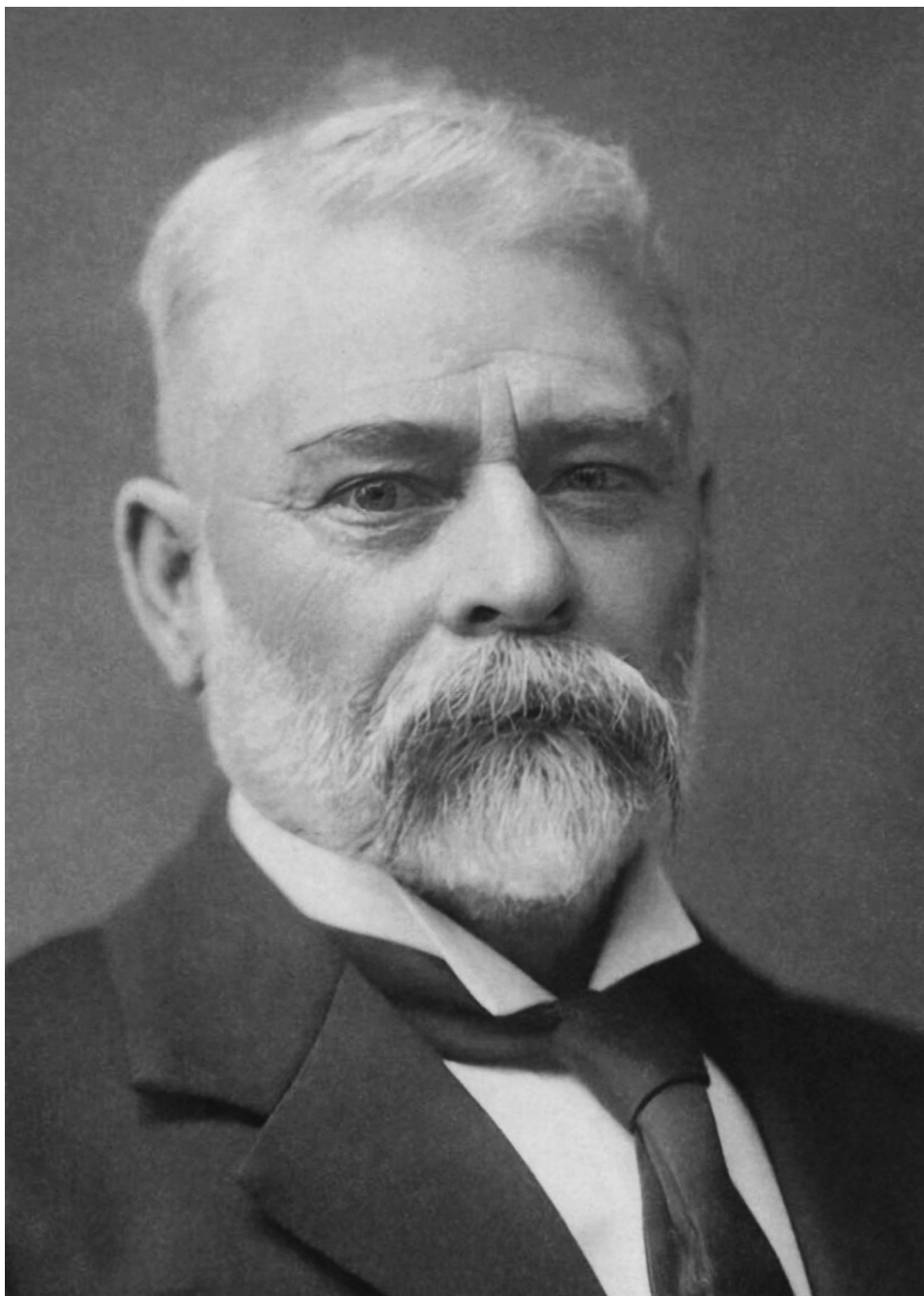
Figure 6: Frederick Bamford.
Source: National Library of Australia, PIC Box PIC/5434 #PIC/5434, Swiss Studios Melbourne.

In 1901 Bamford was the Australian Labor Party (ALP) candidate for the seat of Herbert at the first Commonwealth general election. The most prominent issue throughout Queensland was the immigration and employment of non-Europeans, and he campaigned vigorously against Pacific Island labour, as well as the presence of Japanese, Chinese, and Malays. He won the seat narrowly and somewhat unexpectedly with 51.6 per cent of the vote. Later he claimed, rather implausibly, that his election was decisive in the national adoption of the White Australia policy, 'as Sir Edmund Barton was inclined to wobble until the [sic] Herbert returned a White Australian' (*Townsville Daily Bulletin* 1914, 5). In subsequent elections, Bamford consolidated his hold on the seat, peaking at 64 per cent of the vote in 1914.

In parliament, Bamford's main contributions concerned immigration, defence, and the sugar industry. He spoke briefly during 1901 in support of the immigration restriction bill and at greater length on the Pacific Island labourers bill. Parliament passed both easily, the latter being particularly significant for Bamford's electorate as it ended Pacific Island labour recruitment and authorised the deportation of the great majority of Islanders. He thus established himself as a leading proponent of a strict White Australia policy, describing the replacement of coloured labour on the sugar fields with white workers as the 'great experiment in which we are at present engaged' (H.R. Deb. 13.12.1905, 6832). A keen advocate for the sugar industry as the cornerstone of white settlement and development in north Queensland, he supported government tariff protection and assistance for sugar production. This won him the backing of both farmers and workers—the key to his long-term electoral success. Bamford's causes also included 'unification'—the centralisation of Australian legislative power in the federal parliament—and the abolition of state governments. In September 1910, as a private member, he introduced the Constitution Alteration (Unification) Bill, but did not gain the support needed for it to proceed.

As a friend of the ALP luminary William Morris Hughes, Bamford served as vice-president of the Waterside Workers' Federation from 1902 to 1916 while Hughes was its president. This involvement stemmed simply from convenience; with the exception of the general secretary, all members of its executive were Labor members of parliament, able to meet at Parliament House in Melbourne. His more conventional parliamentary service included membership of royal commissions on old-age pensions (1906) and on Tasmanian customs leakage (1911). He served on a Joint Select Committee on Privilege in 1908 and was appointed as a Temporary Chairman of Committees in 1911. Also in 1911, he instigated and subsequently chaired the royal commission on the pearl-shelling industry, which was appointed with the goal of ending the employment of non-European divers, mainly Japanese. Its interim report in 1913 floated ideas to achieve this aim, though in 1916 the final report acknowledged the impracticality of doing so. He later chaired the royal commission on mail services and trade development between Australia and the New Hebrides (1915).

In the chamber, Bamford was a well-read and informed debater, with a genial disposition. But in December 1912 he took offence when the Melbourne *Age* described an amendment he had moved concerning an electoral redistribution in Queensland as 'a political dodge' (1912, 11). He successfully moved that members protect themselves from future such 'aspersions and misrepresentations' (H.R. Deb. 20.12.1912, 7687) by banning representatives of the newspaper from the precincts of parliament until it had published his explanation. His speeches tended to extravagant rhetoric, such as when he denounced the 'measureless magnitude of magnificent mendacity' of the conservative press (H.R. Deb. 4.9.1913, 888).

During World War I, the conscription issue split the ALP and the nation, marking a turning point in Bamford's career. In July 1915, he urged conscription for overseas service, and later boasted that he was the first member of the House to have done so openly. Although in 1902 he had opposed the South African War, he believed that Australian security depended on loyalty to Britain and the vigorous prosecution of the war in Europe. Conscription was also a matter of 'democratic principle' as it 'would put all men on an equal footing' (*Daily Mercury* 1916, 3). Yet a clear majority in the ALP was firmly opposed to conscription, with the result that he was expelled from the party's Queensland branch on 30 October 1916. He was among the twenty-three Labor parliamentarians who followed Prime Minister Hughes out of caucus, and he became minister for home affairs in the National Labor government from November 1916 to February 1917, before returning to the backbench when the newly formed Nationalist Party took office.

Although the ALP hoped to win back Herbert from the now Nationalist member, Bamford continued to hold the seat, albeit with reduced margins—the result of his widespread popularity and his earnest support of sugar interests. He served on the War Certificates Council, which was appointed to raise funds for the war effort (1917–20). In parliament, he now spoke infrequently, though in July 1923 one of his longest speeches criticised his own party's policy on the sugar industry. Respect for Bamford's age and parliamentary service and his still being on friendly terms with former colleagues in the ALP saw him appointed Chairman of Committees on 28 February 1923. His service in this office was unremarkable. He was reasonably efficient and impartial, firmly reminding speakers not to stray from the topic under debate. The opposition sometimes dissented from his rulings and implied that he wrongly cut debate short to favour the government, including an occasion when he became so flustered that the opposition leader Matthew Charlton concluded simply that 'the Chairman is carrying too heavy a load' (H.R. Deb. 27.6.1923, 385). But even after another such incident in July 1924, the press still wrote approvingly of Bamford's 'wonderful fortitude' and 'easy placid temper' (*Daily Telegraph* 1924, 6).

Bamford retired from parliament at the election of November 1925. While opposing politicians are typically generous in their tributes on such occasions, ALP members were especially effusive. To Frank Anstey, the ALP member for Bourke, he represented 'the most gentlemanly type of individual that enters the public life of this country' (H.R. Deb. 23.9.1925, 2668). The outgoing Speaker, William Watt, declared that to know Bamford 'was not merely to admire him, but also to love him' (H.R. Deb. 23.9.1925, 2675). The *Brisbane Telegraph* added that it was rare for someone who had switched parties to still 'earn such high encomiums' on his retirement (1925, 8). He would not have regretted retiring before the opening of the new parliament building in Canberra, for he was 'opposed to the whole thing, lock, stock and barrel' (H.R. Deb. 14.5.1924, 618). By his mid-seventies, Bamford had become an avuncular figure, esteemed for his 'pleasant, benign face, with its pointed white beard' (*Daily Telegraph* 1924, 6). His wife, Mary, had died in 1914, and in 1921 he married Amelia Jane Hamilton in Sydney. They lived there until his death on 10 September 1934. He was cremated at Rookwood crematorium, survived by three sons and two daughters from his first marriage.

This article supplements the original Volume 7 ADB *biography, published 1979, authored by D. W. Hunt. adb.anu.edu.au/biography/bamford-frederick-william-5118/text8555*

Select bibliography

Age (Melbourne). 'A Political Dodge'. 24 July 1912, 11

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 12 September 1901, 4833–35

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 10 October 1901, 5913–19

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 13 December 1905, 6832–41

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 20 December 1912, 7687–89

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 4 September 1913, 877–90

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 27 June 1923, 382–90

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 5 July 1923, 724–29

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 14 May 1924, 618

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 23 September 1925, 2665–76

Australia. Royal Commission. *Pearl-Shelling Industry*. Melbourne: Government Printer, 1913, 1916

Beasley, Margo. *Wharfies: A History of the Waterside Workers' Federation of Australia.* Rushcutters Bay, NSW: Halstead Press, 1996

Daily Mercury (Mackay). 'The "Yes" Campaign'. 26 October 1916, 3

Daily Telegraph (Sydney). 'Federal Session'. 12 July 1924, 6

Punch (Melbourne). 'People We Know'. 21 December 1916, 6

Telegraph (Brisbane). 'Mr Bamford Retires'. 28 September 1925, 8

Townsville Daily Bulletin. 'Federal Politics'. 4 September 1914, 5

Barlin, Lyndal McAlpin (Lyn): Clerk 1991–1997

Nicholas Brown

Lyndal McAlpin Barlin, thirteenth Clerk of the House of Representatives, was born on 27 July 1932 at Taree, New South Wales, youngest of seven sons of locally born parents Charles Barlin, dairy and beef farmer at Lansdowne, and his wife, Mildred. Lyn travelled by train and later bus to attend Taree High School, coming first-in-class and winning several prizes, and staying with relatives in the town during World War II to complete his schooling. He chose not to follow one brother, who enrolled in the University of Sydney to study science, and also declined opportunities to attend teachers' college and to take a position as a junior chemist at Arnott's Biscuit Factory, Homebush. Encouraged by another brother, George, a pioneer in Canberra radio and television, Lyn went to Canberra in 1949, securing appointment to the Public Service Board. In 1951 he moved to the Superannuation Board in the Treasury. Among the first men to reside at the previously women-only Gorman House hostel, he became keenly interested in the life of the rapidly growing national capital.

The functions of parliament rather than politics engaged Barlin's attention as he observed the conduct of the House of Representatives from the public gallery. In 1954 he sought transfer to a clerk's position in the Department of the House of Representatives. Joining a small, committed team as its most junior member, he soon developed a breadth of knowledge of the House, its powers, procedures, and personalities. The exercise of all three impressed him in June 1955, when journalist Frank Browne and newspaper proprietor Raymond Fitzpatrick were called to appear before the Bar of the House for publishing in the *Bankstown Observer* allegations concerning misconduct by the member for Reid, Charles Morgan—an act seen as an attempt to discredit and silence a member. The alleged misconduct occurred two decades earlier. Both men were imprisoned for three months for a serious breach of parliamentary privilege—the only time the House has exercised this power, and against the advice of Frank Green, then Clerk of the House. The case gave Barlin an early sense of 'being at the centre of things' (Barlin 2020); he agreed with the judgement but considered the punishment harsh.
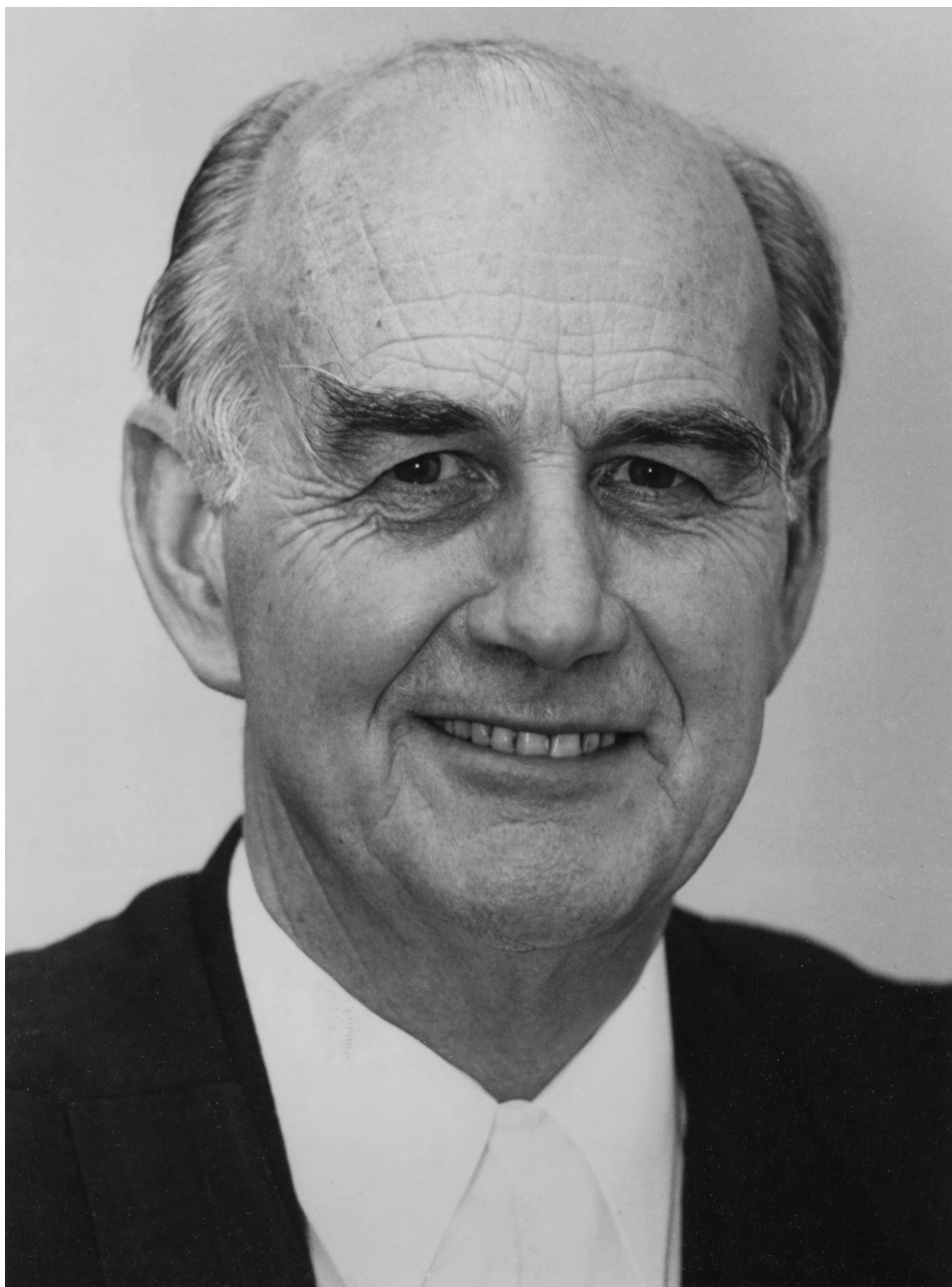
Figure 7: Lyn Barlin.
Source: Department of the House of Representatives.

When (Sir) John McLeay was elected Speaker in August 1956, Barlin became the first member of the department's staff to be appointed private secretary to the Speaker. Assisting McLeay in familiarising himself with the administration and operation of the House, he admired the Speaker's impartial management of often turbulent debates, and further refined his own appreciation of rules and practices. In July 1960, in Perth, he married Beryl Townsend, a flight attendant, with whom he raised three sons and a daughter, and who became a leading advocate for Canberra's child welfare services. Appointed Serjeant-at-Arms and Clerk of Committees (1969), then Senior Parliamentary Officer (1970), and Clerk Assistant (1977), he observed major transitions in the House that included the growing demands of serving parliamentary committees, heightened press scrutiny, and the impact of changes of government.

These pressures demanded vigilance and skill in the performance of Barlin's duties in supporting the Speaker in maintaining order. Near midnight on 8 April 1970, the opposition's angry protests at repeated moves by the Speaker, Sir William Aston, to close debate culminated in Labor backbencher Gordon Bryant being named and suspended after calling Aston a 'disgrace'. Refusing an order to leave the chamber, Bryant was surrounded in solidarity by party colleagues, making Barlin's job as Serjeant-at-Arms in removing him more delicate. With Bryant refusing to withdraw, the sitting of the House was suspended until the next morning, by which time the opposition caucus had persuaded Bryant to apologise. On 10 June, five women chained themselves to the railing of the public gallery in protest against the Vietnam War—again requiring the suspension of the sitting while Barlin accompanied police with bolt-cutters to release and remove the protesters. The security of the House would become an increasingly sensitive dimension of Barlin's responsibilities.

Such incidents aside, overseeing the management, program, and conduct of the House meant constant, often personal, advice to members. It also fostered a distinctive perspective on the House's dynamics. Through 1975 Barlin had a keen sense of mounting pressure on the Labor government, especially when watching Gough Whitlam leave for Government House on 11 November to seek approval for a half-Senate election but return as a dismissed prime minister.

Barlin was actively involved in discussions urging the need for the replacement of the provisional Parliament House. As an initial Joint Clerk to the Joint Standing Committee on the New and Permanent Parliament House, Barlin built on the contribution of Jack Pettifer in advising on the functional requirements of a new building. The committee's 1977 report, advocating the completion of the project by 26 January 1988, gave momentum and focus to this task. Appointed Deputy Clerk in 1982, Barlin appreciated opportunities to offer guidance on aspects ranging from the provision of space to support the operation of the House, to involvement with the Parliament House Construction Authority and the architects on finer aspects of

design. Quite late in construction—against the wishes of many parliamentarians and some fellow officers—he joined the then Speaker, Joan Child, in lobbying to leave the historic Speaker's chair, a replica of that in the House of Commons, in the old chamber and to commission a new chair, constructed from Australian timbers by David Upfill-Brown.

A special point of pride for Barlin was his being one of Queen Elizabeth II's escorts as she toured the new parliament building before opening it on 9 May 1988. He had, by then, developed a great depth of experience of both the traditions and the innovations in parliamentary practice. This was heightened by serving as secretary to the Australian parliament's delegations to conferences of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) in Zambia (1980), Kenya (1983), and Barbados (1989), and in periods of secondment to the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (1982), and to the United Kingdom (1978, 1980) and Canadian (1984) Houses of Commons. Attendance at CPA conferences involved overseeing the preparation of briefing papers on the economic, environmental, social, and security policy issues confronting parliamentary democracies across Commonwealth countries. The meetings of the Society of Clerks-at-the-Table, included in the CPA conference programs, provided Barlin with opportunities to discuss topics ranging from the role of the Clerk in the development of parliamentary procedure to the framing of laws relating to freedom of information. These agendas built on frequent, less formal exchanges among parliamentary officers, reviewing parliament's functions and performance.

When appointed Clerk of the House on 23 March 1991, Barlin already had several major reforms to his credit, reflecting his interest in balancing the pressures of legislative business with ensuring the people's representatives had a voice and accountability. In October 1984, he assisted in the preparation of resolutions requiring the registration of all members' interests, including any financial dealings of spouses and dependent children; he was then appointed the first Registrar of Members' Interests and secretary to the committee overseeing the new arrangements. In 1992, drawing on a Canadian model, Barlin guided the introduction of the opportunity for members to make statements on any topic of concern not exceeding ninety seconds, during an allocated period immediately prior to question time. This initiative proved popular with members. He was, as members recognised, also instrumental in the establishment of the House's Main Committee, later known as the Federation Chamber, in 1994. This innovation provided more time for debate on bills on which there was expected to be agreement, on private members' business, and for the discussion of committee reports. The Federation Chamber continues to play an integral role in the work of the House.

Barlin's commitment to preserving and balancing the roles of the House was matched by a determination to defend its integrity. The rushed handling of the government's superannuation guarantee legislation at the end of a sitting in June 1992 led to a 'vigorous' (Brough 1992) and public exchange between Barlin and the Clerk of the Senate, Harry Evans. Discrepancies between the actual amendments made to the bill by the Senate and those listed in the schedule of amendments prepared by the Senate Table Office, and then agreed to by the House before it adjourned, led to pressure on Barlin to correct them by simply substituting a new schedule. But he insisted that, whatever the intention might have been, bills passed in both chambers must be identical before being presented for the governor-general's assent. This position was supported by advice from the solicitor-general that the problem would not be solved just by amending the relevant paperwork; supporting Barlin's position, this advice maintained it was necessary that 'the proposed law be passed in the same terms in each House' (Brough 1992). The Speaker subsequently told the House 'that he understood it was intended to move a motion in the Senate to the effect that a corrected schedule of amendments made by the Senate on 24 June 1992 be forwarded to the House and that the House be asked to reconsider the bill with the corrected schedule' (VP 1990–91–92/1634–35, 18.8.1992).

Members respected Barlin's determination, as Kim Beazley later observed, to resist attempts to 'slowly, steadily and quietly' diminish the House's 'powers and prerogatives' (H.R. Deb. 27.6.1997, 6590). Barlin's emphasis on proper procedures in such cases was reflected also in the constant, subtle vigilance that he exercised within the chamber. As Beazley also noted, members of the House would 'look for the lift of the eyebrow, the slight curl of the lips' (H.R. Deb. 27.6.1997, 6589) to gauge the extent to which proceedings stayed in order.

Barlin was appointed AM in June 1995 in recognition of his service to parliament, not least in administering a department that had grown from six to 175 members of staff in his time. When his retirement was announced in June 1997, the Speaker, Bob Halverson, spoke of his having 'meticulously observed' the Clerk's impartiality, while Beazley as opposition leader observed that he demonstrated 'more of a sense of innovation' than many of his predecessors (H.R. Deb. 27.6.1997, 6586, 6589). Dedicated to high standards in government, he embraced other aspects of the national capital and its environs. As Clerk to the Joint Committee on the Australian Capital Territory, he oversaw inquiries into freehold rural landholdings and the introduction of random breath-testing of drivers. Trout fishing and clay target shooting were among his recreations. Modest and affable in demeanour, he was judged by one of the Speakers with whom he worked, Stephen Martin, as a 'quintessential' parliamentary officer (Lamberton 1995), his expertise and wisdom having been refined over more than forty years of association with the House.

Select bibliography

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 16 June 1997, 5207–8

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 27 June 1997, 6585–92

Australia. House of Representatives. *Votes and Proceedings*, 1990–91–92, 1600–1608, 1634–35, 1645–54

Australia. Senate. *Journals of the Senate*, 1990–91–92, 2645–46

Barlin, Lyn. Interview by the author, 18 February 2020

Brough, Jodie. 'Uncertainty Hanging over Super Legislation'. *Canberra Times*, 14 October 1992, 11

Lamberton, Hugh. 'Reward for 40 Years in Cauldron'. *Canberra Times*, 12 June 1995, 5

Souter, Gavin. *Acts of Parliament: A Narrative History of the Senate and House of Representatives, Commonwealth of Australia*. Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1988

Bayley, James Garfield: Chairman of Committees 1926–1929

David Carment

James Garfield Bayley (1882–1968), educationalist and Chairman of Committees of the House of Representatives, was born at Franklin, Tasmania, on 26 March 1882, second son of six surviving children of Rev. James Mollineaux Bayley, a Congregational minister from Leeds, England, and his wife, Mary Alice, née Frencham. Garfield attended Leichhardt Superior Public School in Sydney and Brisbane Grammar School. His sister, Irene Maud Longman, and brother, Percy Mollineaux Bayley, both became members of the Queensland Legislative Assembly, Irene being its first female member (1929–32).

After leaving school, Bayley trained as a teacher at South Brisbane State School before becoming an assistant teacher at Toowoomba. He left in September 1904 to pursue further studies in California. In 1905 he received a diploma from San José State Teachers College and became a school principal in Fresno County, but he resigned to attend Stanford University (BA, 1909; MA, 1910). His master's thesis was entitled 'The Educational System of New Zealand'. He had a deep interest in national education systems and, while still in the United States, he contributed to debate in the Queensland press about the role of the new University of Queensland. Arguing for a residential university that was not limited to professional training alone, he also complained that Queensland secondary schools were burdened by 'rutty and fossilised' teachers (*Beaudesert Times* 1910, 3).

Following further international travel, Bayley returned to Queensland and in February 1912 became the first head teacher of Charters Towers State High School. He held this position until he stood as the Liberal Party candidate for Oxley in the September 1914 federal election. Failing to win the seat, he worked as advertising manager for Allan and Stark Ltd, a drapery emporium in Brisbane. On 24 December 1915, at St James' Church of England, Sydney, he married Gladys Tadema Grien, with whom he had a daughter, Elizabeth. Gladys's father, Henri Louis Grien, was

Figure 8: James Bayley.
Source: National Library of Australia, PIC/5460 LOC Drawer PIC/5460, Sidney Riley Studio.

a journalist who, under the assumed name of Louis de Rougemont, was notorious for recounting his fanciful exploits among outback Aborigines that included battling ferocious wildlife, cannibalism, and an Aboriginal wife.

Bayley's second attempt to win Oxley—this time as a Nationalist at the federal election of May 1917—was successful. He held the seat at the next five elections. In the House of Representatives, he was a markedly independent-minded speaker on many different national issues, opposing government intrusion into the free market and, around each fourth of July, exhorting the prime minister to forward a greeting to the president of the United States. While he was never a minister, his party colleagues held him in high regard. He was Chairman of the Joint Statutory Committee on Public Accounts from March 1923 to January 1926 and Temporary Chairman of Committees from June 1923 to June 1925. In September 1924, he was a member of the Empire Parliamentary Association delegation that visited South Africa.

As Chairman of Committees from 14 January 1926 to 16 September 1929, Bayley controlled the House 'with unruffled ease' and a 'phlegmatic temperament' (*Daily Telegraph* 1928, 2). The senior Australian Labor Party (ALP) parliamentarian Frank Brennan, on the other hand, accused Bayley of having 'a too intense loyalty' to friends and party (H. R. Deb. 7.2.1929, 67). On 14 December 1927, Bayley made a ruling regarded as 'a watershed in the evolution of the rights of non-official [backbench] Members of the House of Representatives in passing taxation laws' (Reid and Forrest 1989, 355). When the leader of the opposition, Matthew Charlton, moved in the Committee of Ways and Means to advance by a month the date from which proposed tariff duties would apply, Bayley ruled that this exceeded the power of private members under the then standing order 171, which prevented them from proposing amendments aimed at imposing or increasing taxes or duties during the committee stage of bills. The historians of the federal parliament, G. S. Reid and Martyn Forrest, argued that Bayley failed to grasp that the standing order did not apply to preliminary debates in the Committee of Ways and Means (1989, 355). The opposition member James Scullin moved dissent, leading to a debate in which the ALP's Percy Coleman complained that the ruling was 'an indefensible and unwarranted interference with the rights and privileges of private members' (H.R. Deb. 14.12.1927, 3214). Scullin's motion was defeated along party lines.

Senior political colleagues were sufficiently impressed by Bayley to propose in February 1929 that he replace the steadfastly independent Sir Littleton Groom as Speaker. This was thwarted by the wider party room and the government's consequent fear that dissident members could cross the floor to join a Labor Party vote against Bayley. Had Bayley become Speaker, the Bruce–Page government may have avoided defeat in the House by one vote on 10 September 1929 during debate on the Maritime Industries Bill (VP 1929/117–18, 10.9.1929). The House was in committee at the time, so Bayley rather than Groom was presiding; however, Groom still felt it was

inappropriate for him to cast a vote, and his abstention resulted in the government losing on the floor by just one vote. Had Groom voted for the government, the equal division between yes and no votes would have enabled Bayley to make a casting vote from the chair. Most observers felt this would have been in the government's favour, saving it from going to the polls and losing office. In opposition, he remained fully occupied, serving as whip from November 1929 to December 1931, secretary of the Nationalist Party from November 1929 until May 1931, and as a member of the House of Representatives Committee on Standing Orders from November 1929 to November 1931. Although the United Australia Party, the successor to the Nationalists, swept Scullin's beleaguered government from office at the election of December 1931, its incongruously poor result in Queensland included the loss of Bayley's seat to the ALP. This probably arose from the unpopularity of the Country and Progressive National Party state government, but may also have owed something to Bayley's focus on national affairs, rather than being 'a parish pump type of politician' (*Telegraph*, 'Mr J. G. Bayley',1932, 4).

Returning to politics in April 1933 as the successful Country and Progressive National Party candidate at a by-election for the Queensland Legislative Assembly seat of Wynnum, Bayley was defeated two years later at a state election. In January 1936, he was appointed for two years as secretary of the Aerial, Geological and Geophysical Survey of Northern Australia. For much of the period between 1941 and 1957 he was a Commonwealth film censor. He unsuccessfully contested the August 1943 federal election as an independent candidate for Newcastle, having told voters in this strongly working-class seat that, to survive, the Labor Party 'must divorce itself from its industrial wing' (*Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners' Advocate* 1943, 3). From 1937 he lived variously in the Australian Capital Territory, Sydney, and then Brisbane, pursuing his recreations of tennis and golf. His wife having died in 1941, during his later years he resided with his daughter in Chelmer, Brisbane.

Bayley died at Chelmer on 14 January 1968 and was cremated with a Congregational service at Brisbane's Mount Thompson Crematorium. His death was little noticed. In studio photographs, he is impeccably groomed, wearing high starched collars and bow ties; in parliament, he was a 'courtly and polished' speaker (Lack 1962, 744) and 'one of the most serious students of politics in the House' (*Week* 1931, 18). Yet despite his educational qualifications and relevant experience, he made little evident impression on government policy. Bayley's most public legacy as Chairman of Committees was a contentious ruling seen by some to have reduced the authority of the House of Representatives.

Select bibliography

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 14 December 1927, 3188–215

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 7 February 1929, 66–67

Australia. House of Representatives. *Votes and Proceedings*, 1929, 117–18

Beaudesert Times. 'The Queensland University'. 25 March 1910, 3

Central Queensland Herald (Rockhampton). 'Wynnum Selection'. 16 March 1933, 13

Daily Standard (Brisbane). 'Federal Rumblings'. 8 February 1929, 6

Daily Telegraph (Sydney). 'Mr Bayley May Be Speaker'. 20 November 1928, 2

Daily Telegraph (Sydney). 'Election of Speaker Almost Brings Crisis'. 6 February 1929, 3

Lack, Clem, ed. *Three Decades of Queensland Political History 1929–1960*. Brisbane: Government Printer, 1962

Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners' Advocate. 'Mr Bayley Opens Campaign'. 9 August 1943, 3

Reid, G. S., and Martyn Forrest. *Australia's Commonwealth Parliament 1901–1988: Ten Perspectives.* Carlton, Vic.: Melbourne University Press, 1989

Telegraph (Brisbane). 'Member for Oxley'. 16 December 1931, 8

Telegraph (Brisbane). 'Education'. 5 February 1932, 4

Telegraph (Brisbane). 'Mr J. G. Bayley'. 5 February 1932, 4

Week (Brisbane). 'Political Change'. 30 December 1931, 18

Bell, Sir George John: Speaker 1934–1940

Stefan Petrow

Sir George John Bell (1872–1944), soldier, grazier, and ninth Speaker of the House of Representatives, was born on 29 November 1872 at Sale, Victoria, eldest son of George Bell, a farmer born in Cambridgeshire, England, and his Irish-born wife, Catherine, née Hussey. George's mother died when he was five and his father, with five young children, soon remarried and had a further ten children. George attended state schools in Moe, Tanjil, and Sale.

In 1892 Bell enlisted with the Victorian Mounted Rifles and, on the outbreak of the South African War in 1899, enlisted as a private in the 1st Victorian Mounted Infantry Company, which joined the Australian Regiment at Cape Town in November. The regiment undertook reconnaissance in the Orange Free State and frequently skirmished with the enemy. He took part in the Bastard's Nek and Pink Hill engagements and served with the unit until its disbandment in April 1900. The Victorian Mounted Infantry was then attached to the 4th Mounted Corps of the Imperial Army and fought at Mafeking, Johannesburg, and Diamond Hill. By December, he was back in Australia, but when the British called for reinforcements in February 1901, he re-enlisted as a lieutenant in the 5th Victorian (Mounted Rifles) Contingent. On 4 January 1902, he was severely wounded at Bakkop. He was awarded the Distinguished Service Order and mentioned in dispatches.

After the war Bell settled in north-western Tasmania and, in 1904, took up selections of land at Henrietta and Parrawe. In April 1905, he resigned his commission in the 10th Light Horse Regiment and became an honorary captain in the Commonwealth Military Forces, backdated to 1 January 1902. By 1906 he had two cattle-grazing properties, but early in February his home and stock were destroyed by 'one great sea of flames' (*North Western Advocate* 1906, 5). He rebuilt quickly, and within three years his holdings were prospering. A leading advocate for his district, he was a member of the Yolla Road Trust and chairman of the Yolla Cricket Club. He helped form a branch of the anti-socialist Tasmanian Liberal League at Yolla and in 1910 was elected to its state council.
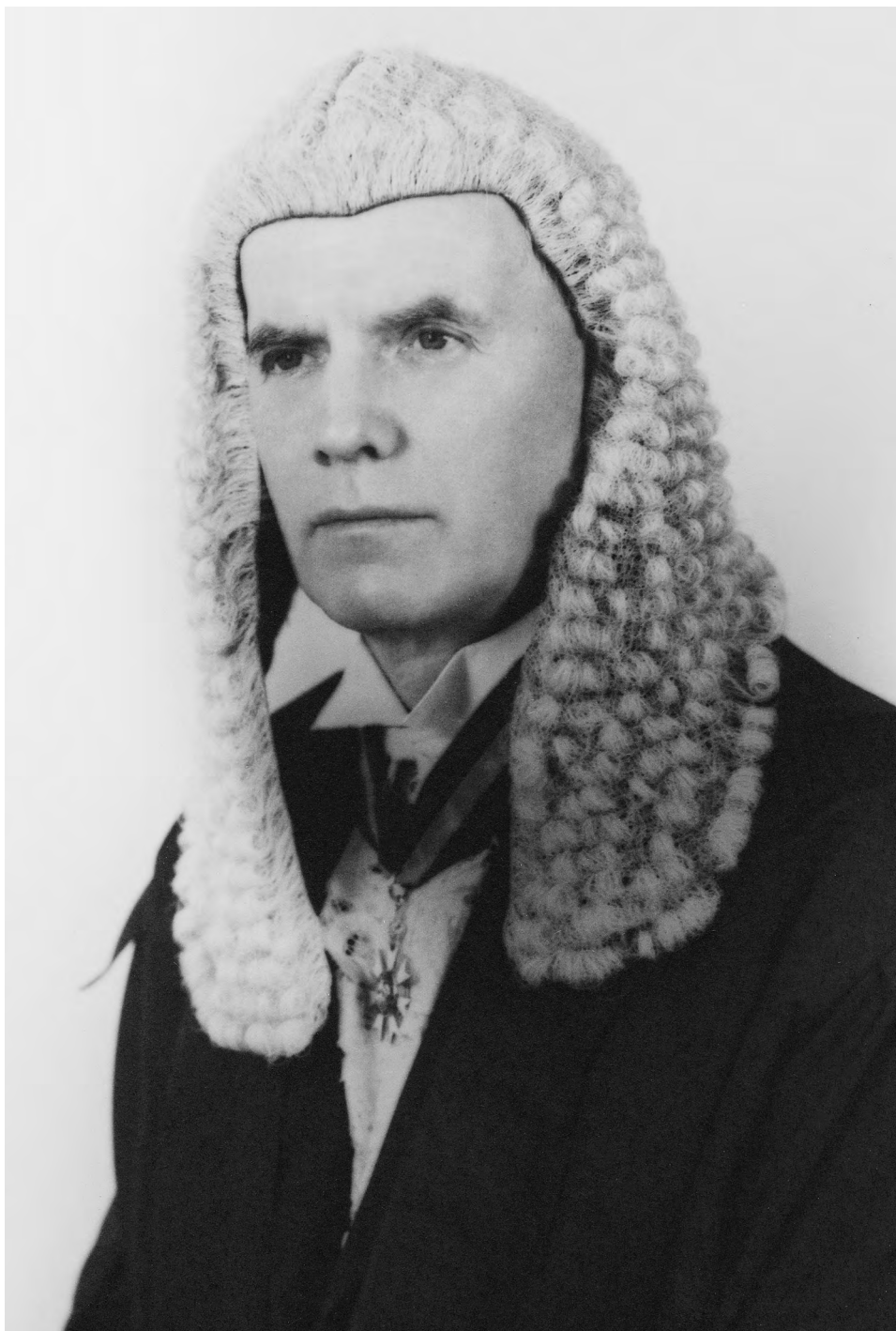
Figure 9: George Bell.
Source: Department of the House of Representatives.

On 25 August 1914, Bell enlisted in the Australian Imperial Force as a second lieutenant in the 3rd Light Horse Regiment and sailed for Egypt in October. He was promoted to lieutenant in February 1915 and, from May to November, served at Gallipoli. Transferred to the Suez Canal zone, he was promoted to captain on 8 February 1916 and major on 15 April. He participated in the early stages of the Sinai campaign, fighting at the Romani battle on 4 August and in abortive advances on Katia and Bir el Abd. Attached as second in command to the 4th Camel Regiment, Imperial Camel Corps Brigade, he saw action in October during the occupation of El Arish. He rejoined the light horse at Bir el Abd in March 1917.

Promoted to lieutenant-colonel in June 1917, Bell was given command of the 3rd Light Horse Regiment and soon emerged as 'one of the most aggressive and astute leaders produced by the light horse' (Blackwell 1950, 55). He demanded from his men the same discipline that he imposed on himself, but was respected for his fairness, coolness, and anticipation of the enemy's moves. The regiment played a spirited role in the battle of Beersheba, participated in the capture of the Jordan Valley, and on 10 February 1918, took Jericho without opposition. His chief contribution was during the advance on Amman when he led an attack on Es Salt—the Turks withdrawing from this vital stronghold without fighting. The later evacuation of British troops from Es Salt was largely due to his tactical astuteness. He was mentioned in dispatches by General Sir Edmund Allenby and in April was appointed CMG.

Throughout the final stages of the war, Bell remained in the Amman area. In August 1918, he came down with malaria, which was to recur after the war. On 10 December, while he was in Cairo, some men from his regiment participated—with other Australian, New Zealand, and British troops—in the Surafend incident in which a number of Arabs from the village were massacred after a Bedouin thief killed a New Zealander. He held an inquiry on 12–13 December, but no soldier was charged and the findings were not made public. This did not stop his superiors from judging him in February 1919 to be the regimental commander 'best qualified' in the ANZAC Mounted Division 'to command a brigade' (NAA B2455).

Demobilised in September 1919, on 5 November at the Yolla Anglican Mission Hall, Bell married Ellen Rothwell, daughter of John Edward Rothwell, a local grazier, and his wife, Ellen Rothwell. His broad appeal as a well-known local man on the land with an impressive war record led to his being proposed as an 'anti-Labor candidate' (*Advocate* 8 October 1919, 3) in the coming federal election by the Returned Soldiers' League and the Farmers and Stockholders Association. He agreed to stand as the Nationalist Party candidate for the Tasmanian seat of Darwin, but he reserved 'the right of free criticism of the administration of Commonwealth affairs' (*Advocate* 8 October 1919, 3). His campaign appealed to a largely rural electorate by condemning government extravagance and the favouring of 'the crowds of workers in the cities' (*Advocate* 24 November 1919, 3). With the crucial support of returned

servicemen in the Labor stronghold of Queenstown, Bell narrowly defeated the Labor candidate and future prime minister Joseph Lyons, who nonetheless became a close friend.

At the 1922 election, Bell withstood approaches to join the Country Party. His rural sympathies did not prevent his defeat at the hands of the Country Party candidate Joshua Whitsitt on Labor Party preferences. (Sir) Earle Page later claimed that Bell lost his seat for failing to fulfil a pledge to vote with the Country Party against the Hughes government's budget (Page 1963, 69). Bell regained Darwin in 1925 and retained it with comfortable majorities at the next six elections, the last four as a United Australia Party (UAP) candidate.

In parliament Bell drew attention to inadequate national defence and support for ex-servicemen. He was labelled a militarist for advocating universal military training and for his stand against disarmament. As a proponent of Tasmania, he supported mining development and sawmilling, becoming 'one of the most able debaters in the House of Representatives' (*Advocate* 1928, 5). He was awarded the Volunteer Officers' Decoration in 1925 and in 1927 was appointed aide-de-camp to the governor-general. In March 1927, he relinquished command of the 26th Light Horse Regiment—a post he had held since 1920. He suffered a personal tragedy in October 1927 when his brother William Robert, a district officer in the British Solomon Islands Protectorate, was assassinated.

Bell was not considered for a ministry when the Lyons government was formed following the December 1931 federal election, but his leadership experience and independence suited a presiding officer's role. In 1932 the choice of a new Speaker had seldom been 'more open' (*Telegraph* 1932, 1). Seeking to embarrass the government, the Country and Labor parties considered Bell, but he refused to stand against the UAP nominee, George Mackay. He was instead elected Chairman of Committees—effectively, Deputy Speaker—despite not having served as a Temporary Chairman as was the usual practice. He received encomiums from his own party and Labor leader James Scullin, and also from the Lang Labor leader, Jack Beasley, who ominously urged Bell to 'exercise wise discretion in allowing latitude' to members in the committee stages of bills (H.R. Deb. 17.2.1932, 37). In practice, the lingering bitterness of some Labor and Lang Labor members following the split in the Australian Labor Party (ALP) and the defection of Lyons soon made Bell's job difficult.

The first of several altercations occurred during the November 1932 debate on the Ottawa Agreement Bill, when Labor members deluged Postmaster-General Archdale Parkhill with interjections. Amid scenes 'unprecedented in the annals of the Federal Parliament' (*Brisbane Courier* 1932, 13), Bell lost control of the House until he named the deputy Labor leader, Frank Forde. During 1933 Bell's impartiality was questioned. In April Scullin declared his having named two Labor members and suspending one of them while taking no action against government members to be

'the greatest outrage that I have known in this Parliament' (H.R. Deb. 5.4.1933, 867). Bell was also accused of curtailing debate at government direction. In October he acted on the advice of the assistant treasurer, Richard (Baron) Casey, in ruling out of order amendments to old-age and invalid pensions proposed by the member for East Sydney, the Langite Eddie Ward. Beasley condemned Bell as 'the mouthpiece of Government' (H.R. Deb. 19.10.1933, 3705) but his motion of dissent was defeated on party lines.

When Mackay resigned at the 1934 election, Bell's popularity within the UAP and support from Lyons made him the likely new Speaker. But when on 23 October the UAP member for Indi, William Hutchinson, moved that Bell be elected Speaker and described him as a Chairman of Committees known for 'absolute impartiality' (H.R. Deb. 23.10.1934, 18), the chamber erupted into 'a bear garden' (*Catholic Freeman's Journal* 1934, 20). The Lang Labor member for Reid, Joseph Gander, followed a filibustering attack on the government by nominating himself as Speaker. Opposition members refused to co-operate with the Clerk of the House, Ernest William Parkes, in conducting the vote, despite which Bell was declared duly elected. As the new Speaker was being escorted to the chair, Gander also approached the chair, and opposition members unsuccessfully called for a vote on the two candidates (H.R. Deb. 23.10.1934, 27–28).

Former Speaker Norman Makin observed that in manner and temperament Bell resembled his immediate predecessor and was restrained in his calls for order. Although the return of Lang Labor to the ALP fold in 1936 and John Curtin's moderating leadership helped make the parliament less raucous, Bell continued to clash with opposition members—notably, Ward and the member for Hunter, Rowland James. The Surafend inquiry resurfaced during 1936 when A. S. Mulhall, a former light horseman who claimed to have witnessed the bloody aftermath of the massacre, wrote separately to Bell and Sir George Pearce, who had been minister for defence during the war, attempting to clear his fellow light horsemen of culpability. Mulhall was disregarded without damage to Bell's reputation.

Don Rodgers of the Lang-controlled *Labor Daily* described Bell's parliamentary rulings as 'totally unsubtle, delivered with the heavy sweep of the cavalry sabre' (Rodgers 1937, 10). But Bell was also prepared to upset his own side of politics. In September 1937, Ward accused the government of appropriating £250,000 from public revenue 'to give special privileges and concessions to private individuals' (H.R. Deb. 10.9.1937, 953) interested in searching for oil. When Lyons demanded that Ward withdraw this assertion, Bell ruled against his own prime minister on the basis that the allegation was 'no more than a reflection on the administration of the Minister' (H.R. Deb. 10.9.1937, 954). Lyons successfully moved that this ruling be 'disagreed with' (H.R. Deb. 10.9.1937, 955), but when Ward refused to withdraw his claim, Bell named him and he was suspended on the further motion of the prime minister. When the Labor member for Darling, Joseph Clark, suggested

that the prime minister himself owned shares in oil companies, Bell refused Lyons's request for a withdrawal because the statement was 'of a political nature and not necessarily personal' (H.R. Deb. 10.9.1937, 956). As dissent from a ruling by the Speaker was reasonably common and provided for in the standing orders, Bell did not contemplate resignation. But it was 'without precedent in the history of the Federal Parliament' (*Mercury* 1937, 7) for the Speaker's ruling to be reversed on the motion of a prime minister.

A few days later, Attorney-General (Sir) Robert Menzies introduced amendments to the standing orders for election of a Speaker, which had been initiated by Bell as chair of the Standing Orders Committee two years earlier, to avoid the disorder that marred his own election. This brought a split among Labor members. Beasley, a member of the committee, sought more time to discuss changes that affected 'the privilege, right and freedom of honorable members' (H.R. Deb. 15.9.1937, 1138). He thought it wrong to impose a five minute limit for speaking on the qualities of candidates while not limiting speeches congratulating a new Speaker. Although he accepted the introduction of a secret ballot, he opposed ballot papers being given to the Clerk for counting without scrutineers representing the candidates. But the Labor member for Bourke, Maurice Blackburn, a former Speaker in the Victorian Legislative Assembly, revealed that he had urged the government to introduce the amendments in time for the election of a new Speaker that would follow the imminent general election. A secret ballot would ensure that the Speaker would be 'the choice of the House' (H.R. Deb. 15.9.1937, 1143). The amendments were passed. It also emerged that not all Labor members found Bell disagreeable. Blackburn assured Bell that he had 'discharged the duties of your high office with absolute impartiality and very high ability indeed' (H.R. Deb. 15.9.1937, 1144). Before parliament adjourned, the affable Lyons praised Bell's 'impartiality', as demonstrated by their 'recent disagreement' (H.R. Deb. 15.9.1937, 1147). He replied: 'I would not be human had I always been right and honorable members would not be human had they thought that I was always right' (H.R. Deb. 15.9.1937, 1151).

Longstanding health problems had put a question mark over whether Bell would remain Speaker, but following the general election of November 1937, he was the only candidate. He continued to strive for impartiality. In June 1938, when the acting minister for commerce, Archie Cameron, described the independent member for Wimmera, Alexander Wilson, as a 'clean-skin' on the opposition benches, Wilson demanded he withdraw this remark as offensive. Cameron refused and was named by Bell. This placed Lyons in a position he believed 'no Prime Minister has previously faced' (H.R. Deb. 15.6.1938, 2129). On his motion, Cameron became the first minister to be suspended from federal parliament.

Bell's preparedness to enforce standing orders even when embarrassing to the government led to the first occasion that a member was named but the motion to suspend failed. During an acrimonious exchange in October 1938 between the UAP

member for Macquarie, John Lawson, and James over what had supposedly been said about the location of a plant to extract oil from coal, Bell refused to accept an apology from James. The motion to suspend James was defeated 24 votes to 19 due to government members having absented themselves to catch trains home (VP 1937–38/223, 14.10.1938).

The following month, Bell suffered a further blow to his authority in yet another 'extraordinary scene believed to be unparalleled in the history of the Parliament' (*Mercury* 1938, 17). During debate on the Ministers of State Bill, the UAP member for Barton, Albert Lane, attacked the Country Party for having too much say in the formation of cabinets and lamented the underrepresentation of New South Wales. Lane ignored Bell's warning that he should focus on the bill, whereupon he was ordered to resume his seat. The Labor member for Batman, Frank Brennan, took advantage of the standing orders, as confirmed by Bell, to move that Lane be given leave to continue his speech, which was agreed to on the voices.

At the end of the fifteenth parliament in August 1940, both Prime Minister Menzies and Curtin praised the manner in which Bell had discharged his duties. He responded that he could not have done the job without the Clerk of the House, another Tasmanian, Frank Green. Bell announced that he would not nominate as Speaker after the election of 1940 as, now that Australia was again at war, he preferred to be 'free to join in every discussion when he thought his views should be expressed freely' (*Advocate* 1940, 5). Despite an increase in Burnie's industrial population, he defeated his Labor opponent, the future premier of Tasmania, Eric Reece, by nearly five thousand votes.

In March 1941, King George VI approved Bell's post-Speakership retention of the title 'Honourable' and in June he was appointed KCMG. During his final term in parliament, he pursued Tasmanian interests by serving on committees inquiring into the Apple and Pear Marketing Board and the state's economic position in wartime. Still troubled by poor health, he retired in 1943 and, on 5 March 1944, died of coronary vascular disease. Buried in Burnie Anglican cemetery after a state funeral, he was survived by his wife, three sons, and two daughters.

On hearing of Bell's death, Prime Minister Curtin spoke of his 'strict sense of impartiality' (H.R. Deb. 7.3.1944, 1016). Dame Enid Lyons, who succeeded Bell as member for Darwin, described his 'personal rectitude' as having been worn as 'a shining armour of stainless integrity' (H.R. Deb. 7.3.1944, 1018). Tall and well built, he was known as a man of courage and determination, with a stern visage that belied a retiring manner. His portrait by Max Meldrum, which won the 1939 Archibald Prize, is held by Parliament House.

This article supplements the original Volume 7 ADB *biography, published 1979, authored by William G. Bell. adb.anu.edu.au/biography/bell-sir-george-john-5193/text8733*

Select bibliography

Advocate (Burnie). 'Labor Opponent in Darwin'. 8 October 1919, 3

Advocate (Burnie). 'Lieut.-Colonel Bell a Candidate for Darwin'. 23 October 1919, 3

Advocate (Burnie). 'Darwin's Campaign'. 24 November 1919, 3

Advocate (Burnie). 'In Darwin'. 8 November 1922, 5

Advocate (Burnie). 'Soldier Politician'. 16 November 1928, 5

Advocate (Burnie). 'Election Candidates State Their Policies'. 5 September 1940, 5

Advocate (Burnie). 'Striking Tribute to Late Sir George Bell'. 8 March 1944, 2

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 17 February 1932, 37

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 5 April 1933, 867

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 19 October 1933, 3703–7

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 23 October 1934, 18–32

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 10 September 1937, 949–56

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 15 September 1937, 1134–51

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 30 November 1937, 13–14

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 15 June 1938, 2128–31

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 14 October 1938, 860–63

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 16 November 1938, 1554–57

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 21 August 1940, 570–74

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 7 March 1944, 1016–19

Australia. House of Representatives. *Votes and Proceedings*, 1937–38, 223

Bell, W. G. Biography of Sir George Bell, MS 3861. National Library of Australia

Blackwell, F. M. *The Story of the 3rd Australian Light Horse Regiment.* Adelaide: Third Light Horse Regimental Club, 1950

Brisbane Courier. 'Bedlam in the House of Representatives'. 17 November 1932, 13

Catholic Freeman's Journal (Sydney). 'Those Disorderly Scenes in Parliament'. 1 November 1934, 20

Coleman, Lachlan. 'The Surafend Incident'. *Wartime* (Canberra), Winter 2007, 62–63

Daley, Paul. *Beersheba: A Journey through Australia's Forgotten War*. Carlton, Vic.: Melbourne University Press, 2009

Gardner, E. D. 'He's the Speaker … but His Role Is Listening'. *Herald* (Melbourne), 16 December 1939, 37

Gullett, H. S. *Official History of Australia in the War of 1914–1918*. Vol. VII, *Sinai and Palestine*. Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1923

Lyons, Dame Enid. *Among the Carrion Crows*. Adelaide: Rigby, 1972

Makin, Norman. 'The Honourable Sir George John Bell KCMG Speaker 1934–1940', c. 1962. Papers of Norman Makin, MS 4663. National Library of Australia

Mercury (Hobart). 'Episode without Precedent'. 13 September 1937, 7

Mercury (Hobart). 'Extraordinary Scene'. 17 November 1938, 17

National Archives of Australia. B2455, Bell G. J.

National Archives of Australia. A981, PERS 237, Personal. A. S. Mulhall The Surafend Incident—December 1918 Correspondence

North Western Advocate and the Emu Bay Times (Burnie). 'At the Back of Table Cape'. 3 February 1906, 5

Page, Earle. *Truant Surgeon: The Inside Story of Forty Years of Australian Political Life*. Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1963

Rodgers, Donald K. 'Parliamentary Pen Pictures No. 11—The Speaker'. *Labor Daily* (Sydney), 13 March 1937, 10

Telegraph (Brisbane). 'Commonwealth Parliament'. 16 February 1932, 1

Berinson, Joseph Max (Joe): Chairman of Committees 1975

Bobbie Oliver

Joseph Max Berinson (1932–2018), pharmacist, government minister, and Chairman of Committees of the House of Representatives, was born on 7 January 1932 at Highgate, Western Australia, youngest of three children of Shulem (Samuel) Berinson, master baker, and his wife, Rivka (Rebecca), née Finkelstein, both Jewish immigrants from Palestine. Joe was educated at Highgate Primary School before winning a scholarship to Perth Modern School. After matriculating in 1948, he studied at Perth Technical College (DPharm, 1953). During practical training at a pharmacy in central Perth, he saw (Sir) Robert Menzies and Ben Chifley deliver speeches in Forrest Place; this was a formative political experience.

In 1953 Berinson opened a business at Mt Lawley in suburban Perth. That same year, he joined the Australian Labor Party (ALP), serving as secretary of the Mount Lawley branch and subsequently on the ALP State Executive. He married Jeanette Bekhor at the Perth Synagogue on 9 September 1958. They were to have three daughters, Jill, Linda, and Ruth, and one son, David. He built a high profile within the Jewish community, including by co-editing the local Jewish newspaper, *The Maccabean*. At the 1962 state election, he stood unsuccessfully for the Legislative Assembly seat of Mt Lawley, and for the federal seat of Swan in 1963. Reasoning that a law degree would suit his interest in politics, he commenced studies at the University of Western Australia in 1967. At the 1969 federal election, he defeated the sitting member for Perth, Fred Chaney senior. He was seen as being on the right of the ALP, to the extent that the Democratic Labor Party had considered directing preferences to him.

The demands of parliamentary life did not deter Berinson from continuing his studies, and he was to be seen studying in the Parliamentary Library late at night and during long flights between Perth and Canberra. He graduated LLB (Hons) in 1970, winning both the H. C. F. Keall Prize for best fourth-year law student and the J. A. Wood Prize for best student in the humanities. The energy that lay behind these outstanding results soon became evident in parliament. Gough Whitlam was to praise Berinson as 'one of the most brilliant debaters in public life' (H.R. Deb. 27.2.1975, 893) as he
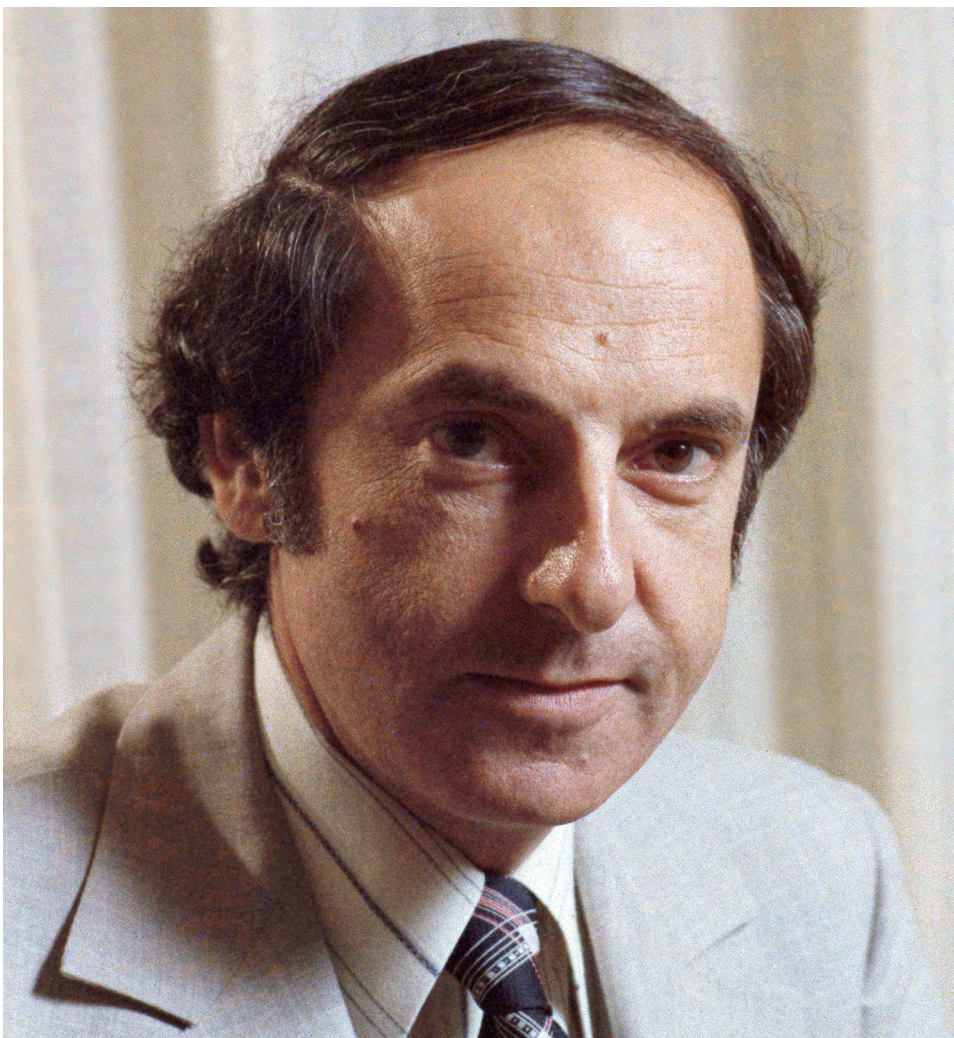
Figure 10: Joe Berinson.
Source: Courtesy of the National Archives of Australia. NAA: A6135, K19/3/75/48.

assailed conservative governments for rising costs and inequitable taxation, and called for the orderly transfer from the states to the Commonwealth of responsibility for transport, education, health, and housing. He also strongly supported establishing a standing committee system in the House of Representatives, similar to that adopted by the Senate.

In March 1972, Berinson joined party colleagues in speaking out against the 'offensive connotations' (H.R. Deb. 23.3.1972, 1100) of an alleged antisemitic reference by Peter Sim, a Liberal senator for Western Australia. He later challenged his own government over its position on the Palestine Liberation Organisation, asking Prime Minister Whitlam in question time why Australia had abstained from, rather than opposed, United Nations motions supporting the PLO given its stance on 'the elimination of Israel as a sovereign independent state' (H.R. Deb. 25.11.1974, 3940).

Berinson was elected Deputy Chairman of Committees in March 1973 and, in February 1975, was also appointed inaugural chair of the Australian Population and Immigration Council. On 27 February 1975, the sudden resignation of James Cope as Speaker and his replacement by Gordon Scholes led to Berinson being elected to fill the now vacant position of Chairman of Committees. Tellingly, the leaders of the opposition Liberal and Country parties welcomed him as 'a man of great capacity and of outstanding quality' (H.R. Deb. 27.2.1975, 893). He had enjoyed serving as Deputy Chairman but found his new position far more challenging, with the frequent need to deputise for the Speaker and to 'take most of the running in the chairing of the committee stages' of bills (Berinson 1993–94). He nonetheless considered the role interesting and 'enjoyed acting as Speaker from time to time' (Berinson 1993–94). The vote on the Family Law Bill was so close that at one stage it appeared he might need to deliver a casting vote, 'but as it happened there was a majority of one for the government … So I was deprived of that extra little contribution to *Who's Who*' (Berinson 1993–94).

The factionally unaligned Berinson finally secured a ministerial position on his fifth attempt, when he was appointed minister for the environment following the resignation of Jim Cairns. He submitted his resignation as Chairman of Committees on 14 July 1975, but found that he had to continue in the position until 19 August because parliament was not sitting and so could not elect a new Chairman; as the Speaker was overseas, he was briefly simultaneously a minister and a presiding officer. Berinson admitted that he knew little about the environment portfolio, having previously been more engaged with social issues. His appointment was praised by the press, given his 'concise, analytical mind' and consequent ability to 'reason logically and unemotionally on most issues—except the Middle East' (Savva 1975). But his federal ministerial career was to be short-lived; he was controversially dismissed along with the rest of the Whitlam government on 11 November 1975, and at the ensuing

election lost his seat in a strong national swing against Labor. He failed to gain ALP endorsement for the federal seat of Swan at the 1977 election. In December 1977, he was admitted to practise in the Western Australian Supreme Court.

Berinson finally returned to public life in February 1980 by winning the state Legislative Council seat of North East Metropolitan Province, later representing North Central Metropolitan Province (1983–89) and North Metropolitan Region (1989–93). Ever outspoken and principled, he commented at the time of his election that the Legislative Council 'is a bad part of the system' but if abolition was not practical then it 'should be found a more useful role than repeating the debate that took place in the Legislative Assembly' (*West Australian* 1980, 21).

In the Legislative Council, Berinson served as deputy leader of the opposition (1980–83), deputy leader of the government (1983–87), and leader of the government (1987–93). He was attorney-general (1983–93) in the Burke, Dowding, and Lawrence governments and at various times held other ministries—notably, resources, corrective services, and budget management. After Sir John Forrest, Berinson was only the second Western Australian to have held both a state and a federal portfolio. In 1987 he was appointed Queen's Counsel. The 1992 royal commission into 'WA Inc.' did not find any notable fault in Berinson's actions as attorney-general. He retired from politics in February 1993.

In retirement, he remained publicly prominent, serving as president of the Jewish Community Council of Western Australia (2001–05), and continuing as a board member of Carmel School, which he had co-founded. He also served on the federal government's Superannuation Complaints Tribunal. Berinson died on 2 June 2018 and was buried at Karrakatta cemetery in Perth. Slim and sharp-featured, his dedication, policy rigour, and debating skills had led to high expectations for his political career, but which in practice was constrained by his untimely defeat in 1975 and his steadfast independence of mind. He was survived by his wife and children, fifteen grandchildren, and one great grandchild.

Select bibliography

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 23 March 1972, 1100–1

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 25 November 1974, 3940

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 27 February 1975, 890–93

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 25 June 2018, 6156–57

Australia. Senate. *Parliamentary Debates*, 26 June 2018, 3936–41

Berinson, Joseph Max. Interview by Erica Harvey, 1993–94. Transcript. J. S. Battye Library of West Australian History

Canberra Times. 'Cabinet Post After Four Previous Attempts'. 15 July 1975, 3

Jacobs, Michael. 'Backbenchers Force PM into Repudiation'. *Canberra Times*, 24 March 1972, 8

Savva, Niki. 'Berinson: Concise and Analytical'. *Australian* (Sydney), 15 July 1975, 9

West Australian (Perth). 'Berinson Sad But Not Shattered'. 19 October 1977, 32

West Australian (Perth). 'Now it's Berinson MLC'. 25 February 1980, 21

Bishop, Bronwyn Kathleen: Speaker 2013–2015

Sylvia Marchant

Bronwyn Kathleen Bishop, lawyer and twenty-ninth Speaker of the House of Representatives, was born on 19 October 1942 in Sydney, eldest of three children of New South Wales–born Thomas Francis Setright, engineer, and his South Australian–born wife, Kathleen Annie, a professional singer. Bronwyn attended Roseville Public primary school and Cremorne Girls' High School. Her parents imparted to her a strong sense of public duty and confidence that she could achieve whatever she set out to do.

Bishop acquired from school studies of world history a firm conviction 'that individuals could make a difference' and, accordingly, aspired from an early age to have 'a say in what happened to my country' (H.R. Deb. 4.5.2016, 4397). Growing up in a solidly Liberal-voting area, she was drawn to the Liberal Party's ideology of individualism and free enterprise. As a university student, she joined the Killara Young Liberals and discovered that the branch had a sub-rule specifying that only a male could be president, and became determined to change this.

In 1960 Bishop commenced studies in law at the University of Sydney (1960–65), but she did not become active in student politics. In 1966 she married Alan David Bishop, a solicitor and future judge. They were to have two daughters, Angela and Sally, and divorced in 1992. Bishop did not complete her university studies but instead gained a professional qualification from the Solicitors' Admission Board in 1967. While a young lawyer, she acted in the television drama *Divorce Court* and delivered radio broadcasts on legal subjects.

From 1974 to 1987, Bishop made repeated attempts to secure preselection as the Liberal Party candidate for a state or federal seat, her only success being an unwinnable position on the ticket for the New South Wales Legislative Council in 1981. Nonetheless, she remained a tireless worker for the party and had more success in ascending the ranks of its organisation. She was president of the Balmoral branch (1973–79), a member of the state executive from 1980, chair of the annual

Figure 11: Bronwyn Bishop.
Source: Australian Government Photographic Service (Auspic).

state convention (1981–85), and became the first female president of the New South Wales Liberals (1985–87). In a period of growing ideological tension within the state party, she recalled that her attainment of the presidency involved 'one of the dirtiest fights I think I ever had to be in', and attributed her victory to 'the ordinary people in the party' (H.R. Deb. 4.5.2016, 4398). Her confidence and determination made a great impression on political friends and foes alike. She proved to be a markedly interventionist president, effectively 'both a chairman of the board and a managing director' (Hancock 2007, 247).

Election to parliament finally came at the 1987 federal double dissolution. Bishop was only the second female senator for New South Wales, and the first popularly elected, contributing to what one journalist came to see as 'her difficult to define quality of being newsworthy' (Farmer 1994). The new senator made a very public point of placing her office not in central Sydney but at Parramatta in the city's west. In May 1989, the newly reappointed Liberal leader, Andrew Peacock, elevated her to the opposition frontbench as shadow minister for public administration, federal affairs, and local government. Aided by a prodigious capacity for hard work and an ability to function with little sleep, she clashed repeatedly with government senators—notably, the foreign minister, Gareth Evans, who rhetorically pondered 'Why do so many people take an instant dislike to Senator Bishop?' and supplied the answer himself: 'It saves time' (S. Deb. 18.8.1992, 20). Such a view was, however, disputed by her acquaintances outside politics, who saw a more amiable side to her.

As a member of the Joint Committee of Public Accounts, Bishop for the first time attracted national attention in her televised appearances in 1992 in which she questioned government officials, including the commissioner of taxation, Trevor Boucher. Her strident tone and persistence sparked angry and public clashes with the committee chair, the Labor member for Barton, Gary Punch. Another and perhaps more substantive Bishop initiative challenged the prosecution of Midford Paramount, a clothing company alleged by Australian Customs Service investigators to have avoided paying duty on clothing it produced in Malaysia. Bishop, conscious that the company was in danger of going out of business, played a major role in highly critical findings that helped it to win compensation. She sat on innumerable other parliamentary committees, including as chair of the House Standing Committees on Legal and Constitutional Affairs (2002–04), Family and Human Services (2004–07), and Communications and the Arts (2015–16).

After the Liberals unexpectedly lost the 1993 election and their leader, John Hewson, appeared to be struggling, Bishop benefited from a series of opinion polls suggesting she was the publicly preferred leader. In January 1994, she was appointed shadow minister for urban and regional strategy. She resigned from the Senate the following month to stand at a by-election for the safe Liberal House of Representatives seat of Mackellar. Despite Labor not running a candidate, she suffered a swing against her

of more than 4 per cent in the primary vote; suggestions that she might attain the party leadership began to fade. After Alexander Downer replaced Hewson as leader in May 1994, she was moved to the more senior shadow portfolio of health. Her stated tolerance of tobacco advertising attracted widespread criticism, including from the president of the Australian Medical Association, Brendan Nelson, later a federal Liberal leader. In January 1995, Bishop was shifted from the shadow health portfolio into privatisation and Commonwealth–state relations.

Following the election of the government of John Howard in March 1996, Bishop became minister for defence industry, science, and personnel. After the October 1998 election, she was moved to the aged-care portfolio, in which capacity she introduced mandatory national standards for aged-care providers. This drew her into what became known as the kerosene bath scandal, when the media reported that residents of an aged-care facility in Melbourne had been bathed using a kerosene solution as a supposed cure for scabies, and took this to be indicative of negligence by Bishop's department.

Bishop lost her place in the ministry after the election of November 2001. That year she was awarded a Centenary Medal for her service in parliament and government. She nominated in the party room for the position of Speaker in November 2004; David Hawker was instead chosen, but Bishop was added to the Speaker's panel. After the defeat of the Howard government, she held the shadow portfolios of veterans' affairs (2007–08), seniors (2009–13), and special minister of state (2010–13).

Despite serving on the frontbench under Peacock, Hewson, Downer, Howard, and Nelson, Bishop never attained cabinet rank. When her friend and supporter Tony Abbott became prime minister in September 2013, she was instead proposed for the Speakership. Unusually, she was nominated in the House by the prime minister, who said he could 'think of no-one more likely to deal with all of the other formidable characters in this place without fear or favour' (H.R. Deb. 12.11.2013, 6). The leader of the House, Christopher Pyne, added as seconder that 'poachers usually make very good gamekeepers' (H.R. Deb. 12.11.2013, 6). In accepting the nomination, Bishop spoke of how she cared passionately for the traditions of the House and 'for what it represents, in looking after the welfare of the people of Australia' (H.R. Deb. 12.11.2013, 11). The opposition nominated the member for McEwen, Rob Mitchell, but Bishop was elected by 93 votes to 56 (VP 2013/6–7, 12.11.2013).

Bishop saw her Speakership as 'the capping of my career' (Ireland 2015). She was the third woman in the chair, after Joan Child and Anna Burke, and the first from outside the Labor Party. Like both previous female Speakers, she did not wear a gown when presiding. At the outset, she declared her 'ambition to bring dignity back into the chamber' (Chang 2013). But she soon attracted controversy, including criticism from her predecessor as Speaker, Anna Burke. Bishop continued to attend party room meetings and readily entered into political debate outside the chamber. She was the

subject of accusations of marked bias against the opposition, particularly for her rigour in ejecting members for misbehaviour during question time. On 27 March 2014, the manager of opposition business, Tony Burke, moved to suspend standing and sessional orders so as to further move a motion of no confidence against the Speaker, on the grounds of 'serious partiality in favour of Government Members' (VP 2013–14/444, 27.3.2014). This was defeated along party lines.

Some specific decisions by Bishop also drew widespread comment—notably, her October 2014 banning of burqas in the public galleries as a security risk, a measure that was soon retracted. The greatest controversy she faced as Speaker arose in July 2015 over what the media dubbed 'Choppergate'. Eight months earlier, she had claimed $5,227 in travel expenses for chartering a helicopter to fly from Melbourne to Geelong and back to attend a Liberal Party fundraising function. Although she voluntarily repaid the cost of the flights, plus an additional 25 per cent, and stated that her claim was within the guidelines, public criticism grew, particularly after it became known that she had made other sizeable travel claims. After three weeks of scathing public and media comment, on 2 August 2015, she resigned as Speaker and went to the backbench. This was followed by a government review of parliamentary entitlements to address the evident discrepancy between the formal rules and community expectations.

In December 2015, Bishop announced that she would recontest Mackellar at the next election. But the following April, she was defeated for preselection and announced her retirement from politics. Reacting to the news, Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull called her not merely 'unforgettable', but also 'dynamic, colourful, charismatic' (Dole 2016). Bishop departed politics as the longest-serving woman parliamentarian in Commonwealth history. A portrait by Jiawei Shen in Parliament House is more suggestive of her warmer side than her better-known persona as a political warrior. At the unveiling, she recognised her late-life status as a model for younger women by commenting that 'if things are a bit more difficult because you're a woman, don't waste your time and your effort whinging about it. Use that time and effort to overcome it, because it can be done' (Koziol 2018). In retirement, Bishop became a commentator for *Sky News*. She retains her longstanding interest in music by serving as a patron of Opera Australia. In 2020 she was appointed AO.

Select bibliography

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 12 November 2013, 6–12

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 27 March 2014, 3404–12

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 4 May 2016, 4397–405

Australia. House of Representatives. *Votes and Proceedings*, 2013–14, 444

Australia. House of Representatives. *Votes and Proceedings*, 2013, 6–7

Australia. Senate. *Parliamentary Debates*, 18 August 1992, 18–20

Chang, Charis. 'Bishop "Honoured"'. *Manly Daily*, 17 September 2013, 7

Dole, Nick. 'Bronwyn Bishop Dumped as Liberal Candidate for Seat of Mackellar'. *ABC News.* Last modified 17 April 2016. Accessed 31 July 2019. www.abc.net.au/news/2016-04-16/bronwyn-bishop-loses-preselection-fight-in-seat-of-mackellar/7332274. Copy held on file

Farmer, Richard. 'Bishop Facing Foes on All Sides'. *Canberra Times*, 15 July 1994, 10

Hancock, Ian. *The Liberals: A History of the NSW Division of the Liberal Party of Australia 1945–2000*. Leichhardt, NSW: The Federation Press, 2007

Ireland, Judith. 'Madam Speaker Should Give Politics a Shake'. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 20 June 2015, 35

Koziol, Michael. 'A Warrior Woman Who "Blew the Door off Its Hinges": Bronwyn Bishop's Official Portrait Unveiled'. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 27 November 2018, 5

Legge, Kate. 'The Making and Remaking of Bronwyn'. *Australian Magazine*, 2–3 October 1993, 8–15

Leser, David. *Bronwyn Bishop: A Woman in Pursuit of Power*. Melbourne: Text Publishing, 1994

Blake, Douglas Maurice (Doug): Clerk 1982–1985

Kay Walsh

Douglas Maurice Blake (1925–2022), eleventh Clerk of the House of Representatives, was born on 25 October 1925 at Campsie, Sydney, son of locally born Elsie Isobel Blake and her husband, Maurice, an instructor at Gosford Training School. Having gained his Intermediate Certificate at De La Salle College, Ashfield, Doug worked as a clerk. Volunteering for service in World War II, he enlisted on 30 November 1942 in the Royal Australian Navy. He was employed as a coder at HMAS Cerberus, before being promoted to midshipman, RAN Reserve, in October 1943. From December, he served in the corvette HMAS *Cowra*, which escorted convoys and carried out patrols in the South-West Pacific Area. In 1945 he was promoted to acting sub-lieutenant and posted in June to the shore establishment HMAS *Madang* (at Madang, New Guinea) for the Naval Beach Unit. Returning to Sydney in September, he was demobilised on 11 October.

Blake was again a clerk in Sydney before arriving in Canberra in 1949 as a member of the Attorney-General's Department, and subsequently briefly worked in the departments of commerce and agriculture, and treasury. He lived initially at Gorman House hostel, Braddon, before marrying Patricia Fox, a member of a local family, on 6 May 1950, at St Christopher's Pro-Cathedral, Manuka. They were to have six girls and a boy. Appointed to the Department of the House of Representatives in September 1950 as Accounts Clerk, Blake found his first sight of (Sir) Robert Menzies and Ben Chifley 'pretty awe-inspiring' (*The House Magazine* 1985, 3). In November 1951, he had the honour of taking into safekeeping the new mace gifted by the British House of Commons as part of the jubilee celebrations of the Commonwealth of Australia, prior to its formal presentation to the House of Representatives by a delegation of British parliamentarians.

In May 1954, Blake became Reading Clerk and, in August 1955, Clerk of the Records and Assistant Clerk of Committees. He progressed to Serjeant-at-Arms and Clerk of Committees in February 1958, and Third Clerk Assistant in February 1959. In 1964, at the request of the Clerk of the House, (Sir) Alan Turner, Blake and his colleague

Figure 12: Doug Blake.
Source: Department of the House of Representatives.

John (Jack) Pettifer produced a report on the organisation and staffing arrangements of the Department of the House of Representatives. Endorsed by the Speaker, Sir John McLeay, the report led to a major restructure, including the redesignation of the Clerk Assistant position as Deputy Clerk. Blake became Second Clerk Assistant in August 1970. He spent three months on exchange to the House of Commons in 1972 and, following his return to Canberra, was promoted to First Clerk Assistant in May 1973.

The most distinctive feature of Blake's career as a parliamentary officer was the professional support he provided to new and developing legislatures. In August 1964, he had visited Port Moresby to assist the new House of Assembly of Papua and New Guinea. He returned frequently over following years to conduct workshops for parliamentary staff and advise parliamentarians. In Canberra, he hosted training visits by Papua New Guinea parliamentary staff and, in 1977, the government of Papua New Guinea awarded him the Independence Medal. He was appointed in 1974 to a committee, chaired by Gordon Scholes, to recommend procedures for the incipient Australian Capital Territory Legislative Assembly. Blake accompanied the Commonwealth parliamentary delegation to Darwin for the formal ceremonies for the granting of self-government to the Northern Territory on 1 July 1978, having chosen the dispatch boxes to be presented to the new Legislative Assembly by the Commonwealth parliament.

Early in 1977, Blake became Deputy Clerk and, following Pettifer's retirement, Clerk of the House, on 16 July 1982. At the end of that year, he commissioned the first major review of the organisation and staffing of the Department of the House of Representatives since his own in 1964. This was in response to a series of significant developments that included the introduction in 1982 of separate appropriation bills for the parliamentary departments; provision in the Public Service Acts Amendment Act 1982 for more parliamentary autonomy in staffing arrangements—notably, by enabling the Speaker to appoint and promote departmental officers (other than the Clerk) without Executive Council approval; and the acquisition of functions previously managed by executive agencies, such as contributions to the Inter-Parliamentary Union, and hospitality for visiting school groups. The review was completed in March 1983. Immediate changes included strengthening the Deputy Clerk positions as support for the head of the department, and the transfer of some functions from the Table Office to a separate Bills and Papers Office. Management services previously handled by the Serjeant-at-Arms's Office, together with finance and personnel responsibilities, were transferred to a new Resource Management Office, which 'became the main administrative arm of the Department' (DHR, *Annual Report 1983–84*, 37).

During Blake's Clerkship, the parliamentary departments were increasingly concerned with planning the move to the new Parliament House. In anticipation, in June 1984, he made a written submission to the Joint Standing Committee on the Broadcasting of Parliamentary Proceedings advocating the creation of a parliamentary television unit. He also argued that the old House should become a museum of parliamentary history, but that the historic Speaker's chair, presented in 1926 by the Empire Parliamentary Association, should be moved to the new parliament, 'even if I have to carry it there on my back' (Longhurst 1983). Despite the former Clerks Pettifer and Norman Parkes joining him in a petition to the House of Representatives, the chair stayed put.

Blake retired on 30 July 1985. In the House of Representatives, seventeen members, from all parties, paid tribute to his service to the parliament. Some, including John Howard, recalled the personal help he had provided when they first entered parliament; others raised his 'most important contribution to the depth and quality of the relationship between our nearest neighbor, Papua New Guinea, and this country' (H.R. Deb. 23.5.1985, 3077–78). The former Speaker Gordon Scholes stated his approval that 'friendly banter' (H.R. Deb. 23.5.1985, 3076) between members and parliamentary officers had become commonplace under Blake, reflecting a more relaxed atmosphere in the House. The Speaker, Harry Jenkins, said that he and Blake had

> developed the rapport which is essential between a Clerk of the House and the Speaker. At times, I must admit, it becomes almost a mind reading exercise. When a point is raised we are able to look at one another and the guidance is gained (H.R. Deb. 23.5.1985, 3073).

In September 1950, Blake had resumed his naval service by joining the Royal Australian Naval Volunteer Reserve and, in 1968, he reached the rank of commander. He became president of the Navy League of Australia (Australian Capital Territory) in 1976, receiving the Volunteer Reserve Officer Decoration (VRD). A deep personal commitment to the Catholic Church led him to assist in the building of the O'Donnell Youth Centre in Braddon, and of St Brigid's Church in Dickson, opened in 1978.

Blake was particularly well known locally for his involvement with rugby union. He played first grade for Canberra Royals (1950–52) and was a member of Australian Capital Territory representative teams. From 1952, he served as a referee in more than two hundred first-grade games, including nine grand finals and international contests with the New Zealand All Blacks, the South African Springboks, the British Lions, and others. Coaching teams drawn from parliamentarians also fell to him, including one known as the Triangle Terrors. In 1971 he was made a life member of the Australian Capital Territory Rugby Referees Association. Blake's retirement as Clerk was brought forward by one day so he could referee an Australian Capital Territory–Fiji rugby match, on 31 July 1985.

In retirement, Blake worked for the St Vincent de Paul Society, was a member of the Holy Name Society, undertook a lay ministry, and chaired the Braddon Parish Council. He was appointed AM in the 1986 Australia Day Honours for service to the parliament and was personally invested by the Queen at Government House, Canberra, on 3 March 1986. Blake died on 20 December 2022, survived by Patricia and six of their seven children.

Select bibliography

Alumni Newsletter (Department of the House of Representatives). 'Reminiscences of Former Clerk Doug Blake AM VRD'. 3 August 2010, 3

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 23 May 1985, 3073–80

Canberra Times. 'Speaking for a Chair'. 29 October 1987, 2

Catholic Voice (Canberra). 'Doug Earned Trust and Respect of All'. December 2012, 8

Department of the House of Representatives (DHR). *Annual Reports 1982–83* and *1983–84*. Canberra: Australian Government Printing Service, 1983, 1984

The House Magazine (Canberra). 'Profile'. 12 June 1985, 3

Longhurst, Frank. 'NCDC Proposes Restoration for the House'. *Canberra Times*, 15 October 1983, 1

National Archives of Australia. A9769, Blake D. M.

Wray-McCann, Paul. 'And Now for Some Fishing'. *Canberra Times*, 24 May 1985, 7

Bowden, George James: Chairman of Committees 1959–1961

Sylvia Marchant and B. J. Costar

George James Bowden (1888–1962), farmer, soldier and Chairman of Committees of the House of Representatives, was born on 17 March 1888 at Moyhu, Victoria, son of William Henry Bowden, farmer, and his wife, Catherine Christina, née McCalman, both Australian born. George was educated at state schools at Whitfield and Benalla, and later worked as a labourer and a commission agent in Melbourne. Enlisting in the Australian Imperial Force on 6 March 1915, he served with distinction with the 24th Battalion. He was wounded at Gallipoli, promoted captain on 16 January 1918, and then gassed and wounded on the Western Front. For his daring reconnaissance under fire and leadership in attack at the battle for Mont St Quentin, France, in September 1918, he was awarded the Military Cross.

On demobilisation in July 1919, Bowden commenced farming at Koo Wee Rup, West Gippsland. In 1923 he joined the United Country Party (UCP) and became a member (1928–38; president, 1930–31) of the Cranbourne Shire Council. In August 1932, he lost his farm to his mortgagee, but soon after was granted land as a soldier-settler. He contested the Victorian Legislative Assembly seat of Mornington in 1935 and 1937 as a Country Party candidate, but was narrowly defeated both times.

Bowden became prominent in Country Party affairs during a period when the party dominated Victorian politics and was experiencing dramatic internal dissension. The expulsion of (Sir) John McEwen for joining the Lyons–Page federal coalition government in 1937 precipitated a splinter Liberal Country Party and created a serious rift between the Victorian branch and the federal Country Party. Simultaneously, Premier (Sir) Albert Dunstan was engaged in a bitter dispute with the party powerbroker Albert Hocking over the executive's attempts to direct the state parliamentary party. Bowden was not highly visible on matters of policy or strategy, other than strongly supporting the Victorian party's opposition to entering into a coalition.

Figure 13: George Bowden.
Source: National Library of Australia, PIC/10450 LOC Box PIC/10450.

A Hocking supporter and a vigorous opponent of the Liberal Country Party, Bowden served as vice-president of the UCP (1938–39). Despite further financial troubles and the loss of his soldier-settler land in 1938, he became UCP president in 1940. That year he unsuccessfully contested the federal constituency of Gippsland against Thomas Paterson, a former deputy leader of the Country Party and fervent supporter of the breakaway Liberal Country Party, who had held the seat since 1922. Bowden was re-elected as UCP president in 1941 and 1942 and, though opposed by three candidates, narrowly won the final ballot for president in 1943. Victorian Country Party unity and harmonious relations with the federal organisation were restored that year, but Bowden played a relatively minor role in the negotiations because of his military commitments. Having been mobilised in October 1939, he was appointed temporary lieutenant-colonel on 13 March 1942 and commanded the 9th Garrison Battalion, Australian Military Forces, from that month until October 1943. He was transferred to the Reserve of Officers in December.

Bowden remained determined to win a seat in parliament. Success finally came in August 1943 when Paterson retired and campaigned for Bowden in Gippsland. Although his military record did not prevent his being heavily outpolled in the servicemen's vote by the Labor candidate, W. T. G. (Wally) Williams, he won the seat on preferences in the face of a Labor landslide. Under Bowden, Gippsland became an increasingly safe Country Party seat, peaking at 73 per cent of the two-party preferred vote in 1955.

As a member, Bowden was a regular and eloquent contributor to debates, including through sharp interjections. He had a particular interest in such constituents' concerns as employment preferences for returned servicemen and servicewomen under the Re-establishment and Employment Act, banking legislation, rural issues, and the aluminium industry. Sir Robert Menzies later recalled him as 'looking like a benign grandfather, while at the same time shooting the arrow of argument with deadly accuracy into what he believed to be wrong' (H.R. Deb. 7.8.1962, 9). He could also be a determined operator in the chamber when seeking to promote a favoured cause. One of his more publicised moves arose from his moving on 15 June 1945 the adjournment of the House to discuss a definite matter of urgent public importance—the diversion of fodder from Victoria to feed New South Wales pit ponies, thereby delaying until later in the day the resumption of a major debate on the Commonwealth Bank Bill. This created headlines for several days, even as the minister for commerce and agriculture, William Scully, pointed out that the government had already decided to direct some fodder back to Bowden's home state. Overall, though, his parliamentary career was solid rather than spectacular. He never attained ministerial rank but became Chairman of Committees on 17 February 1961.

In the chair, Bowden was an impartial and reasonable arbiter, for the most part limiting himself to maintaining order in debates. He could be stinging in his rebukes on rare occasions, but more often was calm and efficient. On several occasions, he clashed with Eddie Ward, the member for East Sydney and long a bane of non-Labor Speakers. On 3 September 1959, Ward earnestly inquired as to whether a reference by (Sir) Billy Snedden to Fred Daly as 'Dilly-Dally' was out of order (H.R. Deb. 3.9.1959, 933). In August 1960, Bowden suffered a heart attack during a sitting of the House. A particularly stern test came three months later when he struggled to maintain order during a long debate on the sabotage provisions of the Crimes Bill. Ward and the Labor member for Eden-Monaro, Allan Fraser, were both named by Bowden. The member for Yarra, Jim Cairns, insisted that Bowden had erred in not requiring Prime Minister Menzies to withdraw an imputation that he was a saboteur (H.R. Deb. 22.11.1960, 3114). Bowden resigned as Chairman of Committees on 7 March 1961 due to ill health and did not stand at the federal election of the following December. Arthur Calwell described him as 'one of the best Chairmen of Committees that this chamber has known', not least as 'he tried to govern with a light rein' (H.R. Deb. 8.3.1961, 25).

Noted for his keen sense of humour, Bowden was well liked by his parliamentary colleagues. Almost six feet tall (180 centimetres), he retained his erect soldierly bearing and was in demand as an Anzac Day speaker. He never married. When his health deteriorated due to his war wounds, his sister cared for him at his Murrumbeena home in suburban Melbourne. He died on 8 June 1962 at the Repatriation General Hospital, Heidelberg, and was buried in Cheltenham cemetery. Gough Whitlam recalled during the parliamentary eulogies for Bowden that, as Chairman, he had drawn on his wartime experiences 'to command a group of spirited men who had human feelings' (H.R. Deb. 7.8.1962, 10); (Sir) John McEwen added similarly that he had 'sustained the kind of discipline that is seen in a democratic parliament without any semblance of the iron fist' (H.R. Deb. 7.8.1962, 11). According to Whitlam, Bowden's impartiality had waned only once when, carried away by a colleague's rhetoric, he interjected from the chair 'Hear, hear!', only to quickly regain his composure and rebuke himself by calling 'Order!' (H.R. Deb. 7.8.1962, 10).

This article supplements the original Volume 13 ADB *biography, published 1993, authored by B. J. Costar: adb.anu.edu.au/biography/bowden-george-james-9551*

Select bibliography

Age (Melbourne). 'House Committees Chairman Resigns'. 9 March 1961, 5

Age (Melbourne). 'Death of Leading CP Politician'. 9 June 1962, 3

Argus (Melbourne). 'More Fodder Likely for Victoria'. 20 June 1945, 16

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 15 June 1945, 3159–73

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 3 September 1959, 933–34

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 22 November 1960, 3082–135

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 8 March 1961, 24–26

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 7 August 1962, 8–14

Bean, C. E. W. *The Australian Imperial Force in France During the Allied Offensive, 1918.* Vol. VI of *Official History of Australia in the War of 1914–1918.* Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1942

Canberra Times. 'Big Chaff Grab Alleged in Fodder Debate'. 16 June 1945, 2

Canberra Times. 'MP Comfortable After Collapse'. 25 August 1960, 3

Canberra Times. 'Closure of Debate on Crimes Bill'. 23 November 1960, 3

Countryman (Melbourne). 'A Sacrifice in the Interests of Unity'. 12 April 1940, 1

Countryman (Melbourne). 'UCP Likely to Capture Gippsland'. 20 September 1940, 1

Countryman (Melbourne). 'Gippsland Campaign'. 23 July 1943, 2

Countryman (Melbourne). 'Prospects Bright for VCP Candidates'. 13 August 1943, 1

Countryman (Melbourne). 'Labour's Collectivist Experiments'. 20 August 1943, 1

Countryman (Melbourne). 'VCP Expects to Retain All Seats Previously Held'. 27 August 1943, 1

Countryman (Melbourne). 'CP Leader Was Inspiration to Younger Men'. 21 June 1962, 2

Gippsland Times (Sale, Vic.). 'Commonwealth Fodder Grab'. 28 June 1945, 5

National Archives of Australia. B884, V81342, Bowden George James

Public Record Office Victoria. VPRS 5714, 2501, Bowden George James

Victorian Country Party Annual Conference Report, 1940, 1943

Weekly Times (Melbourne). 'States Assisted Victoria with Fodder'. 27 June 1945, 13

Browning, Alan Robert: Clerk 1985–1991

Derek Drinkwater

Alan Robert Browning (1928–2004), twelfth Clerk of the House of Representatives, was born on 25 October 1928 in Canberra, fourth child of George Victor Browning, public servant, and his wife Olive, née Barrand, both Victorian born. After attending Canberra High School and achieving first-class honours in Japanese at the Leaving Certificate examination, Alan joined the Department of the Interior as a clerk (third division) in 1946. Later that year, his interest in Japan prompted him to enlist in the Australian Imperial Force (Interim Army, from 1947), and to undertake intensive language training at the Royal Australian Air Force School of Languages at Point Cook, Victoria. Between 1947 and 1949, he served in Japan as an interpreter, working for a number of Australian, British Commonwealth, and United States organisations charged with transforming the country into a non-militarised parliamentary democracy.

In 1949 Browning returned to the Department of the Interior in Canberra, where he also became a locally prominent sportsman. He played Australian Rules football for Ainslie and represented the Australian Capital Territory in baseball; in later life, he played A-grade squash, tennis, and golf. On 7 September 1951, he married Barbara June Linton, a public servant originally from Western Australia, at the Presbyterian Church of St Andrew, Canberra. They were to have two sons and two daughters. In August 1954, he was appointed Reading Clerk in the Department of the House of Representatives. Swift promotion followed, to the posts of Clerk of the Papers and Accountant (August 1955), Clerk of the Papers (October 1956), and Deputy Serjeant-at-Arms and Clerk of the Records (March 1958).

In January 1959, Browning became Serjeant-at-Arms and Clerk of Committees. One of his administrative responsibilities was ensuring the efficient running of the Federal Parliamentary Press Gallery, which drew him into a recurrent issue of limiting its use by ministerial staff who found it a convenient vantage point during peak sitting times. As Serjeant-at-Arms, he also served for some years as Secretary to the Joint Committee on the Broadcasting of Parliamentary Proceedings. He saw
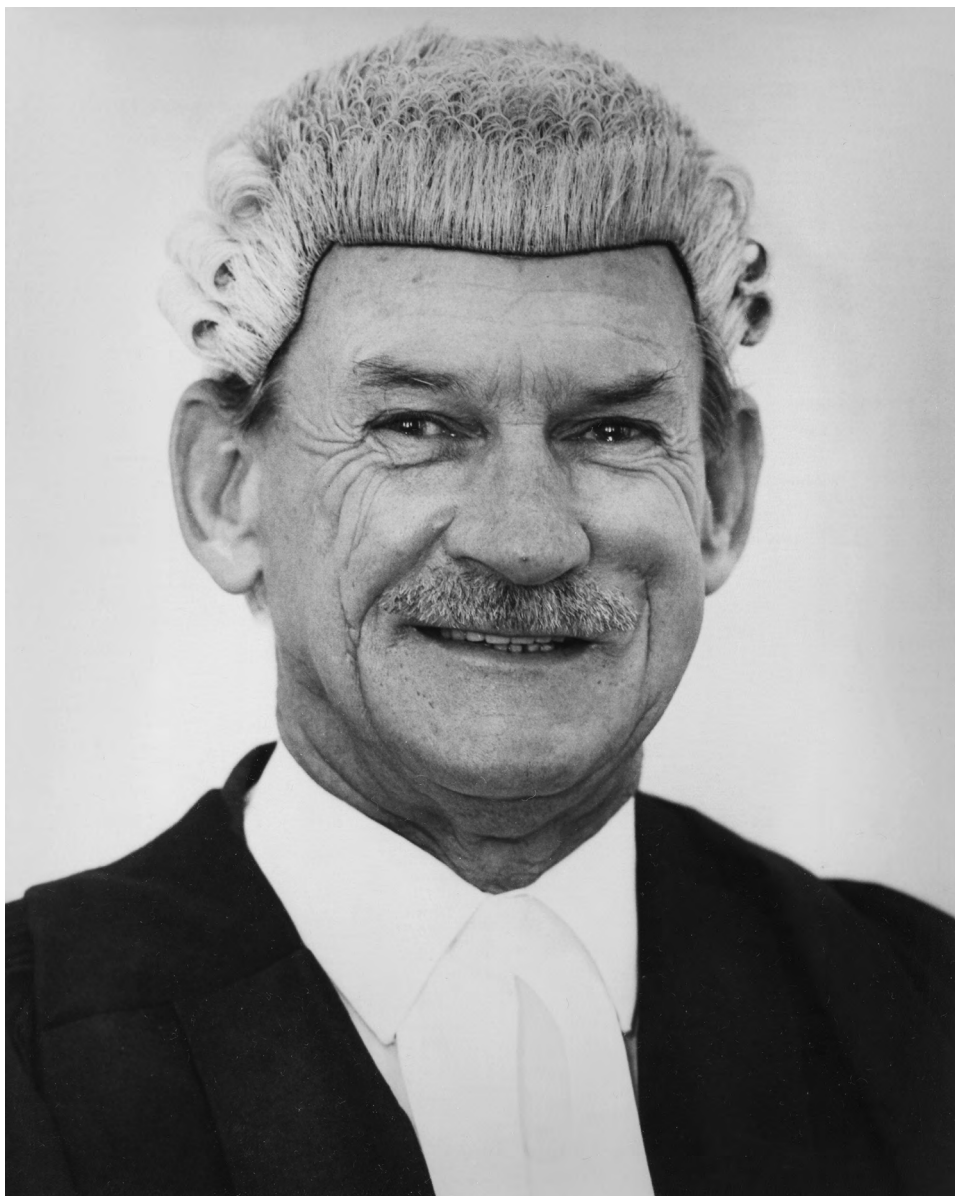
Figure 14: Alan Browning.
Source: Department of the House of Representatives.

an 'overriding justification' (Browning 1966, 84) in a democracy for continuing to broadcast parliament by radio, despite concerns about its influence on debate. His publication *Broadcasting of Parliamentary Proceedings in Australia* (1968) was followed by a history of *The Mace* (1970), along with numerous discussion papers on parliamentary practice, prepared for the Speaker and members.

Browning became Senior Parliamentary Officer in March 1969 and Clerk Assistant in December 1971. His marriage was dissolved and, on 1 May 1976, at Sydney, he married Elizabeth Marsden Hicks. In January 1977, he was appointed First Clerk Assistant. Between 1979 and 1980, he was also Clerk of the Norfolk Island Legislative Assembly, attending sittings when it met during the 'up' week between sessions of the House of Representatives. As the assembly's first Clerk, he was required to establish its basic machinery, including drafting the standing orders. In Canberra, he was a strong advocate of reforms to address pressures arising from the rapid expansion of the Department of the House of Representatives. Browning's exhortations eventually prompted the Speaker, (Sir) Billy Snedden, early in 1977 to authorise a review of departmental operations, which led to the introduction during 1978–79 of extensive personnel and staff-training reforms. Browning was secretary to the Australian delegation at Commonwealth Parliamentary Association conferences held in Trinidad and Tobago (1969), Jamaica (1978), and Fiji (1981). He made a significant contribution to the editing and production of the first edition of *House of Representatives Practice* (1981), earning him a place as one of two assistant editors of this major procedural and historical work.

In September 1982, Browning became one of two Deputy Clerks of the House of Representatives and, on 31 July 1985, Clerk of the House. For House members and staff, the following six years were exceptionally productive. The passing of the Parliamentary Privileges Act 1987 clarified the nature of the powers, privileges, and immunities of the houses, their members, and committees. Browning was a longstanding advocate of a comprehensive House of Representatives committee system empowered to report on the operations of Commonwealth agencies, and other aspects of public policy: 'governments do take notice of the committee reports' (Browning 1989), he concluded. He was convinced of the great potential of committees for improving governance, having been Secretary to the House of Representatives Select Committee on Voting Rights of Aborigines (1961), the first such scrutiny committee appointed since 1929. Largely in response to backbench pressure, a system of eight general-purpose standing committees was established in September 1987. This, and the concomitant expansion of the functions of the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence, enabled the House of Representatives to scrutinise the operations of all Commonwealth entities. Browning was later described in the House as having been 'integrally involved' in this major development, such as by providing 'careful advice about the structure of the new committee system' (H.R. Deb. 14.3.1991, 2053).

As the last Clerk of the House to serve in the provisional Parliament House, Browning was closely involved in organising the move to the new building and its official opening by Queen Elizabeth II on 9 May 1988. Browning also oversaw arrangements for the thirty-fourth Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference, held in Canberra in September 1988. He edited the second edition of *House of Representatives Practice* (1989), which was reviewed as 'a worthy successor to the original enterprise' (MacDonagh 1991). Of the finished publication, he said: 'I accept it as a duty and have found it a pleasure and a privilege to promote one of the world's strongest democracies through this project' (Browning 1989, vii–viii). He was also 'responsible for a review of the standing orders being conducted by House Officers' (H.R. Deb. 14.3.1991, 2048), which contributed to a comprehensive examination of the standing orders that the House Standing Committee on Procedure began in 1989.

On 22 March 1991, Browning retired as Clerk of the House. The twenty-six members who provided farewell tributes—including Prime Minister Bob Hawke; the leader of the opposition, John Hewson; and the Speaker, Leo McLeay—emphasised the impressive number and variety of Browning's contributions to significant 'innovations and improvements' in House procedures (H.R. Deb. 14.3.1991, 2041). The manager of opposition business, Wal Fife, said Browning's written contributions on subjects as varied as electronic voting, division procedures, and the airing in parliament of matters that were sub judice 'will probably not be surpassed for many years, and it is a list that reflects great credit on the professionalism, the dedication and the determination of our retiring Clerk' (H.R. Deb. 14.3.1991, 2048). Kim Beazley recalled that, as a child watching from the public gallery, he thought Browning, in his role as Serjeant-at-Arms, 'at once looked highly ceremonial and slightly dangerous' (H.R. Deb. 14.3.1991, 2043). Browning responded—through the Speaker—that he had realised all of the goals he had set for himself as Clerk and was leaving 'with an undiminished faith in the institution of Parliament, believing that Australia now has a vastly superior House of Representatives to that of the 1950s' (H.R. Deb. 14.3.1991, 2059). In retirement, he remained physically fit, and a keen sportsman. He died in Canberra on 7 December 2004, survived by his partner, Margie Fitzpatrick, and his four children.

Select bibliography

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debate*s, 14 March 1991, 2041–60

Brancker, George E. T. Review of *House of Representatives Practice, second edition*, edited by A. R. Browning. *The Parliamentarian* 71, no. 4 (October 1990): 272–73

Browning, A. R. 'Broadcasting of Parliamentary Proceedings in Australia'. *The Table* 35 (1966): 74–85

Browning, A. R. *Broadcasting of Parliamentary Proceedings in Australia.* Canberra: Government Printer, 1968

Browning, A. R. 'The Serjeant-at-Arms in the Federal Parliament of Australia'. *The Parliamentarian* 50, no. 3 (July 1969): 235–39

Browning, A. R. *The Mace: A Brief History of the Mace and Its Use in the House of Commons, the House of Representatives, the Australian States and Papua New Guinea.* Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service, 1970

Browning, A. R., ed. *House of Representatives Practice, second edition*. Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service, 1989

Browning, A. R. Interview by Greg McIntosh, 18 May 1989. Transcript. Museum of Australian Democracy Oral History collection

The House Magazine (Canberra). 'Profile'. 14 August 1985, 3

MacDonagh, Oliver. Review of *House of Representatives Practice, second edition*, edited by A. R. Browning. *Legislative Studies* 5, no. 2 (Summer 1991): 60

Reid, G. S., and Martyn Forrest. *Australia's Commonwealth Parliament 1901–1988: Ten Perspectives.* Carlton, Vic.: Melbourne University Press, 1989

Burke, Anna Elizabeth: Speaker 2012–2013

Sylvia Marchant

Anna Elizabeth Burke, twenty-eighth Speaker of the House of Representatives, was born in Melbourne on New Year's Day 1966, one of five children of Bernard Burke, an electrician employed by the Commonwealth Bank, and his wife, Joan Margaret, a kindergarten teacher and teacher-librarian. She grew up in a working-class environment in suburban Ashwood, in Melbourne's south-east. Her parents passed on to their children their own shared 'drive and determination to make the world a better place—to show us, through their Catholic faith, a struggle for social justice' (H.R. Deb. 5.5.2016, 4510). Bernard took on additional jobs part-time to help pay for his children's school fees, including operating a newsagency. Anna attended Presentation College at Windsor, Melbourne. Despite dyslexia that resulted in her sitting her Higher School certificate exams orally, in 1984, she won a place at Monash University to study arts.

Burke recalled that, as a student, she 'just wanted to get a good degree that would help me probably crack a graduate job somewhere' (Barrett 2018, 36). Nonetheless, she enthusiastically entered into wider university life, joining the Newman Society and making many friends. She was elected a student representative on the arts faculty council and her political engagement was further inspired by attendance at an International Year of Peace conference in Melbourne in 1986. In 1987 she joined the Australian Labor Party (ALP) branch at Ashwood and the following year became a local delegate to the state ALP conference, rising to become branch president. Despite sensing that student politics was too limited for her rapidly broadening interests, she joined the Monash ALP executive during her final year of study at the suggestion of fellow student Bill Shorten, because, she later said, 'they needed a girl' (Barrett 2018, 36). She graduated (BA Hons, 1988) with a major in English literature, her honours thesis being on the novels of Anthony Trollope.

After graduation, Burke gained employment with the state government authority VicRoads, initially in the stressful field of compulsory land acquisitions, and later as an industrial relations officer. In 1993 she was employed by Victoria University

Figure 15: Anna Burke.
Source: Australian Government Photographic Service (Auspic).

in industrial relations, and the following year switched to the labour movement as national industrial officer with the Finance Sector Union. Her interest in industrial relations led her to postgraduate study at the University of Melbourne (MCom Hons, 1994). On 16 April 1994, she married Stephen Burgess, a hospital and healthcare professional who went on to teach at Monash University.

In 1996 Burke was invited by ALP party organisers to stand for preselection in the federal seat of Chisholm, which encompassed the area around her eastern-suburbs home. Despite losing—and finding the experience far from pleasant—she agreed when asked to nominate again in 1998. Few other candidates were attracted to what appeared to be a safe Liberal seat and Burke was selected. She was advised to 'just run a good campaign' (Hearn 2015) for the election held in October that year, and accept that she was merely filling in as the ALP candidate. But the sitting member, Liberal minister Michael Wooldridge, unexpectedly decided to switch to the seat of Casey, despite having won Chisholm at the past four elections. After a hard-fought campaign, Burke won Chisholm with a two-party preferred swing of more than 4 per cent. Despite her initial pessimism about her long-term prospects, she became a popular local member, and was returned at the next five elections.

Parliamentary life appealed to Burke; it was 'weird, strange but exhilarating, exciting, rewarding and frustrating' (Hearn 2015). She used it as a forum through which to draw attention to social issues, including eating disorders, anaphylaxis, human trafficking, climate change, and live animal exports. On issues such as her opposition to the offshore processing of asylum seekers, she was prepared to make her views known even when they conflicted with established ALP policy. She served on a number of parliamentary committees, including the Joint Committee on Corporations and Financial Services, and House Standing Committees on Economics, Finance and Public Administration; Climate Change, Environment and the Arts; and Petitions. She was deputy chair of the House Standing Committee on Economics, Finance and Public Administration when it produced a report in 2003 on cost-shifting to local government. Although widely referred to as the 'Hawker report' after the committee's chair, David Hawker (another future Speaker), Burke made a major contribution that, according to her friend the member for Ballarat, Catherine King, led to greater recognition of the role of deputy chairs of committees (H.R. Deb. 12.2.2008, 26). As chair of the House Standing Committee of Privileges and Members' Interests, Burke presented, in November 2011, a discussion paper on a draft code of conduct for members of parliament.

Burke's daughter was born in 1999, making Burke one of the few women, at the time, to have had a baby while serving as a member of parliament. She was back at sittings just a few weeks after giving birth. As there were then no childcare facilities in Parliament House, her husband took twelve months' leave to care for the child and support Burke in her role as an MP. Their son was born in 2002. In 2005 Burke

attracted national attention by introducing into the House a private member's bill to regulate telemarketing calls, which helped lead to legislation establishing the Do Not Call Register.

Following Labor's victory at the 2007 federal election, Burke was elected Deputy Speaker under Speaker Harry Jenkins, on 12 February 2008. She was formally nominated by Catherine King, who, in so doing, described Burke as 'a south-eastern suburbs girl through and through' (H.R. Deb. 12.2.2008, 26). Burke was elected along party lines, 84 votes to 64, over the opposition's nominee, the member for Maranoa, Bruce Scott (VP 2008/9–10, 12.2.2008).

Quickly adapting to the role, Burke dealt calmly and patiently with unruly behaviour. Just ten days after her election, she was subjected to one of the most trying days ever faced by presiding officers in the Australian parliament. Earlier that day the Speaker had clashed with opposition members over a proposed motion that newly introduced Friday sittings of the House include a ninety-minute questions-without-notice session. This resulted in two Liberal members—one of whom was Tony Abbott—being ordered from the chamber. Burke was in the chair in this already febrile atmosphere when opposition members brought into the chamber a life-sized cardboard figure of Prime Minister Kevin Rudd, which the member for Canning, Don Randall, proceeded to brandish in protest against Rudd's absence. The scene that followed amounted to a shouting match, as Burke demanded the removal of the offending item, which ended in her suspending the House for more than an hour. It resumed for just a couple of minutes, during which Jenkins, now back in the chair, spoke of how 'today's events have been of considerable concern' but added that he had 'full confidence in the work of all occupants of the chair today in what have been difficult circumstances' (H.R. Deb. 22.2.2008, 1284–85).

Following the August 2010 election, Burke did not recontest the Deputy Speakership. Instead, in an attempt to bolster its position on the floor, the now-minority Labor government nominated Peter Slipper, a dissident Liberal. In September 2010, Burke was appointed to the Speaker's panel. On 24 November 2011, Jenkins resigned as Speaker, and the government proceeded to propose that Slipper succeed him. The opposition protested by nominating Burke as Speaker; she immediately declined, only for a succession of eight other government members to be similarly fruitlessly nominated before Slipper was finally elected. Burke, however, was nominated by the government to return to the Deputy Speakership, which she won by 72 votes to 71— again over Scott (VP 2010–11/1144–45, 24.11.2011). The Slipper Speakership was at once highly controversial. From 8 May 2012, Burke took the chair after Slipper announced that he would stand down until allegations against him concerning misuse of Cabcharge vouchers and of sexual harassment had been resolved. The suspension

of Tony Abbott from the chamber on 20 August 2012 for failing to withdraw an unparliamentary remark without qualification was the first time an opposition leader had been ordered from the House since John Howard in 1986.

On 9 October 2012, Slipper resigned as Speaker and Burke was elected unopposed to replace him. She was only the second female Speaker after Joan Child, who called her to offer congratulations. Although well prepared to serve, Burke faced a difficult environment with a government lacking an assured majority and an aggressive opposition. Question time was routinely front-page news, yet the new Speaker remained highly regarded for her patient and impartial handling of her responsibilities. She did not attend party meetings and later outlined her approach to the Speakership:

> You are there representing the institution. I'm a member of the Labor Party, but when you are in the chair it's about the orderly running of the institution and the Parliament. It's about respect for the rules. (Barrett 2018, 37)

The exigencies of a hung parliament resulted in Burke, with the support of Clerk of the House Bernard Wright, dealing with its unprecedented demands as they went. Yet, public perceptions to the contrary, the parliament worked well in passing more legislation than when the government had a secure majority. Burke looked back on this period as 'an amazing time' (H.R. Deb. 5.5.2016, 4517). The Speaker's international role led her to actively support 'twinning' relationships between Australian parliaments and those of Pacific nations, including the Parliamentary Pacific Women's Partnership, which sought to increase the numbers of women in parliaments. In March 2013, Burke declined to ban members from tweeting during question time on the basis that this would necessitate a blanket ban on electronic devices in the chamber, to which she suspected many members would object. Like many presiding officers before her, including the very first Speaker, Sir Frederick Holder, she confessed to finding it hard at times not to respond to opposition speeches.

Burke's Speakership was ended by Labor's defeat at the September 2013 election. Soon after, she was disappointed not to be appointed party chief whip, and attributed this failure to falling foul of a factional deal. In December 2015, she announced that she would retire at the next election, as she could no longer guarantee her total commitment. During her farewell speech, she said that her motto in politics was 'to be active and approachable', and quoted Trollope: 'It's dogged as does it' (H.R. Deb. 5.5.2016, 4512). Bill Shorten, now her party's leader, praised her as 'a skilful, impartial and patient Speaker', who presided over 'an often fractious and contested Parliament' (Shorten 2015).

In retirement, Burke was, in 2017, appointed a full-time member of the Administrative Appeals Tribunal, hearing claims on matters ranging from Centrelink decisions and child support determinations, to family tax benefit cases and citizenship applications. She became chair of Allergy and Anaphylaxis Australia (2016–18), a director of the

Institute of Breathing and Sleep (appointed 2016), and chair of the advisory council of the Monash University Accident Research Centre (appointed 2018). In 2017 she was awarded a Monash University Fellowship in recognition of distinguished public service. Two years later, she was appointed AO. Although she admitted to being 'a bit ambivalent' (Koziol 2019) about being so honoured, as a supporter of 'Honour a Woman', which sought to have more women nominated for honours, she felt she should not decline. Simultaneously, she publicly stated that her own faction of the ALP, the Victorian right, should do more to encourage women parliamentarians.

A portrait by Jude Rae is held by Parliament House. At its unveiling, Burke modestly described herself as being 'as artistic as a dead chook' (Wright 2017), but the portrait's bright colours and strong lines vividly capture her lively presence and her pride in having presided over what she thought of as 'a magnificent institution' (Australian Women Online 2013).

Select bibliography

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 12 February 2008, 26–31

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 22 February 2008, 1281–85

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 24 November 2011, 13793–95

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 5 May 2016, 4509–17

Australia. House of Representatives. *Votes and Proceedings*, 2008, 9–10

Australia. House of Representatives. *Votes and Proceedings*, 2010–11, 1144–45

Australian Women Online. 'Women in Politics: Anna Burke, Speaker of the House of Representatives'. Last modified 5 August 2013. Accessed 22 July 2019. australianwomen online.com/women-in-politics-anna-burke-speaker-of-the-house-of-representatives/. Copy held on file. doi.org/10.1093/ww/9780199540884.013.u258006

Barrett, Peter. 'Order in the House'. *Monash Life*, 2018, 36–37

Cousens, Di. 'Anna Burke: "It's Time for a Rational Debate About Refugees"'. *Eureka Street* (Melbourne), 8 May 2016, 57–60

Hearn, Sarah. 'Being Anna Burke: The Former Speaker Opens Up'. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 10 July 2015. Accessed 26 August 2019. www.smh.com.au/education/being-anna-burke-the-former-speaker-opens-up-20150710-gi9kaw.html. Copy held on file

Koziol, Michael. 'Anna Burke: People Like Myself Can't Keep Knocking Back Honours'. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 26 January 2019, 2

Murphy, Katherine. 'Anna Burke Defends Previous Minority Parliament to New MPs'. *Guardian*, 15 October 2015. Accessed 26 August 2019. www.theguardian.com/world/2013/oct/15/anna-burke-defends-previous-minority-parliament-to-new-mps. Copy held on file

Shorten, William. 'Retirement of Anna Burke MP'. *Bill's Media Releases*, 16 December 2015. Accessed 26 August 2019. www.billshorten.com.au/retirement-of-anna-burke-mp. Copy held on file

Uhr, John. 'Debating the Speaker'. In *Studies in Australian Political Rhetoric*, edited by John Uhr and Ryan Walter, 155–73. Canberra: ANU Press, 2014. doi.org/10.22459/sapr.09.2014.08

Wright, Tony. 'Anna Burke is Reminded that in Parliament the Bells Never Stop, Even When You've Gone'. *Age* (Melbourne), 15 September 2017, 8

Cameron, Archie Galbraith: Speaker 1950–1956

Stephen Wilks

Archie Galbraith Cameron (1895–1956), farmer and twelfth Speaker of the House of Representatives, was born on 22 March 1895 at Happy Valley, South Australia, son of John Cameron, labourer, and his wife, Mary Ann, née McDonald. Educated at Nairne Public School until the age of twelve, Archie was employed to clear scrub before working on his father's farm near Loxton. He enlisted in the Australian Imperial Force (AIF) on 17 April 1916, fought on the Western Front from January 1917, and rose to temporary regimental quartermaster sergeant. He briefly met Captain Earle Page at a casualty clearing station, whom he was later to succeed as leader of the federal Country Party. Arriving home in July 1919, he was discharged on 7 September.

That year Cameron took up land at Noora as a soldier-settler. He served on the Loxton District Council (1920–24, 1926–27), read widely in literature, economics, biography, and history, and learned to speak fluent German. Received into the Catholic Church from a strict Presbyterian background, he was to become close friends with Dr Matthew Beovich, the archbishop of Adelaide. On 15 April 1925 at St Joseph's Church, Brighton, Cameron married a twenty-two-year-old office worker, Margaret Eileen Walsh; they were to have a son and a daughter. In 1942 the family moved to a dairy farm near Oakbank in the Adelaide Hills.

Cameron unsuccessfully stood for the House of Assembly as a Country Party candidate for the multi-member electorate of Wooroora in 1924. During the campaign, he denounced the still new coalition between the federal Nationalist and Country parties as the unsavoury product of machine politics. He won the seat three years later and held it until 1934. As his party's parliamentary leader (1928–32), he played an important role in forming the South Australian Emergency Committee, which brought together the major local non-Labor groups from which the Liberal and Country League (LCL) emerged in 1932. The principal figure in the committee, (Sir) Archibald Grenfell Price, wrote that Cameron at this early stage of his public career had 'remarkable abilities and grave faults … He was an excellent speaker, and most forceful, but he was unreliable … I soon learnt to be careful with Cameron' (Kerr 1983, 94).
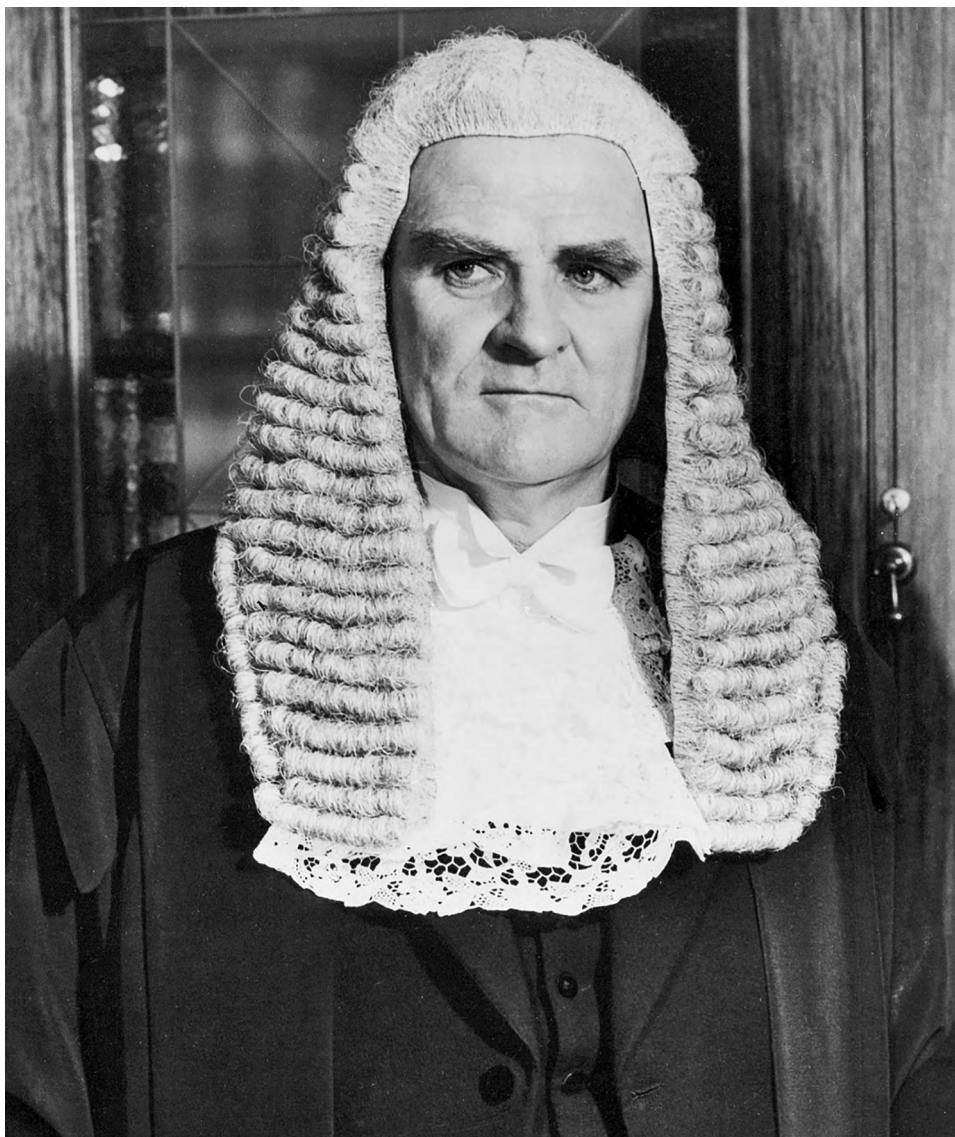
Figure 16: Archie Cameron.
Source: Department of the House of Representatives.

Under the terms of the amalgamation, Cameron was guaranteed endorsement by the LCL for a safe seat in the House of Representatives. In 1934 he was elected as the member for Barker, a seat in south-eastern South Australia that he was to retain until his death. He had persuaded his friend and old army comrade (Sir) Thomas Playford to contest Murray for the LCL at the 1933 state election. Cameron chose to sit as a representative of the Country Party, as he was entitled to do under LCL rules. He immediately attracted public attention by making an affirmation instead of swearing the oath of allegiance. Soon after, he attempted to have John Garden expelled from the House on the grounds of his previous communist affiliations. Cameron's talents were recognised by his appointment on 29 November 1937 as an assistant minister in Joseph Lyons's cabinet. While acting minister for commerce, on 15 June 1938 Cameron became the first minister to be named and suspended from federal parliament, arising from his calling the Victorian independent Alexander Wilson a 'clean-skin' (meaning 'unbranded') and refusing to withdraw the remark when called on by the Speaker, (Sir) George Bell (H.R. Deb. 15.6.1938, 2128–31).

On 7 November 1938, Cameron was promoted to postmaster-general. His conflict with the broadcasting industry culminated the following month when he temporarily revoked radio 2KY's licence because he objected to views expressed by one of the station's news commentators. He was alleged to have told the chairman of the Australian Broadcasting Commission (ABC), William Cleary: 'Forget your charter, I don't believe in boards or commissions—I believe in ministerial control' (Dixon 1975, 133). (Sir) Robert Menzies's first ministry, installed in April 1939, consisted only of United Australia Party (UAP) members and so Cameron returned to the backbenches.

Following Page's retirement as party leader, a deeply divided Country Party met in Canberra on 13 September 1939 and unexpectedly elected Cameron as his successor. When the coalition was restored, he became minister for commerce, minister for the navy, and de facto deputy prime minister on 14 March 1940. His refusal to conform with agreed policy antagonised his County Party colleagues. On 15 October, in circumstances as dramatic as those of his election, he lost the leadership during a tempestuous party meeting at Parliament House. He harangued his assembled colleagues and at one point stormed out into the lobby. Immediately after, he left both the party and the ministry. Throughout the rest of the decade, he sat with the UAP (from 1945, the Liberal Party), becoming a biting public critic of the Labor governments of John Curtin and Ben Chifley, and a somewhat more discreet judge of his party leader, Menzies. By 1943 Price thought Cameron had 'improved immensely', though 'all his old recklessness remained'. He also noted that Cameron 'was one of the few who could reduce Labor's Eddie Ward to impotence' (Kerr 1983, 172).

A temporary major since 1927 in the militia, Cameron was mobilised in November 1940 and was deployed to the Directorate of Military Intelligence at Army Headquarters, Melbourne. His uniform comprised a World War I Highland beret, World War II battledress, and the elastic-sided boots he habitually wore. He did not strictly separate his military and parliamentary roles and on at least one occasion attended the House in uniform. On 2 April 1941, he moved a motion of no confidence against the minister for the army, (Sir) Percy Spender, over his handling of the release of interned enemy aliens; this immediately lapsed for want of a seconder. Cameron added to his personal burden the management of the parliamentary affairs of A. M. Blain, the member for Northern Territory who was a prisoner of war. His relations with General Sir Thomas Blamey were punctuated by bitter disputes over the conduct of the war. On 5 May 1944, Cameron was transferred to the Reserve of Officers. After his death, it was disclosed by the wartime controller of the Allied Intelligence Bureau, Brigadier K. A. Wills, that the work Cameron had done on the Japanese order of battle had been of the 'greatest possible value' (*Advertiser* 1956, 2) to army intelligence. Characteristically, he had never talked about it.

With the return of the Liberal and Country parties to office in 1949, Menzies nominated Cameron as Speaker. The long-serving Clerk of the House, Frank Green, warned the prime minister that Cameron's habit of being 'so consistently wrong with such complete conviction that he was right' made him 'the worst possible choice' (Green 1969, 136). A former Speaker and keen observer of the office, Norman Makin, shared the widely held view that Cameron's appointment was 'a circumstance of political convenience' (Makin c. 1962) as his fiery independence as a minister or backbencher could easily destabilise the new government. On his election to the Speakership on 22 February 1950, he wore the traditional wig and robes of office eschewed by his Labor predecessor, John 'Sol' Rosevear. He objected to using Herbert Evatt's High Court of Australia wig, which had been presented to parliament, but as none other was available contented himself with reflecting that 'it was time some straight thinking was done under this wig' (Cox 1956).

Cameron's election as Speaker elicited disquiet from members of the House. Declaring that he would be 'as King Charles I found Montrose, a rather proud servant' (H.R. Deb. 22.2.1950, 18–19), he gave notice of what they could expect by likening his elevation to a Biblical parable in which the trees had sought one of their kind to rule over them, but after repeated refusals, finally accepted the bramble. Rosevear wryly welcomed his successor by commenting that Cameron had 'a great advantage over any other aspirant' for the Speakership as he doubted that 'any member of the Opposition in the last parliament raised so many points of order … and was so consistently incorrect' (H.R. Deb. 22.2.1950, 20). The opposition leader, Ben Chifley, spoke of Cameron as a sinner turned saint, and pleaded that 'in dispensing justice even-handedly', he 'remember the saintly quality of mercy' (H.R. Deb. 22.2.1950, 20).

Green doubted the new Speaker's capacity to analyse problems of parliamentary procedure and soon found that he also declined to study the details of such issues as parliamentary privilege. Cameron cut a striking figure in the chair and courted controversy almost at once. In March 1950, his relations with the governor-general, the former Labor premier of New South Wales, (Sir) William McKell, were strained due to personal comments made by McKell ten years earlier, including what Cameron described as 'the most personal attack that I have ever been subjected to in my life' (H.R. Deb. 30.3.1950, 1415). The then New South Wales opposition leader had assailed Cameron as a hindrance to the war effort, using such labels as 'mistrusted', 'detested', 'blackmailing', and 'bushranging' (H.R. Deb. 30.3.1950, 1415). Cameron told the House that he had informed the governor-general 'that I had no desire to accept the hospitality of those who spoke of me in the terms employed by him', but also that he would 'treat His Excellency with the strict formality and respect due to his high office, and remove myself from his presence as soon as my duties had been discharged' (H.R. Deb. 30.3.1950, 1416). Chifley raised whether the Speaker was thereby contradicting his own ruling that a member 'may neither praise nor blame the Governor-General' (H.R. Deb. 30.3.1950, 1416), leading to an acrimonious debate and an unsuccessful censure motion.

Cameron developed the unpopular habit of summoning members to his rooms for questioning or admonition. In May 1950, he unavailingly summoned Labor's Gil Duthie for daring to question the Speaker's method of calling members at question time. For days afterwards, Cameron refused to give Duthie the call in the House, despite the opposition not proffering anyone else to ask questions, and appeals from Chifley, Evatt, and Rosevear. On 26 October that year, Cameron attended the opening of the rebuilt House of Commons chamber at Westminster.

Following speeches in the House closely, Cameron often called out transgressions such as referring to a parliamentarian by name or deviating from the subject under debate. His rulings included declaring discussion of the economic condition of communist China irrelevant to a debate on international affairs. During debate on the proposed referendum to give the Commonwealth government power to ban the Communist Party, he drew on a century-old House of Commons resolution to rule that Evatt, by now leader of the opposition, could not participate, as his service as counsel for the Waterside Workers' Federation gave him a pecuniary interest in proceedings. The House instead voted to suspend the relevant part of the standing orders, allowing Evatt to speak. On another occasion the same year, Cameron insisted that Labor's Eddie Ward stand when apologising to the chair and explain exactly why the apology was required. He was the first Speaker to use a microphone to monitor proceedings in the House, which was installed in the upholstery of the Speaker's chair.

The re-election of Cameron as Speaker on 12 June 1951 was heatedly contested, with the opposition unsuccessfully proposing Rosevear's reinstatement. Kim Beazley senior accused Cameron of using the Speakership 'to air public vendettas against highly placed persons, and private ones against Members of the Opposition' (H.R. Deb. 12.6.1951, 24). Labor members were particularly aggrieved by Cameron's use of the Speaker's reserve power under standing order 303 to remove a member from the chamber for 'grossly disorderly conduct' without a formal motion for suspension. Arthur Calwell opined that, although this power was intended to enable the removal of intoxicated members, Cameron applied it to anyone who dissatisfied him.

A firm moral guardian, Cameron imposed a rigid ban on betting in Parliament House and forbade card-playing or any other game of chance. He was alleged to have patrolled the press gallery to enforce this. His implementation of a 1950 decision by the Joint House Committee to abolish the shilling-per-square-foot rental levied on the press in Parliament House was motivated not by generosity but by his belief that it gave the press tenant rights when they should be there by the grace of the House alone. In 1951 he ordered the removal of a print of racehorse Phar Lap from the wall of the Parliament House barber's salon. The following year, the barber was abruptly given notice to quit the building, possibly as both Cameron and the President of the Senate, Edward Mattner, suspected him of being an SP bookie.

In 1953 Cameron returned to London as a member of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association delegation to Queen Elizabeth II's coronation. True to his ancestry and surname, he held strong Jacobite views and invariably wore a tartan tie, yet still managed to charm the Queen Mother by telling her that 'when there is a Prince named Charles and a Princess named Anne a Cameron may visit Buckingham Palace in perfect safety' (Kerr 1983, 95).

As Speaker, Cameron zealously defended his authority over the management of Parliament House itself. When a government minister complained about his removal of titles from the doors of rooms occupied by parliamentary under-secretaries, he responded: 'I want to make it perfectly clear that this building is public property, and that the Speaker of the House of Representatives is the custodian—the only custodian—of that property' (H.R. Deb. 28.8.1952, 692). He also insisted that everyone should be properly dressed in the lobbies, but did not invariably apply his rules to himself. On a hot day, he frequently 'received visitors dressed only in shorts and a singlet' (Cox 1956), his bare feet on his desk. Cleaning staff were said to resent his weekend habit of walking around the lobbies so attired, fearing that visitors might mistake him for a cleaner and 'damage their prestige' (Cox 1956).

Cameron supported the May–June 1955 proceedings by the House against the Bankstown, Sydney, newspaper proprietor Raymond Fitzpatrick and journalist Frank Browne over a serious breach of parliamentary privilege, with the agreement of the government and much of the opposition. His bark at Browne to 'take your

hands off the bar' (H.R. Deb. 10.6.1955, 1625) when he appeared before the House fixed itself in the memories of those present. Even Menzies, no friend of either of the accused, thought this command 'harsh and unnecessary' (1967, 300). Cameron later ordered the destruction of the ABC tape recordings of proceedings. Yet he was by no means entirely a government partisan; foremostly, he sought to maintain the independence of the Speaker. He did not attend party meetings and the misgivings he aroused among government members resulted in five successful motions of dissent against his rulings, none of which led him to countenance resignation. One of the few occasions he acquiesced with either the government or the opposition was in June 1955 when, at the prime minister's request, he withdrew his approval for the reclassification of staff of the House of Representatives.

A sternness of character was matched by Cameron's striking countenance, embodied in a heavy brow, piercing blue eyes, and, in years prior to his Speakership, a curious 'cockatoo' peak of carefully upwardly brushed hair. Despite this exterior, he did not drink, smoke, or swear; his favourite adjective was 'thundering' (Ellis 1963, 251). Privately, he performed many personal kindnesses to members on both sides of politics. He took an interest in the welfare of ex-AIF members and was usually considerate of parliamentary cleaners, messengers, and gardeners. The exacting (Sir) Paul Hasluck chose him to comment on drafts of his official war history of the home front during World War II as, despite limited schooling, Cameron 'was widely read and more highly literate than most members of parliament' (Hasluck 1997, 29).

As a minister, Cameron was at times irascible, but he was also hardworking, determined, and a good administrator. In the chamber, he was a well-informed and fluent debater, always extremely forceful in expression. In once admitting to the House that he was 'conscious of my shortcomings', he more characteristically added that 'doubtless I shall proceed in the same old fashion' (H.R. Deb. 4.8.1954, 9). His tempestuous and at times eccentric nature made him one of the most colourful individualists in the parliament and the subject of stories for decades to come. Green summed him up as 'a queer mixture of generosity, prejudice and irresponsibility' (1969, 137).

An historian of the office of Speaker, Philip Laundy, asserted that 'no Speaker at Westminster could survive the kind of criticism which was levelled against Mr Cameron', which was perhaps a reflection of 'the robust temperament of … a raw and unpolished democracy' (1964, 389). His contrariness has long obscured his principled assertion of the Speaker's independence and authority. Labor's Clyde Cameron said that his namesake's capacity to compel members to behave made Archie 'easily the best Speaker in living memory' (1990, 436)—a decidedly minority view among his party colleagues. Hasluck was uncharacteristically generous in agreeing, despite being conscious of Cameron's questionable rulings and authoritarian nature. A more typical assessment was Makin's view that 'temperamentally he was ill-fitted

for the position' (c. 1962). The political scientist Finn Crisp agreed that Cameron was too combative to fully succeed as Speaker, despite his being a 'jealous but highly subjective guardian of Parliament's rights against the Executive' (1965, 246). But there was near unanimity that his integrity was never in doubt, including among his severest critics.

In August 1955, Cameron suffered attacks of influenza that affected his lungs and heart—both already weakened by gas in World War I. He died while still in office of a heart attack on 9 August 1956 in Royal Prince Alfred Hospital, Sydney. Accorded a state funeral in Adelaide, he was buried in Mount Barker cemetery. His wife and son survived him. (Sir) Ivor Hele's portrait of Cameron was hung in Parliament House, a place that was more placid after his departure.

This article supplements the original Volume 13 ADB *biography, published 1993, authored by John Playford. adb.anu.edu.au/biography/cameron-archie-galbraith-9669/text17063*

Select bibliography

Advertiser (Adelaide). 'War Research of Great Service'. 10 August 1956, 2

Age (Melbourne). 'C. P. Leaderless'. 16 October 1940, 10

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 15 June 1938, 2128–31

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 2 April 1941, 553–60

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 22 February 1950, 18–21

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 30 March 1950, 1415–23

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 13 March 1951, 329–30

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 12 June 1951, 24–28

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 27 June 1951, 548–49

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 10 July 1951, 1211–12

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 28 August 1952, 692

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 4 August 1954, 9

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 10 June 1955, 1625

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 29 August 1956, 7–12

Australian Country Party Monthly Journal. 'New Federal C. P. Members'. 1 September 1935, 12–13

Bulletin (Sydney). 'Vale Archie Cameron'. 15 August 1956, 6

Calwell, Arthur. 'Archie Cameron'. *Argus* (Melbourne), 10 August 1956, 4

Cameron, Clyde. *The Cameron Diaries*. Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1990

Cox, E. H. 'The Fighter Who Always Wore Elastic-Sided Boots'. *Herald* (Melbourne), 9 August 1956, 5

Crisp, L. F. *Australian National Government*. Croydon, Vic.: Longmans, 1965

Dixon, M. F. *Inside the ABC: A Piece of Australian History*. Melbourne: Hawthorn Press, 1975

Duthie, Gil. *I Had 50,000 Bosses*. Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1984

Ellis, Ulrich. *A History of the Australian Country Party*. Carlton, Vic.: Melbourne University Press, 1963

Green, Frank C. *Servant of the House*. Melbourne: Heinemann, 1969

Hasluck, Paul. *The Chance of Politics*. Melbourne: Text, 1997

Herald (Melbourne). 'Crustiest Mr Speaker'. 5 January 1959, 11

Hetherington, John. *Blamey, Controversial Soldier: A Biography of Field Marshal Sir Thomas Blamey, GBE, KCB, CMG, DSO, ED*. Canberra: Australian War Memorial and AGPS, 1973

Kerr, Colin. *Archie: The Biography of Sir Archibald Grenfell Price*. Melbourne: Macmillan, 1983

Laundy, Philip. *The Office of Speaker*. Cassell: London, 1964

Makin, Norman. 'The Honourable Archie Galbraith Cameron Speaker 1950–1956', c. 1962. Papers of Norman Makin, MS 4663. National Library of Australia

Moore, Andrew. *Mr Big of Bankstown: The Scandalous Fitzpatrick and Browne Affair*. Crawley, WA: UWA Publishing, 2011

National Archives of Australia. B883, VX114034, Cameron Archie Galbraith

Page, Earle. *Truant Surgeon: The Inside Story of Forty Years of Australian Political Life*. Edited by A. Mozley. Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1963

People (Sydney). 'Archie Cameron—Whatever Mistakes Mr Speaker Has Never Been Dull'. 6 December 1950, 11–14

Personal knowledge of subject (John Playford)

Thomas, Alan. *Broadcast and Be Damned: The ABC's First Two Decades*. Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1980

Causley, Ian Raymond: Deputy Speaker 2002–2007

Clare Parker

Ian Raymond Causley (1940–2020), farmer and Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives, was born on 19 October 1940 at Maclean, northern New South Wales, son of Samuel Arthur Causley, farmer, and his wife, Hilda Jean, née Lewis. The family had cultivated sugarcane in this region for four generations. Ian attended Chatsworth Island Public School and Maclean High School. Much later, he recalled that 'growing up on the Clarence River, I never envisaged that I would be involved in politics', and he 'certainly did not come from a family that was actively involved' (H.R. Deb. 13.9.2007, 55). He won a scholarship to study at the University of New England, but, to the initial dismay of his father, he gave it up in favour of cutting sugarcane to save for the purchase of his own farm. A capable sportsman, he rowed on the Clarence River as well as captaining and opening the batting for the local cricket team. He married Gloria June Patch at Lismore, New South Wales, on 3 February 1962. They were to have four children.

In 1965 he joined the Country Party and, over the following two decades, became a leader in the sugar industry, serving as president of the Clarence River Cane Growers' Association, a director of the New South Wales Sugar Milling Co-operative, and a member of the New South Wales Cane Growers' Council. With June, he also owned and managed a hotel at Lismore. At the March 1984 New South Wales election, he stood as the National Party candidate for the state electorate of Clarence. He had withstood pressure to run for parliament for a number of years but decided to stand in order to participate in debates about important regional concerns, such as the effect of environmentalism on the timber industry. The two-party preferred swing of nearly 11 per cent that he secured overcame a sizeable Labor majority and won back a traditionally safe seat for the National Party. After the coalition won government in March 1988, he served as minister for natural resources until 1990. As minister, he was critical of anti-logging conservationists as 'single issue people' (Grealy 1989) who failed to balance environmental concerns with the importance of farming and forestry products. The Forest Products Association found him 'likeable, refreshing and incisive' (Grealy 1989).

Figure 17: Ian Causley.
Source: Australian Government Photographic Service (Auspic).

Causley's time in the state ministry was marred by an investigation by the newly established Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC). This concerned an allegation that he and Deputy Premier Wal Murray had decided to sell a Crown land site near Tweed Heads to a developer who had donated $25,000 to the National Party, despite an apparent higher offer. The ICAC report, released in July 1990, cleared both of corruption but criticised them for actions that had 'created a climate conducive to corrupt conduct' (Davey 2006, 332). Causley won an undisclosed sum in damages from the *Sydney Morning Herald*. He looked back on this whole episode as 'soul-destroying' (Farr 1998).

After the release of the ICAC report, Causley became chief secretary and minister for water resources as part of a wider ministerial reshuffle, but he returned to the natural resources portfolio in June 1991. His second tenure in the role was interrupted by extended sick leave to recover from surgery for a benign brain tumour, followed by a serious viral infection. From May 1993, he was minister for agriculture and fisheries, and minister for mines, until the coalition government was defeated at the March 1995 election.

Three months after the election, Causley won preselection for the federal seat of Page, which covered his home region. He resigned from the New South Wales parliament early in 1996 and, at the March federal election, successfully regained Page for the Nationals by defeating the incumbent Labor member, Harry Woods, who had held the seat by a razor-thin margin. Causley's early months in Canberra were dominated by debate about gun ownership in the wake of the Port Arthur massacre. He was one of several National Party members who was the target of threatening letters and parcels for their support of Prime Minister John Howard's proposed gun law reforms.

Causley served on a number of committees that matched his areas of interest, including the Joint Statutory Committee on Native Title and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Land Fund (1996–2002), and the Joint Select Committee on the Republic Referendum (1999). He chaired the House Standing Committee on Environment, Recreation, and the Arts (1997–98), and that on the Environment and Heritage (1998–2001). In November 1998, he joined the Speaker's panel. On 12 February 2002, he was elected Deputy Speaker, serving under Neil Andrew. His election came as a relief for his National Party colleagues, who, in the wake of the 2001 election, were permitted by the Liberal Party to nominate for this position, contrary to long-established convention.

In his first few months as Deputy Speaker, Causley was the subject of some unwelcome headlines. The Labor frontbencher Nicola Roxon accused him of an offensive remark; Causley recalled the comment rather differently but apologised for any offence caused. He also rejected a suggestion that he was intoxicated while presiding, after confusing the name of a member's electorate during a marathon late-night sitting. These early controversies eased, and he was re-elected following the 2004

election, now serving under David Hawker. From his own side of politics, Causley was described as 'affable, approachable, fair and firm' (H.R. Deb. 16.11.2004, 22), but the opposition soon became frustrated by his rulings, echoing its demonstrated dissatisfaction with Hawker. When Causley ruled that a Labor member's attack on the Nationals minister De-Anne Kelly during a discussion on another topic was contrary to standing orders, Mark Latham moved a motion of dissent, claiming that 'we now have the ridiculous situation of a Nationals Deputy Speaker trying to censor debate' (H.R. Deb. 8.12.2004, 88). The motion was easily defeated by the coalition majority.

Having on his sixty-sixth birthday announced his forthcoming retirement from politics, Causley left parliament and the Deputy Speakership at the election of November 2007. He admitted to being disappointed not to have served as a federal minister, having been 'lured down to Canberra because I had a lot of experience and could help the Government and take on ministerial positions' (Easton 2006), but he was proud of his time as Deputy Speaker. Remarks by members on his retirement reflected respect for his direct and honest approach. The Labor member Arch Bevis, for example, appreciated his 'wit and … forthright approach to all issues' (H.R. Deb. 20.9.2007, 120), while Duncan Kerr declared him to be 'a person of great goodwill as well as one with a hide as tough as a rhinoceros' (H.R. Deb. 20.9.2007, 125). Causley himself reflected that:

> This is the members' House; the government might have the numbers to control it but it is the members' House. The members have a right to speak. I believe that the most important standing order is the one that grants the right to speak in silence. I have tried to enforce that order. (H.R. Deb. 13.9.2007, 55)

Retiring to his farm at the mouth of the Clarence River, Causley resumed his role as a rural industry leader, serving as chair of the New South Wales Sugar Milling Co-operative (2009–17) and of the Sugar Research and Development Corporation board (2010–13). When his wife of more than fifty years died in 2013, he paid public tribute to her importance. She had managed the farm and cared for their family during his long absences in Sydney and Canberra. In addition to her volunteer work, she attended countless public events on his behalf, effectively making her 'a second Member for all those years' (*Lismore Echo* 2006). 'Broad, solid and strong' (Grealy 1989), Causley prided himself on his candid approach to politics. Despite some very public controversies, he was, for more than two decades, a stalwart defender of his home region. He died on 27 April 2020.

Select bibliography

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 12 February 2002, 23–27

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 16 November 2004, 21–26

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 8 December 2004, 84–98

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 13 September 2007, 51–56

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 20 September 2007, 115–25

Coorey, Phillip. 'Causley Retires, and Anthony Eyes Return'. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 20 October 2006, 6

Daily Examiner (Grafton, NSW). 'Ian Farewells the Love of His Life'. 22 July 2013. Accessed 9 December 2019. www.dailyexaminer.com.au/news/ian-farewells-the-love-of-his-life/1953083/. Copy held on file

Davey, Paul. *The Nationals: The Progressive, Country and National Party in New South Wales 1919 to 2006.* Sydney: Federation Press, 2006

Easton, Alex. 'Causley to Retire: Anthony Circles His Seat'. *Northern Star* (Lismore, NSW), 20 October 2006. Accessed 9 December 2019. www.northernstar.com.au/news/apn-causley-to-retire-anthony-circles-for/15156/. Copy held on file

Farr, Malcolm. 'Fame That Destroys the Soul'. *Daily Telegraph* (Sydney), 4 May 1998, 11

Garcia, Luis M. 'Causley Got the Chop Over Logging'. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 24 July 1990, 6

Grealy, Michael. '"Bull" Causley's Survival Mission'. *Sun Herald* (Sydney), 3 September 1989, 13

Hudson, Phillip. 'Nats Angry as PM Defies Convention'. *Age* (Melbourne), 5 February 2002, 6

Lismore Echo. 'After 23 Years, Causley Calls it a Day'. 26 October 2006. Accessed 9 December 2019. www.echonews.com.au/news/9606-after-23-years-causley-calls-it-a-day/678713/ (site discontinued). Copy held on file

Prior, Neale. 'Damages Agreed in Causley Libel Case'. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 17 September 1991, 2

Sydney Morning Herald. 'Correction: Apology to Mr Ian Causley MP'. 21 September 1991, 35

Chanter, John Moore: Chairman of Committees 1901–1903, 1914–1922

G. N. Hawker

John Moore Chanter (1845–1931), farmer, auctioneer, commission agent, and first Chairman of Committees of the House of Representatives, was born on 11 February 1845 in Adelaide, son of John Chanter, shoemaker, who had migrated from Devonshire, England, in 1840, and his second wife, Elizabeth, née Moore. John senior became a publican in Adelaide and, from 1856, in Melbourne, before he selected land in rural Victoria, at Trentham in 1869 and in 1874 at Rochester. Young John was educated at the Albert House Academy and the Collegiate School of St Peter in Adelaide, and at the Model Training Institution in Melbourne. On 16 November 1863, at Campbell's Creek Primitive Methodist Church, Victoria, he married Mary Ann Clark; they had six sons and four daughters. He became a champion of the selectors' cause and was active in protectionist rural politics, in 1878 becoming the first secretary of the Victorian Farmers' Union.

In 1881 Chanter moved to Moama, New South Wales, where he was an auctioneer and commission agent, winning the trust of local selectors for his preparedness to stand up for their interests. The political career of almost forty years that followed spanned two parliaments and local government. In the colonial parliament of New South Wales, he began as an independent member, then was in the protectionist party and later an early version of the Country Party; in the federal sphere, he was successively a protectionist, Labor, Nationalist, and Nationalist and Farmer member. Yet he was rarely accused of opportunism or betrayal, with each switch between parties being his response to changing party formations rather than marking a change in his political beliefs.

Starting his political life in the New South Wales Legislative Assembly in 1885, Chanter headed the poll as an independent in the two-member seat of Murray. He held his place over the next three elections as a protectionist, becoming a moving

Figure 18: John Chanter.
Source: National Library of Australia, PIC Box PIC/7332 #PIC/7332, Falk, Sydney.

spirit in the assembly's 'country corner'. More prominent as an election campaigner and parliamentarian than as a player in the rough and tumble party politics of colonial New South Wales, he was Secretary for Mines in (Sir) George Dibbs's second ministry, which lasted seven weeks in 1889, with (Sir) Edmund Barton and (Sir) William Lyne as colleagues, but he failed to be selected for later protectionist ministries. He was also the first mayor of Moama (1891–92). After a change to single-member electorates in 1894, he won Deniliquin in three further contests, consistently polling around 70 per cent of the vote. His federal career was presaged by his appointment as a Temporary Chairman of Committees in 1896 and again in 1900. In September 1900, he became the first president of the New South Wales branch of the Australian Natives' Association.

Chanter entered federal politics in 1901 as the member for Riverina. On 5 June 1901, during the opening session of the Commonwealth parliament, he was elected by the House of Representatives as its first Chairman of Committees. His nomination was followed by a short debate marked by an implicit assumption on both sides of the chamber that the experienced Chanter was a sound choice; more words were expended on whether his tenure should be for a single session or for the life of the parliament—an issue that was only fully resolved six years later. His nominator, James McColl, was perhaps expansive in claiming that Chanter had 'on a great number of occasions acted as deputy-chairman' (H.R. Deb. 5.6.1901, 745) in the New South Wales Legislative Assembly, but Chanter responded that he was certainly a seasoned parliamentarian who was determined to uphold the 'dignity of the position … [in] my native land' (H.R. Deb. 5.6.1901, 746). As the free-trade member Patrick Glynn noted, a candidate's eligibility for a presiding officer position was invariably 'tested beforehand privately, and their respective merits or careers are not gone into on the motion that a particular honourable member shall be appointed' (H.R. Deb. 5.6.1901, 746). Chanter was also one of several new Commonwealth parliamentarians, including King O'Malley and James Fowler, who advocated the selection of ministers by parliament rather than by the political party holding a parliamentary majority.

The uncontested appointments of Chanter as Chairman of Committees and of (Sir) Frederick Holder as Speaker also suggested a gesture towards comity by the nascent House of Representatives. Political balance was probably a further consideration given Holder's identification with free trade and the subsequent appointment as Temporary Chairmen of Committees of two Labor members, three free-traders, and one protectionist.

Chanter's first term was notable for his interpreting the Constitution and the standing orders to allow private members speaking in the Committee of Ways and Means to propose new taxes and to increase existing ones. Holder reluctantly upheld

this interpretation, which remained in place until 1927 when it was overturned by another Chairman of Committees, James Bayley. Chanter retained the Chairmanship in the second session of the first parliament without opposition, despite this ruling.

Were it not for his temporary absence arising from an electoral mishap, Chanter might have contested and held the position again in the second parliament. He lost Riverina at the election of December 1903 by a mere five votes to the free-trade candidate Robert Blackwood. An outraged Chanter claimed electoral irregularities, eventually leading to the outcome being overturned by the High Court and a by-election in May 1904 that he won. This unsettling experience contributed to his advocacy of parliament being made the arbiter of disputed returns, rather than High Court judges, who, he felt, were so absorbed in 'the ordinary forms of legal procedure' as to be prone to 'unconscious bias' (H.R. Deb. 12.12.1905, 6744).

By the time he regained Riverina, Chanter's fellow protectionist Carty Salmon had been elected to replace him as Chairman of Committees. Salmon's original candidature was contested by Labor and, during the second session of this parliament, he was challenged by Chanter himself—indicative not only of a thwarted sense of ownership but also of mounting dissatisfaction with Salmon that eventually saw Labor's Charles McDonald defeat him for the Chairmanship in the third session. Chanter had to wait a considerable time before he was again able to seek election as Chairman. McDonald retained the position at the commencement of the third parliament in 1907 and kept it for the remaining sessions as a result of the post being made tenurable for a whole parliamentary term.

In the July 1909 election for Speaker caused by Holder's untimely death, party passions came to the fore as the government's nominee, Salmon, was opposed by McDonald and then, after long and heated debate, also by Chanter. The compromise nomination of Chanter by the member for Bass, David Storrer, amid what Alfred Deakin called 'a debate of an altogether unprecedented character' (H.R. Deb. 28.7.1909, 1688), did not manage to come to a vote.

Chanter's political direction underwent a major change during 1909. He was one of four protectionists who refused to become part of the new Fusion Party with the free-traders, and the only one who chose to switch to the Australian Labor Party. When Labor won the election of 1910, Chanter was still a recent convert, and so the positions of Speaker and Chairman of Committees went to the party stalwarts McDonald and Alexander Poynton, respectively, but with Chanter being appointed as a Temporary Chairman of Committees for all three sessions of this first McDonald Speakership.

Labor was defeated at the election of 1913, with Chanter losing his seat to the rural Liberal Bert Falkiner. At the double-dissolution election of September 1914, he regained Riverina and Labor returned to government. His re-election as Chairman

of Committees on 9 October was widely acknowledged as being his belated due for the disappointment of 1903. The Liberal leader Joseph Cook made some play that Chanter owed his position to 'the decree of Caucus' but confessed that 'his appointment will not be unwelcome to me' (H.R. Deb. 9.10.1914, 64).

Chanter changed parties yet again in 1917 when the Labor Party split over conscription led to his moving to the new Nationalist Party. He was unopposed for the Chairmanship at the commencement of the seventh parliament in June 1917—his fourth such election by general concurrence. At the general election of December 1919, he was endorsed by both the Nationalist Party and the Farmers and Settlers Association (FSA) of New South Wales. His fifth and last election by the House as Chairman, which followed, was, however, not smooth. Labor nominated William Mahoney against him and, although Chanter defeated him comfortably, 42 votes to 22 (VP 1920/11, 27.2.1920), this followed a long debate and was a direct reflection of party strengths. The Labor leader, Frank Tudor, charged that Chanter had wrongly prevented him from speaking in committee during the previous parliament. The young Labor member Samuel Nicholls remarked that Chanter, who had just turned seventy-five, could 'no longer be relied upon. He has fallen into a condition of senile decay' (H.R. Deb. 27.2.1920, 68). This harsh judgement went unchallenged; party lines had continued to tighten, and the rise of the Country Party raised tensions for a rural Nationalist like Chanter that a weakened Labor Party sought to exploit.

His final term as Chairman was probably Chanter's most difficult, especially during the long first session of February 1920 – December 1921. He was granted three months' leave of absence in May 1920 following the death of his wife but was back in the House by July. That month, the House repudiated his ruling on the point in proceedings at which a motion could be put to the vote, which was at odds with an earlier ruling by the Speaker, Sir William Elliot Johnson (VP 1920/221–22, 28.7.1920). The remainder of 1920 was marked by a series of suspensions of Labor members. When this highly contested parliament ended in November 1922, Chanter was routinely thanked for his services by the government and opposition. His reply was characteristically poised, but he took the opportunity to reflect that the standing orders were 'unfortunately … incomplete [and] only temporary, although they have been in use for over twenty years', and accordingly suggested that the next parliament should 'revise them and make them so plain as to be thoroughly understood by every member of the House' (H.R. Deb. 12.10.1922, 3929). They proved to be almost the closing words of his parliamentary career. At the election of December 1922, he was overwhelmed in Riverina by a trio of Country Party candidates exchanging preferences. The victor, William Killen, was a recent past president of the FSA that had endorsed Chanter in 1919.

Tall and rugged, Chanter was a quiet man who spoke infrequently in debates but, when he did, explored all details of his subject and held tenaciously to his viewpoint. His unusually long service as Chairman of Committees encompassed major changes

in Australia's developing political and party systems. In retirement he lived at Caulfield in suburban Melbourne, where he died on 9 March 1931. He was buried in the Anglican section of Brighton cemetery; eight of his ten children survived him.

This article supplements the original Volume 7 ADB *biography, published 1979, authored by G. N. Hawker and Joan Rydon. adb.anu.edu.au/biography/chanter-john-moore-5553/text9467*

Select bibliography

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 5 June 1901, 745–46

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 12 December 1905, 6741–45

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 28 July 1909, 1687–88

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 9 October 1914, 64–65

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 27 February 1920, 61–70

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 28 July 1920, 3018–23

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 12 October 1922, 3928–29

Australia. House of Representatives. *Votes and Proceedings*, 1920, 11–12, 221–22

Buxton, G. L. *The Riverina 1861–1891: An Australian Regional Study*. Carlton, Vic.: Melbourne University Press, 1967

Graham, B. D. *The Formation of the Australian Country Parties*. Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1966

Hawker, Geoffrey. *Politicians All: The Candidates for the Australian Commonwealth Election 1901—A Collective Biography.* Sydney: Wild and Woolley in association with the Australian Institute of Political Science, 2002

Loveday, P., A., W. Martin, and Patrick Weller. 'New South Wales'. In *The Emergence of the Australian Party System*, edited by P. Loveday, A. W. Martin and R. S. Parker, 172–248. Sydney: Hale & Iremonger, 1977

Reid, G. S., and Martyn Forrest. *Australia's Commonwealth Parliament 1901–1988: Ten Perspectives.* Carlton, Vic.: Melbourne University Press, 1989

Riverine Herald (Echuca and Moama). 'New South Wales Parliament'. 23 May 1896, 4

Rydon, Joan. 'Chanter, John Moore (1845–1931)'. In *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, volume 7, edited by Bede Nairn and Geoffrey Serle, 609–10. Carlton, Vic.: Melbourne University Press, 1979

Sydney Morning Herald. 'Death of Mr Chanter'. 10 March 1931, 10

Child, Gloria Joan:
Speaker 1986–1989

Sylvia Marchant

Gloria Joan Liles Child (1921–2013), nineteenth and first female Speaker of the House of Representatives, was born on 3 August 1921 at Kew, Melbourne, youngest daughter of Warren Arthur Liles Olle, postmaster, and his wife, Hilda Cary, née Seedsman. Joan, her sister, Sarah, and brother, Warren, spent their childhood in Yackandandah and Beechworth in north-eastern Victoria before moving in 1932 to the Melbourne suburb of East St Kilda.

The leftist inclinations of her siblings and resistance to their father's strongly conservative convictions gave Joan her first exposure to politics. In Melbourne, she won a scholarship to attended Camberwell Girls Grammar School. There she did well academically but felt socially out of place, contributing to a lasting sense of life's unfairness and her readiness to stand up for what she saw as right. She left school at the age of fifteen and worked as a receptionist. On 18 February 1942, she married Harold Lindsey (Hal) Child, who was then serving in the army and later with the Royal Australian Air Force. After the war, they lived in Melbourne, where Hal worked as a salesman and four of their children—all boys—were born. They later moved near to Launceston, Tasmania, where Hal was state manager for Nylex and their last son was born. In Tasmania, Child became involved in campaigning for the Australian Labor Party (ALP), but did not take out membership. In 1963, after the family's return to Melbourne, Hal died of a heart attack.

Child had been working in advertising, but, as a widow with five children, the eldest aged seventeen, and being eligible for only a meagre pension, she was forced into a series of part-time jobs. Over the next four years, she cleaned houses, cooked in a nursing home, and worked in a knitwear factory. These experiences contributed to her commitment to social justice and the alleviation of poverty; bringing up her sons on her own also made her 'very decisive' (*Canberra Times* 1992). She sat on the committees of school parents' associations and other community groups and took a course in public speaking. In 1964 she joined the ALP and, after her youngest son

Figure 19: Joan Child.
Source: Courtesy of the National Archives of Australia. NAA: A6180, 16/9/87/3.

left school, became active in party affairs and in the Union of Australian Women. She faced barriers within the party based on her gender, especially to participating in policy discussions, but insisted on being heard.

In the run-up to the 1972 federal election, Child gained a place on the party's Federal Electoral Assembly for the seat of Henty in her home area of south-eastern Melbourne, but found that only men were considered appropriate candidates, some of whom she thought were totally unsuitable. This encouraged her to offer herself as a candidate. She secured preselection for Henty, aided, she felt, by the knowledge that the seat had never been won by Labor. Undeterred, she immersed herself in the life of the electorate. On election day, she secured a swing of 9.1 per cent, which brought her within a mere 308 votes of an upset victory over the sitting member, Max Fox, as Labor secured government nationally for the first time since 1949.

While she continued canvassing in Henty, Child worked as a liaison officer for Jim Cairns, minister for overseas trade, during which time she developed an interest in trade and industry issues. Meanwhile, the Labor government faced a hostile Senate that repeatedly blocked legislation, leading to a double-dissolution election in May 1974. Child sought to stand again only to find that, despite her near success two years earlier, she was expected to fight for party preselection against candidates drawn to what was now a winnable seat. This infuriated her, but she received decisive support from party official and Senate candidate John Button.

Campaigning hard on her foremost concerns of social justice and poverty, Child also focused on the contemporary issues of inflation, education, health care, and government spending. This time, her efforts were rewarded, as, despite a modest nationwide swing against the government, she defeated Fox by more than three thousand votes. When photographers came to her house to report on her win, she refused to adopt domestic poses of using a vacuum cleaner or putting out the washing, instead raising a glass of champagne to toast Prime Minister Gough Whitlam's re-election.

Her victory made Child not only the first Labor candidate to win Henty, but also the first woman Labor candidate to be elected to the House of Representatives and, at that time, the only female member of the House from any party. (There had been three previous non-Labor female members, one of whom, Doris Blackburn, was an independent Labor member). Few of her fellow members saw her arrival as groundbreaking. Mick Young was an exception and, in his first speech to the House, he described her election as a cause for rejoicing but also 'a source of shame' that it had taken so long for the ALP to produce a female member of the House (H.R. Deb. 16.7.1974, 234). Child's own first speech came straight after, in which she congratulated the Speaker, Jim Cope, for holding 'an onerous office, made more so at times than it need be by the behaviour that is sometimes as vociferous as it is unnecessary' (H.R. Deb. 16.7.1974, 238). Her main message concerned her favoured

theme of social justice, stating that Australia was a country in which no-one should live in poverty and where national wealth should be measured 'by the care and compassion it is prepared to extend to the old and lonely, the dependent, the disabled and the young who are in the schools' (H.R. Deb. 16.7.1974, 240).

Articulate and well informed about her electorate, Child was an impressive addition to the House. In her short first term, she spoke on social issues such as housing, health, schools, and the status of women. She drew on personal experience as a pensioner to illustrate the need for adequate support for poorer citizens. On occasion, she was caustic, such as when she accused Liberal member Don Chipp of consistently confusing the proposed Medibank with the British public health system (H.R. Deb. 7.8.1974, 106–7). She argued against foreign ownership of Australian resources and thought it absurd that there were only five women in the entire parliament, but also opposed setting gender quotas. The dismissal of the Whitlam government in November 1975 led to another double dissolution—this time, sweeping Labor from office. Child suffered a nearly 6 per cent swing against her and lost her hard-earned seat.

Temporarily out of elective office, Child worked part-time as an executive officer for the State College of Victoria Staff Association, and as an assistant to the Labor member Clyde Holding. She was unsuccessful when she stood for Henty again at the 1977 election but regained the seat in 1980 and so returned to parliament as a member of the opposition led by Bill Hayden. She was now one of three female members of the House and, at her behest, the Speaker, Sir Billy Snedden, agreed to henceforth refer to 'honourable Members' rather than 'honourable gentlemen'. In 1983 there was another double dissolution, at which Labor returned to government and Child retained her seat. On 28 February 1984, she was elected Chairman of Committees.

Child enjoyed her three years as Chairman of Committees but was disappointed not to be made a minister. When the Speakership fell vacant after Harry Jenkins senior resigned to become Australian ambassador to Spain, she put herself forward. On 11 January 1986, she won the Labor caucus ballot by a single vote when a deal between the left and centre-left factions fell apart. In the House, she defeated the opposition's nominee, Allan Rocher, to become Speaker, on 11 February 1986. In her acceptance speech, she responded to opposition calls for shorter ministerial replies to questions without notice by arguing that, as the remedy was not entirely in the Speaker's hands, they should seek to have the standing orders altered to impose a time limit on answers.

Child chose to eschew the robe and wig as symbols of office. Although she felt that 'Madam Speaker' was too formal a title, preferring to be addressed as 'Speaker Child', the former continued to be used widely. Recollection of the lack of guidance she had received in 1974 led her to introduce an orientation day for new members. She proved

calm and capable in the chair and was initially well respected by both sides of the chamber. Her naturally quiet and controlled voice, she felt, was more effective than a loud one. The traditional rowdyism in the chamber drew her disapproval and she had mixed success in maintaining order. This was especially so in the presence of Prime Minister Bob Hawke and Treasurer Paul Keating, who in full flight at question time were 'a difficult pair to handle' (Child 2015, 226). They repeatedly provided overly long answers, and could be obstinate when instructed to allow another member to speak. Child learnt to appreciate the value of inviting the minister for science, Barry Jones, to ask a question as a circuit-breaker as he invariably had something 'good and interesting and amusing to say' (Child 2015, 230).

In June 1986, Child led a parliamentary delegation to the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and Poland. Parliamentarians from other parties who were on the delegation were impressed by her performance in sometimes difficult circumstances. Senator Norm Sanders of the Australian Democrats declared that, on human rights issues, Child had showed host governments 'what a very tough and thoughtful Australian woman can do' (S. Deb. 25.11.1986, 25). Child herself recalled how, at the end of a one-sided meeting with the formidable former Soviet foreign minister, Andrei Gromyko, she successfully insisted that he stay to hear her representations on behalf of Jewish constituents about emigration from the USSR.

Unimpressed by the habit of most members of different parties and even of rival factions within parties of not socialising with each other in the parliamentary dining room, Child ran get-togethers to try to counter this. She also took a strong interest in promotions of parliamentary staff, and said she wanted them to be based primarily on ability. Relations with the Clerk of the House, Alan Browning, were not always smooth, and she recalled 'the occasional robust discussion' (Child 2015, 265) over such matters as her agreeing with the President of the Senate, Douglas McClelland, that the House could use Senate space in the crowded parliament building for printers. She worked closely with her personal private secretaries in scrutinising the details of budget estimates and expenditure. Together with the President of the Senate, she formally sponsored the Parliamentary Privileges Bill. When it passed in May 1987, the Act clarified both houses' powers, privileges, and immunities—matters hitherto largely unresolved since Federation. Following the election of July 1987, she was re-elected Speaker on 14 September, winning against the opposition's nominee, Don Dobie.

The following year was dominated for Child by the move to the new parliament building. She became heavily involved in the final stages of fitting out the new parliament house, grappling with matters ranging from the design of courtyard gardens to carpet patterns, the safe depth of steps, natural lighting of offices, and the danger of falling into the water feature in the Members' Hall. A particularly contentious matter was the fate of the Speaker's chair presented by the British

parliament in 1926, which proved unduly difficult and too expensive to be moved to the new building. She found the chair custom built for the new House chamber more functional than visually impressive. As Speaker, she was very involved in the ceremonial opening by Queen Elizabeth II. Child had to insist to Prime Minister Hawke that he not escort the visiting Queen into the House of Representatives, as longstanding Westminster tradition held that the monarch must be invited by the representative of the members—namely, the Speaker herself.

In the new building, Child missed the conviviality that its cramped predecessor had forced on members. She suspected that this contributed to a decline in conduct, which was not helped by the much bigger chamber, making it harder for the Speaker to project her personal authority. But she accepted that there was no turning back from the new environment and explored the opportunities it provided for modest fundraising ventures such as by hiring out the Great Hall. In May 1988, she introduced a bill to reduce the number of parliamentary departments from five to three by creating a new Department of Parliamentary Services, only to have it rejected by the Senate.

Disliking the rowdyism of so much Australian parliamentary conduct, Child's health suffered under the strain. When dealing with questions on a proposed casino for Canberra, she admitted that she was not always familiar with the subject matter raised in parliamentary questions, making it hard for her to determine the relevance of answers and leading her to suggest that members see the relevant minister if not satisfied with what was provided in the House. A redistribution announced late in 1988 that foreshadowed the abolition of Henty made easier her decision in December 1988 to retire at the next election.

By this time, Child's relationship with the opposition had deteriorated despite good relations with some of its individuals. In March 1989, she faced a censure motion moved by opposition leader John Howard for failure to act impartially after she had named Ian Sinclair, a future Speaker, for disrespect to the chair by having interjected 'and you' after she had appealed to members to 'look at their behaviour' (H.R. Deb. 8.3.1989, 633). The motion was defeated along party lines, but not before a lengthy debate during which she was criticised by Howard and vigorously defended by Leader of the House Kim Beazley and Paul Keating. She caught a chronic virus during a 1989 trip to Turkey for Anzac Day and continued to suffer from the effects of a car accident the previous year. Increasingly, she felt she could no longer manage the administrative demands imposed on her. She resigned as Speaker on 28 August 1989, seven months before the 1990 election.

In retirement, Child reflected that the Speaker's chair can be 'the loneliest seat in the House' (2015, 232), and that 'when your team is losing the umpire often gets the blame' (Veitch 2013). She remained active in retirement, living alone but close to her family. A consultant on public and government relations, and a long-time patron

of the Epileptic Society, she still attended party meetings, enjoyed reading detective novels, and found that knitting helped her arthritis. In 1990 she was appointed AO and in 2001 was awarded the Centenary Medal.

Child died on 23 February 2013, survived by her five sons. At the time of her death, the House had its second female Speaker, Anna Burke, who was conscious of following in Child's 'wonderful footsteps' (H.R. Deb. 12.3.2013, 1613). Burke recalled that Child 'called me when I was elected Speaker and said hang tough' (*Age* 2013), adding that Child could be 'pretty fierce … Joan was there in a pretty difficult stage—she had Paul Keating to contend with … and she stood up to it' (*Age* 2013). Child was physically small and deceptively soft-spoken, but quickly became assertive when she felt she was being disregarded. Prime Minister Julia Gillard noted how well the photo of Child raising a glass to Gough Whitlam captured her boldness, defiance, and cheekiness (Gillard 2013). Barry Jones recalled that, although she faced difficulties in the 'gladiatorial' atmosphere of question time, he was impressed by her 'judgment, commitment and integrity' (Jones 2006, 248). On 5 March 2013, a state funeral was held at the Monash University Religious Centre. Her portrait by Charles Bush, which delighted the otherwise graciously modest Child, hangs in Parliament House.

Select bibliography

Age (Melbourne). 'First Federal Woman Speaker Joan Child Dies'. 25 February 2013, 7

Austin, Paul. '"Fatigued" Child Resigns as Speaker'. *Australian*, 29 August 1989, 3

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 16 July 1974, 234–40

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 7 August 1974, 106–108

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 28 February 1984, 5–8

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 11 February 1986, 225–33

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 14 September 1987, 3–8

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 21 April 1988, 1970–77

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 8 March 1989, 633–52

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 12 March 2013, 1612–13

Australia. Senate. *Parliamentary Debates*, 25 November 1986, 2684–87

Bang, Maureen. 'At Party Meetings'. *Australian Women's Weekly* (Sydney), 21 May 1975, 4–5

Cameron, Debbie, 'Hodgman Slips into the Mire as Speaker Fails to Tame the Bear'. *Canberra Times*, 16 April 1986, 14

Canberra Times. 'Seat Lost, Child Decides to Go'. 11 December 1989, 1

Canberra Times. 'Women in the House'. 23 February 1992, 19

Child, Joan. Interview by Susan Marsden, 5 November 2009. Transcript. Joint oral history project conducted by the National Library of Australia and the Museum of Australian Democracy

Child, Joan, with Graeme Johnstone. *Joan: Child of Labor*. Victoria, 2015

Department of the House of Representatives. *The Speaker of the House of Representatives*. 2nd ed. Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia, 2008

Gillard, Julia. Eulogy at state funeral for Joan Child, 5 March 2013. Obituaries Australia, National Centre of Biography, The Australian National University. Accessed 3 July 2019. oa.anu.edu.au/obituary/child-gloria-joan-16271/text28211

Jones, Barry. *A Thinking Reed*. Crows Nest, NSW: Allen & Unwin, 2006

Kitney, Geoff. 'Child Quits to Keep Her Own Peace'. *Australian Financial Review*, 29 August 1989, 5

Leedham, Nicole. 'Women in the House'. *Canberra Times*, 23 February 1992, 19

Malone, Paul. 'First Censure Motion against Child'. *Canberra Times*, 9 March 1989, 1

Redenbach, Stephen C. 'Servant of Two Masters? An Exploration of the Speaker's Role in the Australian Commonwealth Parliament'. PhD thesis, La Trobe University, 1999

Reid, G. S., and Martyn Forrest. *Australia's Commonwealth Parliament 1901–1988: Ten Perspectives*. Carlton, Vic.: Melbourne University Press, 1989

Summers, Selena. 'The Lady of the House'. *Australian Women's Weekly* (Sydney), 5 June 1974, 2–3

Veitch, Harriet. 'First Female Speaker Had a Lot to Say'. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 1 March 2013, 16

Clark, Joseph James (Joe): Chairman of Committees 1946–1949

N. T. McLennan

Joseph James (Joe) Clark (1897–1992), tailor and Chairman of Committees of the House of Representatives, was born on 29 July 1897 at Coonamble, New South Wales, eldest of four children of Joseph Alfred Clark, master tailor, and his wife, Elizabeth Ellen, née Finlay, both New South Wales born. Joe junior was 'reared in a political atmosphere' (Clark 1985), for his father was secretary of the local branches of the Australian Workers' Union and the Australian Labor Party (ALP), an alderman (1902–20) on the Coonamble Municipal Council, and its mayor (1907–08, 1911–13). The younger Clark was educated at St Brigid's Convent and Coonamble Public schools before being sent to Holy Cross College, Ryde, where he undertook commercial studies and won prizes for shorthand, English history, and geography. As a young man he read the *Australian Worker* and attended political rallies. He joined the ALP aged just sixteen.

In 1915 Clark returned to Coonamble and began an apprenticeship with his father to become a tailor. Disliking the trade and wanting to 'do better' (Clark 1985), he also studied engineering by correspondence. He was then articled to a surveyor but after two years contracted pleurisy and was compelled to forgo camping in the bush for work in town. In May 1920, his father was elected member for Wammerawa in the New South Wales Legislative Assembly. As the position entailed lengthy stints away from home, Clark took over running the family business. At its peak the firm had shops in Coonamble, Dubbo, Walgett, and Baradine, and employed some thirty hands. He became increasingly active in regional politics, serving as president of the Coonamble branch of the ALP and of the Labor Electoral Council for Castlereagh. Like his father, he was also an alderman (1925–34) on the municipal council, including serving three years as mayor. On 29 January 1927, at St Mary's Cathedral, Sydney, he married Mary Elizabeth Regan (d. 1961) of Coonamble.

Figure 20: Joe Clark.
Source: *Commonwealth Parliamentary Handbook* Tenth Issue, 1945.

During the Depression, Clark was forced to shut all but the Coonamble shop and put off staff. That experience, the poverty he witnessed during those years, and disunity within the ALP spurred his desire to become a full-time politician. Following the ALP split of 1931, he unsuccessfully stood for preselection as the Lang Labor candidate for the federal division of Darling. Three years later, he was successful in gaining preselection for this electorate. Recognising the importance of winning support in the Labor stronghold of Broken Hill, he began and ended his preselection and election campaigns there. Campaigning across this vast rural electorate resulted in his travelling some six thousand miles (9656 km) in total. In public meetings he observed that while he was young in age, he was 'old in the political world' (*Gilgandra Weekly and Castlereagh* 1934, 4), having been involved in politics for the previous eighteen years. His campaign promoted nationalisation of banking and the socialisation of credit, the end of the Premiers' Plan, and unity within the ALP. He was elected at the general election on 15 September 1934. Decades later, when asked how he managed to oust Arthur Blakeley, the sitting ALP member for seventeen years, Clark replied: 'I canvassed the bad friends … he canvassed the good friends', and it turned out that 'he had more bad friends than good friends' (Clark 1985).

From 1937 to 1966, Clark was re-elected at a further twelve elections. Most of his thirty-five years in office would be spent on the opposition backbenches. In the company of Lang Labor's federal leader, Jack Beasley, he travelled to Melbourne, Adelaide, and Hobart, to talk to members of the ALP federal executive and argue for the reunification of the party—a feat achieved in 1936. During World War II, he was an active committee member in the Curtin government, serving as deputy chair of the Profits and Meat Advisory Committees, and of the Australian Meat Industry Commission. In October 1943 he became a Temporary Chairman of Committees and, in April 1946, he led Australia's delegation to the first session of the Iron and Steel Committee at the International Labour Organisation in Ohio, United States of America. On his return, he was elected Chairman of Committees (1946–49) and, in the absence of the Speaker, Sol Rosevear, would serve as Deputy Speaker for extended periods in 1948 and 1949. The *Daily Telegraph* described Clark as 'a quiet, solid citizen' who had been 'knocking on the door of Cabinet from the time Labor took office in 1941 … but always just missed a portfolio', yet it added that when it came to 'a showdown in the House', he could be 'determined' (1947, 26). In June 1949, while he was Deputy Speaker, he did not shy away from naming opposition leader (Sir) Robert Menzies for repeatedly interrupting Arthur Calwell, resulting in the suspension of Menzies from the House.

Clark's service as Chairman of Committees coincided with a particularly volatile chamber and a sharp ideological divide between the two major parties, fuelled by the government's intention to nationalise the banks. On 24 February 1949, the opposition's (Sir) Eric Harrison moved a no-confidence motion against Clark on grounds of partiality, misinterpretation of standing orders, and incompetence

in managing parliamentary procedure, adding that 'this is possibly the strongest motion that has ever been moved in this House against any occupant of the chair in any capacity' (H.R. Deb. 24.2.1949, 656). (Sir) John McEwen, supporting Harrison's accusation of partiality, declared that he had seen 'Mr Deputy Speaker wink at Government supporters when he scored a point', eliciting a riposte from the government side that this was 'a figment of the honourable member's imagination' (H.R. Deb. 24.2.1949, 660, 661). Debate was then adjourned for nearly seven months; when it resumed on 8 September, tempers were still so fraught that the ensuing proceedings occupied most of the parliamentary day, before the motion was defeated on party lines.

The remoteness of Clark's electorate and the demands of his parliamentary duties necessitated his residence in Sydney and Canberra, restricting his ability to visit his electorate. On one particularly windy day in the capital in late 1944, however, the dust was so thick that he quipped: 'I need not have gone to my electorate—it's all coming to me!' (*Daily Telegraph* 1944). He was nonetheless well aware that drought and erosion were very real concerns in his constituency and called on his own government to offer drought relief for pastoralists in the form of long-term loans at low interest. Other issues that he raised in parliament included shortcomings in communication, transport, and health services across his electorate. He was also careful to apprise his supporters, especially trade unionists, of his work in championing their interests. In a 1949 letter to constituents, he proclaimed that he had 'not been in the rear, or in the middle, but in the vanguard' (NLA MS 2708) in protecting the rights and conditions of union members; towards the end of his parliamentary career he maintained that it was through his 'personal efforts' (NLA MS 2708) that the people of Broken Hill had secured a modern airport and could look forward to the introduction of television.

On 18 February 1963, at St Therese Church at Dover Heights, Sydney, Clark married Melbourne 'Mollie' Mary Regan (d. 1985), the former wife of his brother-in-law. During the last years of his parliamentary career, he shared with McEwen the title 'Father of the House', before retiring prior to the election of October 1969. He was farewelled by McEwen, who, with the passage of time, felt that '[i]n Opposition and in government the honourable member for Darling has discharged his responsibilities in such a manner as to be a credit to himself' (H.R. Deb. 26.9.1969, 2091). Clark, in his final speech to the House, foreshadowed his plans by warning members that if they came looking for him, they would 'have to get a boat and row out into the harbour to see me' (H.R. Deb. 26.9.1969, 2094). He was appointed CBE in 1970. Survived by the two sons and two daughters from his first marriage, and two stepsons, he died on 9 December 1992 at Bondi, and was buried in Waverley cemetery.

Select bibliography

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 30 May 1945, 2241

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 24 February 1949, 655–61

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 1 June 1949, 411–12

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 8 September 1949, 110–39, 147–61

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 26 September 1969, 2090–94

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 16 December 1992, 3791

Clark, Joseph James. Interviewed by Gordon Bryant, 8 January and 20 November 1985, Australian Parliamentary Library Oral History Project. National Library of Australia

Daily Telegraph (Sydney). 'Political Roundabout'. 19 November 1944, 10

Daily Telegraph (Sydney). 'A Tailor Had Them Sewn Up'. 9 November 1947, 26

Gilgandra Weekly and Castlereagh. 'Labor Candidate at Gilgandra: Mr J. J. Clark Expounds Labor Policy'. 23 August 1934, 4

National Library of Australia. MS2708, Papers of Joseph Clark, 1930–1988

Western Herald (Bourke, NSW). 'Joe Clark's Parliamentary Record'. 10 October 1969, 11

Cope, James Francis (Jim): Speaker 1973–1975

Joshua Black

James Francis Cope (1907–1999), glassworker and fifteenth Speaker of the House of Representatives, was born on 26 November 1907 at Surry Hills, Sydney, youngest of five sons of Victorian-born George Eugene Cope, compositor, and his New South Wales–born wife, Martha, née Ellem. The family's support of the South Sydney District Rugby League Football Club, the 'Rabbitohs', imbued in Jim a lifelong enthusiasm for the sport, alongside cricket and billiards. His father was a strong supporter of the Australian Labor Party (ALP), and his brother Reg, a close ally of (Sir) William McKell, would go on to serve with him in the party's Redfern branch, and on Redfern City Council. As the youngest child, Cope was particularly close to his mother, who helped develop his strong moral values.

Cope attended Crown Street Public School and, briefly, Bourke Street School, but economic hardship and his father's illness resulted in his leaving after two years of secondary studies. He became a messenger boy at Potter & Birks, a distributor of medical and chemical products. From 1924, he was a machinist at the Randwick tramway workshops, and played cricket at nearby Moore Park, where he once scored an unbeaten century against the spin bowling of the future Test player Bill O'Reilly. With the onset of the Depression, retrenchment left Cope unemployed for three years, during which, as a single man, he relied on five shillings a week relief support from the state government. On 19 November 1932, at St Michael's Anglican Church, Surry Hills, he married Myrtle Irene Hurst, a machinist from Mascot. Their daughter, Bonni, was born in 1934. The young couple received fourteen shillings and tuppence a week in relief support, six shillings of which went to pay rent. To avoid tram fares, Cope and one of his brothers frequently walked from Redfern to a panelbeaters' shop at Camperdown where they joined hundreds of others who formed up 'like a line of cattle' (Hamilton 19 December 1972) in the hope of being chosen for a day's paid work. He reluctantly gave up playing cricket to earn pay as an umpire. Using money from his mother, he purchased two billiard tables and opened a club in Darlinghurst. He subsequently sold the tables and became a billiard marker in central Sydney—essentially a paid players' assistant.

Figure 21: Jim Cope.
Source: Courtesy of the National Archives of Australia. NAA: A1200, L83656.

The Depression fundamentally influenced Cope's political outlook. Despite fruit and vegetables not being covered by dole coupons, he discovered that unsold produce was routinely dumped off South Head and concluded that 'there was something terribly wrong with this sort of system' (Hamilton 26 December 1972). He rejected an offer to join the Communist Party on the grounds that 'I believe in democracy' (Cope 1983) and because he was more attracted to the social agenda of Premier Jack Lang. On 3 June 1930, he joined the Redfern branch of the ALP, and went on to become branch secretary. World War II, however, presented Cope with new opportunities. At the Amalgamated Wireless Valve factory at Ashfield, he became a skilled fabricator of glass tubes for the manufacture of radars, working under conditions of wartime secrecy. In 1947 he ran for Redfern City Council, only to be defeated by the Communist Party candidate. The following year, he won a by-election for the council, and also held several ALP organisational positions, including the presidency of the Federal Electorate Council and the branch chairmanship for the federal seat of Cook. He worked with a former colleague in a business supplying speciality glass for laboratories, and rose to become honorary federal treasurer of the Australian Glass Workers' Union (1952–55).

In 1955, following the death of the sitting member Tom Sheehan, Cope sought ALP preselection for Cook. Although a staunch anti-communist, he, as a supporter of the party's leader, Dr H. V. Evatt, had to defeat an alleged 'grouper' from the party's right wing, Kevin Dwyer, before winning the seat easily at a by-election in May. Cook was abolished soon after, but he nominated for and won Watson at the general election of December 1955. Watson took in much of the Alexandria, Botany, Mascot, Matraville, Redfern, Rosebery, and Waterloo region, a tough and demanding constituency that, as his home region, Cope was proud to represent. From the backbench, he delivered carefully prepared speeches, usually on social welfare issues, but he became better known for his timely witticisms. When Prime Minister (Sir) Robert Menzies claimed that a passing truck driver had shouted to him 'Good on yer, Bob', Cope at once responded: 'He should have been pinched for drunk driving' (Hamilton 19 December 1972). Even political opponents came to appreciate his interjections, with a later Liberal leader, (Sir) Billy Snedden, conceding that the affable Cope often 'restored the temper' (H.R. Deb. 27.2.1973, 9) of the House during tense sittings. He also was an outspoken advocate of electoral reform, especially by seeking to have candidates' names listed randomly on ballot papers to deny those early in the alphabet the unfair advantage of the 'donkey vote'. Gough Whitlam later credited him with doing 'more than any other member' (Whitlam 1985, 660) to expose this flaw in electoral procedures.

Cope was one of the longest-serving members of the Public Accounts Committee (1956–72), and he also became Deputy Chairman of Committees (1967–72). In April 1968, he helped Whitlam defeat a challenge for the ALP leadership from Jim Cairns, but came to feel that his support was quickly forgotten. Cope looked

to becoming Speaker and made a close study of parliamentary procedures and the standing orders (Freudenberg 1977, 309). Following the 1969 federal election, at which Cope transferred to the seat of Sydney in the wake of the abolition of Watson, Labor members nominated him for the Speakership against the incumbent, (Sir) William Aston. The Labor frontbencher Clyde Cameron rhetorically compared 'the jovial dignity of Mr Cope with the cruel and arrogant posture' (H.R. Deb. 25.11.1969, 9) of Aston. Aston nonetheless won the ensuing secret ballot narrowly, 63 votes to 60 (VP 1969/6–7, 25.11.1969). When the ALP attained government in December 1972, Cope again made it known that he 'thought that I could do the job' of Speaker (Cope 1978). His eventual successor as Speaker, Gordon Scholes, recalled that Cope 'virtually had the job sewn up long before we got to the election' (Scholes 2010). He was unopposed in caucus and, on 27 February 1973, the first sitting day for the new government, the House unanimously elected him Speaker. Prime Minister Whitlam looked forward to 'good spirit and good humour' in the session to come, and Snedden urged Cope not to abandon his 'sense of fun' (H.R. Deb. 27.2.1973, 8, 9).

In the chair, Cope presented very differently from his predecessor. He followed longstanding ALP tradition by not wearing the wig or gown, commenting that a wig's only use was that 'it hides the dandruff' (Hamilton 19 December 1972). His 'broad Australian accent' was said to differ from the more clipped tones of most previous Speakers (Murray 1975), and, under pressure, his voice took on a 'raucous shrillness' (Freudenberg 1977, 309). Some of his colleagues felt he was prone to 'warning members about their behaviour, and then not acting on those warnings' (*Sydney Morning Herald* 1975, 6). He preferred his long-established habit of employing humour to defuse tension. His misfortune was to occupy the chair during a period of near constant parliamentary crisis. Unaccustomed to being in opposition, members of the coalition parties were frequently pugnacious in the House and used their numbers in the Senate to frustrate the government's ambitious legislative program. Cope suspended sixteen members during his tenure. He became convinced that the opposition, especially some Country Party members, was out to undermine his authority, but also that he was not receiving the full support of his party colleagues (Cope 1997, 202).

Circumstances notwithstanding, he and the Liberal President of the Senate, Sir Magnus Cormack, 'cooperated very, very well indeed' (Cope 1978) in the administration of parliament. True to his political values, Cope was 'appalled at the working conditions' (Cope 1978) of some parliamentary staff, especially those in the kitchens. He pursued equal pay for female employees and arranged the procurement of new kitchen equipment. Both he and Cormack were responsible for renovations that included introducing airconditioning into the members' and visitors' dining rooms.

His actions inside the chamber, however, earned him little favour from his fellow parliamentarians. On 5 April 1973, Cope named two members, including the former prime minister (Sir) John Gorton, for showing disrespect to the chair (H.R. Deb. 5.4.1973, 1125–26). The following month, after naming Liberal member William Wentworth for unparliamentary language, Cope was subject to a motion of no confidence from the opposition. Snedden now felt that Cope's use of humour had gone so far that he could 'have no confidence … in a Speaker who seeks to be some sort of comedian' (H.R. Deb. 8.4.1974, 1118). He also accused Cope of using the chair to 'protect the Government', while the Country Party leader, Doug Anthony, charged him with 'vindictiveness' (H.R. Deb. 8.4.1974, 1119, 1121).

During the first twelve months of the twenty-eighth parliament, the Senate rejected nineteen pieces of major legislation, six of which provided grounds for a double dissolution. Controversy arose from the appointment of the Democratic Labor Party senator Vince Gair as ambassador to Ireland in a failed attempt to time his formal resignation to create an extra vacancy for an expected half-Senate election, giving the government a chance of winning an upper-house majority. Decrying this manoeuvre, the opposition blocked the government's supply bills, leading to a double-dissolution election on 18 May 1974 at which the government was re-elected but narrowly failed to secure a Senate majority. The aftermath posed several challenges for Cope. Amid growing dissatisfaction among caucus members, Scholes and Joe Berinson unsuccessfully challenged him for the Speakership (O'Leary 1975). When parliament returned on 9 July, the opposition nominated the Liberal Geoffrey Giles as Speaker, but Cope was re-elected along party lines, 63 votes to 57 (VP 1974/6, 9.7.1974). When the six double-dissolution trigger bills again fell short in the Senate, the government moved to resolve the deadlock by conducting a joint sitting of both houses of parliament. Just five days before the sitting, Cormack and Senator James Webster filed a writ in the High Court of Australia challenging its validity, arguing that a double dissolution and subsequent joint sitting could only be called on the basis of a single bill, not six. The High Court's decision found for the Speaker and the government.

On 6–7 August 1974, Cope presided over the parliament's first joint sitting. This was far from a mere extension of existing parliamentary practice. To work out the necessary procedures, he worked intensely for three weeks with a special committee that included the Clerk of the House of Representatives, Norman Parkes, and the Clerk of the Senate, J. R. Odgers. There was also the logistical difficulty of hosting all parliamentarians in the House of Representatives chamber at once, for which 'we had to have special platforms made so as to fit them all in' (Cope 1978). The sitting ran for eighteen and a half hours and was the first instance of the parliament being televised live to a national audience. Cope felt that this amounted to a successful

trial, but later became wary of televising parliament. Each bill was passed, although the Petroleum and Minerals Authority Bill was subsequently invalidated by the High Court.

Later in August, Wentworth moved a motion of dissent from the Speaker's ruling relating to the precedence to be accorded to a censure motion against the government; similar motions became common over the months that followed. By early 1975, Cope's standing among members, including Prime Minister Whitlam, had deteriorated to the point of creating a 'flash-point situation' (Freudenberg 1977, 309). Government members increasingly felt he was failing to keep the opposition in check; his sharp wit had noticeably dimmed. This situation came to a sudden head on 27 February, when the Liberal frontbencher Jim Forbes accused the minister for labour and immigration, Clyde Cameron, of telling a 'monstrous lie' (H.R. Deb. 27.2.1975, 824). At Cope's prompting, Forbes substituted 'monstrous untruth' and then simply 'untruth', but when Cameron rose to protest and the Speaker called him to order, Cameron responded loudly, evidently to the Speaker: 'Look, I don't give a damn what you say' (H.R. Deb. 27.2.1975, 824). Cope insisted that he apologise, but the prime minister interjected bluntly 'no' (H.R. Deb. 27.2.1975, 824). Cope named Cameron, but the leader of the House, Fred Daly, was prevented by Whitlam from moving for Cameron's suspension, whereupon the manager of opposition business, Ian Sinclair, did so. Most government members followed their prime minister's lead in voting against the motion. As the vote was being conducted, Whitlam approached Cope behind the Speaker's chair to warn him: 'If you lose this division, you should resign' (Hocking 2014, 215). Watching from the backbench, former prime minister (Sir) William McMahon thought Whitlam's manner to be 'offensive and threatening' to the Speaker (H.R. Deb. 27.2.1975, 825). This was the only occasion on which the government had not supported the Speaker after a member had been named.

Quickly assessing his options while the vote was still being conducted, Cope decided that accepting the anticipated outcome as a decisive vote of no confidence in himself would minimise damage to the government. He resigned immediately after the result was declared, vacating the chair in favour of Deputy Speaker Scholes. The dignity and promptness of his announcement drew evidently sincere applause from opposition members, the press gallery, and, reportedly, a few government members. It was exactly two years since he had been appointed Speaker. In the aftermath, some speculated that Cameron's remark had been aimed at Forbes, but Cope was sure that it was directed at himself, and further recalled the Clerk of the House urging him not to resign. The longstanding chief *Hansard* reporter Bill Bridgman described Cope's resignation as having 'left perhaps the greatest impression' (Hodgkinson 1976) of all the many parliamentary events he had covered since 1935.

Having already decided to retire at the next election, Cope did not recontest Sydney at the unexpectedly early poll of December 1975. Although confessing to boredom in the years immediately following his retirement, he made good use of his well-known love of billiards by starring in a 1976 television advertisement for billiard tables. That same year, he was invited by the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet to sit on the Official Establishments Trust, which administered the official residences of the prime minister and the governor-general. He agreed, on the condition that 'it wasn't a political committee' (Cope 1978). The committee surveyed the working environments at these premises during 1977 and concluded that staff were subjected to 'appalling out-of-date and inadequate conditions' (Heyman 1977). In 1978, his republican views notwithstanding, he accepted appointment as a CMG for his services to parliament. After living for forty-seven years in Redfern, he and Myrtle moved to Sans Souci in Sydney's south.

In retirement, Cope remained active in the ALP, attending branch meetings and volunteering in elections through to the mid-1980s. Despite giving interviews in his retirement, he refused to write memoirs because he would have to 'criticise too many of my friends' (Cope 1983), but corresponded cordially with Cameron (Cope 1997, 211). In 1983 he was played by Les Foxcroft in *The Dismissal* television miniseries. Cope spent two full days on the set offering advice on parliamentary procedure. In his later years, he suffered increasingly from congestive cardiac failure, and in 1995 was incapacitated by a stroke. He died in Sydney on 3 February 1999. A short and hunched figure who seemed diminutive in the Speaker's chair, he found that his light-hearted demeanour was of limited help during the tempestuous Whitlam years. Cope's passion for wit, forged amid the hardships of working-class Sydney between the wars, was exceeded only by his commitment to egalitarian principles. A portrait of him by Judy Cassab hangs in Parliament House.

Select bibliography

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 25 November 1969, 8–12

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 27 February 1973, 7–9

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 5 April 1973, 1125–38

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 8 April 1974, 1117–26

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 23 August 1974, 1134–37

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 27 February 1975, 824–35

Australia. House of Representatives. *Votes and Proceedings*, 1969, 6–7

Australia. House of Representatives. *Votes and Proceedings*, 1974, 6

Barney, Murray. 'Cope Loses Glamour Job and $15,000'. *Australian*, 28 February 1975, 4

Cope, James. Interview by Mel Pratt, 1978. Transcript. Mel Pratt collection. National Library of Australia

Cope, James. Interview by Andrew Moore, 1983. Parliament's Bicentenary Oral History Project. National Library of Australia

Cope, Robert. 'Studying a Politician: The Early Years of James Cope'. In *Childhood, Citizenship, Culture: Proceedings of the Australian and New Zealand History of Education Society 26th Annual Conference, Queensland University of Technology, Brisbane, 10–14 July 1996*, edited by Joanne Scott, Catherine Manathunga and Noeline Kyle, 813–35. Sydney: Australian and New Zealand History of Education Society, 1996

Cope, Robert. 'Becoming a Politician: A Biography of James Cope'. PhD thesis, Queensland University of Technology, Brisbane, 1997

Freudenberg, Graham. *A Certain Grandeur: Gough Whitlam in Politics.* South Melbourne: Sun Books, 1977

Hamilton, John. 'Our Sternly Funny Mr Speaker'. *Herald* (Melbourne), 19 December 1972, 2

Hamilton, John. 'The Quick Wit of Mr Speaker'. *Advertiser* (Adelaide), 26 December 1972, 4

Heyman, Maureen. 'Behind the Scenes at the Lodge: "Intolerable Conditions"'. *Australian Women's Weekly* (Sydney), 25 May 1977, 7

Hocking, Jenny. *Gough Whitlam: His Time.* Carlton, Vic.: The Miegunyah Press, 2014 (first published 2013)

Hodgkinson, Jan. 'Retired Hansard Reporter Recalls'. *Canberra Times*, 18 August 1976, 19

Holt, Stephen. '"A Decent and Amiable Man"'. *National Library of Australia News* 19, no. 2 (November 2008): 11–13

O'Leary, Tony. 'The Long Fall from Favour of James Francis Cope'. *Canberra Times*, 28 February 1975, 2

Scholes, Gordon. Interview by Garry Sturgess, 2010. Old Parliament House political and parliamentary oral history project. National Library of Australia

Sydney Morning Herald. 'Mr Cope's Quips'. 28 February 1975, 6

Whitlam, Gough. *The Whitlam Government 1972–1975*. Ringwood, Vic.: Viking, 1985

Duffy, Charles Gavan: Clerk 1901–1917

Stephen Wilks

Charles Gavan Duffy (1855–1932), second and first substantive Clerk of the House of Representatives, was born on 27 August 1855 at Blackrock near Dublin, Ireland, second son of (Sir) Charles Gavan Duffy from Monaghan, Ireland, and his second wife, Susan, née Hughes, of Newry, Ireland. He came to Victoria with his parents in 1856. His father, a prominent Irish nationalist, pursued a varied career as a newspaper editor, member of the House of Commons (1852–55), premier of Victoria (1871–72), and Speaker of the Victorian Legislative Assembly (1877–80). His brother Frank was chief justice of the High Court of Australia (1931–35), and his half-brother John was a minister in Victorian colonial governments.

In 1865 Duffy returned to Britain to attend Stonyhurst, a Jesuit college in Lancashire. He completed his schooling at St Patrick's College, East Melbourne, almost adjacent to Parliament House. After graduating from the University of Melbourne (LLB, 1880), he was admitted to the Victorian Bar but never practised, being one who 'prefers quiet and genial conversation, particularly on Parliamentary affairs, to convicting criminals at the Bar' (*Sydney Mail* 1912, 8). Joining the staff of the Chief Secretary's Office in 1871, he acted as private secretary to his father, who was then premier. He subsequently became secretary to four premiers, among them the controversial (Sir) Graham Berry. In 1878 he transferred to the Legislative Assembly as Assistant Clerk of Committees and private secretary to several successive Speakers, and was appointed Clerk Assistant of the Legislative Assembly in 1891.

On 18 April 1893 at St Mary's Church in the Gippsland town of Maffra, Duffy married Ella McLean, daughter of Allan McLean, later premier and coalition partner of Prime Minister (Sir) George Reid in the Reid–McLean ministry of 1904–05. In 1894 he was secretary to the Victorian royal commission on constitutional reform, working with commissioners who included Premiers Berry, (Sir) James Brown Patterson, (Sir) Alexander Peacock, William Shiels, and (Sir) George Turner, and future national figures Alfred Deakin and (Sir) Isaac Isaacs.

Figure 22: Charles Gavan Duffy.
Source: Department of the House of Representatives.

Duffy played a supporting but still significant role in the formal steps towards Federation. He acted as assistant secretary to the 1897–98 Australasian Federal Convention and helped (Sir) Robert Garran make corrections to the draft Commonwealth Constitution. Garran recalled how he and Duffy 'worked feverishly' (1958, 123) through the night to prepare the final schedule of amendments for the last day of meeting. Duffy developed an exceptional knowledge of parliamentary procedure. In 1894 he produced *Speakers' Rulings 1856–7 to 1893*, a compendium that organised rulings by such categories as 'debate', 'petitions', and 'language'. The last section was derived from a thorough examination of *Hansard* to record the proscribing of such improprieties as 'he is a coward', 'uncalled for and disgusting attacks', and 'he goes about in a sneaking manner'. Four years later, he produced *Index to Resolutions Passed in the Legislative Assembly of Victoria*, which, as late as 1992, was described as remaining 'a valued guide' (Wright 1992, 61).

After Federation, Duffy moved to Commonwealth service, becoming in May 1901 Clerk Assistant in the Senate. In July the acting Clerk of the House of Representatives, (Sir) George Jenkins, returned to his position in the Victorian Legislative Council. The two contenders to succeed him and become the first substantive Clerk of the House were Duffy and the Clerk Assistant in the House, Charles Boydell. Duffy prompted the Victorian Speaker, Francis Conway Mason, to write to the federal Speaker, (Sir) Frederick Holder, supporting his claim as the more senior of the two. Holder successfully recommended Duffy to Prime Minister (Sir) Edmund Barton, the foremost arbiter of administrative arrangements for the still infant parliament. Duffy commenced as Clerk of the House of Representatives on 8 July 1901. He served through many long and complex debates that helped to lay legislative foundations for the young Commonwealth. In 1901 he drew up 'Regulations for the Inter-State Press Gallery' that remained largely in force as the basis for the gallery's privileges until 1966. For his service to the House of Representatives, he was appointed CMG in 1904.

Duffy hesitated to publicly express his own views on parliamentary matters. In May 1908, he was among the parliamentary and legal experts summoned before a parliamentary joint select committee inquiring into responses to breaches of parliamentary privilege. When pressed, he advocated trial before a judge sitting without a jury, as 'in cases where a good deal of feeling of one sort or another exists, it is not always easy to get a fair verdict, and it is safer to leave the matter to a Judge'. He added that attempts by parliament itself to deal with such cases 'generally gives rise to considerable unpleasantness and ill-feeling' (Aust. Parliament 1908, 6–10). The issue remained unresolved and was to haunt future Speakers and Clerks.

Issues of precedent and primacy featured prominently for Duffy during these formative years. When the Clerk of the Senate, Edwin Blackmore, ended his leave of absence by formally retiring on 30 June 1908, there was speculation that, as the most senior parliamentary officer, Duffy would return to his former chamber to succeed him and

in doing so assume Blackmore's honorific title of Clerk of the Parliaments. This was a venerable title of British origin, held since medieval times by Chief Clerks of the House of Lords. The issue at once arose of whether this prestigious title should always be accorded to the Clerk of the Senate or could instead be bestowed on whoever was the most senior parliamentary officer, in which case Duffy could stay in the House of Representatives without loss of prestige. Complicating this potential solution was the then employment of all parliamentary officers under the Public Service Act, by which vacancies were usually filled from within a department rather than by external transfer. This procedure favoured the alternative course of promoting Boydell, who was acting Clerk of the Senate. The *Argus* perceived 'a mild conflict between the dignity of the Senate and the authority of the House of Representatives' (1908, 4). Holder advised Prime Minister Deakin that there was no reason the Clerk of the House could not also be Clerk of the Parliaments, but the President of the Senate, Sir Albert Gould, supported Boydell. The government found a resolution by letting the Clerk of the Parliaments title fall into abeyance while promoting Boydell to Clerk of the Senate.

On 27 July 1909, it fell to Duffy, 'in a voice charged with emotion' (*Newcastle Morning Herald* 1909, 5), to announce to the House the death of Speaker Holder. Deakin's eulogy was formally addressed to Duffy, who, as Clerk, was acting as Chairman of the House pursuant to the relevant standing order. The next day the House moved to elect a Speaker. It was Duffy's misfortune that the chamber was still in a highly charged state following the fall of Andrew Fisher's Labor government at the hands of Deakin's newly formed fusion of the non-Labor parties. Labor members stridently objected to the government's attempt to impose Carty Salmon as the new Speaker. A 'wordy war between members' (*Sydney Morning Herald 1909*, 7) raged for hours. Duffy, 'feeling the responsibility very keenly' (*Sydney Morning Herald* 1909, 7), did not assert himself as Chairman. He intervened only to resolve a tied adjournment motion by casting a vote with the noes on the basis that he would not take responsibility for ending the debate. At once, 'Labor members simply flew at the poor Clerk' (*Sydney Morning Herald* 1909, 7) as the House descended into 'a Bedlam of noises and cries and shouts and cross challenges' (*Age* 1909, 6). William Morris Hughes, 'who could hardly speak with excitement' (*Sydney Morning Herald* 1909, 7), challenged the Clerk's right to vote, but Deakin came to Duffy's aid by pointing out that even without a casting vote the motion would still have failed for want of a majority. Once the House had elected Salmon, Deakin thanked Duffy for 'the able manner in which he discharged his duties under extremely trying conditions, which it was impossible for him to foresee, and prepare for' (H.R. Deb. 28.7.1909, 1728).

During the long parliamentary sittings of 1910–11, Duffy became seriously ill. At the end of 1911 he took leave, returning to duty the following year. In July 1915, he became secretary to the Federal Parliamentary War Committee, appointed by the Fisher government as a bipartisan advisory body but which in practice dealt

mainly with recruitment and repatriation. Duffy's famous family and mastery of parliamentary practice gave him a public profile accorded few other Clerks. He was celebrated in a *Truth* cartoon accompanied by doggerel: 'Gavan Duffy is the Clerk/ Up at Parliament/ Not a common sort of clerk/ But a gilt-edged gent/ Duffy is a cultivated chap/ Cute and clever-rather!/ Worthily he bears the name/ Of a famous father' (1914, 6).

When Boydell retired as Clerk of the Senate late in 1916, the President, Thomas Givens, received 'urgent representations' that the replacement should be chosen on the basis of seniority within the whole parliament. Duffy was accordingly appointed Clerk of the Senate on 1 February 1917. He was said by Melbourne *Punch* to have thereby reached the 'Ultima Thule' of a parliamentary officer's career, 'the full achievement of ambition'. *Punch* added (using a variant of his family name) an unsolicited boast that 'a Gavan Duffy is always somebody' (1917, 244). He retired in 1920.

Predeceased by his wife and survived by his son, Duffy died on 23 February 1932 at Ormington Private Hospital, South Yarra. Following a requiem mass at St Joseph's Roman Catholic Church, he was buried in Boroondara Cemetery, Kew.

This article supplements the original Volume 8 ADB *biography, published 1981, authored by H. A. Finlay. adb.anu.edu.au/biography/duffy-charles-gavan-6346/text10305*

Select bibliography

Age (Melbourne). Editorial. 29 July 1909, 6

Age (Melbourne). 'About People'. 24 February 1932, 8

Argus (Melbourne). 'Clerk of Parliaments'. 7 July 1908, 4

Argus (Melbourne). 'Death of Mr C. G. Duffy'. 24 February 1932, 6

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 27 July 1909, 1629–32

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 28 July 1909, 1669–716, 1727–28

Australasian (Melbourne). 'Wedding at Maffra'. 9 April 1893, 39

Australia. Parliament. *Progress Report from the Joint Select Committee on Privilege Procedure.* Melbourne: Government Printer, 1908

Daily Telegraph (Sydney). 'Clerk of Federal Parliaments'. 5 March 1908, 7

Garran, Robert. *Prosper the Commonwealth*. Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1958

Mawer, G. A. 'Charles Gavan Duffy'. In *The Biographical Dictionary of the Australian Senate*. Vol. 1, *1901–1929*, edited by Ann Millar, 386–89. Carlton South, Vic.: Melbourne University Press, 2000

Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners' Advocate. 'The Late Speaker'. 28 July 1909, 5

Punch (Melbourne). 'People We Know'. 15 February 1917, 244

Reid, G. S., and Martyn Forrest. *Australia's Commonwealth Parliament 1901–1988: Ten Perspectives*. Carlton, Vic.: Melbourne University Press, 1989

Sydney Mail. 'Australians in the Foreground'. 22 May 1912, 8

Sydney Morning Herald. 'The New Speaker'. 29 July 1909, 7

Truth (Melbourne). 'C. Gavan Duffy'. 26 December 1914, 6

Wright, Raymond. *A People's Counsel: A History of the Parliament of Victoria, 1856–1990*. Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1992

Edwards, Ronald Frederick (Ron): Deputy Speaker 1989–1993

Michael Hogan

Ronald Frederick Edwards, economist and Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives, was born on 2 July 1945 at West Midland, Perth, second of two children of Western Australian–born parents Norman Frederick Edwards, railway engine driver, and his wife, Daphne Hope. Ron attended Governor Stirling High School and the University of Western Australia (BEc, 1966). In 1966 he moved to Canberra to take up a position as an administrative trainee with the Public Service Board.

From 1967 to 1976, Edwards lived in Sydney, where he was a research officer in the Commonwealth Department of Labour (1967–70) and taught economics and industrial relations at Sydney Technical College (1970–73). In 1970 he joined the Australian Labor Party (ALP), becoming president of its Manly branch (1972–76) and a delegate to the Warringah Federal Electorate Council (1972–76). On 10 April 1970, he married Pam Fairley; they were to have two daughters and a son. He became head of the Division of Social Sciences in the New South Wales Department of Technical Education (1974–76) and commenced studies at the University of Sydney, graduating Master of Education (1983).

At the end of 1976, Edwards returned to Perth, taking with him an interest in rugby league acquired during his Sydney sojourn. He commenced as a lecturer in economics and industrial relations at Churchlands College of Advanced Education, which was incorporated into the Western Australian College of Advanced Education in 1982. Living at the suburb of Trigg, he was persuaded to stand at the 1983 federal election for the local seat of Stirling, which was then held by the Fraser government minister Ian Viner. He won the seat—the result of fourteen months of intense campaigning and the electoral swing that brought Labor to national office. His retention of this very marginal seat at the elections of 1984, 1987, and 1990 was largely due to his dedication as the local member, including—according to an admiring colleague from a landlocked electorate—having 'pulled one of his constituents out of the surf when that person was in difficulties' (H.R. Deb. 29.8.1989, 475).

Figure 23: Ron Edwards.
Source: Department of the House of Representatives.

As an academic teacher of economics, Edwards was a firm supporter of the Hawke government's economic and industrial relations reform agenda. His first speech to the House emphasised the responsibilities of members to 'try to react to, reflect, and to some extent convey the aspirations and wishes of the electors' (H.R. Deb. 12.5.1983, 524), particularly on problems of unemployment, education, and the economic 'national crisis we face' (523). He also stressed the importance of creating educational opportunities for young people, especially through technical and further education, for which he recalled that the New South Wales system set an example 'for which there is a lot to be said' (H.R. Deb. 12.5.1983, 525). Although he was interested in the then still emerging issues of the environment, urban renewal, gender, and Indigenous rights, the priority he accorded to economic reform placed him in Labor's right-wing faction—a shift from his days in New South Wales politics.

With his expertise in economics, Edwards in 1988 became chair of Labor's powerful caucus economic committee, where he exchanged ideas with Treasurer Paul Keating and Finance Minister Peter Walsh. He also chaired the Joint Select Committee on Corporations Legislation (1988–89), which was largely concerned with controversial issues of business takeovers and safeguards for competition. The committee's deliberations contributed to the eventual establishment of the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission in 1995. Four opposition members presented a dissenting report from the main findings, but still noted 'the very courteous, even handed and effective manner' in which Edwards had 'conducted the business of the Committee at all times' (Joint Select Committee on Corporations Legislation 1989, 195). Other significant roles included membership of the House of Representatives Standing Committee on the Environment and Conservation (1983–87), the Standing Committee on the Environment, Recreation, and the Arts (1987–93), the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence (1983–84), and the Joint Statutory Committee on the Broadcasting of Parliamentary Proceedings (1983–93), which was instrumental in the introduction of televised sessions of parliament.

Edwards served as Deputy Chairman of Committees from September 1987 to August 1989. When Joan Child resigned as Speaker in August 1989, caucus elected her deputy, Leo McLeay, to be the government's nominee to succeed her; Edwards, also supported by the ALP's right-wing faction, received more caucus votes to become nominee for Chairman of Committees than McLeay did for the Speakership. Edwards was elected Chairman of Committees by the House shortly after (VP 1987–88–89/1418, 29.8.1989). One of his predecessors in the position, Clarrie Millar, in wishing him well, harked back to his own experience of sitting in the chair by observing that 'it is not always hot, but when hot it is exceedingly hot, and it is always lonely' (H.R. Deb. 29.8.1989, 480).

As Chairman, Edwards gave priority to encouraging reasoned debate, but he was prepared to discipline unruly members, being responsible for five namings (with subsequent suspensions). He was given responsibility by Prime Minister Bob Hawke to organise the special joint sitting of parliament that was addressed by United States president George H. W. Bush on 5 December 1991. On 3 November the next year, the formal title of his position was changed to Deputy Speaker and Chairman of Committees.

Edwards retained Stirling by just 234 votes at the 1990 election. As the 1993 election approached, the *Canberra Times* reported that his 'skilful handling of rowdy MPs has been noted by both sides of the chamber' and had led to his being 'best known in Canberra for his deft role in the Speaker's chair' (Peake 1993). But at the election, his seat was one of two in Western Australia to fall to the Liberal Party, contrary to a broader national swing in favour of the government. His colleagues and the press commented that had he been re-elected he could well have had a choice between succeeding McLeay as Speaker or promotion to the ministry. Despite his commitment to Stirling, he was relieved that defeat signalled the end of shuttling between Canberra and Perth, and more time with his wife and family. After nearly ten years as a member and three and a half as Deputy Speaker, he was only forty-seven years old when he left parliament.

Although Edwards as a parliamentarian had been a committed Labor member, his gregarious personality had helped him sustain friendships across partisan boundaries. This and his unfulfilled ministerial potential were also reflected in the breadth of his post-parliamentary career. He enjoyed a short term as a talkback radio host on Perth station 6PR. As one of his passions has been to promote educational opportunities for Indigenous children in Western Australia, in 1995 he helped establish the Graham (Polly) Farmer Foundation, under the patronage of that famed Australian Rules footballer. Another educational interest for Edwards was his membership of the Anglican Schools Commission of Western Australia (1994–2017).

In 2006 Edwards gained a doctorate from the University of Western Australia for a thesis examining education and social inclusion. He served as a director of the Perth Mint (2005–15) and of the Potato Marketing Corporation (2013–17), and was a member of the National Landcare advisory committee (2014–17) and the Not-for-Profit Sector Reform Council. He became closely involved with the Western Australian fishing industry through membership of the Pacific Area working group for the Marine Stewardship Council and of the Seafood Trade and Market Access Forum, and as chair of the board of the Western Australian Fishing Industry Council. In 2017 he became chair of the State Emergency Management Committee and chaired the stakeholder reference group overseeing the monitoring of Murujuga rock art on the Burrup Peninsula in the Pilbara region. He has continued to contribute submissions to economic inquiries.

Select bibliography

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 12 May 1983, 523–26

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 29 August 1989, 475–81

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 8 May 1990, 26–32

Australia. House of Representatives. *Votes and Proceedings*, 1987–88–89, 1418

Australia. Joint Select Committee on Corporations Legislation. *Report of the Select Committee on Corporations Legislation*. Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service, 1989

The House Magazine (Canberra). 'Profile'. 4 March 1987, 3

Peake, Ross. 'Both Sides Cautious About Predicting Poll Results'. *Canberra Times*, 6 February 1993, 6

Taylor, Norman. 'Winner Thanks Long Campaign'. *West Australian* (Perth), 7 March 1983, 9

West Australian (Perth). 'WA Man to Head Top ALP Group'. 16 February 1988, 2

Elder, David Russell: Clerk 2014–2019

Richard E. Reid

David Russell Elder, sixteenth Clerk of the House of Representatives, was born on 10 November 1955 at Mitchelton, Brisbane, second child of Russell Oscar Elder, accountant, and his wife, Daphne May, both Queensland born. The family moved in 1967 to Murwillumbah, New South Wales, where David attended the local state high school, becoming school captain in 1973. His father was a lay preacher at the Methodist church and, while David taught Sunday school for about three years, he did not retain any religious beliefs or affiliations. This background, however, provided him with something of a 'moral compass' (Elder 2020).

After completing high school in 1974, Elder enrolled at The Australian National University (ANU) to read history. As a result of his father's death, he returned to Brisbane, where he graduated with a degree in history from the University of Queensland (BA Hons, 1977). After a short exposure to the frontline challenge of work with the Department of Social Security in Brisbane, he was accepted into the Commonwealth's Graduate Program with the Department of Defence in Canberra in January 1979.

Elder's career with the Department of the House of Representatives began in March 1981. The years that followed, until his appointment as Deputy Clerk of the House in 2010, constituted a long apprenticeship in every major area of House business, making his perhaps typical of the career trajectory necessary for eventual appointment to high office in the department. From 1981 to 1993, he worked for a number of House committees, initially as a research officer and then as secretary for both House and Joint House committees: the Standing Committee for Aboriginal Affairs (1981–83); the Joint Committee on the Australian Capital Territory (1984); and various other committees and major inquiries dealing with Aboriginal affairs (1985–90). During his service as secretary of the House Standing Committee on Finance and Public Administration (1990–93), its inquiry into deregulation and banking led to a high-profile and colourfully titled report, *A Pocket Full of Change*. He described this inquiry as one of the 'most intense experiences' (Elder 2020)

Figure 24: David Elder.
Source: Australian Government Photographic Service (Auspic).

of his career. These years of committee work, extensive national travel, and close working relationships with members of parliament, gave him a strong sense of the comprehensive sweep and purpose of parliament, and of the importance of a national perspective. His intellectual curiosity, and perhaps the personal impact of his exposure to Indigenous issues and conditions, was evident in his obtaining a master's in social anthropology from ANU (1988).

The year 1993 marked the start of the second phase of Elder's progress towards the position of Clerk. He was appointed Serjeant-at-Arms, serving in two separate periods, 1993–98 and 2002–10. As Serjeant, he (or a delegate) had to be present in the chamber whenever the House was sitting and had administrative responsibilities as a senior staff member of the department. In the chamber, he both fulfilled a ceremonial role and supported the Speaker's directions for maintaining order. This included responsibility for escorting members ordered by the Speaker to be removed from the chamber. One incident vividly recalled by Elder occurred on 23 October 2003, when United States president George W. Bush addressed a joint meeting of the House and the Senate in the House of Representatives chamber. Two Greens senators, Bob Brown and Kerry Nettle, interjected repeatedly. In turn, the Speaker ordered each to leave the chamber and, when they refused, instructed the Serjeant to direct them to do so. Each ignored Elder's direction and remained in the chamber. Bush continued his address after each interruption, declaring: 'I love free speech'.

This incident occurred during a period when the physical security of members and the parliamentary precincts necessarily had Elder's particularly close attention. The aftermath of the '9/11' terrorist attacks on New York and Washington, DC, in 2001 had led to a re-examination of all aspects of parliamentary security, with a focus on prevention rather than response. Drawing on his experience as Serjeant-at-Arms, Elder participated on a committee with oversight of some highly visible changes to public access, including the screening of all people entering the building (other than members and senators). He considered that the measures managed to balance the need for security with the public need for access to parliamentarians within 'a democratic system of government' (Elder 2020).

Between his two periods as Serjeant-at-Arms, Elder undertook other senior departmental roles, first as Clerk Assistant (Committees) and then as Clerk Assistant (Table). In 2006 he completed a master of public administration degree at the Australia and New Zealand School of Government at ANU. From 2010 to 2013 he was Deputy Clerk, and, on 1 January 2014, was appointed Clerk. The Clerk of the House was no longer simply the senior member of the Clerk's Office and Clerk at the Table but was, in many respects, CEO of a complex organisation, the Department of the House of Representatives. His tenure coincided with a tumultuous period for the House. Governments changed, there were five prime ministers, a minority

government, and a double-dissolution election. Reflecting on the challenges presented by these developments, he wryly recalled that they made 'life interesting for Clerks' (Elder 2020).

Clerks are 'fascinated by parliamentary procedure' (Elder 2020), and necessarily so. In seeking day-to-day political advantage, oppositions quickly turn to the opportunities available through procedural tactics. The period 2012 to 2018 encompassed many dramatic episodes in the parliamentary contest between government and opposition, producing challenges to existing procedures. In October 2016, owing to a short lapse by a minister, an opposition second-reading amendment to a bill was carried. Such amendments are frequently proposed by oppositions to demonstrate some criticism of a bill but, generally, do not delay its progress. None had been carried until then. Elder was not present in the chamber at the time, but believed his subsequent reaction demonstrated the role of the Clerk in such emergencies: a new procedure was swiftly devised and then applied by the Speaker. The bill, for which the questions on the second reading and subsequently the third reading had been put and agreed to on the voices, was able to be reinstated to the second reading for further consideration by the House. As Clerk, Elder was editor of the seventh edition of *House of Representatives Practice* (2018), in which such episodes were recorded and analysed as part of the House's procedural history. He also contributed other non-political comment and analysis on important aspects of these years of parliamentary turmoil in articles for political journals and addresses to scholarly and professional groups, such as the Australasian Study of Parliament Group.

Elder retired on 2 August 2019. The tributes during his final occupation of the Clerk's chair show sincere regard for an employee who had spent thirty-eight years in service to the parliament and forty-one to the Commonwealth: 'a very humble man', 'dignified', showing 'devotion' and 'dedication', but also possessing a 'wicked sense of humour' (H.R. Deb. 1.8.2019, 1843–46). Reference was also made to his twenty-year involvement with extra-parliamentary educational events—including the Model United Nations Assembly for high school students, held in Old Parliament House, and his contribution to advising and assisting younger, evolving parliaments in Asia and the Pacific. On 4 April 1982, in Canberra, he had married Louise Foster. They had two daughters. In retirement, he continued to take on leadership roles, including with the Rotary Club.

Select bibliography

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 12 October 2016, 1747, 1769–71

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 1 August 2019, 1843–46

Elder, David. 'The New Terrorism: The Parliamentary Response—The Example of the Commonwealth Parliament'. *Australasian Parliamentary Review* 19, no. 1 (Spring 2004): 149–55

Elder, David. 'The Role of the Speaker in Minority Government: The Case of the Australian House of Representatives 2010–2013'. *Australasian Parliamentary Review* 29, no. 1 (Autumn 2014): 6–18

Elder, David. 'Does a Chamber Need a Majority to be Effective?' Address to Australasian Study of Parliament Group, ACT Branch, Canberra, May 2015. Copy held on file

Elder, David. 'A Perfect Storm: The 2016 Double Dissolution Election'. *Australasian Parliamentary Review* 31, no. 2 (Spring–Summer 2016): 19–33

Elder, David, ed. *House of Representatives Practice: Seventh Edition*. Canberra: Department of the House of Representatives, 2018

Elder, David. Interview by Richard Reid, 12 June 2020

Elder, David. Personal communication

McIlroy, Tom. 'Turnbull Government Accidentally Votes in Support of Labor in Second Embarrassing Parliamentary Blunder'. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 13 October 2016, 8

Fowler, James Mackinnon: Chairman of Committees 1913–1914

G. N. Hawker

James Mackinnon Fowler (1863–1940), Chairman of Committees of the House of Representatives, was born on 20 June 1863 near Lanark, Scotland, son of James Fowler, farmer, and his wife, Mary, née McKinnon. Little is known of his formative experiences, although he is said to have served with the Black Watch (Royal Highland) Regiment. After education locally and in Glasgow, he entered the counting house of a Glasgow firm in 1884, and later worked in drapery warehouses there and at Manchester before migrating to Australia in 1891. He prospected for gold in Victoria and Western Australia, helped found the Victorian Socialist League, and, in 1898, settled in Perth. On 2 December that year, he married Daisy Winifred Bastow at Subiaco; they were to have a daughter and three sons.

A commerce accountant, freelance journalist, and secretary of the Western Australia Federal League (1899–1900), Fowler won the House of Representatives seat of Perth in 1901 as a Labor Party candidate supporting a revenue tariff, marking him as a free-trader within a party that included many protectionists. (Sir) George Reid's Free Traders had not opposed him, probably so as to avoid splitting the free-trade vote and thereby handing the seat to the protectionists. Despite later changes in party affiliation, Fowler won eight successive victories in Perth, averaging nearly 58 per cent of the primary vote, until his last, unsuccessful, campaign.

The energy with which Fowler campaigned in his electorate was also evident in parliament. He was a frequent speaker and interjector, and he served eagerly on parliamentary committees. His special interest was public finance, but no subject seemed beyond him. He was a member of the Select Committee on Decimal Coinage (1901), the Select Committee on Electoral Act Administration (1904), the Standing Committee on Printing (1901–10), the Standing Committee on Standing Orders (1914–19), and the Joint Statutory Committee of Public Accounts (member,
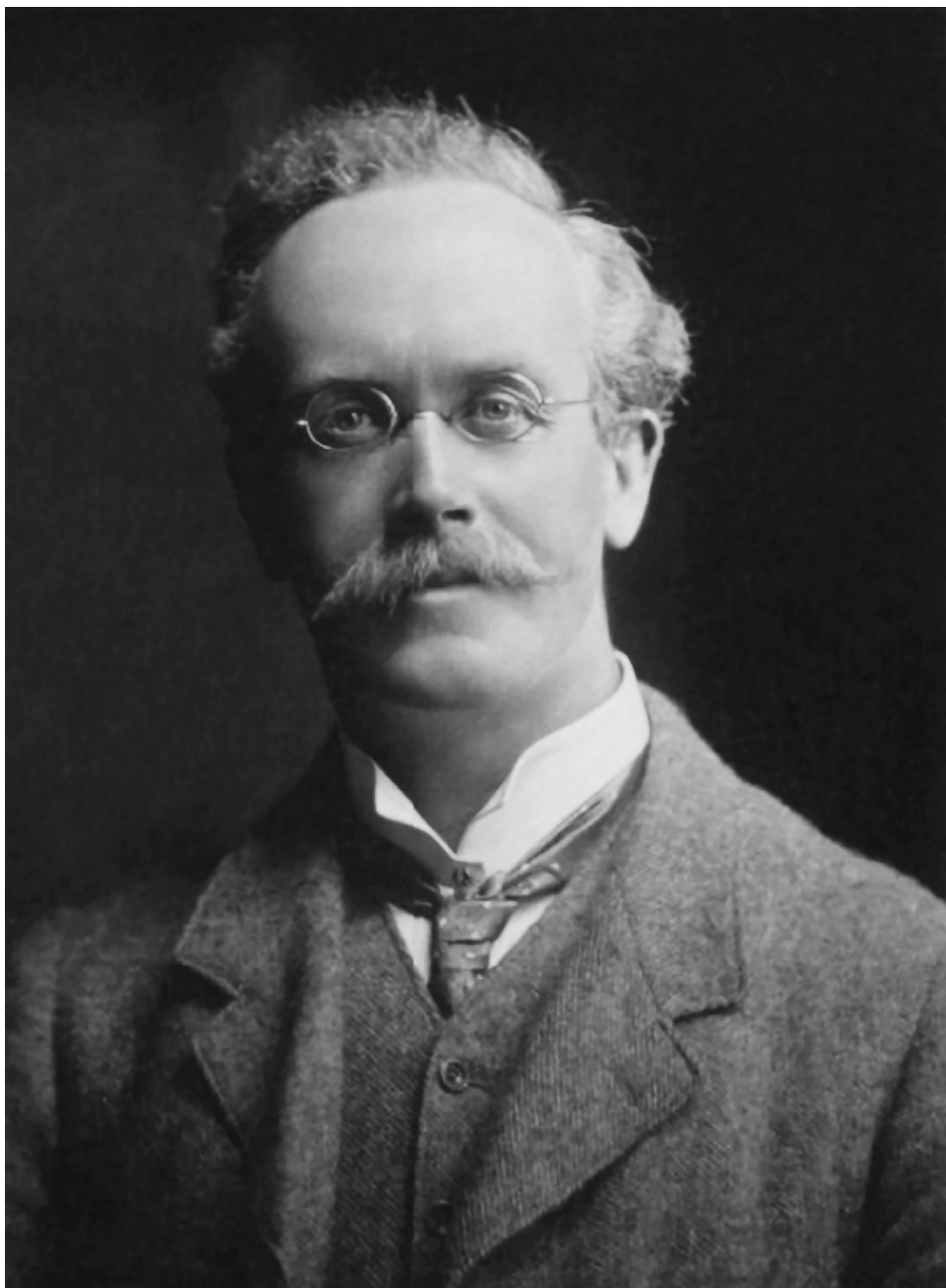
Figure 25: James Fowler.
Source: National Library of Australia, PIC Box PIC/6459/34 LOC B21, T. Humphrey & Co. Melbourne.

1914–17; chairman, 1920–22). From 1904 to 1907, he also served on the royal commission on customs and excise tariffs. One of his more unconventional causes was the selection of ministers by parliament rather than by the governing party. In August 1905, he moved a motion to that effect in the House and, during his ensuing speech, revealed much about his frustration with party politics. He condemned the selection of ministers by the governing party as an 'usurpation of the rights and duties of Parliament' that was caused by 'the exigencies of party warfare', but he failed to sway the House (H.R. Deb 17.8.1905, 1106, 1109).

Fowler's ambition for higher office probably contributed to his preparedness to serve as one of the Temporary Chairmen of Committees, a position he held in six consecutive parliamentary sessions from 1906 to 1912. In 1909 he deserted his party for the Deakin–Cook Fusion and the Liberal Party that later emerged from it—the result of his distrust of William Morris Hughes and, as a West Australian, a concern that Labor had become too centralist. Among Fowler's new party colleagues, (Sir) William Elliot Johnson had a stronger claim to be Speaker—first, after the Liberals narrowly won the election of 1913, and then in 1917, in the wake of the Labor Party split that eventually handed government to the Nationalist Party that succeeded the Liberals. Fowler was, however, elected by the House to the position of Chairman of Committees on 9 July 1913, 37 votes to 35 (VP 1913/6, 9.7.1913). His nomination was opposed by Labor, but without any comment being made against him or an alternative candidate being proposed. Labor's protest was essentially an early signal that the forthcoming parliamentary session would be hard fought, rather than a concerted attempt to secure the Chairmanship for one of its own members.

Both sessions of the brief 1913–14 fifth parliament were fiery, but it was during the first, in particular, that Fowler showed aplomb in weathering dissent to his rulings. During a debate on the Tasmania Grant Bill, he, after some hesitation, defused his own mistaken ruling by taking note of advice from members—including Andrew Fisher, Joseph Cook, Frank Tudor, and Charles McDonald—and then simply announcing: 'I withdraw the ruling I have given' (H.R. Deb 11.12.1913, 4174). On eleven occasions during the short second session, he exercised a casting vote, including ten times relating to the controversial Government Preference Prohibition Bill that aimed to outlaw union preference in Commonwealth employment. He and the Speaker, Johnson, who made similar use of his casting vote during this closely contested parliament, endured strong criticism during long late-night sessions. When the government eventually lost office in September 1914, Fowler resumed his accustomed role as an energetic debater and questioner, occasionally voting against his own party.

Fowler was renowned for his deep antipathy to Hughes, both as a fellow Labor member and as his party leader after 1917. He was one of only two members of the new Nationalist Party who in January 1918 voted against Hughes's continuing leadership

in the wake of his loss of the second conscription referendum and abortive resignation of the prime ministership. In his booklet *Statesman or Mountebank: An Australian Study*, Fowler assailed Hughes's recently acquired reputation as an international statesman by declaring that his behaviour was 'impulsive and headstrong, not over scrupulous', and that on the issue of conscription he had in fact 'thrust Australia into the gutter by his fatuous and cowardly policy' (Fowler 1919, 7, 9). Fowler added that Hughes owed his survival as prime minister immediately following the 1916 Labor split to the resulting Liberal majority in parliament, and he felt that, 'according to all precedent and practice, its leader should have been called upon to form a Ministry at the breakup of the Labour Party' (Fowler 1919, 14). Possibly Fowler imagined that this would have resulted in his finally attaining the ministry he thought he deserved. At the election of December 1919, he easily thwarted John Curtin's second attempt to win a federal seat, but prior to the election of 1922 Hughes was behind Fowler's disendorsement as the Nationalist candidate for Perth. He nonetheless contested the seat as an independent Nationalist; Edward Mann defeated him by little more than two hundred votes in the third distribution of preferences. Fowler was the last Western Australian elected to the House of Representatives in 1901 to pass from the parliamentary scene.

Towards the end of Fowler's parliamentary career, the *Bulletin* suggested a more personal reason for his exclusion from the ministry, judging that he would have 'achieved Ministerial rank long ago if he hadn't been such a good hater' (*Bulletin* 1921, 16). This most earnest of parliamentarians addressed the House with 'a high-pitched voice of great penetrating power and Scotchness' (*Punch* 1912, 6), but was burdened by a bleakly serious demeanour. Following his 1922 defeat, he wrote short stories, newspaper articles, unpublished novels, and a film synopsis (which he optimistically mailed to Cecil B. DeMille); these often drew on his experiences on the goldfields. Sometimes he employed the pseudonyms Hamish Mackinnon and James Evandale. His draft novel, 'The Day of Demos', was inspired by his being 'driven slowly but surely to the conclusion that democracy as a system of government is a rank failure' (NLA MS 2765). He died at his Malvern home in suburban Melbourne on 3 November 1940 and was buried in Springvale cemetery. His wife and four children survived him.

This article supplements the original Volume 8 ADB *biography, published 1981, authored by G. N. Hawker, G. C. Bolton and B. K. De Garis. adb.anu.edu.au/biography/fowler-james-mackinnon-6224/text10709*

Select bibliography

Abjorensen, Norman. *The Manner of Their Going: Prime Ministerial Exits in Australia*. North Melbourne: Australian Scholarly Publishing, 2019

Argus (Melbourne). 'Pioneer Federal Member'. 4 November 1940, 5

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 17 August 1905, 1105–14

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 9 July 1913, 33–34

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 11 December 1913, 4163–75

Australia. House of Representatives. *Votes and Proceedings*, 1913, 6

Bulletin (Sydney). 'Personal Items'. 14 April 1921, 16

Fowler, James Mackinnon. *Statesman or Mountebank: An Australian Study.* Melbourne: Australasian Authors' Agency, 1919

Hawker, Geoffrey. *Politicians All: The Candidates for the Australian Commonwealth Election 1901—A Collective Biography.* Sydney: Wild and Woolley in association with the Australian Institute of Political Science, 2002

Inquirer and Commercial News (Perth). 'The Successful Candidates'. 5 April 1901, 7

National Library of Australia. MS 2280, Papers of James Mackinnon Fowler

Punch (Melbourne). 'People We Know'. 1 August 1912, 6

Sawer, Geoffrey. *Australian Federal Politics and Law, 1901–1929.* Carlton, Vic.: Melbourne University Press, 1956

Gale, Walter Augustus: Clerk 1917–1927

Bobbie Oliver

Walter Augustus Gale (1864–1927), third Clerk of the House of Representatives, was born on 22 December 1864 at Geraldton, Western Australia, youngest son of William Gale, merchant and collector of customs, and his wife, Mary Ann, née Scott. Educated at Perth High School and St Peter's College, Adelaide, in 1884 Walter proceeded to Exeter College, Oxford, on a scholarship. An able athlete, he represented Exeter in rowing and running, but due to 'some temporary setback in the family fortunes' (*Bulletin* 1927, 22), he returned to Perth before he could graduate.

Gale gained employment at Perth High School before entering the Colonial Secretary's Office as assistant registrar in 1886. He remained there for two years, then served as secretary to the Central Board of Education. Also known as a poet and songwriter, he wrote the words for the 'Proclamation Hymn' performed on 21 October 1890 when the new Constitution of Western Australia was proclaimed.

In 1891 Gale was appointed Clerk of the Legislative Assembly. During his decade in the role, he became one of the 'brightest protégés' (*News* 1927, 1) of Premier Sir John Forrest. Forrest appointed Gale also as Parliamentary Librarian, thereby conveniently supplementing his salary to match that of his previous job (WA Parliament 1891, 179). On 18 November 1896, Gale married Georgiana Kennedy Richardson-Bunbury at St Mary's Church, Busselton. Her parents were William Richardson-Bunbury and Amelia, née Molloy, daughter of Georgiana and John Molloy, two of the earliest settlers in the Busselton region. The couple's social standing was underscored by their wedding ceremony being performed by the Anglican Bishop of Perth, Charles Riley, and a guest list that included Sir John and Lady Forrest and members of such established colonial families as the Burts, Piesses, Prinseps, and Lee-Steeres (*West Australian* 1896, 10).

As one of the colonial premiers who switched to the federal parliament in 1901, Forrest was influential in Gale's appointment as Second Clerk Assistant in the new House of Representatives in May that year. Having moved to Melbourne, in July,

Figure 26: Walter Gale.
Source: National Library of Australia, PIC Box PIC/8249 #PIC/8249, Laura Greenham.

he became Clerk Assistant. During World War I, Gale's verse became prominent. His patriotic poem of 1915 'Play the Game!' was widely used in recruiting, including by being issued as a postcard. It concluded: 'Leave football to the beardless boys / Too young to make a deathless name / Leave life's poor toys, seek life's stern joys / Fight the good fight, and Play THE Game!' (Gale 1915, 8). In 1916 he produced a booklet of verse entitled *Are We Downhearted? NO, NO* (Gale 1916).

The foremost criterion for the promotion of parliamentary officers in the young federal parliament was seniority and so, when Sir Charles Gavan Duffy vacated the Clerkship of the House to become Clerk of the Senate, Gale moved up to replace him on 1 February 1917. He was appointed CMG in 1920. Despite such recognition, in November 1920, he had to fight for an appropriate salary. Other parliamentary officers, including some less experienced, were granted raises that placed their salaries above his £1,000 per annum—unaltered since 1917. In meticulously setting out his case for a higher salary and claim to the honorary title of Clerk of the Parliaments, which had been vacant since 1908, he revealed much about the nature of his duties. These were 'of a highly technical and often very exacting nature, requiring … an intimate knowledge of the Standing Orders, Parliamentary practice and procedure, and Constitutional law' (Gale 1920). Additionally, the Clerk's workload had increased with the expansion of the parliament's responsibilities—one reason for the raises bestowed on other parliamentary officers. The Clerks of state legislative assemblies and his counterparts in other national parliaments, including those of South Africa and Canada, were all better paid than Gale. His well-researched case was supported by the Speaker of the House, Sir William Elliot Johnson, but was initially refused by the prime minister, William Morris Hughes, with the support of the President of the Senate, Thomas Givens. A salary rise was finally granted in December 1921.

Frank Green, Gale's Clerk of Records, felt that, as a Tasmanian, he had much in common with his senior, who also hailed from what was then still a small state. He recalled that Gale 'taught me patience and tolerance in handling politicians' (Green 1969, 33)—no small necessity for a successful Clerk. Gale was so scrupulously politically neutral that when compulsory voting was introduced for federal elections in 1924, he preferred to be fined rather than cast a vote (Green 1969, 33). Green and Gale were both members of Melbourne's bohemian Yorick Club, as were Assistant Clerk John McGregor, and the future Speaker William Watt.

In 1920 Gale was appointed honorary secretary of the Australian branch of the Empire Parliamentary Association, involving him in international representations. The association's meetings were held around the Empire and so, in 1924, he visited South Africa as a guest of the Empire Parliamentary Delegation. In September 1926, he accompanied a delegation from Britain on a trip to Cairns in north Queensland.

The association's meetings set the stage for the Balfour Declaration of 1926 that laid foundations for the Statute of Westminster in 1931, affirming the independence of dominions within the Empire.

By the mid-1920s, Gale was experiencing poor health and was diagnosed with heart disease, but he continued with his duties. In 1927 he became the first Clerk to be based in Canberra when federal parliament relocated from Melbourne. His wife remained in their home at South Yarra, possibly due to the shortage of housing in the new capital (*Canberra Times* 1927, 8). On the morning of 27 July 1927, he was conversing in his office adjacent to the House of Representatives chamber with his one-time best man, Major C. J. Griffiths, about 'old times when we were boys together' (*Canberra Times* 1927, 8), when he felt ill and phoned Green to come to his office. Almost immediately after, he slumped in his chair. Griffiths called a doctor, who pronounced Gale dead, the victim of a heart attack. He was buried at the Anglican Church of St John the Baptist, Reid.

One of the first items of business for the House on its first full working day at its new home on 28 September 1927 was the delivery of eulogies to Gale. Prime Minister Stanley (Viscount) Bruce, Hughes, and Johnson each described him as a 'guide, philosopher and friend' (H.R. Deb. 28.9.1927, 22–25). A holly tree was planted outside his former office in his memory. In September 1928, a memorial brass tablet was unveiled at St John's to honour Gale and his short-lived successor, John McGregor: 'a tribute of affectionate remembrance from Officers of the Parliament of the Commonwealth'. Described as 'a tall, distinguished looking man' (*News* 1927, 1) and as possessing 'a quiet wit' (*Bulletin* 1927, 22), Gale was survived by his wife, a daughter, Doreen, and three sons, Frederick, Dermot, and Mervyn.

This article supplements the original Volume 8 ADB *biography, published 1981, authored by G. J. Williams. adb.anu.edu.au/biography/gale-walter-augustus-6370/text10799*

Select bibliography

Argus (Melbourne). 'Mr W. A. Gale'. 28 July 1927, 15

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 28 September 1927, 22–25

Black, David, ed. *The House on the Hill: A History of the Parliament of Western Australia, 1832–1990*. Perth: Parliament of Western Australia, 1991

Bulletin (Sydney). 'Personal Items'. 4 August 1927, 22

Canberra Times. 'Mr W. A. Gale'. 29 July 1927, 8

Commonwealth of Australia. *Biographical Handbook and Record of Elections for the Parliament of the Commonwealth, Fifth Issue*. Melbourne: Library Committee of the Commonwealth Parliament, 1926

Gale, Walter A. *Are We Downhearted? NO, NO*. Melbourne: Government Printer, 1916

Gale, Walter A. 'Memorandum re Salary and Position of the Clerk of the House of Representatives', 26 November 1920. Papers of Edward Theodor Hubert, MS 506. National Library of Australia

Gale, Walter A. 'Play the Game!' *Argus* (Melbourne), 16 June 1915, 8

Green, Frank. *Servant of the House*. Melbourne: Heinemann, 1969

Herald (Melbourne). 'Mr W. A. Gale'. 27 July 1927, 1

News (Adelaide). 'Mr W. A. Gale Dead'. 27 July 1927, 1

Reid, G. S., and Martyn Forrest. *Australia's Commonwealth Parliament 1901–1988: Ten Perspectives*. Carlton, Vic.: Melbourne University Press, 1989

West Australian (Perth). 'Marriage of Mr W. A. Gale and Miss G. Bunbury'. 21 November 1896, 10

Western Australia. Legislative Assembly. *Parliamentary Debates*, 6 February 1891, 179

Williams, J. G. 'Gale, Walter Augustus'. In *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, volume 8, general editors Bede Nairn and Geoffrey Serle, 608–9. Carlton, Vic.: Melbourne University Press, 1981

Green, Frank Clifton: Clerk 1937–1955

Stephen Wilks

Frank Clifton Green (1890–1974), sixth Clerk of the House of Representatives, was born on 26 June 1890 at Mole Creek, north-central Tasmania, third of five children of Joseph Richard Green, a schoolteacher from Clarence Plains, Tasmania, and his wife, Kate Elizabeth, née Reardon, from Sorell, Tasmania. He described his parents as 'neither eccentric nor exciting' (Green 1969, 4). Frank was more appreciative of the lasting influence of his early life in the bush, both at the Western Tiers and at the Huon Valley; as an adult, he sought relief from protracted parliamentary sittings in Canberra by camping out in the Australian Alps. Educated at Cygnet State School and at Queen's College, Hobart, he embarked in 1908 on studies at the University of Tasmania in arts and then law, with the support of the Tasmanian Operative Lodge Scholarship Trust. He did not complete his university studies, but that same year began a lasting friendship with Joseph Lyons when the future prime minister was, as a student teacher, Green's football and cricket teammate. He entered the Crown Law Department in 1909. Two years later, following Green's century-making performance in a club cricket match, the Speaker of the Tasmanian House of Assembly and cricket patron John George Davies appointed him Clerk Assistant.

At St Joseph's Catholic Church, Hobart, on 29 April 1914, Green married Florence Agnes Kearney, a distant relative who forwent a burgeoning singing career to become his wife. As secretary to the 1915 royal commission on the public debts sinking funds of Tasmania, he came under the stimulating influence of commission member, state parliamentarian, and economist Lyndhurst Falkiner Giblin. This was an early instance of Green's predilection for developing close personal attachments to major public figures. A socialist who readily empathised with Australian Labor Party (ALP) parliamentarians, Green was moved more by sentiment than by doctrine. His literary interests were formed by Rudyard Kipling, Hilaire Belloc, and G. K. Chesterton, and were later supplemented by the poets of World War I.

Figure 27: Frank Green.
Source: Department of the House of Representatives.

On 2 September 1915, Green enlisted in the Australian Imperial Force (AIF) and was posted to the 40th Battalion, a Tasmanian unit, with Giblin as his company commander. Commissioned as a second lieutenant in January 1916, he sailed for England in July and reached the Western Front in November. He saw action in night raids on enemy trenches near Armentieres, at Messines, and at the Third Battle of Ypres. In May 1917, he was promoted captain and, in March–April the next year, participated in counter-attacks near the French town of Morlancourt to turn back the German advance, at one point finding himself in temporary command. In April 1918, he was hospitalised in England and missed his battalion's participation in the final assault on the Hindenburg Line. For his work, especially in the offensive at Messines, he was awarded the Military Cross. His divisional commander and fellow Tasmanian Sir John Gellibrand urged the writing of the battalion's history before it returned to Australia, leading to Green producing in 1922 *The Fortieth: A Record of the 40th Battalion, AIF*. On 7 October 1919, his AIF appointment terminated. War experience profoundly affected his outlook and strengthened his faith in egalitarianism.

Resuming work at the Tasmanian parliament, Green soon fell out with a state minister who, according to Green, sought revenge for denying his brother wartime promotion. After a work trial at Parliament House, Melbourne, in September–October 1920, he transferred to the federal parliament, on 1 April 1921, as Clerk of Papers. Blessed with a talent for friendship, he rapidly became popular with a wide array of politicians, bureaucrats, pressmen, and trade union officials, becoming particularly close to Labor's left-wing assistant leader Frank Anstey. Already shocked by sectarian violence between Catholics and Protestants in Melbourne, he was disturbed by the Hughes government using its majority in the House in November 1921 to expel the Irish-born Hugh Mahon for sedition. In 1925 Green was appointed Clerk of Records. Unlike many, he welcomed the federal parliament's move to Canberra in 1927, where he set about exploring the surrounding countryside and pursuing his love for fly-fishing and rabbit-shooting. Using a pseudonym, he wrote light-hearted pieces on Canberra affairs for *Smith's Weekly*, which described its correspondent as 'one of the most civilised personalities in polyglot Canberra, with a healthy appetite for good books, good talk and good humour' (1945, 13).

Following the deaths in quick succession of two Clerks of the House, Walter Gale and John McGregor, Green was promoted Clerk Assistant under Ernest Parkes in November 1927. Influential members of parliament confided in him; Anstey even confessed to an admiration for Stanley (Viscount) Bruce's imperturbable calm. Green appreciated that Speaker Sir Littleton Groom's refusal in September 1929 to cast a deciding vote to save Bruce's government from defeat in the House upheld traditional party neutrality, but also felt that Groom was effectively disfranchising his electorate. He was discomfited by authoritarian rulings by House staff and presiding officers. This included Speaker Norman Makin's decision in April 1931 to ban the Melbourne *Herald*'s Joseph Alexander from the House for using leaked cables from Prime Minster

James Scullin. Green felt it was for parliament itself, not presiding officers, to deal with apparent breaches of parliamentary privilege. He considered calm appeals by the Speaker more effective in restoring the dignity of the House than a raised voice and the expulsion of offending members.

After the election of an ALP government in 1929, Green welcomed his old friend Lyons to Canberra but, as the Depression deepened, he watched with dismay as the Scullin government stumbled to defeat in December 1931. Privy to Lyons's growing disillusionment, he later wrote that he understood why Lyons had crossed the floor and felt that his friend had been driven out of the ALP unwillingly. He was reluctant to divulge confidences about the exact circumstances under which Lyons had switched parties to become prime minister. However, he later revealed in his memoirs that Lyons had used him as a discreet intermediary with the architect and businessman Kingsley Henderson, one of the several Melbourne figures involved in seeking this change. During the 1930s, his conviction grew that parliament was in decline. More than ever, he sought solace in the bush. In 1937 he became Clerk of the House. Popularity with the press gallery saved him from public embarrassment when journalists collectively agreed not to report his slip in administering the oath to a new member by requesting allegiance to the recently abdicated Edward VIII.

Green saw Lyons's government crumble and the prime minister's health deteriorate under the weight of events and factional infighting. Some thought him indiscreet in making friends with journalists and with the communist trade union officials Ernest Thornton and James Healy. Gregarious and a great raconteur, Green became a popular figure of Rabelaisian standing. After World War II broke out, he protected the interests of enlisting members of his staff, including Jack Pettifer, a future Clerk of the House, who joined the Royal Australian Air Force. He provided moral support to his friend John Curtin, most famously in 1942 when the prime minister endured sleepless nights worrying about the safety of Australian troops at sea returning from the Middle East. Ben Chifley relieved Curtin from managing the House of Representatives, instituting 9 a.m. meetings with Green on sitting days to set the daily program. Chifley's friendly yet businesslike approach seemed to Green the first ever 'proper organization of the business of the House' (Green 1969, 129).

From 1945 Green watched the Chifley government struggle for stability amid industrial strife, ideological differences, and growing dissension in the ALP. The return of (Sir) Robert Menzies to government in 1949 further dispirited him. He never got on with Menzies, probably because he believed that Menzies had undermined Lyons, readily attributing to him the basest of motives. Green even adjudged a piece of prime-ministerial doggerel about parliamentary officers to be 'deliberately offensive' (TAHO NG792). The final five years of his parliamentary career were dispiriting for him, encompassing the controversy over the proposed dissolution of the Communist Party of Australia, the Petrov affair, and the ALP split. He was rightly convinced that

he had attracted the attention of the Australian Security Intelligence Organization as a result of his public association with Thornton as one of his trout-fishing companions. Within ASIO, he had a discreet informant who passed on information about its operations and occasional interest in him. In March 1953, he suffered his worst blow when his only child, a medical officer with the Snowy Mountains Hydro-electric Authority, drowned while fishing near Adaminaby, New South Wales. Three months later, Green dutifully attended the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II in London.

Green's involvement in the notorious 1955 gaoling by the House of Representatives of Frank Browne and Raymond Fitzpatrick was a troubling finale to the long career of this colourful Clerk. Fitzpatrick was a newspaper proprietor from Sydney's Bankstown with suspected criminal connections; Browne was a journalist who wrote for Fitzpatrick's *Bankstown Observer*. On 8 June 1955, the Privileges Committee reported that Browne and Fitzpatrick were guilty of a serious breach of parliamentary privilege. The pair had published articles intended to influence and intimidate the member for Reid, Charles Morgan, by falsely accusing him of corruption. The committee's findings were considered by the House on 9 June 1955 and a motion moved by the prime minister—'That the House agrees with the Committee in its Report'— was agreed to without division (VP 1954–55/267, 9.6.1955). The following day, Fitzpatrick and Browne were, by a vote of the House, gaoled for three months (VP 1954–55/269–71, 10.6.1955).

In his memoir, Green recalled that Lyons, in 1934, had had a bill prepared to belatedly implement a 1908 joint select committee recommendation that such prosecutions be instead heard by a justice of the High Court, but it had lapsed after Menzies became attorney-general. A privileges committee established in 1944 to report on alleged breaches became, in Green's view, too absorbed in the pursuit of political capital to be effective. He advised the committee that parliamentary privilege should not be used to protect a member against alleged actions outside the House and should instead be pursued in the civil courts. According to Green, Browne in particular had attracted the ire of both Menzies and the deputy leader of the opposition, Arthur Calwell, by publishing a snide reference to the prime minister not having volunteered for the AIF. He considered the proceedings that ensued to be 'disgraceful' (Green 1969, 159), not least because his last-minute request to Menzies to allow two barristers to appear at the Bar of the House for the accused was disallowed.

In June 1955, Green retired and returned to Hobart. He was appointed CBE in 1959. Later he became president (1961–64) of the local branch of the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals and an active conservationist. His pleasure in 'historical research as a form of escape from contemplation of the present and the future' (TAHO NG792) led to his serving as the founding chairman of the *Australian Dictionary of Biography* Tasmanian working party and writing entries on fifteen figures from Tasmanian colonial history. He also edited *A Century of Responsible Government:*

1856–1956 (1956), a major source on the state's history, and authored *The Tasmanian Club, 1861–1961* (1961). His memoir, *Servant of the House* (1969), was written in his characteristic discursive and declamatory style. Despite having more often been observer than participant, his narrative ranges confidently across the great political events of his times. Of the nine Speakers under which he served, he had most to say about Archie Cameron, whom he thought 'a queer mixture of generosity, prejudice and irresponsibility' (Green 1969, 137). He advised Menzies that his selection of Cameron for the Speakership was 'the worst possible choice' (Green 1969, 136). His memoir's trove of anecdotes has been extensively mined by historians. The most oft-repeated is Green's account of trying to comfort Curtin as he paced the grounds of the Lodge late at night, succeeding only in persuading the anxious prime minister to join him for tea in the kitchen. Soon after the 1949 election, the defeated Chifley, seeking Green's solace, admitted that the unexpectedly severe loss was probably his own fault for moving too quickly on bank nationalisation.

The ALP parliamentarian Leslie Haylen considered Green 'far and away the best Clerk of the House the Parliament has had', being 'cautious, informed and steeped in the records of Parliament here and in Britain' (Haylen 1969, 157). Private correspondence in his retirement confirms his disdain for most politicians under whom he served, and his fear that parliament was increasingly dominated by the executive. In retirement, he still considered Giblin the best man he had known. He came to see himself as a failure in his dedication to upholding parliamentary democracy yet also as something of a seer, concluding his memoirs with a portentous assessment of the possible outlook for humanity: 'I submit that Man is the parasite of the Earth' (Green 1969, 166). Survived by his wife, he died on 12 September 1974 at New Town, Hobart, and was cremated.

This article supplements the original Volume 14 ADB *biography, published 1996, authored by W. A. Townsley. adb.anu.edu.au/biography/green-frank-clifton-10351/text18329*

Select bibliography

Australia. House of Representatives. *Votes and Proceedings*, 1954–55, 267, 269–72

Canberra Times. 'Mr F. C. Green to Retire as Clerk of House'. 4 June 1955, 2

Canberra Times. 'Mr Frank Green, A Mentor to Members'. 13 September 1974, 9

Evans, Harry. 'Fitzpatrick and Browne: Imprisonment by a House of Parliament'. In *Australian Constitutional Landmarks*, edited by H. P. Lee and George Winterton, 145–59. Port Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 2003. doi.org/10.1017/cbo9781139106948.008

Green, Frank C. *Servant of the House*. Melbourne: William Heinemann, 1969

Haylen, Leslie. *Twenty Years' Hard Labor*. South Melbourne: Macmillan of Australia, 1969

Horner, David. *The Spy Catchers: The Official History of ASIO 1949–1963.* Crows Nest, NSW: Allen & Unwin, 2014

Lyons, Enid. *So We Take Comfort.* London: Heinemann, 1965

Moore, Andrew. 'Fitzpatrick and Browne After 60 Years'. *Papers on Parliament*, No. 64 (January 2016)

Moore, Andrew. *Mr Big of Bankstown: The Scandalous Fitzpatrick and Browne Affair.* Crawley, WA: UWA Publishing, 2011

National Archives of Australia. A6119, 496, Frank Clifton Green

National Archives of Australia. B2455, Green F. C.

People (Sydney). 'A Bewigged Man with Gout'. 7 June 1950, 10–11

Personal knowledge of subject (W. A. Townsley)

Smith's Weekly (Sydney). 'He Has Listened to Politicians for 35 Years'. 15 September 1945, 13

Stanley, Massey. 'About a Servant of the House'. *Hemisphere* (Sydney), December 1969, 25–29

Sydney Morning Herald. 'Frank Green Gave Canberra Colour'. 13 September 1974, 12

Tasmanian Archive and Heritage Office (TAHO). NG792, Frank Clifton Green

Whitington, Don. *Twelfth Man?* Milton, Qld: Jacaranda Press, 1972

World (Hobart). 'The Fortieth'. 17 March 1923, 3

Groom, Sir Littleton Ernest: Speaker 1926–1929

David Carment

Sir Littleton Ernest Groom (1867–1936), barrister and sixth Speaker of the House of Representatives, was born on 22 April 1867 at Toowoomba, Queensland, third son of William Henry Groom, and his wife, Grace, née Littleton. A brilliant student, winning many prizes, Littleton was educated at Toowoomba North State School, Toowoomba Grammar School, and the University of Melbourne (MA, 1891; LLM, 1892). While at Ormond College, Melbourne, he participated in journalistic and cultural activities, exposing himself to ideas that would later emerge in his political career.

Between 1891 and 1901, Groom combined a barrister's practice in Brisbane with involvement in church and educational ventures. An active and devout Anglican, he believed that Christians should make practical efforts to help the less fortunate. As well as an involvement with the Brisbane Literary Circle and the Brisbane School of Arts, he was a leading figure in the Queensland University extension movement that organised public lectures. He collaborated in the authorship or preparation of legal reports and texts and, in 1900, was appointed a deputy judge of the District Court. On 4 July 1894 in South Melbourne, he married Jessie, daughter of Charles Bell, a Presbyterian minister of Wagga Wagga, New South Wales.

William Groom had been elected to the first House of Representatives in March 1901 as the member for Darling Downs but died on 8 August that year. At the request of his father's supporters, Littleton stood at the subsequent by-election; he received the Barton government's endorsement and, despite a strong opponent, was elected with a substantial majority on 14 September 1901. He soon became identified with the more radical protectionists. As an enthusiastic convert to the 'new liberal' ideology, he was convinced that government should 'seek to realise the ideal of justice to every part of the Commonwealth in national legislation' (Groom 1930, 21). A fervent nationalist, he believed the Commonwealth rather than the states should become the focus of popular loyalties. He argued for a drastic extension of Commonwealth powers,
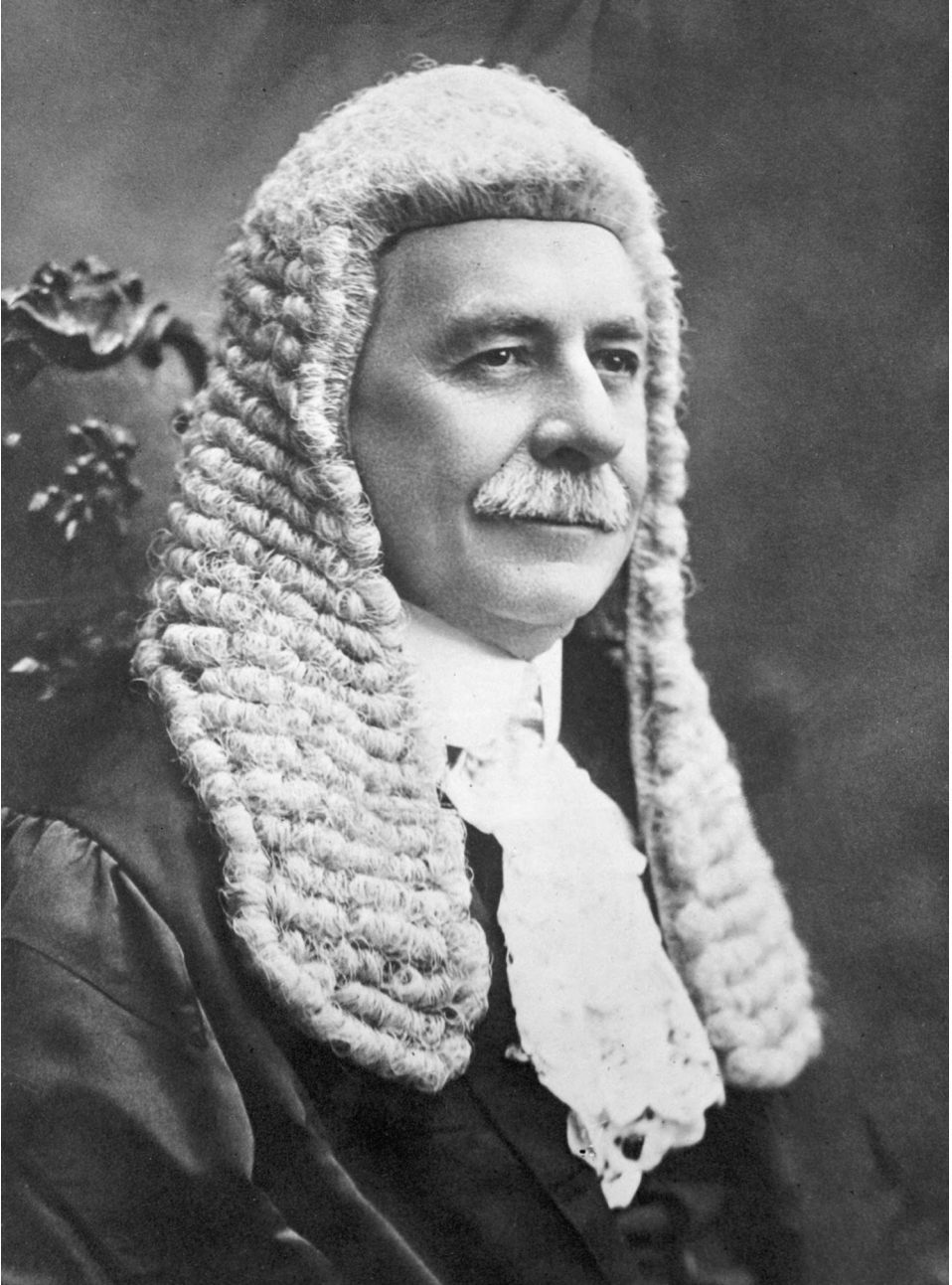
Figure 28: Littleton Groom.
Source: Department of the House of Representatives.

particularly in regard to industrial relations. Because he favoured Commonwealth conciliation and arbitration, he supported the short-lived Labor administration of 1904 and the alliance between Labor and some protectionists.

On 5 July 1905, Alfred Deakin appointed Groom minister for home affairs in the new Liberal Protectionist administration, revealing him as an energetic and forceful politician. Also important were his links with the Labor caucus, the Deakin government being dependent on Labor support. Groom's championing of the expansion of Commonwealth activity led to clashes with the states, including disputes with New South Wales over the proposed Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics and the site for a federal capital. His greatest success concerned Commonwealth involvement in meteorology and the transfer to the Commonwealth of state properties. Promoted to attorney-general on 12 October 1906, he was, for the next two years, closely involved with most aspects of government policy. He defended new protection, introduced bounties legislation, helped enforce H. B. Higgins's Harvester Judgement on a minimum wage (1907), attempted to control the operations of large trusts, and represented the Commonwealth in the High Court when its Excise Tariff (Agricultural Machinery) Act 1906 was challenged.

Groom's last major achievement during the Deakin administration was legislation to provide Commonwealth invalid and old-age pensions in 1908. In introducing this bill, he proclaimed his 'sense of deep national responsibility to every single unit in the community … if any single person in the great industrial army meets with disaster in the course of his work, a duty is owing to him' (H.R. Deb. 3.6.1908, 11925). While he had reservations about the Fusion of non-Labor parties the following year, in the end, he saw no realistic alternative given Labor's intention to stand candidates against Liberal Protectionists. He was also concerned that Labor was moving towards a more doctrinaire socialism; for him, the stage had been reached where governments should consolidate previous reforms rather than introduce new ones. One of only three Liberal Protectionists included in the Fusion government of 2 June 1909, he served for the next eleven months as minister for external affairs. Much of his legislation was blocked in the House, and even his High Commissioner Bill of 1909, which was ultimately successful in establishing Australian representation in London, received much criticism.

In the election of 1910, Groom was one of the few former Liberal Protectionists to hold his seat against Labor, which for the first time won control of both houses. Thereafter, he became a prominent opponent of Labor's socialistic measures. He attacked such proposals as the establishment of a Commonwealth bank and attempts to gain Commonwealth control over monopolies, which he now argued were designed only to appeal to trade unionists or unnecessarily interfere with human rights. He was minister for trade and customs in (Sir) Joseph Cook's Liberal

government of 1913–14. The policy of reversing Labor's achievements, however, frustrated whatever desire he had for positive initiatives. Along with Cook, he often declared that the Liberals could achieve little when Labor controlled the Senate.

After Labor's victory in the double-dissolution election of September 1914, Groom devoted himself to the war effort. He saw no contradiction between his Australian nationalism and what he constantly stressed was the righteous Allied cause, and was active in the pro-conscription campaign before the 1916 plebiscite. From 17 February 1917, he served in the Nationalist government of William Morris Hughes as assistant minister for defence, until 16 November, when he became vice-president of the Executive Council. He was prominent in the conscription plebiscite of 1917.

The war reinvigorated Groom's advocacy of increased Commonwealth powers. In 1919, unlike many Nationalists, he supported Hughes's proposals to strengthen Commonwealth powers in industry, trade, and commerce. He felt that the war had accustomed people to extended national authority and maintained that the Commonwealth government was the only instrumentality able to cope with the perplexing problems of the postwar years. As minister for works and railways from 27 March 1918, he pushed for a vigorous development program. He supervised increased Commonwealth involvement in the Murray waters conservation scheme and construction at Canberra where, according to Walter D. Bingle, secretary of the Department of Works and Railways, Groom was 'the man who lifted the whole business out of the bog' (Carment 1983, 132).

On 21 December 1921, Groom again became attorney-general, retaining the post for four years. He was appointed KC in 1923. Although the most senior minister in the House of Representatives, Sir Littleton was passed over for the Nationalist leadership on Hughes's resignation when the Nationalist–Country Party coalition under Stanley (Viscount) Bruce and (Sir) Earle Page was formed. He was not happy with the coalition, nor did he like Bruce, but their relationship started amicably enough. Bruce respected Groom's experience and was no doubt largely responsible for the latter's elevation to KCMG in January 1924. From 29 May until 13 June 1924, Groom was also minister for trade and customs, and for health.

As attorney-general, Groom's record was mixed. He presided over a new public service superannuation scheme and replaced the public service commissioner with a board of three. However, he encountered problems in attempting to extend the Commonwealth's industrial powers. During 1924 he served as leader of the Australian delegation to the fifth assembly of the League of Nations in Geneva. As a committee chairman, he helped formulate a protocol that aimed to establish a more concrete system of international arbitration. He was later disappointed when most league members, including Britain and Australia, rejected the protocol; instructed to abstain, Groom voted for the measure.

Perhaps of most significance was Groom's role in deportation proceedings against 'foreign' radical agitators who he felt posed a threat to Australia. It was largely on his initiative that two Irish republican spokesmen were deported in 1923, and he participated in the unsuccessful attempt to deport two overseas-born leaders of the Australian Seamen's Union during 1925. Partly because of his handling of the latter case as well as a general dissatisfaction with his performance, Bruce demanded Groom's resignation as attorney-general; this was proffered and took effect on 18 December.

In compensation for his departure from the ministry, Groom was chosen as the government's nominee for Speaker when William Watt stepped down. Labor parliamentarians praised Groom's character but criticised the way in which he became the nominee after losing the attorney-general's position. The fiery Frank Brennan quipped that Groom had not exactly been elevated to the position of Speaker but rather had been '"delevated" to that high office' (H.R. Deb. 13.1.1926, 21). He was, nevertheless, elected on 13 January 1926, with no opposing candidates. In cooperation with the President of the Senate, Sir John Newlands, and with the assistance of the Clerk of the House of Representatives, Walter Gale, among his earliest tasks was supervision of the Commonwealth parliament's move from Melbourne to Canberra, which took more than a year to be fully implemented. At the very end of the House's final sitting in Melbourne, on 24 March 1927, Groom honoured all those who had sat there since Federation by declaring that he was 'proud to feel that when the history of Australian politics comes to be written, their work will inspire our future citizens to fashion their lives and conduct on similar ideals' (H.R. Deb. 24.3.1927, 1085).

Groom sought to make the Australian Speakership as similar as possible to that of the House of Commons. He often argued that British precedents bound him. During the ceremony of 11 October 1926, when the Empire Parliamentary Association of Great Britain presented a replica of the House of Commons Speaker's chair to be used in the Australian parliament's new home in Canberra, he dwelt on the value of parliamentary traditions, describing the new chair as 'one of the most treasured possessions of the Nation' (*Canberra Times* 1926, 1). This was reinforced for Groom when, on 9 May 1927, he participated in the formal opening of Canberra's first parliamentary session at which the Duke of York (later King George VI) represented King George V. Hughes wrote that, for Groom, the relevant British traditions principally meant 'very rigid ideas about the dignity of the Chair', with the result that he felt 'very strongly that its occupants should be completely removed from party strife' (Groom 1941, 253–54). Resentful at his loss of ministerial rank, in poor health, and grieving his daughter Grace's death in 1926, Groom also possibly attempted to enhance the Speaker's status to compensate for his own disappointments.

There are varying views on Groom's Speakership from two parliamentary colleagues who observed it closely. His immediate successor as Speaker, Norman Makin, argued that, while Groom was 'gentle and likeable', he was 'nervous, and at times uncertain', leading to his having 'held the rein a little too tightly when the House had the more quiet spells in debate' (Makin c. 1962). Hughes, being friendly with Groom, was predictably more complimentary, describing him as 'dignified, courteous and friendly' and 'eminently fair' (Groom 1941, 253). His manner, Hughes thought, 'invited approach and members came to him freely for advice … the advice he gave would be that by which he himself would have been guided' (Groom 1941, 253).

When, following the November 1928 election, members of the non-Labor parties gathered in Canberra, on 5 February 1929, government ministers wanted James Garfield Bayley, Chairman of Committees in the previous parliament, to replace Groom as Speaker, but opposition from Groom and others left the government with no option other than to support his re-election. The deputy Labor leader, Edward Theodore, later claimed that the government's dissatisfaction with Groom resulted from his refusal to hamper Labor members during debates. During August and September 1929, the Commonwealth government controversially attempted to withdraw from the field of industrial regulation, apart from the maritime and waterfront industries. Its Maritime Industries Bill, introduced into the House of Representatives on 23 August, was widely interpreted as an attack on the arbitration system that Groom had long strongly supported. On 10 September, Hughes moved an amendment in committee that the bill, if passed, not take effect until after it had been submitted to the people either in a referendum or at a general election. Five other non-Labor members indicated they would support him. Because Labor also backed the amendment, the government faced the prospect of defeat by one vote unless Groom voted against it. Bayley, as Chairman of Committees, could only cast a vote if the numbers were equal.

Realising how desperate the situation was, on 11 September, Bruce visited Groom's chambers. Later that day Groom wrote to his wife of how he reminded the prime minister that the Nationalists had always stood by British traditions and that the impartiality of the Speaker was 'most sacred'. Bruce responded, fruitlessly, that the damage to the Speakership 'was small compared to the damage of the Government going out of office'. Groom now felt clear on why ministers had not wanted him as Speaker and concluded that the government 'by its own actions has produced the trouble' (Groom 1929). The Nationalist senator H. S. Foll reminded Groom the next day that he had remained in government office as a member of the Cook government in 1913–14 because of the Speaker's casting vote. Bruce added that Groom's refusal to vote amounted to a wrongful disenfranchisement of the Darling Downs electorate. At the critical division, the motion was carried by a single vote. On the prime minister's advice, the governor-general dissolved the parliament and, at the election of 12 October 1929, the Bruce–Page government was heavily defeated.

Groom's actions were widely criticised. Some of his non-Labor colleagues said that there were clear precedents under which he could have exercised his vote—a view later endorsed by Gavin Souter, an historian of the Commonwealth parliament.

There are three possible explanations for Groom's decision: the Speakership issue, opposition to the government's stance on arbitration, and what Bruce's biographer, David Lee, described as Groom's 'accumulated grievances against Bruce' (2010, 90). The last, although significant, was not as fundamental as the other two. While Groom's commitment to arbitration was strong, his concern about the dignity of the chair was equally genuine. With his legal background and desire to follow relevant British parliamentary practices, he hesitated to defy what he considered the correct House of Commons precedent. His longstanding commitment to Commonwealth involvement in arbitration makes it likely that, had he voted, it would have been for Hughes's amendment.

Denied Nationalist endorsement for Darling Downs, Groom stood as an independent at the 1929 election. The local campaign was particularly bitter, with the Nationalists contending that Groom's primary motive in refusing to save the government was his view on arbitration rather than—as he and Hughes continued to claim—the traditions of his office. His heavy loss to the official Nationalist candidate ended nearly seventy years of continuous parliamentary representation of the Toowoomba district by the Groom family.

Groom returned to the Bar in Brisbane but won back Darling Downs as an independent on 19 December 1931. He joined the United Australia Party in August 1933. For the remainder of his parliamentary life, however, he was not as active as he had been, and instead used his prestige to aid particular causes. President of the Australian branch of the League of Nations Union, he remained a leading lay member of the Church of England, and forcefully argued for a national university. He died in Canberra on 6 November 1936 of coronary vascular disease, survived by his wife and one of their two daughters. A well-attended funeral service was held at Parliament House and he was buried in the grounds of the Anglican Church of St John the Baptist, Reid. Jessie Groom's compilation, *Nation Building in Australia* (1941), was intended as both a memorial and a vindication of Groom's decision not to save the federal government in 1929. Fred Leist's portrait of Groom is in Parliament House and a memorial spire stands in Toowoomba. A reconfigured Darling Downs federal electorate was named after him in 1984.

Throughout his career, Groom followed a set personal routine. In addition to political duties, he led an active social life, spent considerable time working for the Church of England, at one stage being a member of its Australian synod, and wrote dozens of articles and pamphlets on legal, political, and religious subjects. He was joint author with Sir John Quick of *The Judicial Power of the Commonwealth* (1904). At Toowoomba, he resided in a comfortable home overlooking the Great

Dividing Range and was a conscientious local member, whose short and always well-dressed figure was a familiar sight. What leisure time he had was spent in gardening, photography, and reading.

The refusal of Groom to save his own government in 1929 must loom large in any assessment of his Speakership. While he is sometimes viewed as a 'mild and somewhat pedantic' (Souter 1988, 252) politician of only moderate ability, he left a distinct mark on his country. Hardworking, efficient, and honest, he was responsible for numerous reforms and was among the first to realise that many political problems could only be treated in a national context. He also stands out as representative of a significant mode of non-Labor thought, though his concept of the active social role of the state differed from the Labor view only by degree. On occasions, he went so far as to justify the limitation of individual liberties if the interests of the majority were at stake. In his speeches and writings, he portrayed himself as a liberal, in the evident belief that the word had a consistent, if developing, meaning. The striking feature of his life was not only the continuity of his beliefs, but also the frequency with which he acted on them.

This article supplements the original Volume 9 ADB *biography, published 1983, authored by David Carment. adb.anu.edu.au/biography/groom-sir-littleton-ernest-6499/text11145*

Select bibliography

Argus (Melbourne). 'Sir Littleton Groom'. 26 September 1929, 8

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 3 June 1908, 11922–26

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 13 January 1926, 16–23

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 24 March 1927, 1084–85

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 23 August 1929, 280–91

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 10 September 1929, 841–46

Canberra Times. 'Empire Parliamentarians' Visit'. 14 October 1926, 1

Canberra Times. 'Political Storm in the Nationalist Party'. 6 February 1929, 1

Carment, David. 'Australian Liberal: A Political Biography of Sir Littleton Groom, 1867–1936'. PhD thesis, The Australian National University, Canberra, 1975

Carment, David. 'A Question of Conscience: Sir Littleton Groom, the Speakership and the Fall of the Bruce–Page Government'. *Australian Journal of Politics and History* 23, no. 1 (April 1977): 70–75. doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8497.1977.tb01228.x

Carment, David. 'Groom, Sir Littleton Ernest (1867–1936)'. In *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, volume 9, general editors Bede Nairn and Geoffrey Serle, 130–33. Carlton, Vic.: Melbourne University Press, 1983

Carment, David. 'Sir Littleton Groom and the Deportation Crisis of 1925: A Study of Non-Labor Response to Trade Union Militancy'. *Labour History*, no. 32 (May 1977): 53–54. jstor.org/stable/27508258

Carment, David. 'Sir Littleton Groom: Forgotten Founder'. *Canberra Historical Journal* (NS), no. 1 (March 1978): 1–7

Daily Standard (Brisbane). 'Federal Rumblings'. 8 February 1929, 6

Daily Telegraph (Sydney). 'Election of Speaker Almost Brings Crisis'. 6 February 1929, 3

Fitzhardinge, L. F. Interview by David Carment, 2 August 1973

Groom, Jessie, comp. *Nation Building in Australia: The Life and Work of Sir Littleton Ernest Groom, KCMG, KC, MA, LLM, MP*. Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1941

Groom, Littleton. Letter to Lady Groom, 11 September 1929. Papers of Sir Littleton Groom, MS 236, series 2, folder 65. National Library of Australia

Groom, Littleton. 'Makers of Federation'. *Brisbane Courier*, 6 December 1930, 21

Lee, David. *Stanley Melbourne Bruce: Australian Internationalist.* London: Continuum, 2010

Makin, Norman. 'The Hon Sir Littleton Groom, KCMG', c. 1962. Papers of Norman Makin, MS 4663. National Library of Australia

Souter, Gavin. *Acts of Parliament: A Narrative History of the Senate and House of Representatives, Commonwealth of Australia*. Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1988

Sydney Morning Herald. 'Maritime Bill'. 30 August 1929, 11

Sydney Morning Herald. 'Critical Position'. 10 September 1929, 15

Sydney Morning Herald. 'Speaker's Absence'. 11 September 1929, 15

Telegraph (Brisbane). 'Dissolution!' 13 September 1929, 2

Halverson, Robert George (Bob): Speaker 1996–1998

Judith Brett

Robert George Halverson (1937–2016), air force officer and twenty-second Speaker of the House of Representatives, was born at Springvale, Victoria, on 22 October 1937, eldest child of Herbert Martinius Halverson, electrician, and his wife, Elizabeth Gretta, née Ordner. Herbert took a job at the William Angliss meatworks at Footscray in Melbourne's inner west. Bob went to the Geelong Road Primary School (now Footscray Primary) and later Footscray Technical College. There he became a cadet in the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) Air Training Corps—his first step towards fulfilling his ambition to become a pilot. He was close to his paternal grandfather, Bendik, who lived with the family—a Norwegian-born sailor who had arrived in Australia in the 1870s. His grandfather regaled young Bob with tales of his sailing days and instilled in him a desire to see the world.

Halverson's first chance to do so came early. He left school at the end of 1953 to begin an apprenticeship as an industrial chemist, but he remained active in the Air Training Corps with the aim of joining the RAAF. A bright young man, he was one of four RAAF cadets chosen in June 1954 to visit Britain at the invitation of the Royal Air Force (RAF), where he met Winston Churchill. The same year, he met Margaret (Maggie) Joan Charlton, a country girl undertaking pre-nursing training at the Footscray Creche and Kindergarten in Albert Street opposite the Halversons' home. She was warmly welcomed by the Halverson household. In 1956, after six months of national service, he joined the RAAF. The following year, he was one of four airmen selected to attend the army's Officer Cadet School at Portsea, Victoria, where he topped the course.

During his first posting to the RAAF base in Townsville, an explosion left Halverson deaf in one ear and ended his ambitions to fly. Transferred back to Melbourne to work in supply and equipment, he and Maggie married at St Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Box Hill, on 12 July 1958. Both tall, they were a striking couple. They had four children in quick succession as they moved between postings across Australia. In 1966 the family went to Washington, DC, where Halverson was a member of the

Figure 29: Bob Halverson.
Source: Australian Government Photographic Service (Auspic).

team buying F-111 aircraft for the RAAF, returning to Australia in 1969. In 1976, now a wing commander, he was posted for three years to the RAF base at Brampton, England, to assist with the restructuring of training facilities. He was also involved in organising Queen Elizabeth II's silver jubilee celebrations in 1977, for which he was awarded an OBE the following year.

When his RAF posting finished, Halverson decided to leave the air force, retiring as a group captain in 1981. He had long been interested in the stock market and began working for Vernon Hauser as a stockbroker and financial planner at Robertson and Thompson, part of the Bell Potter group. Hauser, a member of the Victorian Legislative Council, encouraged him to join the Liberal Party and to stand for state parliament. Halverson was drawn to the Liberals as he saw the Australian Labor Party (ALP) as too wedded to regulation and high taxes—'the grey face of socialism' (*Australian* 1984, 4)—a position that even in the early 1980s elicited some press comment as being seemingly unusual for someone with a working-class background. He was less attracted to state politics as he was more interested in national issues. His involvement with the Liberal Party deepened and he was a delegate to its state council in 1983–84.

At the December 1984 federal election, Halverson contested the seat of Casey for the Liberal Party. This sprawling seat had been created in 1969 to cover Melbourne's urban expansion eastwards into the Dandenong Ranges and towards the Yarra Valley. It had returned both ALP and Liberal members and, in 1983, had been won by Labor's Peter Steedman by a narrow margin that became even tighter after a redistribution of electoral boundaries. Amid an unexpected national swing against the Hawke government, Halverson won Casey 50.6 per cent to 49.4 per cent on a two-party-preferred basis. Reflecting on his win, he assured the press that it was nonsense to assume that all Liberals were silvertails (*Australian* 1984, 4).

With his defence background, Halverson in parliament presented himself as a patriotic nationalist. He strongly supported Australia remaining a constitutional monarchy and retaining its existing flag against suggestions that both were inappropriate for modern Australia; he was to later revise his position on both issues. From the backbench, he undertook extensive committee work, including with the Joint Statutory Committee on Public Works and the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade, where he drew on his overseas experience with the RAAF. He enjoyed committee work and believed there was scope for its extension. At the July 1987 election, his hard work, gregarious nature, and organisational ability helped to strengthen his position in what was Victoria's most marginal seat and he won 51.2 per cent of the two-party-preferred vote. His political career began to show promise. He acted as opposition shadow minister for foreign affairs and, in April 1990, after increasing his two-party-preferred vote in Casey to 58.2 per cent at the election the previous month, he became opposition whip.

These were difficult years for the Liberal Party, with a succession of parliamentary leaders failing to shake Labor's hold on government. Halverson supported John Howard in party leadership ballots, including that of April 1993 against John Hewson when Howard was defeated. In the reshuffle of opposition positions that followed, Halverson was dropped as whip. When Alexander Downer replaced Hewson as opposition leader in May 1994, Halverson was reappointed whip and a few days later promoted to chief opposition whip. He held the position until the coalition victory at the 1996 election, by which time Howard was leading the Liberals.

Halverson stood for the Liberal party room's ballot for Speaker amid a crowded field of four fellow Liberals and the National Party's Ian Sinclair. Sinclair had the support of the new prime minister and was a seasoned parliamentarian, but he faced the difficulty that the choice was to be made by Liberal members. Although Halverson was markedly less experienced, he was widely liked by his colleagues and seen as having been an effective whip, and he promised that he would be an independent Speaker 'as far as that can be achieved' (Grattan 1996, 11). He undertook not to attend party meetings, to resign from the party's federal strategy committee, and to not attend its state policy assembly. The party room voted overwhelmingly for him and he became Speaker on 30 April 1996, unopposed in the House. During the 1996 election campaign, Howard had promised that if elected he would raise the standards of parliamentary behaviour from the levels they had fallen to under Paul Keating. Halverson particularly supported the reform of question time, which, in his view, was frequently 'a farce' (Halverson 1989).

Once in the Speaker's chair, Halverson took Howard at his word but soon found that the new prime minister's views had changed. He followed Liberal precedent by wearing the traditional court dress of gown and jabot, but was the first non-Labor Speaker not to don the traditional wig. His imposing physical presence and loud voice seemed to suit the role. Controversially, he proceeded to allow supplementary questions in question time, which, although provided for in the standing orders, were subject to a longstanding convention that they were not to be accepted. On 28 May 1996, he allowed opposition leader Kim Beazley a follow-up question concerning the construction of a second Sydney airport to the minister for transport and regional development, John Sharp. The leader of the House, Peter Reith, immediately and unsuccessfully raised a point of order, referencing convention. In December that year, Reith refused to withdraw a derogatory remark about the opposition and was supported by Howard. Halverson was saved from public humiliation when Beazley withdrew the opposition's objection to Reith's comment. His continued defiance of convention by allowing further supplementary questions prompted repeated points of order from Reith and angered the government. Halverson later reflected that he had been naïve to expect the Liberal Party's leadership to support a more independent Speaker.

In May 1997, Halverson advised the House that, as he expected 'questions to be specific, and answers to be relevant' (H.R. Deb. 26.5.1997, 3929), he would intervene whenever ministers' replies became unnecessarily long or digressive. He also complained more broadly that the House was 'too often far too noisy' (H.R. Deb. 26.5.1997, 3930). He seemed to lack the standing in the party and the parliament that would have helped him enforce such good intentions, particularly when ministers ignored him, prompting opposition accusations of bias. Despite his personal popularity, he was not at heart a party warrior and had been better known for organising billiards competitions across party lines. By the end of 1997, after months of friction with Howard, Halverson had had enough.

Returning to parliament following the summer break, Halverson announced his resignation as Speaker to the House on 3 March 1998. 'This is not a decision I have taken lightly', he said, 'but it is my decision and mine alone and I am entirely comfortable with it' (H.R. Deb. 3.3.1998, 159). He later told colleagues that he did not want to experience another session like the last. Beazley expressed appreciation of Halverson's attempts 'to impose disciplines which, if actually adhered to, would have produced a situation in which, both in question time and more generally in the conduct of the House, that improvement of standards which the Prime Minister (Mr Howard) sought, but which has scarcely been delivered upon, might well have proceeded' (H.R. Deb. 3.3.1998, 159). Sinclair was elected Speaker the following day. Halverson later commented that he believed Howard was about to replace him as Speaker, leading to his decision to resign on his own terms.

Halverson returned to the backbench and, in August 1998, the minister for foreign affairs, Alexander Downer, announced his appointment as ambassador to Ireland and the Holy See. He was the first non-Catholic to hold these positions. His sociability, along with his wife's charm and organisational skills, made them popular hosts at the official residence at Killiney. Both were generous supporters of the expatriate community and of Irish charities with Australian connections. Halverson became close to then Irish president, Mary McAleese, and had a good relationship with Pope John Paul II. In 2001 he was made a papal knight and was awarded a Centenary Medal.

While in Ireland, Halverson began treatment for prostate cancer. In 2003 he and Maggie returned to Australia and bought a small beef cattle farm near Holbrook in southern New South Wales. Three years later, he was appointed a non-executive director of the Western Australian technology company QR Sciences. Survived by his wife, one daughter and three sons, he died at the farm on 9 February 2016, Maggie nursing him in his final illness. Halverson was cremated at Albury, New South Wales. A portrait by Robert Hannaford is in the Parliament House collection.

Select bibliography

Abjorensen, Norman. 'Speaking with the Speaker'. *Canberra Times*, 1 November 1997, Panorama 3

Age (Melbourne). 'Footscray Youth State Choice for UK Tour'. 30 June 1954, 10

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 28 May 1996, 1493–94

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 3 December 1996, 7399–503

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 26 May 1997, 3929–30

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 3 March 1998, 159–61

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 4 March 1998, 351–61

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 22 February 1998, 1593–96

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 24 February 2016, 2168–74

Australia. Senate. *Parliamentary Debates*, 22 February 2016, 648–52

Australian. 'Member for Casey Is No Silvertail'. 3 December 1984, 4

Canberra Times. 'An OBE for RAF Service'. 25 January 1978, 9

Canberra Times. 'Hawke Should Go to Funeral: Opposition'. 10 January 1989, 1

Daley, Paul. 'Speaking Out'. *Sunday Age* (Melbourne), 3 February 2002, 15

Grattan, Michelle. 'Victorian MP Wins Role as Federal Speaker'. *Age* (Melbourne), 30 April 1996, 11

Halverson, Maggie. Phone interview by Judith Brett, 2019

Halverson, Robert. Interview by Greg McIntosh, 25 May 1989. Museum of Australian Democracy Oral History collection

McPhedran, Ian. 'Halverson's Last Days? Howard Puts Pressure on Speaker'. *Canberra Times*, 11 February 1997, 1

Peake, Ross. 'Opposition's Flag "Hypocrisy"'. *Canberra Times*, 8 May 1992, 10

Personal knowledge of subject

Redenbach, Stephen C. 'Servant of Two Masters? An Exploration of the Speaker's Role in the Australian Commonwealth Parliament'. PhD thesis, La Trobe University, Melbourne, 1999

Richardson, Graham. 'Our Little Shop of Horrors Lives On'. *Bulletin* (Sydney), 17 March 1998, 34

Sibley, David. 'Instability Rises over Front Bench'. *Canberra Times,* 9 April 1993, 1

Harris, Ian Charles: Clerk 1997–2009

Nicholas Brown

Ian Charles Harris, fourteenth Clerk of the House of Representatives, was born on 16 August 1945 at Kurri Kurri near Cessnock, New South Wales, eldest of three children of locally born parents Charles Rutter Harris, coalminer, and his wife, Beryl Isobel. Ian was descended from several generations of miners; his maternal grandfather was involved in the Rothbury Colliery lockout of 1929. His father encouraged Ian to see that his education should offer an alternative path. Taking the seven-year-old boy into a mine and turning out the lights, he let the darkness make his point.

Dux of Kurri Kurri High School and supported by bursaries and scholarships, Harris studied at the University of Newcastle (BA Hons, 1965; Dip. Ed., 1966; MA, 1969), specialising in Australian constitutional history. While at university, he served on the student representative council, tutored in history, and wrote a weekly column for the *Newcastle Herald* on 'town and gown' affairs, which also informed a regular program on Radio 2NX. After graduation, he taught at Newcastle Technical School and at Canberra High School, where he 'relished the beauty of Canberra with its clean inland climate' (Cotton 2002).

In 1971 Harris was accepted into the Commonwealth Public Service Administrative Training Scheme, and particularly enjoyed his first rotation in the Prime Minister's Department and introduction to the Department of the House of Representatives. His interest in the work of the House was spurred by events surrounding the end of (Sir) John Gorton's prime ministership and Gough Whitlam's mastery of the chamber as leader of the opposition. At the conclusion of his traineeship, he successfully applied to join the parliamentary service in 1972, his tasks including the provision of research assistance to House committees. Appointed to Senior Parliamentary Officer in the Table Office in 1977, he oversaw procedural, administrative, and reporting support for the House. From 1981 as Clerk Assistant (Committees), he further refined his appreciation of the review, investigation, and legislative appraisal roles of the committee system as it assumed more comprehensive and specialised functions, including in facilitating communication with the public. Although respectful of

Figure 30: Ian Harris.
Source: Department of the House of Representatives.

the responsibilities carried by the department, he also sought to ease some of the formalities among its staff. Promoted to First Clerk Assistant (1985), he later became (1993) the first Deputy Clerk to be appointed following open advertisement of the position. A member of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association's Expert Group in Parliamentary Training, he led the establishment of the Australia-based Inter-Parliamentary Study Program for staff in 1994.

In July 1997, Harris succeeded Lyn Barlin as Clerk of the House. Keen to consolidate initiatives under way—such as the work of the Main Committee (now called the Federation Chamber)—he explored further reforms in the department. He encouraged exchange between committee, administrative, and procedural staff, and advocated unsuccessfully for the abolition of the Deputy Clerk position so as to dispel a sense of 'inheritance' from the role of Deputy Clerk to Clerk. With more success, he argued that some important principles of the Public Service Act 1999 should also apply to parliamentary staff, while maintaining their status as members of a separate service. He participated in the formulation of a code of conduct, embedded in the Parliamentary Service Act 1999, replacing a rule-driven approach with values to be observed in work. In areas specific to parliamentary officers, the code emphasised service to the parliament rather than to the government. The Act also reflected his concern to limit the term of appointment of the Clerk of the House. After negotiation with the Public Service Commission and the Clerk of the Senate, to whom the same provisions would apply, the term was limited to ten years.

Harris's attention to the professional development of departmental staff, and to defending their neutrality in dealing with members, was matched by his pursuit of efficiency, accountability, and visibility. He enthusiastically supported the creation of the Parliamentary Studies Centre. Established in 2005, in partnership with the Department of the Senate and the governance and political science programs at The Australian National University's Crawford School of Public Policy, the centre promoted the study of parliamentary systems. Its work included linking researchers with parliamentary institutions in and beyond Australia, student internships, and educational programs enhancing public awareness of parliament's role in policy development. A frequent speaker in PSC forums, he saw the centre's Strengthening Parliamentary Institutions project as a core initiative. Developing a comparative research program examining the 'causes of success and failure in parliamentary capacity-building stemming from attempts to modernise and strengthen legislatures' (Harris 2007, 71), the project matched his sense of the importance of balancing traditions with emerging opportunities for communication and inclusion.

The adaptation of parliamentary procedures to developments in information technology, and to new opportunities to engage with the wider community, was, for Harris, another vital commitment. The parliamentary system, he argued, could seem 'geared basically to an Anglo Saxon literate group' (*The World Today* 2009).

He nurtured new practices that incorporated audiovisual, digital, and interactive forms of communication with the 'person in the street' (Harris 2002, 17). This included initiatives that recognised Australia's social diversity—among them, the acknowledgement of Indigenous cultures in the opening ceremony of the House (Harris 2008).

The innovations Harris instituted were not without critics or reservations. His introduction of notebook computers into the chamber assisted members to receive external advice during debate, but also (as Harris conceded) resulted in the Speaker's rulings being more likely to be challenged on the basis of precedent. Electronic communication also raised concerns that his role as the Clerk was elevated by his capacity to communicate with the Speaker more discreetly and less visibly than in a summons to the chair. Yet these experiments, Harris contended, helped to boost parliament's relevance. His suggestion that PowerPoint presentations be introduced into the chamber to 'improve the impact or absorption of information' was unsuccessful, being seen by some as potentially undermining the role of debate in the House's business (Fullilove 2006). His argument in 2008 for the introduction of electronic petitioning—to address the marked decline in the number of citizens' applications to the House—was also rejected. He nonetheless remained a determined advocate of taking parliament to the people, highlighting issues of access and representativeness.

In advancing these causes, Harris drew on a deep sense of the distinctive adaptations of the Australian parliament. The 2004 fourth edition of the House standing orders—the first comprehensive revision since 1963—ended the primacy accorded in 1901 to the practices of the British House of Commons in resolving uncertainties in procedure. Responding to concerns about a perceived decline in standards during question time, he noted the continuing public and media interest in the performance of ministers and shadow ministers, if not necessarily in accountability. As Harris asked, why would 'so many people waste their time so wantonly' (2006, 7) in following question time if it had no value?

In 2002 Harris's defence of the privileges of the House drew him into an extended debate with the Clerk of the Senate, Harry Evans. Harris maintained that Peter Reith, a former minister of defence who had left parliament in 2001, could claim legal immunity if asked to give evidence before the Senate select committee inquiring into the 'children overboard' incident of October 2001, on the basis that he was a member of the House at the time of the relevant events. Neither Evans nor the committee accepted that advice, yet on three occasions Reith refused requests to appear. Divided about whether to formally summons Reith—which was judged likely to lead to a protracted court case—the committee did not pursue the matter. In 2008 disagreement between Harris and Evans again gained publicity when Harris advised that a bill originating in the Senate and aiming to increase the pension rate

was effectively an appropriation bill, and on that basis was unconstitutional. This matter also remained formally unresolved, with it being judged within the power of either chamber to refuse to debate any bill. These were case-by-case disputes, but still reflected his support for the primacy of the House and the careful defence of its privileges.

Harris carried his support for the role of parliament and its modernisation into his contribution to the international Association of Secretaries General of Parliaments. Joining its executive committee in 2000, he served as vice-president (2001–03) and president (2003–06)—the first Australian to hold the latter position. Recognising that the ASGP was a bilingual organisation, Harris studied French to help him ensure impartiality in his chairing of meetings. Work with the association extended to participation in parliamentary development projects and training, often in association with the United Nations Development Programme, in Africa, Asia, and the South Pacific. His emphasis in these roles frequently centred on parliament's contribution to 'peacebuilding from below' (Harris 2008, 4), in fostering a dialogue with civil society and in securing the institutions that could advance reconciliation. In 2009 he was appointed the first chair of the steering committee for the Forum of Secretaries-General of Asia Pacific Parliaments.

Harris retired in December 2009 in accordance with the ten-year limit to the Clerk's appointment. Valedictory speechmakers admired his commitment to parliament's reputation and expressed gratitude, as Speaker Harry Jenkins noted, for 'the outward focus' of the department and his own 'strategic engagement with the community in order to promote the parliamentary institution' (H.R. Deb. 26.11.2009, 13107). Several members paid tribute to the support provided by Harris's wife, Erika, the youngest daughter of Istvan and Ilona Hangodi, refugees from Hungary. At the time of their marriage at Queanbeyan, New South Wales, in 1986, Erika was working in a ministerial office. Harris considered that his career, including the relationships fundamental to the collegiality he promoted, had benefited from her energy, advice, and wisdom.

In thanking Harris for his patience and generosity, and also acknowledging Erika's support, the Deputy Speaker, Anna Burke, observed that 'Ian's great day was actually yesterday' (H.R. Deb. 26.11.2009, 13102), when he was inducted into the Hall of Fame at Cessnock. That honour was added to the award of the University of Newcastle Convocation Medal for Professional Excellence (2000), the Australian Centenary Medal (2001), and being appointed AO (2007). Another former Speaker, David Hawker, recalled Harris as 'a man of complete integrity, always impartial and always discreet' (H.R. Deb. 26.11.2009, 13091).

During retirement, Harris's views on parliament continued to be sought, such as during a 2010 dispute over a proposed pairing arrangement for the Speaker and on issues relating to possible abuses of parliamentary entitlements. He was keen,

however, to seek other directions. Alongside his working life, Harris had been active in community affairs, as secretary of the Tuggeranong Rugby Club (1978), president of the Australian Capital Territory Public Service Rugby League (1993–95), and as a volunteer at the St Benedict's Community Centre for homeless men in Queanbeyan. From 2009, he worked as a landscape gardener, becoming immersed in organic gardening principles, continuing his studies of horticulture, reviving a personal passion for beekeeping, and discovering a talent for recycling and repurposing do-it-yourself projects, as well as enjoying with Erika the company of their four daughters and their own families.

Select bibliography

Alumni Newsletter (Canberra). 'Retirement of Ian Harris AO'. August 2010, 1, 4

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 26 November 2009, 13089–92, 13095, 13101–2, 13105–8

Cotton, Peter. 'Frank and Fearless'. *About the House* (Canberra), July–August 2002, 13–14

Fullilove, Michael. 'Pointers on How to Make the Already Dull Duller'. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 14 December 2006, 15

Harris, Ian. 'The Structure of the Australian House of Representatives over Its First One Hundred Years: The Impact of Globalisation'. *UNSW Law Journal* 24, no. 3 (2001): 688–700

Harris, Ian. 'The Role of a Clerk of the House of Representatives'. Address to Juris Doctor students, University of Melbourne, June 2002. Copy held on file

Harris, Ian. 'Question Time: Impartial Speakers and Dissent from Rulings, Some Comments on the House of Representatives' Experience'. Democratic Audit of Australia, March 2006. Copy held on file

Harris, Ian. 'The Australian Parliamentary Studies Centre: Strengthening Parliamentary Institutions Project'. *The Table* 75 (2007): 69–72

Harris, Ian. 'Parliaments as Peace-Builders in Conflict Affected Countries'. Contribution to Association of Secretaries General of Parliaments, Cape Town session, April 2008. Copy held on file

Harris, Ian. 'Contribution from Mr Ian Harris, Clerk of the House of Representatives of the Parliament of Australia, to the General Debate on Observing Parliamentary Traditions and Meeting Expectations of Members and Electors'. Association of Secretaries General of Parliaments, Addis Ababa session, April 2009. Copy held on file

The World Today. 'Sounds of Summer: Clerks Farewell'. Interview by Sabra Lane. ABC Radio, 21 December 2009. www.abc.net.au/worldtoday/content/2009/s2777407.htm

Hawker, David Peter: Speaker 2004–2007

Clare Parker

David Peter Maxwell Hawker, grazier and twenty-fifth Speaker of the House of Representatives, was born on 1 May 1949 in Adelaide, son of David Hawker, grazier, and his wife, Pamela Gavin, both South Australian born. The Hawkers were a prominent family whose ancestors migrated to South Australia in 1839 and included George Charles Hawker (1818–95), who established a merino wool stud north of Adelaide and served as Speaker of the South Australian House of Assembly (1860–65). George Hawker's grandson Charles Allan Hawker (1894–1938) represented the South Australian federal electorate of Wakefield for the Nationalist and United Australia parties (1929–38). David junior's father and uncle both served on local councils.

When he was four years old, Hawker's family moved to Apsley in western Victoria, where his parents ran a property focused on wool production. After attending Geelong Church of England Grammar School, he studied mechanical engineering at the University of Melbourne (BEng, 1972). He gained work experience at a petroleum refinery at Altona in Melbourne's west, and as a jackaroo on a family property west of Port Augusta, South Australia, before returning to manage the property at Apsley. In 1973 he married Penelope Ann Ahern of Melbourne. Penny and he had three sons and one daughter. Hawker was 'furious' with the Labor government of Gough Whitlam, particularly regarding economic management and Whitlam's comment that farmers had 'never had it so good' (*The House Magazine* 1987, 3). He joined the Liberal Party in 1973. In 1974 he became president of his local Apsley–Langkoop branch, and held the position until his election to parliament.

In May 1983, Hawker stood for federal parliament at a by-election for his local south-western Victorian seat of Wannon, following the resignation of its sitting member Malcolm Fraser, who had lost the prime ministership two months earlier. Hawker defeated eighteen candidates for preselection for the safe Liberal seat, including the former Victorian state minister Ian Smith. He won the by-election with a two-party

Figure 31: David Hawker.
Source: Australian Government Photographic Service (Auspic).

preferred margin of more than 20 per cent, and held Wannon comfortably at the next nine elections. As a local member, he focused on such issues as fuel and freight costs, export prices, and wheat marketing. At the end of his career, he estimated that, as the local member, he had driven more than a million kilometres around Wannon.

Hawker served as opposition deputy whip (1989–90, and again briefly in 1994), before becoming chief opposition whip (1994–96), encompassing an uneasy period when leadership tensions threatened party cohesion. His service on the front bench was limited to three years as shadow minister for land transport (1990–93). Committee work dominated his second decade in parliament, when he sat on both party and parliamentary committees. From 1993 to 1996, he was a member of the Coalition's Expenditure Review Committee, and in 1993 was also appointed chair of the Liberal federal Regional and Rural Committee. His service on major parliamentary committees included the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade (1993–96, 1998–2004). As chair of the Defence Sub-Committee, he initiated what became the Australian Defence Force Parliamentary Program, which provides parliamentarians with practical experience of the Australian Defence Force. He was an 'urbane but firm' (*Canberra Times* 2004, 2) chair of the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Economics, Finance and Public Administration (1998–2004), during which it produced a report on cost-shifting to local government (2003). Membership of the Speaker's panel (1998–2004) gave him valuable experience.

Overlooked for the ministry, Hawker became increasingly interested in the Speakership, having reasoned that 'I'd better find something else to keep myself busy' (Hawker 2011–13). He contested the position in party room votes in 1998 and 2002, but lost on both occasions to South Australia's Neil Andrew. Hawker campaigned on a platform of improving public faith in parliament, arguing that television broadcasting of question time 'does not always instil in people an appropriate level of confidence in our Federal Parliament' (McBride 2002). His persistence finally bore fruit after Andrew's retirement at the election of October 2004. He defeated Bronwyn Bishop in the final vote in the party room with the decisive support of his fellow Victorian members. He told the House that he hoped to emulate George Charles Hawker as a 'courteous and fair' Speaker (H.R. Deb. 16.11.2004, 11).

After twenty-one years in parliament and experience as whip, committee chair, and on the Speaker's panel, Hawker was well qualified. Yet his elevation was greeted with widespread surprise by the press, despite his past attempts to become Speaker. One newspaper opined that, faced with a difficult House, his 'previous experience in the farmyard should come in handy' (*Australian* 2004, 14). The new Speaker himself suggested that his time as a jackaroo was helpful, as it had taught him the importance of being resolute; 'if you show any fear, cattle will just walk over you. Wild dogs will attack you. You've got to be able to control that emotion' (Hudson 2004).

He likened the role of Speaker to that of a football umpire, 'where your job is to try and keep the game flowing smoothly' and 'people shouldn't really notice you're there' (Hudson 2004). The House of Commons practice of a fully independent Speaker was not, he thought, suited to the smaller Australian House of Representatives, where 'governments need every seat they have' (Milne 2004). He agreed with Neil Andrew that it would also not be viable for the Speakership to be held by someone from outside the governing party or outside parliament entirely. Understanding of 'the nuances of the Parliament' and its personalities could only be gained by long experience as a member; 'You had to read the mood' (Hawker 2011–13), and so he sometimes let matters resolve themselves.

Hawker's first few weeks as Speaker were a truly testing time. In his first question time, he ruled a question from opposition leader Mark Latham to John Anderson out of order on the grounds that a question to a minister about his role as party leader did not fall 'within the minister's administration' (H.R. Deb. 17.11.2004, 80). When the opposition objected, he determined that his ruling was consistent with the 'greater weight' of established practice, despite rulings by some earlier Speakers to the contrary (H.R. Deb. 18.11.2004, 1). The following month, the opposition unsuccessfully moved a dissent motion against his allowance of a question from a coalition backbencher relating to a bill on school funding due to be debated later that day (VP 2004/63–64, 1.12.2004). He ruled that, while the bill itself could not be the subject of a question, the general subject that it concerned could be. Labor was unhappy with both this fine distinction and the tabling of a document during the minister's reply, leading the manager of opposition business, Julia Gillard, to accuse Hawker of lacking impartiality. Several days later, he again faced an unsuccessful dissent motion when the opposition disputed his ruling against a question to the minister for veterans' affairs, De-Anne Kelly, on a decision she had made in her previous capacity as a parliamentary secretary (VP 2004/95–96, 7.12.2004).

These and other challenges to Hawker led one journalist to liken proceedings in the chamber to 'an aggressive press conference', adding that 'while it is not uncommon for new speakers to get a torrid first few weeks, it's been a long time since anyone has had such a horror start as Hawker' (Seccombe 2004). Parliamentary arithmetic may have been a factor. Following the 2004 election, the coalition government was in the unusual position of having a majority in both houses of parliament, making the opposition more than usually determined to scrutinise the government by whatever means available. This was particularly evident during debates on legislation for the government's controversial new industrial relations policy, WorkChoices. Hawker denied that as Speaker he favoured the government, arguing that 'it's my job to uphold order. I call it as I see it' (Burke 2005).

Ejections of Labor members and accusations of bias against Hawker continued during 2006, leading to 'stunts, chaotic noise and mass warnings and expulsions' (*Daily Telegraph* 2006). One incident stood out; in May 2006, he ejected Gillard from the House for calling Tony Abbott a 'snivelling grub' (H.R. Deb. 31.5.2006, 1) and refusing to withdraw unreservedly. Several days earlier, Abbott had himself used this phrase, but subsequently made a full withdrawal. Despite such incidents, among Hawker's ongoing concerns as Speaker was how to broaden public appreciation of parliament beyond unrepresentative news clips. Few realised that government and opposition members worked together much of the time, passing most legislation unopposed and cooperating in the work of parliamentary committees.

As a presiding officer, Hawker was jointly responsible for overseeing management of the parliament building. A parliamentary childcare facility was finally approved in August 2007 after many years of demand for this service. Vehicle access to Parliament House was restricted by use of retractable bollards after a review suggested that car bombs were the biggest risk to the building; mail was more thoroughly screened following several white powder scares. But he and the President of the Senate, Paul Calvert, rejected a proposal for police background checks of parliamentary staff and journalists.

After the coalition lost government at the 2007 election, Hawker decided to repay the faith of his electors in Wannon by serving a full term as their member. He returned to the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade (2008–10), but in May 2009 announced his intention to retire at the 2010 election. Being out of government had proved frustrating, especially after having been in opposition for more than a decade earlier in his long parliamentary career. In 2010 he proposed, with the support of Deputy Speaker Anna Burke, that the funding of the parliament be independently determined. He argued that, as the budget to run parliament had been cut while ministerial staff and departmental budgets had grown, 'the balance between parliament and the cabinet … is tilting unhealthily towards the cabinet of the day' (H.R. Deb. 16.6.2010, 5592). Hawker felt that the only way to correct this was 'a parliamentary commission that adequately resources the parliament' (Hawker 2010). The House Standing Committee on Appropriations and Administration, which considers estimates of annual funding for the Department of the House of Representatives, was established during the parliament that followed his retirement.

When Hawker left parliament in August 2010, his predecessor in Wannon, Malcolm Fraser, described him as a distinguished 'quiet achiever' (Johnson 2009). Hawker returned to the family property, where he worked alongside two of his sons. He took on a range of other positions, including as chairman of the committee of governors for the ecologically significant Heart Morass wetlands in Gippsland, chair of VicRoads' Motorcycle Expert Advisory Panel, membership of the board of Abbeyfield Australia, an organisation dedicated to community-based housing, and membership

of the fundraising committee for the Warrnambool Base Hospital. He was appointed AO in the Queen's Birthday Honours List in 2012 for 'distinguished service to the Parliament of Australia, to public administration and monetary policy reform, and to the community through local government, health and sporting organisations'. A portrait by Jiawei Shen was unveiled in September 2008 at Parliament House, depicting him in the Speaker's robes and posed proudly before the mace.

Select bibliography

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 8 December 1983, 615–18

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 16 November 2004, 5–12

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 17 November 2004, 80–81

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 18 November 2004, 1

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 1 December 2004, 77–90

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 7 December 2004, 6–19

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 2 November 2005, 4–16

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 25 May 2006, 49–50

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 31 May 2006, 1–4

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 16 June 2010, 5589–93

Australia. House of Representatives. *Votes and Proceedings*, 2004, 63–64, 95–96

Australian. 'Parliamentary Circus Gets New Ringmaster'. 16 November 2004, 14

Burke, Nicolette. '55 MPs Ejected During Bitter Debates'. *Advertiser* (Adelaide), 19 December 2005, 26

Canberra Times. 'Long-Serving Member Praised by Colleagues'. 16 November 2004, 2

Daily Telegraph (Sydney). 'Speaker in Labor's Firing Line'. 16 June 2006, 4

Hawker, David. 'Don't Starve the Watchdog'. *Australian*, 22 February 2010, 14

Hawker, David. Interview by Peter Sekuless, 2011–13. Transcript. Old Parliament House Political and Parliamentary Oral History Project. National Library of Australia

The House Magazine (Canberra). 'Profile'. 25 February 1987, 3

Hudson, Phillip. 'Hawker Ready to Muster Up and Keep the Herd in Line'. *Sunday Age* (Melbourne), 21 November 2004, 10

Johnson, Alex. 'After 26 Years as Member for Wannon, David Hawker Says It's Time to Retire'. *Standard* (Warrnambool, Vic.), 31 May 2009. www.standard.net.au/story/734465/after-26-years-as-member-for-wannon-david-hawker-says-its-time-to-retire/

Koutsoukis, Jason. 'Victorian Takes Speaker's Chair'. *Age* (Melbourne), 16 November 2004, 5

McBride, Andrew. 'Hawker Eyes New Job'. *Ararat Advertiser*, 28 January 2002, 3

Milne, Glenn. 'Not a Soft Speaker'. *Sunday Telegraph* (Sydney), 21 November 2004, 102

Seccombe, Mike. 'Nothing to Speak Of'. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 11 December 2004, 28

Holder, Sir Frederick William: Speaker 1901–1909

Haydon Manning

Sir Frederick William Holder (1850–1909), first Speaker of the House of Representatives, was born on 12 May 1850 at Happy Valley, near Adelaide, eldest son of James Morecott Holder, a freeman of the City of London who had migrated to South Australia shortly after his marriage on 9 September 1848 to Martha Breakspear Roby, daughter of a London tailor. James became a schoolteacher at Happy Valley and, about 1870, stationmaster at Freeling. Frederick was educated initially by his father, later at state schools, and then at the Collegiate School of St Peter, Adelaide. He also became a teacher—first at Prince Alfred College, then at Freeling. In August 1875, he was made headmaster of the Burra Public School.

In 1877 Holder, whose school had been superseded by a new Model School, became manager of a Burra store, town clerk, and the first managing editor of the newly established *Burra Record*, of which he was later proprietor. He had already been active in the Burra Parliamentary Club and in the *Record* developed ideas on government at both the colonial and the local levels. Following his election to the Burra Corporation, he served as mayor, in 1886–87 and 1888–89, and was largely responsible for a waterworks scheme and bridge construction. He served as a captain in the South Australian Volunteer Force and on the council of the South Australian School of Mines and Industries.

On 29 March 1877, at Burra, Holder married Julia Maria Stephens, daughter of John Riccardo Stephens, a Cornishman, homeopathic doctor, farmer, teacher, and shopkeeper who had studied for the Methodist ministry. Holder shared his wife's Wesleyan and suffragist convictions and, as a lay preacher, regularly conducted services in Adelaide and in country churches. He was also active in the administration of the church and in seeking unity of the different Methodist denominations. Although he supported his wife's campaigns for temperance and against gambling, he had a keen sense of fun and made a happy home life for their four sons and four daughters.
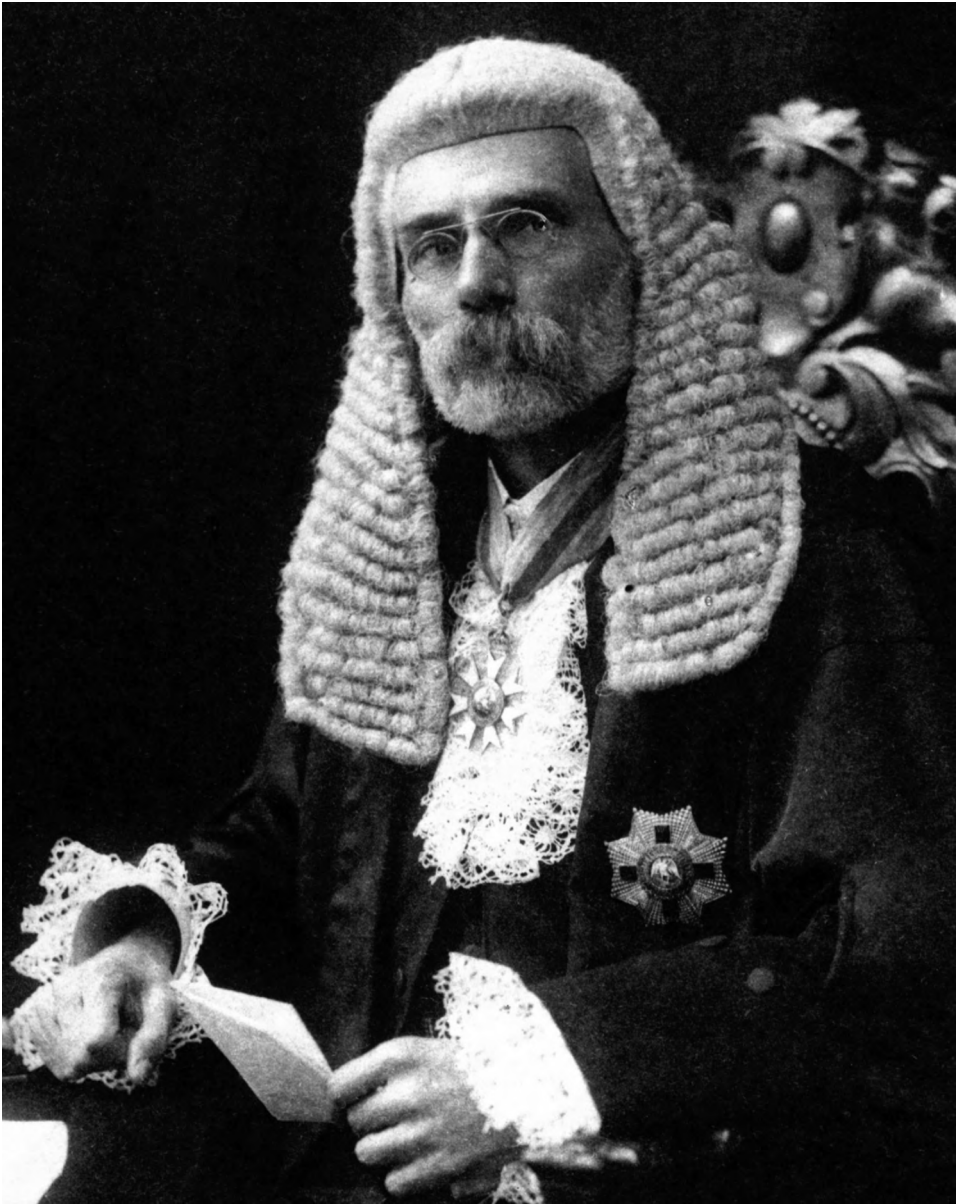
Figure 32: Frederick Holder.
Source: Department of the House of Representatives.

In 1887 Holder was elected senior member for the multi-member seat of Burra in the South Australian House of Assembly. He retained his seat at four subsequent elections. Describing himself as a free-trader, he opposed the sale of Crown lands in order to remove the deficit and was against a property tax. He favoured an increase of the land tax, reduction of income tax and customs duties, payment of members, and the Chaffey irrigation scheme to harness the Murray River in the Renmark area, but opposed the totalisator. In his first arduous parliamentary session, Holder was a member of the commission on the land laws, the select committee on the *Star of Greece* shipwreck disaster, and chairman of the Barrier Trade Select Committee. On 27 June 1889, he became treasurer in (Sir) John Cockburn's ministry, which introduced succession duties and a progressive tax on unimproved land values. The next year, he was chairman of a select committee—later converted into a royal commission—which advocated the adoption of intercolonial free trade on the basis of a uniform tariff. He was also a member of the commission on landing and embarking European mails.

After the fall of the Cockburn ministry in August 1890, Holder, as leader of the opposition and a member of the pastoral lands commission, in 1891, travelled extensively in the colony. He wrote a series of articles on the pastoral industry for the South Australian Register, urging caution in the subdivision of pastoral properties, steady improvement of water resources, and more rabbit-proof fencing. On 17 June 1892, he defeated Premier Thomas Playford in the House on a motion of confidence and became premier and treasurer. It was, however, a time of great financial difficulty and the ministry fell on 15 October.

Following the conservative win in the election of 1893, Holder, though he had been leader of the opposition, made way for Charles Kingston to become premier in recognition of his role in bringing together liberal factions and Labor members to defeat the conservative ministry of John Downer. Holder became commissioner of public works and, from April 1894, treasurer and minister in charge of the Northern Territory, which had been annexed by South Australia in 1863. Kingston had opposed universal adult suffrage at the election but was persuaded by Holder and Cockburn to change his views, with the result that, in December 1894, South Australia became the first Australian colony in which women could vote. The State Bank of South Australia was established during Holder's treasurership and he produced a balanced budget, despite successive years of drought and depression.

Holder was elected a delegate to the 1897 Australasian Federal Convention, second only to Kingston. By the close of the convention, Holder was in the first rank of influence, particularly on financial matters. His belief in the free exchange of goods as a first step towards a united Australia drove his commitment to the federal movement. At the convention, he proposed a clause in the Constitution guaranteeing the national

right for women to vote. Following its defeat, he successfully secured a compromise that would ensure the vote in federal elections for all adults with the vote in their respective state.

On 6 July 1897, Holder presented to the South Australian parliament the draft for a federal Constitution prepared by the convention sitting in Adelaide. When the bill, after revision in Sydney and Melbourne, was submitted to the electors, its acceptance by an overwhelming majority vote in South Australia was largely due to his influence and advocacy. In 1899, when mules pulling his vehicle on a country trip bolted and he seriously injured his hip, he refused to seek medical advice—an early instance of habitual disregard for his own health. On 28 November that year, the Kingston government was defeated and, when V. L. Solomon was unable to form a ministry, Holder again became premier and treasurer, and also minister of industry. He retained these positions until he moved to the federal parliament in May 1901. His second government established libraries in country towns, introduced standard time throughout South Australia, and ensured completion of the Bundaleer and Barossa water schemes.

With other premiers, Holder refused in December 1900 to serve in a federal ministry under the New South Wales premier, Sir William Lyne, as part of an interim government ahead of the general election scheduled for March 1901. To thwart Governor-General Lord Hopetoun's proposal to appoint Lyne, (Sir) Edmund Barton proposed a 'Cabinet of Kings', and Hopetoun, under considerable pressure, changed tack and supported Barton's claim to the prime ministership. Holder coveted appointment as the Commonwealth's first treasurer. As the incumbent South Australian premier, he travelled to Sydney to meet Barton, only to learn that he had been excluded from the ministry in favour of Kingston. Holder's fellow South Australian parliamentarian Patrick McMahon Glynn reported that, despite 'his somewhat neutral nature', Holder was 'furious and disappointed' (Glynn, 4 January 1901), but the journalist Herbert Campbell-Jones instead recalled that he took the news of the 'Kingston–Barton sleight-of-hand' with 'amazing aplomb' (Campbell-Jones 1935). While a public explanation was never issued, Barton was wary of Holder's free-trade position and probably simply preferred Kingston as a fellow protectionist. Moreover, Kingston's position as a long-serving and recent South Australian premier made it relatively easy for Barton to make the case for his suitability.

At the ensuing federal election, conducted in South Australia as a single state-wide constituency, Holder ran as a free-trade candidate. Among the seven members elected, he polled fourth to Kingston, (Sir) Langdon Bonython, and Glynn, with free trade polling 50 per cent of the vote, protection 33, and Labor 16. Holder received the largest number of votes in the twenty-one country districts. In the days before the first session of federal parliament, Prime Minister Barton disregarded pleas to be appointed Speaker that the renowned Federationist Sir John Quick directed via

Alfred Deakin, instead circulating a letter to members canvassing support for Holder as Speaker. Offering the post to Holder shrewdly provided insurance against his being tempted to join (Sir) George Reid's Free Traders. When the parliament sat for the first time on 9 May 1901, Holder was duly elected unopposed, although there were dissenting voices. Bruce Smith, a free-trader from Queensland, denounced Barton's letter as antithetical to House of Commons practice and 'wholly unbecoming to the new order' (H.R. Deb 9.5.1901, 21). His disgruntlement arguably derived from having coveted the Speakership himself, with the *Age* describing this 'first discordant note' as 'a Little Scene' (1901). Donald Cameron of Tasmania more benignly regretted that Holder's elevation would effectively deny the free-traders an extra vote on the floor (H.R. Deb 9.5.1901, 22).

After being ceremonially conducted to the Speaker's chair by his proposer and seconder, Holder assured the chamber of his 'deep sense of the obligation … which the House has unanimously conferred upon me' (H.R. Deb 9.5.1901, 22). Barton responded by praising him for his 'known acquaintance with Parliamentary usage and practice' and for being 'an honourable and upright man' (H.R. Deb 9.5.1901, 22). Holder faced a daunting task. With only provisional standing orders at hand, based on those used by the colonial assemblies, he 'had only generally accepted principles and his own common sense to guide him' (Souter 1988, 43). Maintaining order was further complicated by the presence in the House of eight other former colonial premiers, the tendency of many members to remain wedded to the standing orders used in their states, and a chamber uneasily divided between three political parties. Despite the *Bulletin's* later comment that Holder should have 'decided to dispense with the horsehair and the millinery' (1909, 7), he more likely benefited from the trappings of authority and traditions of the Speakership. His interpretation of standing orders was from the outset characterised by impartiality and decisiveness. He soon established himself as a commanding presence in the House, with the *Argus* reflecting that 'it is pleasant to hear his sonorous tones giving out a prompt ruling' ('Ithuriel' 1901).

Working with Sir Richard Chaffey Baker, the first President of the Senate, Holder was responsible for adapting Westminster practices and those of the state legislatures to the needs of the new parliament. One early task was to attempt to draft permanent standing orders, Holder having been appointed chair of the Standing Orders Committee on 5 June 1901. The House's failure to agree on new standing orders led to his making do with amendments to the provisional orders. In November 1901, he and the Chairman of Committees, J. M. Chanter, supported the then controversial right of all members to propose revenue-raising laws including tariffs, albeit with misgivings on Holder's part. As chairman of the Joint Library Committee, he was responsible for what would become the blueprint for the eventual National Library of Australia.

Holder was appointed KCMG in 1902. Sir Frederick was returned unopposed at the 1903 election as an independent for the single-member seat of Wakefield, and held the same seat at the 1906 election. Both of his re-elections by the House as Speaker were supported by all three party leaders without contest. He accordingly came to occupy the role very much in the spirit of Westminster, drawing on his relatively independent status to help assert his authority. His success in usually remaining aloof from party politics was demonstrated by his only participating in debates that concerned his administrative role as Speaker. Despite this, he once alluded to 'an almost overwhelming desire to step out of the Chair and tear off the gag' (*Adelaide Observer* 1904).

Superficially, Holder had appeared unsuited to adjudicating over a rancorous chamber that often sat into the early morning hours. Deakin described Holder, who was effectively blind in one eye, as also being 'as thin as a paling', with 'a chest which seemed destined for consumption' (1963, 61). Holder's indifference to his health and the advice of doctors and friends came to the fore in his final days and led to dispute over what caused his fatal collapse. The long campaign for Federation, the establishment of the new parliament, and the vigorous interplay of the parties all took their toll. In the week before his death, he appears to have suffered a minor heart attack caused by exhaustion after rushing to catch the Friday evening train to Adelaide. He did not seek medical advice over the weekend and managed to summon sufficient energy to preach at the West Adelaide Methodist Church—renamed the Holder Memorial Church in 1915—on Sunday evening.

Returning to Melbourne, he was in the House on the night of 22–23 July 1909 while it sat as a committee of the whole debating old-age and invalid pension legislation. The temper of some members was angry following the fusion of protectionists and free-traders six weeks earlier, which formed the Fusionist Deakin–Cook ministry and ushered Deakin back into the prime ministership at the expense of Labor's Andrew Fisher. Holder took the chair briefly shortly after 4 a.m., but made way for Chairman of Committees Charles McDonald when it moved back into committee. He shifted to a seat on the front bench, still dressed in the Speaker's wig and gown, as the treasurer, Sir John Forrest, jousted with the still deeply embittered Lyne. No doubt weary and ailed by his recent health scare, shortly after 5 a.m. Holder uttered 'Dreadful, dreadful!' and collapsed on the floor. Without regaining consciousness, he died that afternoon of a cerebral haemorrhage, still in the parliament building. One of the medically qualified members who tended to him in his final hours was his eventual successor as Speaker, Carty Salmon.

Reflecting on the circumstances of Holder's death, the *Sydney Morning Herald* opined that an 'evil temper' had crept into parliament and 'borne bitter fruit but we hardly imagine that there will be any sudden conversion to better ways' (27 July 1909). In the same vein, the *Age* maintained that 'Sir Fredrick had succumbed to the rising tide of evil in the House' (1909). The *Bulletin* even more provocatively asked, 'What mania possessed the Fused crowd to rave as it did, the Lord only knows, but

… if that insane bellowing killed him, then his dead body lies at the Fused party's door' (1909, 8). Against these press pronouncements, the member for Melbourne, Dr William Maloney, rose in the House to point out that the chief cause of Holder's death was his pre-existing ill health (H.R. Deb 27.7.1909, 1631–32).

Town hall bells across Adelaide tolled when the news was received. The *Advertiser* mourned the loss of 'one of the pillars of Australian Liberalism' (1909). During the condolence motion, Deakin observed that Holder's rulings 'without seeming unduly weighted, were based upon close study and examination of precedent; their delivery was swift, incisive, and clear, thus assisting most materially in the transaction of public business' (H.R. Deb 27.7.1909, 1630). Fisher, as leader of the opposition, spoke of Holder's 'knowledge of procedure … his kindliness of character, and consideration for everyone' (H.R. Deb 27.7.1909, 1630). After a memorial service in the House, his body was taken by train to Adelaide for a state funeral and burial in West Terrace cemetery. He was survived by his wife and their eight children. Julia Holder in 1916 became Australian president of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union, which she represented at the union's world conference in London in 1920.

Holder's political career was more that of a parliamentarian than an ideologue. In parliament, he marshalled his arguments well and spoke fluently and with fervour. He demonstrated a fine knowledge of Westminster procedure, a mind for detail that served him well as he followed debate, and, given his devoutness, a perpetually sober presence of mind. Despite the manoeuvrings associated with his becoming Speaker, he managed to emulate South Australian practice to remain independent across the six governments that rose and fell during the first eight years of the Commonwealth. Although this relative weakness of the executive helped him to emulate many aspects of the British Speakership, an enduring tradition of independence was never likely, given that this 'had not been firmly established in the colonial legislatures' (Redenbach 1999, 56). Effectively, every ruling of his set a precedent. A future Speaker, Norman Makin, judged that, in producing 'a heavy list of these precedents', Holder was always 'a model of propriety and sagacity' (Makin c. 1962). The veteran journalist (Sir) William Sowden described Holder as one of the 'smartest men in the administration of government business' he had known (*Mail* 1915).

Several of Holder's articles were reprinted in 1892 under the title *Our Pastoral Industry*, and a small book of his sermons, *Condensed Sermons by a Layman*, was published in Adelaide in 1922. There are portraits by George A. J. Webb in the South Australian House of Assembly and in Parliament House, Canberra. Another portrait, by Holder's daughter Rhoda, is held by the National Library of Australia, and a bust by Michael Smerd is held by the Regional Council of Goyder in Burra. His name is commemorated by a Canberra suburb.

This article supplements the original Volume 9 ADB *biography, published 1983, authored by Ralph Harry. adb.anu.edu.au/biography/holder-sir-frederick-william-6706/text11575*

Select bibliography

Adelaide Observer. 'Mr Speaker Holder on Parliament'. 7 May 1904, 36

Advertiser (Adelaide). 'The Late Sir Frederick Holder'. 24 July 1909, 8

Age (Melbourne). 'Meeting of the Houses', 'House of Representatives'. 10 May 1901, 9

Age (Melbourne). 'The Late Sir F. Holder'. 24 July 1909, 11

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 9 May 1901, 21–22

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 27 July 1909, 1629–32

Australian Town and Country Journal (Sydney). 'The New Speaker, Sir Frederick Holder's Funeral'. 4 August 1909, 3

Brisbane Courier. 'Makers of Federation: Sir Frederick Holder'. 8 November 1930, 19

Bulletin (Sydney). 'Speaker Holder'. 29 July 1909, 7

Bulletin (Sydney). 'Lyne and Groom and the Dead Body of Speaker Holder'. 29 July 1909, 8

Campbell-Jones, H. The Romance of Australia's First Federal Parliament, 1935. Papers of H. Campbell-Jones, MS 8905. National Library of Australia

Combe, G. D. *Responsible Government in South Australia*. Adelaide: Government Printer, 1957

Deakin, Alfred. *The Federal Story: The Inner History of the Federal Cause, 1880–1900*. Carlton, Vic.: Melbourne University Press, 1963

Glynn, Patrick McMahon. Diary. Papers of Patrick McMahon Glynn, MS 4653. National Library of Australia

'Ithuriel' (D. H. Maling). 'Among Federal Members'. *Argus* (Melbourne), 25 May 1901, 5

Mail (Adelaide). 'Smoking Room Echoes'. 17 July 1915, 10.

Makin, Norman. The Honourable Sir Fredrick William Holder, KCMG, Speaker 1901–1909, c. 1962. Papers of Norman Makin, MS 4663. National Library of Australia

Matthews, Michele. 'A Forgotten "Father" of Federation: Sir John Quick 1852–1911'. MA thesis, La Trobe University, Bendigo, Vic., 2003

National Library of Australia. Papers of Frederick Holder, MS 2268

Redenbach, Stephen C. 'Servant of Two Masters? An Exploration of the Speaker's Role in the Australian Commonwealth Parliament'. PhD thesis, La Trobe University, Melbourne, 1999

Reynolds, J. *Edmund Barton*. Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1948

Souter, Gavin. *Acts of Parliament: A Narrative History of the Senate and House of Representatives Commonwealth of Australia*. Carlton, Vic.: Melbourne University Press, 1988

Sydney Mail and New South Wales Advertiser. 'Late Sir Frederick W. Holder KCMG'. 28 July 1909, 26

Sydney Morning Herald. 'The Late Speaker'. 24 July 1909, 14

Sydney Morning Herald. 'The Federal Speaker'. 27 July 1909, 6

Jenkins, Sir George Henry: Clerk 1901

Stephen Wilks

Sir George Henry Jenkins (1843–1911), acting and first Clerk of the House of Representatives, was born on 21 September 1843 at Bedminster, Bristol, seventh of eight children of Henry Jenkins, a schoolteacher born at Abergavenny in the south-east of Wales, and his wife, Mary, née Osland. In January 1853, George and his family arrived on the *Try* in Melbourne, where his father became a draper. He was educated at Rev. T. P. Fenner's Collegiate School, South Yarra, and at Melbourne Grammar School (1859–61). During his schooling, he suffered a health breakdown and spent a year on a station in Victoria's Goulburn Valley to recover (*Argus* 1901, 5).

Jenkins entered government service in 1861 as a clerk in the Victorian Railways Department. In December 1865, the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, Sir Francis Murphy, appointed him as his private secretary and Clerk of Private Bills. He became Clerk of Committees in 1870 and then Clerk Assistant in 1878. That year he narrowly avoided Premier (Sir) Graham Berry's dismissal of government employees following the Legislative Council's refusal to pass an appropriation bill, and went on to become Clerk of the Legislative Assembly in 1882.

On 18 April 1887, Jenkins married Caroline Kent at All Saints Anglican Church, St Kilda. They had two daughters and a son. With the emergence of the Federation movement, he became Clerk of the Federal Council of Australasia, an ineffectual early attempt to unite the Australian colonies. He was secretary of the Melbourne convention of the Australasian Federation Conference in 1890, at which he displayed 'a proper sense of an occasion, and of his own part in it' (La Nauze 1972, 33). Although Jenkins probably hoped to also manage the 1891 Constitutional Convention in Sydney, the premier of New South Wales, Sir Henry Parkes, preferred the Clerk of his own Legislative Assembly, Frederick William Webb. Jenkins was nonetheless appointed CMG in 1891 for his services to the conference. In May that year, he became Clerk of the Legislative Council, which was widely seen as a promotion and gained for him the associated honorary title of Clerk of the Parliaments.

Figure 33: George Jenkins.
Source: National Library of Australia, PIC Box PIC/8217 #PIC/8217, J. W. Lindt Melbourne.

The social pages of the Melbourne press regularly mentioned Jenkins alongside prominent local figures, including when they received such renowned visitors as the actor Sarah Bernhardt and Field Marshal Lord Kitchener. He associated with politicians outside parliament, including by joining (Sir) Thomas Bent's welcoming committee for the former Speaker (Sir) Matthew Davies on his return to Melbourne in September 1892 to face fraud charges (Glass 1993, 108–9). Jenkins's studied courtesy was widely admired: Melbourne *Punch*—not overly given to praising public figures—complimented him on his knowledge, discretion, administrative skills, and firmness, which made him 'probably the best Parliamentarian in the Commonwealth' (*Punch* 1901, 4). In 1896–97, he served as president of Melbourne Grammar's Old Melbournians society.

Despite this, Jenkins seemed to have presented a very different face to lesser contemporaries, leading to less flattering assessments. A historian of the parliament of Victoria concluded that Jenkins was 'in fact a lazy, dictatorial, unctuous opportunist' (Wright 1992, 60). Reportedly, he was not above interjecting in debates and delaying the ringing of parliamentary bells until he had finished his drink. Some merchants were said to have refused his custom. Edward Theodor Hubert, who served in the Victorian parliament under Jenkins for fourteen years, maintained a detailed diary from 1891 to 1899 dedicated in large part to denouncing Jenkins, emphasised throughout by the liberal use of exclamation marks. Hubert found his superior 'always very assiduous in working his own way with president's [of the Legislative Council] friends, theatre people & c.' (Hubert 17 January 1898) and, in his more official duties, he was 'the greatest procrastinator I ever met with!!' (Hubert 6 December 1899). A typical anecdote is that 'on one occasion when J. [Jenkins] was clerk of a committee he forgot to send for a shorthand writer so the committee were kept waiting until he arrived, when the committee censured him, but J. sat dumb!!' (Hubert 24 September 1898). Jenkins is also alleged to have demanded that parliamentary staff undertake such personal duties as helping arrange the wedding of one of his daughters and 'searching the *West Australian* to show J. every paragraph having reference to his son's election!!' (Hubert 16 May 1898). (Arthur Jenkins was a member of the Legislative Council of Western Australia in 1898–1904 and 1908–17.)

Whatever Hubert thought, Jenkins's long parliamentary service, connections, and home base in Melbourne led to his appointment on 1 May 1901 as first Clerk of the House of Representatives. This was on an acting basis for the first session of the new federal parliament only, with his return to the parliament of Victoria being ensured by the Commonwealth not paying him a salary. The *Australasian* greeted his appointment as having long 'appealed to him most strongly as being the crowning honour of a long parliamentary career' (13 April 1901, 27).

Shortly before formally commencing as Clerk of the House, Jenkins, in April 1901, received the former mace of the Victorian parliament for use in the House of Representatives. His main contribution to the new Commonwealth was to manage arrangements for the Duke of York, the future King George V, to formally open parliament in Melbourne's Exhibition Building on 9 May. Jenkins's impressive bewhiskered countenance led to a report that some foreign attendees 'thought he was the Governor' (*Leader* 1901, 33). Acclaim for this ceremony was marred by subsequent criticism of its cost. Dispute centred on whether the Commonwealth or the Exhibition Building trustees should pay for the excessive provisioning of furniture and drink, with Bent alleging that 'Mr Jenkins was trying to back out of his responsibility, and place the trouble on the shoulders of the genial Dr L. L. Smith, who was chairman of the Exhibition trustees' (Vic. LA 1901, 173).

Punch described him amid his short-lived clerkship as 'probably the happiest, proudest, most important and most worried individual throughout the length and breadth of Australia' (1901, 4). Jenkins seems to have struggled in the unfamiliar context of the Commonwealth parliament. The first ever supply bill went to the Senate without an accompanying descriptive schedule, resulting in senators refusing to consider it. He resigned as acting Clerk on 2 July 1901, effective four days later, eliciting a perfunctory motion of thanks moved by Prime Minister (Sir) Edmund Barton (H.R. Deb. 3.7.1901, 1955–56). Jenkins was the first person to receive a vote of thanks from the House of Representatives.

Three years after returning to the state parliament, Jenkins was knighted. Sir George retired on 20 September 1910, marking forty-five years of continuous parliamentary service. Hoping to recover from bronchitis, he joined his eldest daughter, who lived in Hatton, Ceylon (now Sri Lanka), as wife of a tea planter. He died in Colombo on 18 July 1911. The *Australasian* recalled how in the chamber he had presented 'a picture of earthly felicity' (22 July 1911, 44). But there were also hints that Hubert's portrayal of Jenkins as a two-faced opportunist had some basis. The *Bulletin* classed him as 'the most humourless of persons', who celebrated receiving 'his precious title' by making 'the rounds to receive the congratulations of the barmaids'. But even it grudgingly conceded that 'he had ability of a kind' (1911, 9). A diary that he was reportedly intending to publish (*Argus* 1901, 5) never appeared.

Select bibliography

Argus (Melbourne). 'Mr George Jenkins CMG'. 4 April 1901, 5

Australasian (Melbourne). 'Mr George Jenkins CMG'. 13 April 1901, 27

Australasian (Melbourne). 'Legislative Assembly'. 29 June 1901, 37

Australasian (Melbourne). 'Sir G. Jenkins'. 22 July 1911, 38

Australasian (Melbourne). 'Gallery Sketches'. 22 July 1911, 44

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 3 July 1901, 1955–56

Bulletin (Sydney). 'At Poverty Point'. 27 July 1911, 9

Glass, Margaret. *Tommy Bent: Bent by Name, Bent by Nature*. Carlton, Vic.: Melbourne University Press, 1993

Herald (Melbourne). 'Clerk of Parliaments'. 14 September 1910, 3

Hubert, Edward Theodor. Diary. Papers of Edward Theodore Hubert, MS506. National Library of Australia

La Nauze, J. A. *The Making of the Australian Constitution*. Carlton, Vic.: Melbourne University Press, 1972

Leader (Melbourne). 'Representative Men: Mr George Henry Jenkins C.M.G. Clerk of Parliament, Victoria'. 21 September 1901, 33

Punch (Melbourne). 'George H. Jenkins C.M.G.' 18 April 1901, 4

Victoria. Legislative Assembly. *Parliamentary Debates*, 27 July 1901, 170–77

Wadsworth, Arthur. *Biographical Handbook and Record of Elections for the Parliament of the Commonwealth (Fifth Issue)*. Melbourne: Library Committee of the Commonwealth Parliament, 1926

Wright, Raymond. *A People's Counsel: A History of the Parliament of Victoria 1856–1990*. Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1992

Jenkins, Henry Alfred (Harry): Speaker 1983–1985

Joshua Black

Henry (Harry) Alfred Jenkins (1925–2004), medical practitioner, state parliamentarian, and eighteenth Speaker of the House of Representatives, was born on 24 September 1925 at Caulfield, Melbourne, only surviving child of Tasmania-born Henry Alfred Jenkins, storeman-packer and metal polisher, and his Victorian-born wife, Eileen Clare, née McCormack. Educated at Victorian state schools and Ivanhoe Grammar School, Harry went on to study at the University of Melbourne (MSc, 1948; MB BS, 1952). Though he enjoyed the support of his parents throughout his tertiary studies, he helped to meet his educational fees by undertaking 'odd jobs' (Jenkins 2020), such as caddying at golf courses. During his postgraduate studies, he worked as a part-time tutor and demonstrator in the university's physiology department.

Upon graduating, Jenkins was a resident medical officer at the Alfred Hospital (1953), before becoming a general practitioner at Thornbury and Thomastown in Melbourne's north. While a resident medical officer, he met Hazel (Wendy) Winter, a trainee nurse from Ascot Vale, with whom he began a 'courtship at the Alfred' (Jenkins 2020). On 6 September 1951, they married at St Luke's Anglican Church, South Melbourne. They had a daughter and three sons, one of whom, also Henry (Harry) Alfred, would follow his father to the Speakership.

Jenkins's holistic approach to medicine equipped him well for his later political career. His view was that medicine was 'just not a matter of treating disease', but rather of 'getting to know the background of people and understanding their problems' (*Herald* 1968, 2). His son Harry recalled that among Jenkins's most 'vital bits of equipment' were the gumboots that he wore to travel to treat many of his patients at their homes on the urban fringe (Jenkins 2020). In establishing and running his own medical practice, he was greatly supported by Wendy, who served as a typist and secretary. Jenkins's medical work was complemented by his support for schools, hospitals, and other organisations in his local community, including through his membership of the Board of Management of the Preston and Northcote Community Hospital. From

Figure 34: Dr Harry Jenkins.
Source: Department of the House of Representatives.

1954 to 1961, he was a major in the army reserve. In 1955 both he and Wendy joined the Australian Labor Party (ALP) and began to serve the community in local government positions. Wendy held various important positions in the party organisation, including that of secretary to Bill Hartley, the party's state secretary.

During the 1960s, Jenkins 'phased himself out of his medical practice' in favour of his principal interest, politics; practising in 'Collins Street never appealed to me', he reflected (*Herald* 1968, 2). On 15 July 1961, he was elected to the Victorian Legislative Assembly for the seat of Reservoir, and thereafter rose through the state parliamentary ranks to become shadow minister for health. He attracted opponents within the ALP for his association with the socialist left faction of the Victorian branch of the party and, by the late 1960s, he could see no further opportunity for advancement at the state level. He later explained that he saw the Legislative Assembly as a 'training ground' (*Herald* 1968, 2) for a federal seat, which would be a better match for his policy interests. He joined the party's federal health policy and social welfare committees; Gough Whitlam later recalled Jenkins's involvement in discussions in 1967 that began the policy process that eventually led to the universal health scheme known as Medibank, which commenced in 1975.

In November 1968, Jenkins defeated Frank Courtney, the member for the recently abolished federal electorate of Darebin, in a preselection contest for the newly created seat of Scullin in Melbourne's working-class north. His son Harry recalled that this federal preselection contest was 'muddier' than his state preselection (Jenkins 2020). He coveted the health portfolio, but, despite press speculation, he did not go on to become a minister in the Whitlam government. By early 1974, he found himself having to deny reports that he would vacate Scullin for the Australian Council of Trade Unions president Bob Hawke. These rumours became so persistent that, in August 1975, he told the House that Hawke had personally assured him that he was not their source. They were likely fuelled in part by rumours about Jenkins's health. Early in his federal career, he was diagnosed with Kennedy's disease, a disorder of the motor neurones that steadily worsened.

During the Whitlam years, Jenkins instead gained experience that helped equip him for the Speakership. In March 1973, he was elected Deputy Chairman of Committees. His service on parliamentary committees included chairing during 1975 the Joint Select Committee on the Parliamentary Committee System, which had been established two years earlier to consider recommendations for a balanced system of committees for the parliament. On 19 August 1975, following Joe Berinson's elevation to the ministry, Jenkins was elected Chairman of Committees. Witnessing the events of the Whitlam dismissal in November 1975 and the devastation of the ALP at the subsequent election, Jenkins remained 'very much a realist' (Jenkins 2020) about the government's electoral prospects. Though he formally lost the Chairmanship in March 1976 following the advent of Malcolm Fraser's government, he again served

as Deputy Chairman of Committees. During these difficult years for the ALP, he was also chairman of the parliamentary Labor Party and secretary of the caucus (1976–78).

Following the 1980 federal election, Jenkins was nominated in the House for the Speakership by his party colleagues Gordon Scholes and John Kerin, the latter praising his 'dignity, impartiality, consistency and control' (H.R. Deb. 25.11.1980, 5). Although Jenkins lost along party lines to the incumbent, Sir Billy Snedden, the ballot helped establish his claim to the position. Following the election of the Hawke government in 1983, Jenkins stood against Les Johnson in the caucus ballot for the Speakership; he won largely due to support from the left and centre-left factions, and especially from the deposed leader Bill Hayden. When the thirty-third parliament opened on 21 April 1983, Jenkins was elected by the House unopposed. Snedden, the outgoing Speaker, in congratulating Jenkins, announced his intention to follow Westminster convention and resign at once from the House, particularly as he feared that his further presence in the chamber would amount to a 'continual auditing' (Mannix 1983) of the new Speaker. Jenkins was himself attracted to a Westminster-style Speakership but felt that its adoption in Australia was 'quite a way in the future' (Livingstone 1985).

Jenkins's occupancy of the chair coincided with an ascendant Labor government. Given past rumours about his making way for Hawke and their opposing factional loyalties, the relationship between the new Speaker and the new prime minister remained cool. Hawke scorned suggestions by Jenkins's predecessor that the Speaker should have the honour of laying the foundation stone for the new parliament building: 'I wasn't prepared to imagine that Harry Jenkins, our Speaker, would have any Snedden-like pretensions' (Hawke 1994, 444). Jenkins's son later recalled that his father and Senate President Doug McClelland were somewhat disappointed by this outcome, as might be expected from the parliament's chosen presiding officers. As Speaker, Jenkins was nonetheless chair of the Joint Standing Committee on the New Parliament House, which advised on the construction and fitting out of the new parliamentary buildings. In particular, he sought to ensure that 'members who actually knew how they used the building were asked how it should operate' (Jenkins 2020).

Jenkins soon developed a reputation for calm and an ability to defuse tension in the House, but still faced pressure from an opposition striving to gain ground against a confident new government. On 28 March 1984, the opposition directed a question without notice to one of their own, Jim Carlton, regarding the timing of his introduction of a bill to amend existing health legislation. When Carlton's answer turned to matters of policy debate and Jenkins withdrew the call from him, the opposition leader, Andrew Peacock, moved a dissent motion in which he accused Jenkins of making an 'absolute mockery' (H.R. Deb. 28.3.1984, 930) of the standing orders. On 29 May 1984, the prime minister answered a question without

notice seemingly with the aid of notes, but when asked by the opposition to table them asserted that he had not in fact quoted from any document, and he received support from the Speaker. Peacock soon after told Hawke: 'Don't start appealing to Mr Speaker. He has looked after you once today' (H.R. Deb. 29.5.1984, 2297).

Two months later, Peacock protested against the Speaker's decision to name John Howard for repeated interjections directed at the finance minister, John Dawkins, during question time. There was considerable confusion as to whether or not it was appropriate for Peacock to do so, given that the House had affirmed the naming by voting to eject Howard for twenty-four hours. In September 1984, Peacock described Hawke as 'this little crook' (H.R. Deb. 13.9.1984, 1252), but, at the Speaker's direction, immediately withdrew this uncharacteristic accusation; Hawke recalled such language as having 'appalled both sides of the House' (Hawke 1994, 269). One of the more remarkable and well-remembered breaches of House decorum occurred on the night of 25 November 1985, when someone dressed as a chicken entered the chamber and sat on the ministerial bench. The Speaker refused to name the culprit—widely thought to have been Bruce Goodluck, the Liberal member for the Tasmanian seat of Franklin. The next day, Jenkins professed 'disgust that any honourable member would show so little respect for the institution' (H.R. Deb. 26.11.1985, 3647).

Jenkins had some success with the reform of parliamentary broadcasting practices— 'one of the major innovations' (Livingstone 1985) of his Speakership. In August 1984, Treasurer Paul Keating delivered the first televised budget speech, followed soon after by Peacock's budget reply. At the end of his tenure, Jenkins drew on the recent successful broadcasting of budget speeches in favouring 'a unit which continuously televised both houses, with various media outlets able to use what they wanted' (Livingstone 1985), despite his suspicion that this would not improve parliamentary speeches. This very liberal approach to parliamentary broadcasting would, in time, become reality. As Speaker, he strove to maintain the importance of the parliamentary committee system, drawing directly on his own membership of committees. He strongly advocated a parliamentary education office to be accommodated in the new Parliament House. His son recalled that Jenkins felt 'very fortunate to be involved' (Jenkins 2020) in these developments.

While serving as Speaker, the intellectually curious Jenkins completed an arts degree at Deakin University (BA, 1984). On 20 December 1985, the prime minister phoned to offer him the post of ambassador to Spain. He reportedly took just minutes to accept, signalling a sudden end to more than twenty-four years of parliamentary service. The decision may have been influenced by his general health. A staff member recalled occasionally having to give him 'a little bit of a push' (Adamson 2008) up stairways and on to aircraft because of his physical difficulties. Others recalled that he experienced minor difficulty 'getting in and out of the Chair' (Jenkins 2020).

The fierce preselection battle for Scullin that followed was eventually won by his son Harry, who went on to win the by-election for this safe ALP seat on 8 February 1986. In Spain, the ambassadorial lifestyle required Jenkins to adjust to 'being looked after by domestic staff and having a large residence' (*Canberra Times* 1986, 2)—not an easy transition for someone who had not forgotten his working-class origins. The former Speaker enjoyed his ambassadorship and promoted the bilateral trade relationship between Australia and Spain wherever possible. Continuing health problems resulted in his premature return to Australia in 1988.

Jenkins once remarked that Speakers would 'go mad without a sense of humour' (Livingstone 1985). His presence as a 'huge, ambling man' amplified his 'openly friendly face' (*Herald* 1968, 2) that aptly signalled his amiable nature. In 1991 he was appointed AM and, in 2001, he received a Centenary Medal. During his retirement, he remained committed to his family and his longstanding membership of the Lions International Club, but his health continued to deteriorate. In his final years, he was devotedly nursed by Wendy, before his death on 27 July 2004. Jenkins's former political colleague Kim Beazley said that he was a Speaker

> who had such a profound belief in the good that the chamber of the House of Representatives could do in itself, for the ordinary citizen of Australia, by being the sort of chamber that teased out the essence of every issue that it considered, teasing it out because ordinary members of parliament were well treated. (H.R. Deb. 4.8.2004, 32198)

His portrait by Wesley Walters hangs in Parliament House.

Select bibliography

Adamson, Morrie. Interview by Edward Helgeby, 23 September 2008. Transcript. Museum of Australian Democracy Oral History collection

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 19 August 1975, 1–6

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 26 August 1975, 491

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 25 November 1980, 3–9

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 21 April 1983, 5–11

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 28 March 1984, 928–35

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 29 May 1984, 2295–97, 2301–11

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 13 September 1984, 1252–62

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 14 November 1985, 2805–13

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 26 November 1985, 3647

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 3 August 2004, 31793–800

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 4 August 2004, 32191–201

Canberra Times. 'Harry Jenkins: Taking Control of a New House'. 6 August 1986, 2

Costin, Warwick. 'I Won't Quit for Hawke'. *Daily Mirror* (Sydney), 8 January 1974, 5

Hawke, Bob. *The Hawke Memoirs*. Port Melbourne: William Heinemann, 1994

Herald (Melbourne). 'Politics Is This Doctor's Potion'. 18 November 1968, 2

Jenkins, Harry junior. Interview by Joshua Black, 6 July 2020

Jones, Philip. 'Even a Stalwart Has His Limits'. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 30 August 2004, 56

Livingstone, Tess. 'A Speaker of Some Authority'. *Advertiser* (Adelaide), 14 December 1985, 2

Mannix, Teresa. 'Sir Billy Snedden Resigns His Seat'. *Canberra Times*, 22 April 1983, 1

Mills, Stephen. 'Jenkins All Set for Spain'. *Age* (Melbourne), 8 January 1986, 4

Richardson, Graham. *Whatever It Takes.* Sydney: Bantam Books, 1994

Whitlam, Gough. *The Whitlam Government 1972–1975.* Ringwood, Vic.: Viking, 1985

Jenkins, Henry Alfred (Harry): Speaker 2008–2011

Joshua Black

Henry (Harry) Alfred Jenkins, shire president and twenty-sixth Speaker of the House of Representatives, was born on 18 August 1952 in Melbourne, eldest of four children of Henry Alfred Jenkins, medical practitioner and politician, and his wife, Hazel 'Wendy' Winter, a nurse, local councillor, and Australian Labor Party (ALP) officeholder. His father was a member of the Victorian and Commonwealth parliaments, and the eighteenth Speaker of the House of Representatives (1983–85). Although all of the Jenkins siblings were ideologically close, only Harry and his parents were ever formal officeholders in the ALP. He insisted that his parents' views 'were never forced upon us' (Best 1986).

Jenkins's long association with the House of Representatives began in 1969 when his father was elected member for Scullin. After studying medicine at Monash University for three years, he took an 'enforced gap year' (Jenkins 2020) before switching to part-time studies in science, including human ecology, biology, and biochemistry, at The Australian National University (BSc., 1976). Both his university education and the influence of his father prepared him for taking 'a holistic approach to problems' (Jenkins 2020). Upon graduating, he became an estimates officer in the Department of Veterans' Affairs in Melbourne, working on pension payments and trusts. In 1976 he was elected to Whittlesea Shire Council (president, 1984–85), later describing the experience as politically 'educational' (Balfour 2013). His ALP party positions included membership of state policy committees and the presidency of the Bundoora branch (1980, 1986). In 1974, he married Michele Sharp, a comptometrist from Melbourne whom he had met in the Leos youth branch of the Lions International Club. They had two sons and a daughter. Jenkins later reflected that his political life effectively rendered Michele 'a single parent' (Balfour 2013).

In January 1986, upon the retirement of his father from parliament, Jenkins sought preselection for Scullin. After a bitter three-way contest against the former member for Casey, Pete Steedman, and the future state minister Theo Theophanous, he emerged victorious, with the help of the party's left faction. At the time, Jenkins

Figure 35: Harry Jenkins.
Source: Australian Government Photographic Service (Auspic).

dismissed suggestions that he was the 'compromise candidate', instead describing himself as the 'candidate of reconciliation' (Best 1986). He later conceded that his billing in the middle of the field was 'probably right' (Jenkins 2020). At the ensuing by-election on 8 February 1986, Jenkins held the safe seat, despite a swing of 4.4 per cent against the ALP.

From 1987 to 1993, Jenkins served on numerous House of Representatives committees, including those on Finance and Public Administration; Environment, Recreation, and the Arts; Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs; and Industry, Science, and Technology. He found himself a member of a government that, though still electorally and politically successful, had 'started to wobble a bit' (Jenkins 2020). Following the 1987 election, he was appointed chair of the House Standing Committee on Publications, and, after the 1990 election, also chaired the Standing Committee on Community Affairs. He gained his first experience of presiding over the House by serving as Temporary Chair of Committees during the thirty-sixth parliament (1990–93). In that role, he applied himself to mastering the standing orders and the workings of parliament, and took the opportunity to learn from the Clerks of the House, as well as Speaker Leo McLeay and Deputy Speaker Ron Edwards (Jenkins 2020).

On 4 May 1993, with the ALP having won a fifth term in office, Jenkins was elected Deputy Speaker and Chairman of Committees. His parents were seated in the gallery of the House to watch their son's election to the position. The prime minister, Paul Keating, took the opportunity to note that the televising of parliament—then still a recent development—had added to the 'heavy task' (H.R. Deb. 4.5.1993, 37) of managing the parliament.

Jenkins served in the position for the duration of the thirty-seventh parliament, and frequently represented the House when Speaker Stephen Martin was absent, including at the interment of the Unknown Australian Soldier at the Australian War Memorial on 11 November 1993. He was acting as Chairman of Committees when the landmark Native Title Bill was returned from the Senate to the House in December 1993, prior to being passed by the House, which he described as an 'extraordinary experience' (Jenkins 2020; H.R. Deb. 22.12.1993, 4541–50). He began to learn how to cope with the challenges of being in the chair, particularly when, after a by-election for the seat of Canberra in March 1995, the opposition sensed victory at the next national election. Opposition member Wilson Tuckey, in particular, more than once dissented from Jenkins's rulings.

As an opposition backbencher and Second Deputy Speaker (the third elected position of chair after the Speaker and Deputy Speaker) throughout the Howard government years (1996–2007), Jenkins remained associated with his party's left. This helped him to survive a preselection challenge in 2006, and he reacted angrily to reports early in 2007 that he had been asked to resign his seat to make way for the Victorian

treasurer, John Brumby. When the ALP returned to government in November 2007, Jenkins was an obvious candidate for the Speakership, having long demonstrated his understanding of the House's formal rules and its operations. He positioned himself accordingly. The New South Wales right member Roger Price also canvassed colleagues but decided not to run, leaving Jenkins to be endorsed by caucus unanimously on 28 November. He was formally elected to the position when parliament resumed on 12 February 2008; his predecessor as Speaker, David Hawker, welcomed him as having 'earned the respect of both sides of this chamber' (H.R. Deb. 12.2.2008, 10).

On Jenkins's first day as Speaker, a lengthy debate about reforming the practices and processes of the House of Representatives took place. The government proposed that the House would sit on Fridays, which would be set aside for private members' business and the grievance debate, without a question time, and with any divisions to be deferred until the next sitting day. Anthony Albanese, leader of the House, argued that such additional Friday sittings would enable members to 'raise important issues in the parliament', but the manager of opposition business, Joe Hockey, responded that the government was acting 'to reduce the accountability and transparency of their own government to this parliament' (H.R. Deb. 12.2.2008, 75, 88). The proposed new standing orders were ultimately adopted by the House in the early hours of the following morning.

Jenkins's second day as Speaker saw Prime Minister Kevin Rudd move a formal apology to the Stolen Generations of Aboriginal Australians. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people filled the galleries of the House for the occasion, and former prime ministers Gough Whitlam, Malcolm Fraser, Bob Hawke, and Keating were also present. At the conclusion of proceedings, Rudd and opposition leader Brendan Nelson jointly and symbolically presented to Jenkins an Aboriginal coolamon— a small carved bowl traditionally used for cradling a newborn baby (Rudd 2018, 35). Jenkins found it humbling to have presided over such an occasion.

The government's objective in holding Friday sittings was to allocate more time for committee and private members' business, but the opposition's objection that this amounted to an avoidance of accountability was put so forcefully that only one such sitting ever took place, on 22 February 2008. The day began with an opposition motion to suspend standing orders so as to include question time every sitting Friday. Because of the deferment of divisions to the next sitting day, the House was effectively unable to make decisions, whether on business or on the conduct of members. While some private members' business was transacted, there was repeated disorderly conduct by some members amidst no capacity to make a conclusive decision on their naming, on a closure motion, or a motion of dissent from the Speaker's ruling. In an attempt to restore order during the morning, Jenkins suspended proceedings and vacated the chair for fifteen minutes. Later in the day, a further suspension was forced after Deputy Speaker Anna Burke was confronted by opposition members brandishing in

the chamber a cardboard cut-out of Prime Minister Rudd, who was absent from the House. The opposition threatened to challenge the validity of Friday sittings in the High Court, and the Rudd government reluctantly decided to drop these sittings (*PM* 2008). Jenkins felt that 'lack of consultation' had made this all a 'textbook example of how not to achieve reform of parliamentary procedure' (Jenkins 2020).

During his first term as Speaker, Jenkins won the lasting respect of government and opposition members. He avoided caucus meetings on political and parliamentary tactics. For much of the forty-second parliament, particularly after the global financial crisis began to threaten the Australian economy late in 2008, the opposition's aggression in the House eased. One discordant issue that nonetheless remained prominent was that of props being used in question time, such as photographs and large charts; on one occasion, he likened their use to a 'sideshow' (H.R. Deb. 28.5.2009, 4762). In the final sitting weeks of 2009, Jenkins issued a series of rulings about their use.

As Speaker, Jenkins sought to further Australia's national interest on the world stage, such as through engagement with the parliaments of neighbouring states in the Pacific. He strove to 'demystify' the forms and procedures of parliament for a wider audience, reasoning that 'it's about the people, so it's relevant to the people' (Jenkins 2020). This involved keeping House procedures apace with technological developments, including the introduction of a screen in the chamber to help contextualise proceedings for viewers in the gallery. Despite the occasional belligerence of opposition members, particularly Christopher Pyne as manager of opposition business and Tony Abbott as leader of the opposition, Jenkins later recalled that they afforded him respect because 'they knew that I'd play it straight up and down' (Jenkins 2020). Throughout the period, members recognised the role of Jenkins's 'razor-sharp wit and well-developed sense of humour' in maintaining order in the House (H.R. Deb. 28.9.2010, 5). Nonetheless, he would later express frustration at the frequent 'lack of civil behaviour' (Balfour 2013) in the chamber.

The minority government produced by the federal election of August 2010 significantly altered the dynamics of the House of Representatives, with implications for Jenkins's role as Speaker in the forty-third parliament. Independent members Rob Oakeshott and Tony Windsor called for a series of reforms, including requiring Speakers to act entirely independently of the governing party by abstaining from caucus and party room meetings, and from policy debates within the government. Under the 'Agreement for a Better Parliament' negotiated between the ALP, the opposition, and the independents, the former Selection Committee was reinstated with increased authority that would encourage private members' engagement; the Speaker was empowered to deal more swiftly with argument being used in parliamentary questions and answers; strict time limits were imposed for questions and answers; and the Speaker would be supported by a Deputy Speaker from a different political party. Oakeshott also publicly expressed interest in becoming Speaker himself.

The government did not rule this out at once, and it was only after Albanese as leader of the House announced that legal advice would be sought that Oakeshott withdrew. Such ambivalence from his own government disappointed Jenkins. When parliament resumed on 28 September, he accepted renomination as Speaker with a defiant 'may the record show, definitely yes', and also acknowledged his family's importance in giving him 'the strength and desire to take this position' (H.R. Deb. 28.9.2010, 6, 12). He confessed that the new agreement-mandated 'self-imposed exile from the federal parliamentary Labor Party' was something that he found 'difficult' (H.R. Deb. 28.9.2010, 12).

Notwithstanding the agreement and the personal respect that Jenkins still commanded across the chamber, the forty-third parliament proved difficult. He found himself in an environment of 'the government wanting greater decisiveness and the Opposition wanting greater responsiveness' (Uhr 2014, 165), and was required to use his casting vote on multiple occasions. In keeping with House tradition, this included voting to prevent debate from being curtailed, which occasionally meant delivering a vote against the government. On one occasion, however, his casting vote prevented Peter Dutton from being granted a time extension on the grounds that this would 'not stifle further discussion of the proposition' (H.R. Deb. 15.6.2011, 6051). Other casting votes drew Jenkins into difficult political positions, particularly in relation to motions concerning the scandal-engulfed government member Craig Thomson. In an effort to lift the dignity of question time proceedings, Jenkins ruled 'Dorothy Dixers' out of order, but this ruling was short-lived. Later, he admitted to having found question time in the forty-third parliament 'fairly unedifying' (Balfour 2013). He credited the Clerk of the House, Bernard Wright, with absorbing much of the additional pressure arising from minority government, particularly by detailed research into the relevant checks and balances built into the Australian Constitution (Jenkins 2020).

Minority government also made Jenkins's tenure in the chair precarious. Conscious of the possibility of sudden removal from the Speakership, he kept a draft resignation letter on hand. On 31 May 2011, when he named an opposition member for disorderly conduct, the ensuing vote on the motion to suspend the member for twenty-four hours was lost by a single vote, possibly because some did not realise the significance of the House's support—or otherwise—for the Speaker's decision. In similar circumstances, in February 1975, Speaker Jim Cope had resigned. Jenkins accordingly announced: 'I will be taking the time to consider my position' (H.R. Deb. 31.5.2011, 5284). Resignation was averted by a motion of confidence moved quickly by opposition leader Tony Abbott and seconded by Prime Minister Julia Gillard, then unanimously approved by the House. On 2 June 2011, he ruled against a bill introduced by an opposition member challenging the long-held principle of the financial initiative of the executive, under which only a minister may propose a bill

that provides for the appropriation of public money, and presented to all members a copy of the Clerk's advice on this initiative. The opposition responded with a dissent motion. This sparked another long and angry debate, which referred to the advice from the Clerk, before the motion was finally defeated.

On 24 November 2011, the final sitting day of the year, Jenkins resigned as Speaker. Given the minority government's increasingly fragile position on the floor of the House, Albanese had approached a number of opposition members to sound them out about taking up the Speakership. Peter Slipper expressed interest. Although Jenkins was unhappy about resigning, his prime minister felt that, by having 'asked for nothing in return', he 'showed himself to be a truly great Labor man' (Gillard 2014, 76). On 24 November 2011, 'with a catch in his voice' (Gillard 2014, 76), Jenkins announced his resignation to the House, adding that he would at last 'be able to participate in policy and parliamentary debate' (H.R. Deb. 24.11.2011, 13741). During the remainder of the parliamentary term, he chaired the Joint Statutory Committee on Human Rights. He later admitted to having 'hunted and ran with people who made it difficult' for Gillard, who lost the prime ministership in a caucus ballot in June 2013, but added that he still had respect for her 'extraordinary journey' (Balfour 2013). In July 2012, he announced that he would retire at the next election, emphasising that his decision came 'at a time of my choosing' (Humphreys 2012).

Jenkins is known for his bearded smile, frequent chuckle, and a modesty that extended to confessing to embarrassment at holding so safe an ALP seat as Scullin. He was described by one ALP leader as being 'too decent' for politics (Latham 2005, 220). Jenkins committed himself to spending his retirement with his family. In 2014, he was appointed AO. The next year, he agreed to serve on an independent panel reviewing the entitlements of members. The panel handed down its findings in February 2016, advocating a new 'principles-based system allowing the parliamentarian flexibility to apply judgement … but obliging him or her to report publicly and be subject to reasonable standards of auditing' (Australia 2016, 3). The Turnbull government accepted the review's recommendations and eventually established the Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority to administer the system. In his post-parliamentary life, Jenkins has assisted United Nations initiatives related to women in parliaments around the world, joined Australian observer groups that oversaw elections in Fiji, Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea, and Timor-Leste, and participated in activities to strengthen parliaments in Pacific nations. In July 2018, he was appointed independent chair of the Alcohol Beverages Advertising Code. A portrait by Rick Amor was unveiled in Parliament House in September 2013. Jenkins said simply of the portrait: '[It's] there, whether you like it or not' (*Canberra Times* 2013).

Select bibliography

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 4 May 1993, 34–39

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 22 December 1993, 4541–50

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 12 February 2008, 5–13, 75–89

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 22 February 2008, 1238–42

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 28 May 2009, 4753–56, 4761–62

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 25 November 2009, 12858

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 26 November 2009, 13066–67

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 28 September 2010, 5–12

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 31 May 2011, 5282–86

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 2 June 2011, 5699–711

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 15 June 2011, 6049–52

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 24 November 2011, 13741–42, 13790–93

Australia. *An Independent Parliamentary Entitlements System: A Review*. Canberra: Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, 2016

Balfour, Cheryl. 'Former Scullin Labor MP Harry Jenkins Retires After a Long Career in Politics'. *Herald Sun* (Melbourne), 10 September 2013

Best, Bruce. 'Scullin's Dark Horse Came from a Strong Labor Stable'. *Age* (Melbourne), 4 January 1986, 2

Canberra Times. 'Scullin Socialist Left Picks a Jenkins'. 3 January 1986, 1

Canberra Times. 'Hang the Speaker … His Portrait That Is'. 8 February 2013. www.canberratimes.com.au/story/6160144/hang-the-speaker-his-portrait-that-is/

Gillard, Julia. *My Story*. North Sydney: Knopf, 2014

Humphreys, David. 'Newsmaker Harry Jenkins: This Time the Former Speaker Can Leave on His Own Terms'. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 28 July 2012, 6

Hurst, Daniel. 'Brendan Nelson and Harry Jenkins to Help Lead Entitlements Review'. *Guardian* (Sydney), 7 August 2015. www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2015/aug/07/brendan-nelson-and-harry-jenkins-to-help-lead-entitlements-review

Jenkins, Harry junior. Interview by Joshua Black, 6 July 2020

Latham, Mark. *The Latham Diaries*. Carlton, Vic.: Melbourne University Press, 2005

Lewis, Steve. 'Cocky Labor MPs Already Jostling for Election Win Spoils'. *Advertiser* (Adelaide), 25 September 2007, 4

PM. 'Government Scraps Friday Sittings of Parliament'. Sabra Lane, ABC Radio National, 7 March 2008. Transcript held on file

Rudd, Kevin. *The PM Years*. Sydney: Pan Macmillan, 2018

Uhr, John. 'Debating the Speaker'. In *Studies in Australian Political Rhetoric*, edited by John Uhr and Ryan Walter, 155–73. Canberra: ANU Press, 2014. doi.org/10.22459/sapr.09.2014.08

Johnson, Leslie Royston (Les): Chairman of Committees 1983

John Hawkins

Leslie Royston Johnson (1924–2015), trade unionist and Chairman of Committees of the House of Representatives, was born on 22 November 1924 at Enfield, Sydney, fourth of five children of William Johnson, jack of all trades and delivery man, and his wife Maude Harriet, née English, both English born. When Les was six his father died from the effects of shrapnel injuries sustained in World War I. Johnson attended schools at Enfield and Croydon Park but left at fourteen to support his family.

Johnson's first job was as a boilermaker's mate. Later he became an apprentice fitter and turner, attending Sydney Technical College by night. While still in his teens he became involved in the trade union movement, chairing the New South Wales youth committee of the Amalgamated Engineering Union and later becoming an organiser with the Federated Clerks' Union. At fifteen he joined the Australian Labor Party (ALP). As an organiser with the Red Cross he met Gladys (Peggy) Jones, a nurse, whom he married on 20 March 1948 at Gymea Bay, Sydney. They settled at Gymea, where they built their own house and Johnson ran a general store and newsagency with a business partner.

The gregarious Johnson was active in the local community, becoming chair of the Gymea Progress Association. He was also campaign manager for a politically ambitious barrister, Edward Gough Whitlam, who won the federal electorate of Werriwa at a by-election in 1952. Johnson served on Sutherland Shire Council (1952–56), during which he beat ten other candidates to secure preselection for the new federal seat of Hughes that stretched south from Sydney into the Illawarra region. He won the seat at the 1955 election, becoming the youngest Labor member of the House of Representatives.

All but three of Johnson's following twenty-five years in parliament were spent in opposition. He was an active local member who was never challenged for preselection and became patron of some sixty community organisations. A strident opponent of Australia's involvement in the Vietnam War, he was defeated at the 1966

Figure 36: Les Johnson.
Source: Courtesy of the National Archives of Australia. NAA: A6135, K25/7/74/115.

election. Out of parliament, he worked for Senator Lionel Murphy and in 1967 helped to found the Kirinari Hostel for Aboriginal students in Gymea. A favourable redistribution helped him regain Hughes in 1969. In the chamber, Johnson's speeches were 'reasonable and emphatic without being impassioned' (Whitington 1964, 143). Foreshadowing his future ministerial responsibilities, he chaired his party's caucus housing and Aboriginal affairs committees. He was one of the 'Tuesday club' of ALP members, mostly drawn from the party's left faction but notably also including a young Paul Keating, who was impressed by Johnson as someone 'who knew a lot' (O'Brien 2015, 57).

When federal Labor won office in December 1972, Johnson was placed second on the club's ticket for the caucus ballot for ministerial positions and duly became minister for housing, his own preference of portfolio. In October 1973 he also acquired the works portfolio, and the following month the two were combined to make him minister for housing and construction. As a minister he was a 'good organiser, efficient and resourceful, though with an autocratic streak' (Stephens 2015, 30). He introduced legislation to create the Australian Housing Corporation as a lending institution but clashed with Tom Uren, whose urban and regional development portfolio overlapped with his own.

In June 1975 Johnson was shifted to the Aboriginal affairs portfolio and two months later participated in the celebrated land rights ceremony at Wave Hill, Northern Territory, where Whitlam symbolically poured soil into the hands of the Gurindji man Vincent Lingiari. Looking back on the Whitlam government, Johnson recalled 'great achievements' but regretted its being 'a government of impetuosity' (Bramston 2015, 404). After the government's defeat at the 1975 election, he stood for deputy Labor leader in an unsuccessful attempt to block Uren. This cost Johnson the backing of the left, and so he declined to also stand for the shadow ministry at this time; he did so when a vacancy arose in March 1976, without success. In 1976–77 he was parliamentary representative on the council of the Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies, a member of the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs, and also a member of the Joint Select Committee on Aboriginal Land Rights in the Northern Territory.

Johnson became opposition whip in March 1977 and held the position for six years. The long-serving ALP member Clyde Cameron described him as 'easily the best Whip I have served under', as his 'methodical' approach 'succeeded in maintaining a very tight discipline' (Cameron 1990, 749). Johnson disliked, however, the English term 'whip', derived from fox-hunting, and unsuccessfully proposed instead 'jackaroo' or 'boundary rider'. During 1982–83, he supported Bob Hawke's successful efforts to supplant Bill Hayden as party leader, with the result that, following the ALP's return to government in March 1983, Hayden organised against Johnson in the caucus

ballot for the Speakership. Johnson was initially disappointed at missing out by one vote on being the Labor nominee, instead becoming Chairman of Committees on 21 April 1983.

Some colleagues told Johnson that he might still attain the Speaker's position as the incumbent, Harry Jenkins senior, was not well. However, after experience of presiding in the chamber, Johnson found that 'it didn't appeal to me terribly much—sitting up there in the high chair in parliament' (Johnson 1990-92). As Chairman of Committees he was 'forever sitting around waiting to be called in … to take over the Chair'; when finally called upon, it seemed to him that 'you aren't sparking on all fours—you're not making speeches yourself, you're just in that presiding officer's role' (Johnson 1990–92). During 1983 he was offered jobs outside parliament, including private sector positions in public and government relations. Hayden, now minister for foreign affairs, did not support a diplomatic posting for Johnson: Hawke nonetheless offered him the position of high commissioner to New Zealand, with the result that Johnson resigned from parliament on 19 December 1983.

Although Johnson enjoyed his responsibilities in Wellington, he returned to Australia in 1987 due to the serious illness of his daughter, Sally, who died the following year. Johnson was elected the first national vice-president of the Association of Former Members of the Parliament of Australia in 1988, edited the association's newsletter, *Federal Gallery*, and subsequently served as its national president (1991–1993). He chaired the Australia New Zealand Foundation and was appointed AM in 1990 for service to the Australian parliament and the Aboriginal community. In 2001 he received a Centenary Medal.

Peggy Johnson died in 2002, and on 4 July 2003 Johnson married Marion Carol Sharkey, a grazier. Blind by his ninetieth year, he died on 26 May 2015 at Sutherland, survived by his wife, and the surviving children of his first marriage, Grant and Jenny. Johnson was of 'middle height, thick-set with a ruddy face and black hair' (Whitington 1964, 143). He was remembered as being resolute, and a 'natural talker and very personable' (Solomon 2015, 45). Bob Hawke, Paul Keating, and Gough Whitlam's son Tony all paid tribute to Johnson at his state funeral ceremony at the Sutherland Entertainment Centre.

Select bibliography

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 27 May 2015, 4778–79

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 4 June 2015, 5964–67

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 15 June 2015, 6263–66

Bramston, Troy, ed. *The Whitlam Legacy*. Annandale, NSW: The Federation Press, 2015

Cameron, Clyde. *The Cameron Diaries.* Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1990

Johnson, Leslie. Interview by Ron Hurst, 1990–1992. Transcript. Parliament's Oral History Project. National Library of Australia

Lacey, Chris. *Illawarra Agitators: A Centenary History of Thirroul Labor (Est. 1913).* Fremantle, WA: Vivid Publishing, 2013

O'Brien, Kerry. *Keating.* Crows Nest, NSW: Allen & Unwin, 2015

Solomon, Robert. 'Les Johnson, 1924–2015'. *Federal Gallery* (Canberra), September 2015, 45

Stephens, Tony. 'Obituary: Les Johnson Stands Tall in Australia's History'. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 26 May 2015, 30

Whitington, Don. *The Rulers: Fifteen Years of the Liberals.* Melbourne: Lansdowne Press, 1964

Whitlam, Gough. *The Whitlam Government 1972–1975.* Melbourne: Viking, 1985

Johnson, Sir William Elliot: Speaker 1913–1914, 1917–1922

G. N. Hawker

Sir William Elliot Johnson (1862–1932), fourth Speaker of the House of Representatives, was born on 10 April 1862 at Newcastle-on-Tyne, England, son of John Ellis Johnson, scene painter, and his wife, Mary, née Nutsforde. Elliot came to Sydney as a ship's steward after an adventurous youth. The details of his early life are unclear but were widely rumoured to have included experience of shipwrecks and service as a mercenary in the 1879–84 War of the Pacific that involved Chile, Peru and Bolivia. On 29 June 1881, in Sydney, he married Marie McLachlan, a dressmaker from Scotland.

An early adherent of the political economist Henry George, Johnson, throughout his career, supported a single tax on unimproved land values. Until the mid-1890s, he was active in labour circles and in 1894 stood unsuccessfully for the emerging Labor Party in the New South Wales Legislative Assembly, but he left when he saw the party take a socialist turn. He became honorary secretary of the Free Trade and Liberal Association of New South Wales and, though opposed to Federation, he was in 1903 elected as a free-trader for the federal seat of Lang. He described himself on entry to parliament as a 'gentleman' and on electoral rolls in his later years as an 'artist (MHR)'.

None of the various political organisations that Johnson joined provided a fully comfortable fit with his personal views. He maintained a mixture of radicalism and conformism through changing party titles and policies. A democrat committed to equal opportunity, justice, and liberty for all, he attacked socialism, collectivism, and government intervention, as well as employers' federations and capitalist concentrations of wealth. The protectionist policies of the 1920s were obnoxious to him, even though they were increasingly espoused by the Nationalist Party he represented.
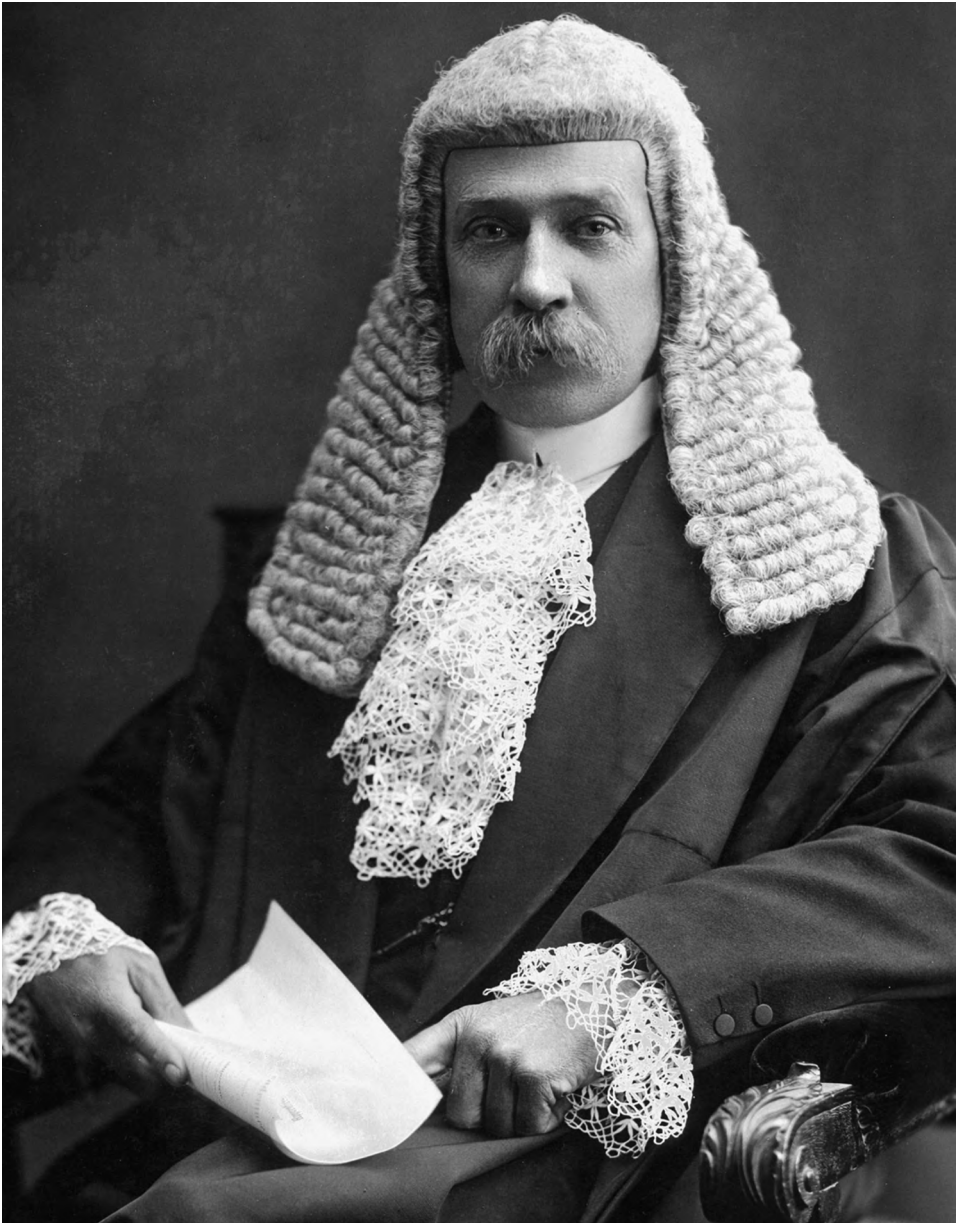
Figure 37: Elliot Johnson.
Source: Department of the House of Representatives.

Parliament was a natural forum for the loquacious Johnson. His individualistic style rarely brought him into contention as a minister, but his warmth and tolerance won him friends across the parliament. He was a Temporary Chairman of Committees in the fourth session of the third parliament (1909) and in all three sessions of the fourth (1910–12). His pride in English parliamentary democracy encompassed the symbolism of the mace and Speaker's wig, occasioning some opposition when he became Speaker. In 1911, he attended the coronation of King George V as a member of the Australian parliamentary delegation and became one of the founders of the Empire Parliamentary Association and honorary secretary of its Australian branch.

In July 1913, Prime Minister Joseph Cook and the Liberal Party proposed Johnson for the Speakership. Many observers thought this was because he could be relied upon when only one vote separated the government and the opposition, which implied that the Speaker might frequently have to exercise a casting vote in the government's favour. Johnson was formally nominated in the House by (Sir) Granville Ryrie, the member for Warringah, who instead simply suggested jovially that Johnson was certain to be impartial and was 'a close student of politics' (H. R. Deb. 9.7.1913, 22), a reference to his heterodox past.

Johnson's personal qualities and experience as Temporary Chairman of Committees helped to make him a successful Speaker in difficult circumstances. His decision to avoid party meetings did not prevent the Labor opposition from trying during the first session of the parliament every procedural device it could find to catch the government short, attempting motions of censure and dissent from the chair and refusing pairs. The address-in-reply required Johnson's first use of a casting vote, to negate an opposition amendment regretting that the governor-general's advisers proposed to 'destroy the beneficial character of our social and industrial laws' (VP 1913/43, 4.9.1913). In delivering his vote, Johnson observed simply: 'The new Government has so far not been afforded an opportunity to submit any of its proposed legislative measures for the consideration and judgment of the House' (VP 1913/44, 4.9.1913).

Voting when the House was in committee was similarly often close. Johnson aroused controversy by voting as a member in ten such divisions on a bill to restore postal voting. He defended his action by reference to Westminster practice and other precedents, including pointing out that his predecessor as Speaker, Charles McDonald, had voted in committee during the previous parliament. One of Johnson's votes ensured that the question would be put to test his right to vote in committee, but in the event he did not vote on this himself, as W. G. Higgs, the Labor member for Capricornia, unexpectedly decided to support the right of a Speaker to do so.

The government's position in the chamber temporarily improved after 11 November 1913 when Cook raised, as a matter of privilege, remarks impugning the impartiality of the Speaker reportedly made by Charles McGrath, the Labor member for Ballaarat

(as it was then spelt). McGrath refused to apologise, and debate on his suspension from the House proceeded through the day and past midnight. Many allegations were made against Johnson, including his supposed alteration of *Hansard* proofs. The proceedings appear to have included an element of confected rage; Higgs conceded that 'it was my intention not to worry him [the Speaker] so much as to worry the Ministerialists' (H. R. Deb. 11.11.1913, 3032). The Labor member for Brisbane, W. F. Finlayson, attempted to reassure Johnson that 'any remarks we may make are directed towards you in your official position as Speaker, and not in your private capacity as an individual' (H. R. Deb. 11.11.1913, 3049). In the final division, Higgs again refrained from voting with his party, though later in the session he and Johnson clashed repeatedly. McGrath's suspension for the remainder of the session gave the government slight respite, as no further divisions were tied in this first session. But the rowdy second session, when McGrath was restored to the chamber, featured Higgs and another opposition member stealing the mace and the Speaker's copy of May's *Parliamentary Practice* before confessing. A select committee inquiry into this failed to produce any notable result.

Later perceptions about the fifth parliament to the contrary, Johnson used his casting vote in only ten of sixty-nine divisions. In the first session, his vote supported the government three times, though twenty divisions were still determined by a single vote. In the second session, he used his casting vote seven times, including once when he negatived a government motion to close debate, thereby following a precedent that the Speaker should invariably vote for further discussion.

When Labor won the 1914 election, Johnson was again nominated as Speaker but, unsurprisingly, was defeated by McDonald along party lines, 41 to 26 (VP 1914/4–5, 8.10.1914). In turn, Johnson resumed the Speakership in the wake of the sweeping Nationalist win at the 1917 election. His unanimous re-election by the House was followed by the immediate restoration of the mace, which had been banned from the chamber by McDonald, to its traditional place on the table. 'Honourable members'—that is, government supporters—responded with 'three cheers for the King, and sang a verse of the National Anthem' (H. R. Deb. 14.6.1917, 23). Prime Minister William Morris Hughes offered congratulations, claiming hyperbolically that it was 'the first time in the history of the House that the Speaker has been chosen unanimously without election' (H. R. Deb. 14.6.1917, 23), ignoring four previous such uncontested elections, including Johnson's in 1913. Hughes and Johnson were coevals in more than age, the bond between them probably owing something to the time thirty years before when both were free-trade labourites espousing Georgist principles in the suburbs of Sydney.

Johnson's re-election as Speaker following the 1919 election was less smooth, as the government's loss of seats encouraged the opposition to contest the position. He still won easily, securing 46 votes against 21 for the member for Dalley, W. G. Mahony

(VP 1920/4–5, 26.2.1920). Johnson may have been pleased to be nominated by Hector Lamond—by then a fellow Nationalist but formerly Johnson's defeated opponent in contests for the seat of Lang in 1913 and 1914. The debate before the vote was protracted, and comments afterwards continued for two hours, with many members lamenting the conditions and pay of parliamentary staff. Johnson responded defensively that he knew 'nothing of any officers of the House having been sweated, and, as a matter of fact, few public servants have, on the whole, as easy a time as the attendants of the Parliament' (H.R. Deb. 26.2.1920, 39). In 1920, he was appointed KCMG.

The status of parliamentary staff remained a major issue during the early 1920s as the public service commissioner sought to bring them within the terms of an amended Public Service Act and the Economies Commission, appointed to examine Commonwealth expenditures, proposed reductions in numbers and salaries. Johnson and the Senate President, Thomas Givens, were largely successful in resisting such pressures, though later scholars judged that the 'basic principle of parliamentary independence' dwindled in this period to become 'little more, in administrative terms, than the power of the Presiding Officers to control the day-to-day work of their departmental staff' (Reid and Forrest 1989, 427). Nevertheless, Johnson developed a reputation as a determined exponent of the rights of the parliamentary staff and of the parliament generally, and looked likely to eclipse Holder's tenure of eight years.

He was, however, summarily replaced with William Watt when parliament opened in February 1923. The new prime minister, Stanley (Viscount) Bruce, wanted the potentially unpredictable Watt off the floor; the Speakership was a convenient way to do so. Johnson at first downplayed his dismay and spoke merely of a 'little political episode' when opening a Salvation Army home for aged women in his electorate, averring that 'he was not going to kick' as it was 'essential at the present time to stabilise the Government' (*Argus* 1923, 9). He continued as vice-president of his party's National Association in 1923 and won re-election to parliament in 1925.

In the mid-1920s, Johnson built a home at the newly constructed Castlecrag in Sydney, neighbouring the designers of this unique suburb, Marion and Walter Burley Griffin. During his final term in parliament, his commitment to politics appears to have waned. In his pre-Speakership years, his daily attendance in the House exceeded 90 per cent; as Speaker, he was absent only following the death of his wife on 28 July 1920 and in May–September 1921 when he was seriously ill. But during his last session in parliament he was absent for more than a quarter of sitting days, suggesting either some release from the tensions of politics or defeat foreseen. At his tenth federal election, in 1928, he was unable to resist the Labor tide and lost his seat. His record as Speaker was recognised by later commentators as 'excellent' (Sawer 1956, 225 n. 22) and 'perfectly able' (Souter 1988, 196). There is no reason to contest these judgements.

Johnson died on 8 December 1932 at Geelong, while visiting his only child, Florence May. Born an Anglican, he was buried at Rookwood Cemetery, Sydney, as a Presbyterian. A portrait by Florence Rodway hangs in Parliament House. Johnson was himself an artist of talent and an amateur photographer, and the National Library of Australia holds a collection of his works.

This article supplements the original Volume 9 ADB *biography, published 1983, authored by G. N. Hawker. adb.anu.edu.au/biography/johnson-sir-william-elliot-6858/text11879*

Select bibliography

Argus (Melbourne). 'Federal Situation'. 6 November 1913, 9

Argus (Melbourne). 'Election of Speaker'. 5 March 1923, 9

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 9 July 1913, 22

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 5 November 1913, 2907–12

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 11 November 1913, 2982–3053

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 29 April 1915, 2729–49

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 14 June 1917, 21–23

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 26 February 1920, 29–44

Australia. House of Representatives. *Votes and Proceedings*, 1909, 15

Australia. House of Representatives. *Votes and Proceedings*, 1910, 25

Australia. House of Representatives. *Votes and Proceedings*, 1911, 4

Australia. House of Representatives. *Votes and Proceedings*, 1912, 3

Australia. House of Representatives. *Votes and Proceedings*, 1913, 44

Australia. House of Representatives. *Votes and Proceedings*, 1914, 4–5, 48–53, 84

Australia. House of Representatives. *Votes and Proceedings*, 1914–15, 181

Australia. House of Representatives. *Votes and Proceedings*, 1920, 4–5

Makin, Norman. The Honourable William Elliot Johnson KCMG, c. 1962. Papers of Norman Makin, MS 4663. National Library of Australia

Reid, G. S., and Martyn Forrest. *Australia's Commonwealth Parliament 1901–1988: Ten Perspectives.* Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1989

Sawer, Geoffrey. *Australian Federal Politics and Law 1901–1929.* Carlton, Vic.: Melbourne University Press, 1956

Smith, A. N. *Thirty Years: The Commonwealth of Australia, 1901–1931.* Melbourne: Brown, Prior & Co., 1933

Souter, Gavin. *Acts of Parliament: A Narrative History of the Senate and the House of Representatives, Commonwealth of Australia.* Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1988

Sydney Morning Herald. 'Sir E. Johnson'. 9 December 1932, 12

Lucock, Philip Ernest: Chairman of Committees 1961–1972, 1976–1977

Marija Taflaga

Philip Ernest Lucock (1916–96), Presbyterian minister and Chairman of Committees of the House of Representatives, was born on 16 January 1916 at Eltham, Kent, second of three surviving children of British-born parents Grace Miriam Lucock, née Bishop, and her husband, Alan. Grace had been apprenticed to a London dressmaker before marrying; Alan worked as a shell gauger at the Royal Arsenal, Woolwich, but later opened a women's hairdressing salon. Both were strong supporters of the British Liberal Party. In 1923, the Lucocks migrated to New Zealand, residing successively at Dunedin, Timaru, and Christchurch. Philip and his elder brother's involvement with the local youth wing of the Presbyterian fellowship prompted the entire family's conversion to Presbyterianism.

In his new country, Lucock enjoyed sport, especially cricket, and attended an elite state school, Timaru Boys' High (1929), and Christchurch Technical College (1930–31). His father's hairdressing salons at Timaru and Christchurch suffered during the Depression, resulting in Philip's leaving school at age fourteen. He assisted in his father's salons, then worked at a Christchurch service station before a prominent local Presbyterian, (Sir) James Hay, offered him a sales job at his department store in Christchurch. In 1937, he moved to Sydney after chancing on an advertisement for a sales position with Anthony Hordern & Sons Ltd and successfully applying. Within months of his arrival, he decided to join the Presbyterian ministry and, in 1939, commenced as a home missionary at Paterson in the lower Hunter Valley of New South Wales, combining theological training with employment by the church.

The outbreak of World War II interrupted Lucock's studies. He felt obliged to contribute to the fight against Nazism, but, as his religious training was incomplete, he was ineligible to be appointed as a military chaplain. He instead applied to join the Royal Australian Air Force in November 1939 but only commenced service

Figure 38: Philip Lucock.
Source: Courtesy of the National Archives of Australia. NAA: A1200, L48966.

in July 1941. After initial training at Somers, Victoria, he was sent to Rhodesia in November 1941 for pilot training. Suspected haematuria and renal calculus resulted in his being sent home four months later, and, eventually, his discharge in August 1942 as a leading aircraftman.

On 5 August 1942, Lucock married Margaret Joan Dixon, a nurse he had met before the war, at Paterson. He became a home missionary at Wollomombi, northern New South Wales (1943–45), where the first of their four children, a son, was born. The family moved to the Sydney suburb of Blacktown in 1945. There, he was again a home missionary while concurrently studying at St Andrew's Theological Hall (1945–47). He was subsequently a home missionary at Wingham on the mid-north coast of New South Wales, and was ordained in January 1948 and inducted into the parish of Upper Manning as its minister.

Politics had been regularly discussed in Lucock's family, and he particularly recalled his father's 'very strong views' on 'the rights of the individual and the freedom of everybody' (Lucock 1985). He was later also exposed to rural ideals of self-reliance and the national importance of primary industry. While at Wollomombi, he had joined the Country Party, becoming local branch secretary. He was not concerned that membership raised any tensions with his commitment to the church as he 'was in an area where 99 per cent of the congregation were members of that political party' (Lucock 1985). At Blacktown, however, he joined the Liberal Party, reasoning that the coalition parties were united by a shared philosophy and opposition to the Australian Labor Party (ALP). Despite being liberal on theological matters, he remained conservative on moral issues such as abortion and homosexuality.

An increase in the size of the House of Representatives in 1949 created the new seat of Lyne, which encompassed the Manning Valley and surrounds. Lucock was approached by the Country Party to stand for Lyne, and, as party rules then allowed multiple candidates, he became one of four party nominees. The seat was won by the Legislative Council member and former Country Party state chairman Eldred James Eggins, with Lucock coming third in the primary vote out of a field of six candidates. He returned to his ministry and became a director of radio station 2RE at Taree, from which he began weekly broadcasts on devotional matters and international affairs.

Eggins's death in January 1952 gave Lucock a second chance at federal politics. He declined an approach from the Liberal Party, and instead won the ensuing by-election for the Country Party. His first speech in the House of Representatives reflected his longstanding interests in primary industry and foreign affairs. He pictured Australia as being placed firmly within the imperial fold, but 'experiencing growing pains as our nation goes forward to take its place among the great nations of the world' (H.R. Deb. 7.5.1952, 113). Subsequently, he participated in several parliamentary delegations, including to the United Nations General Assembly (1957), and to meetings of the assembly of the Asian Parliamentarians' Union in

Seoul, South Korea (1966), and Bangkok, Thailand (1967). Lucock was also a regular participant in Commonwealth Parliamentary Association conferences; in 1979, he led the Australian delegation to the conference held in Wellington.

To Lucock's surprise, in February 1956, the Speaker, Archie Cameron, appointed him as a Temporary Chairman of Committees. He performed well, and was elected Chairman of Committees on 8 March 1961, succeeding the Country Party's George Bowden. As Chairman, Lucock emphasised the primacy of parliament and its traditions. He described the Speaker's role as that of 'protector of the Member, be it Government or Opposition', but added that 'the House is more important than the individual' (Lucock 1985). Although he did not always approve of opposition tactics, he accepted its disruption of House business as a legitimate tool; indeed, one of the challenges he faced was ensuring that 'the government doesn't ride roughshod over the Opposition' (Lucock 1985).

The opposition valued Lucock's fair-mindedness. Its leader, Arthur Calwell, welcomed his election, as the Labor Party had 'no reason to take great umbrage at his rulings' in his previous role as Temporary Chairman of Committees (H.R. Deb. 8.3.1961, 26). Lucock's impartiality was reflected in some notable rulings. On 10 September 1969, as Acting Speaker, he allowed the opposition leader, Gough Whitlam, to answer a question during question time. When replying to a question, the minister for health, Jim Forbes, rhetorically insisted that Whitlam explain his position on a public health scheme. In a bold tactical manoeuvre, Gordon Scholes, a future Speaker, followed Forbes's attack by addressing his question to Whitlam, asking him to clarify Labor's stance (H.R. Deb. 10.9.1969, 1031). Lucock ruled in favour of Scholes by referring to Forbes's own demand (H.R. Deb. 10.9.1969, 1031–32). As the debate continued, Lucock dismissed challenges from the leader of the House, Dudley Erwin, by succinctly stating that 'if the House disagrees with that, there is one action which the House can take' (H.R. Deb. 10.9.1969, 1032).

Inevitably, Lucock also had some robust exchanges with the opposition. In April 1966, he ruled that Prime Minister Harold Holt was not obliged to table a letter concerning conscripts serving in Vietnam from which he had just quoted. The opposition responded that, as the letter did not appear to be confidential, it was not exempt from tabling. Calwell alleged that Lucock was simply trying to protect the prime minister. Lucock was not helped by Holt's clarification that the letter in question was anonymous (H.R. Deb. 19.4.1966, 894–99), creating an uproar within the chamber.

Three years later, Lucock became embroiled in a long debate about whether accusations in the chamber addressed to groups of members—in this case, a suggestion that the ALP was in alliance with the Communist Party—were offensive, ruling that 'only a statement referring to a particular individual in the House can be claimed to be offensive' (H.R. Deb. 23.4.1969, 1375). Some Labor members responded by

rhetorically questioning whether members of the coalition parties could be described as 'collectively Fascists with Nazi intentions' (H.R. Deb. 23.4.1969, 1392–93). On 26 August 1971, Lucock had to adjourn the House early after a failure to meet the quorum requirement. During the day Labor had repeatedly called for a quorum; on the fifth such occasion, he conducted a series of counts of members. Some Labor members strategically stayed outside the chamber, evidently hoping to embarrass the government of (Sir) William McMahon. The government failed to muster the numbers required, despite some members banging on the doors after they had been locked.

Lucock nonetheless maintained his esteem for the Westminster parliamentary tradition, reflecting after his retirement that 'with all its faults, with all its difficulties … [it] is still the only system that is really giving the best and noblest and the most logical system of government to the people' (Lucock 1985). After spending the Whitlam years on the backbench, he welcomed the reintroduction of the Speaker's wig and robes by (Sir) Billy Snedden following the coalition's return to office in 1975. Lucock argued that, rather than being 'a trapping of power', they constituted a 'covering up of the personality so that the office is the thing that really counts' (Lucock 1985). His conservatism extended to hoping that parliament would never be televised, given the 'not really interesting' (Lucock 1985) nature of most parliamentary business.

Increasingly, Lucock feared that the chain of accountability between governments and voters was under threat from growing executive control of parliament. Shortly after his re-election as Chairman of Committees in February 1976, he implored the House that 'every one of us must remember that the most vital and important functions that we have to fulfil in this place are our responsibility to the electorate, to the people who are our masters' (H.R. Deb. 17.2.1976, 24–25). During this debate, Whitlam repudiated a comment made by his party colleague Gordon Bryant that Lucock was 'a remarkably slow learner of the rights and duties of the people for whom he deliberates'; Whitlam instead observed that 'in the company he has to keep … [Lucock] shines like a good deed in a naughty world' (H.R. Deb. 17.2.1976, 23).

A few months later, Lucock allowed Labor's Horace Garrick to make a personal explanation during question time after Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser had suggested that Garrick supported violent demonstrations. The ruling was justified on the grounds that 'when an honourable member claims to have been misrepresented the personal explanation should be made as close as possible to the time of the alleged misrepresentation' (H.R. Deb. 7.9.1976, 711), and insisted that Fraser's withdrawal of his allegation be without qualification. Lucock greatly valued courtesy and decorum. During one particularly lively debate, he described conduct in the chamber as 'disgraceful' and warned that 'if there is any more behaviour along that line I will immediately leave this Chair' (H.R. Deb. 6.5.1976, 2063). He also chastised some

members for walking in front of their colleagues when they were addressing the chair: 'You wouldn't do that kind of thing in your own home, or at least I hope you wouldn't' (H.R. Deb. 20.10.1977, 2261).

The opening of the thirty-first parliament in February 1978 marked the end of Lucock's service as Chairman of Committees. His re-election was opposed by elements of his own party, and he subsequently lost the vote in the House. This came as a surprise to him, and he struggled for an explanation beyond a suspicion that some party colleagues disagreed 'that I was a servant of the House and had to protect the Opposition just as much as I protected members of the government' (Lucock 1985). He was unable to attend parliament during the vote due to the hospitalisation of his wife. Although the opposition nominated him, there was confusion as to whether he accepted the nomination, particularly as Snedden did not read out Lucock's confirming telegram until after the ballot was complete.

Outside the Chairmanship, Lucock was only rarely the subject of headlines. In 1969, he conducted the ceremony when Harold Holt's widow, Zara, married Jeff Bate, the member for Macarthur. Lucock was appointed CBE in 1971. The collapse of the Life Funds Company in 1972, of which he was a director, was the subject of a probe brought on by a Labor member of the New South Wales Legislative Assembly, but it came to little. He retained a robust sense of independence and, by the end of his political career, he had crossed the floor to vote against his own party on five occasions. When he retired from parliament at the 1980 election, he was the longest-serving Chairman of Committees—a total of thirteen years and five months. The opposition's Lionel Bowen remarked appreciatively that Lucock's 'somewhat gentle' approach to politics included 'the compassion … of understanding all the problems of human behaviour' (H.R. Deb. 18.9.1980, 1564).

Of heavy build, Lucock was blessed with a resonant voice that was a decided advantage in the chair, and a genial manner that contributed to his popularity in Lyne. In retirement, he resumed a strong personal engagement with the Presbyterian Church, becoming moderator of the church in New South Wales (1981–82) and, in 1987, a member of the council of the Presbyterian Ladies' College, Armidale. He also continued his longstanding work with Rotary Australia. On 8 August 1996, he died at a Brisbane nursing home, survived by his children. His wife predeceased him.

Select bibliography

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 7 May 1952, 112–14

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 8 March 1961, 24–27

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 19 April 1966, 894–99

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 23 April 1969, 1375–400

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 10 September 1969, 1031–32

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 26 August 1971, 789–92

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 12 February 1976, 21–25

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 6 May 1976, 2059–69

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 7 September 1976, 710–12

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 20 October 1977, 2261

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 21 February 1978, 22–26

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 18 September 1980, 1564

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 20 August 1996, 3242–48

Australian Financial Review (Sydney). 'MHR Named in Life Funds Allegations'. 24 March 1972, 20

Canberra Times. 'NCP Minister "Aspiring to Leadership"'. 3 April 1978, 9

Canberra Times. 'A Career of Service and of Sacrifice'. 21 September 1980, 2

Gray, Arthur. 'Lucock Ousted as Deputy Speaker'. *Canberra Times*, 22 February 1978, 15

Lucock, Philip E. Interview by Ron Hurst, 22–24 January 1985. Parliament's Oral History Project. National Library of Australia

National Archives of Australia. A9301, 412600, Lucock Philip Ernest

Solomon, David. 'Lack of House Quorum Ends Sitting'. *Canberra Times*, 27 August 1971, 1

Sydney Morning Herald. 'Philip Lucock, CBE'. 11 December 1996, 35

Mackay, George Hugh: Speaker 1932–1934

Elaine Brown

George Hugh Alexander Mackay (1872–1961), businessman and eighth Speaker of the House of Representatives, was born on 20 March 1872 at Copperfield in central Queensland. His parents, Jane Mackay, née Baird, and her husband, Hugh Mackay, a carpenter, were Scottish immigrants who had arrived in Brisbane together in December 1868. Hugh died suddenly of heart disease on 5 June 1872, leaving his wife with a daughter born in 1870 and baby George. Brought up by his mother, Mackay remained close to her throughout her life.

Mackay attended public schools at Clermont and Bundaberg but, as an avid reader and aspiring writer, largely educated himself. In 1887, after a brief apprenticeship as a pharmacist, he began a printer's apprenticeship at the *Peak Downs Telegram* at Clermont, becoming foreman printer in 1894. He also wrote for the publication and was appointed its managing editor in 1896. On 23 September 1896, he married Edith Ann Heard at Clermont Wesleyan Church. Three children were born at Clermont, but only the youngest, George Baird Mackay, survived. In 1897 the *Telegram* lost a libel case over a story Mackay had written accusing the manager of Gordon Downs station of cancelling the agreements of the station's rouseabouts. Despite receiving public sympathy for his stance, he resigned and joined his widowed sister, Barbara, in managing a bookshop at Clermont. Freed from his newspaper role, he was elected to Clermont Town Council in 1899 and served as mayor (1900–02). He was also involved in many local causes, including the Oddfellows Lodge, the hospital committee, and the rifle club.

In June 1902, following a disagreement with his sister, Mackay sold his share of the business and moved to Lismore in northern New South Wales. There he bought a newsagency, the Lismore Book Arcade, where he worked for a year before leasing a small dairy farm at nearby McLean's Ridges to gain practical experience of the land. He was again secretary of the local rifle club and, at McLean's Ridges, became president of the school of arts. Enthusiastic about the developing dairy industry, he joined a group of Richmond River farmers who together moved to Queensland
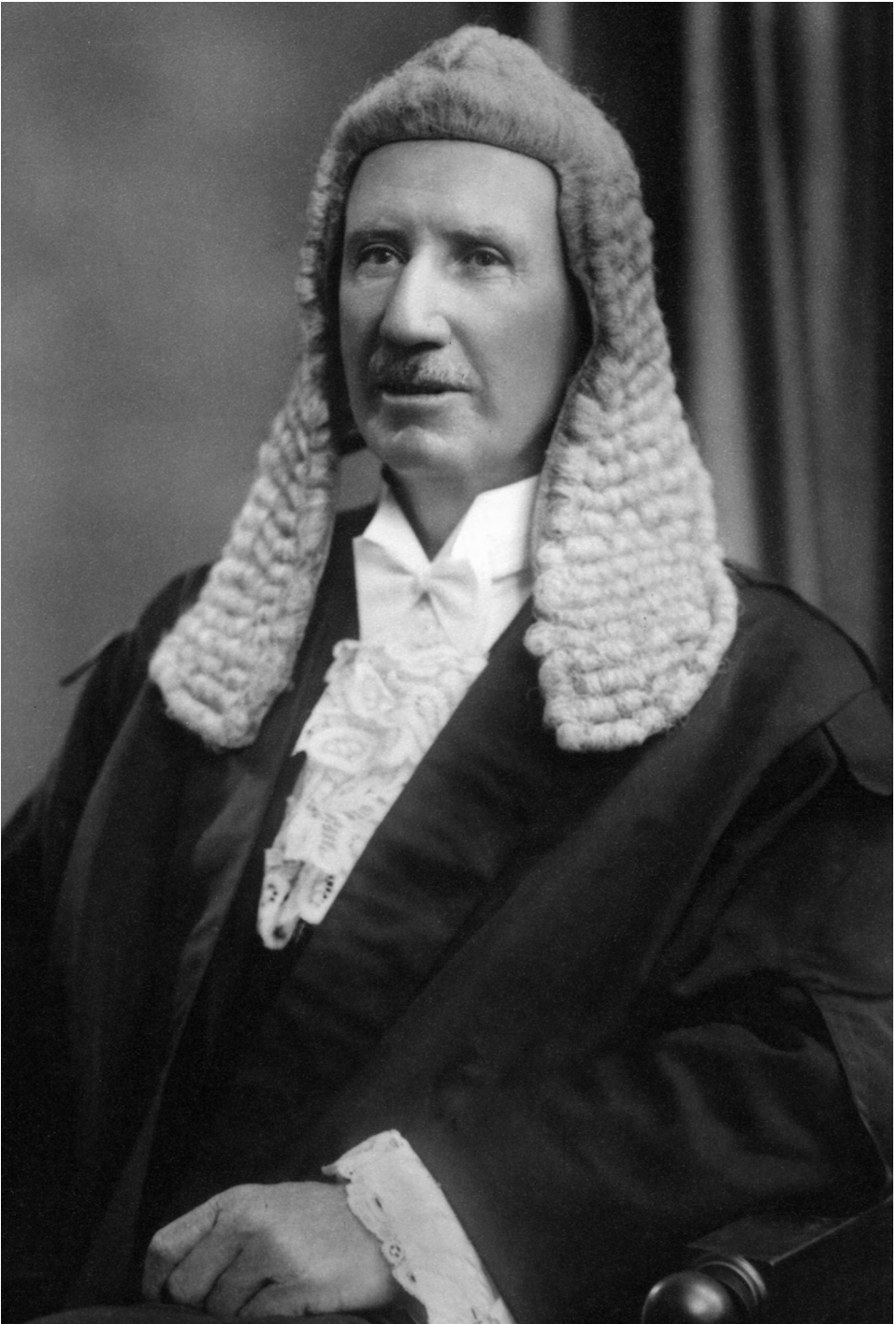
Figure 39: George Mackay.
Source: Department of the House of Representatives.

in the hope of taking up new land in the Cooran–Kin Kin district near Gympie. However, in October 1905, Mackay missed out in the ballot for blocks. He instead entered a partnership with Raymond John King to open a local auctioneering and real estate business. In 1906 Mackay became honorary secretary of the committee that established the Wide Bay Co-operative Dairy Association and its butter factory. He joined local debating societies, the Masonic lodge, and the Gympie Chamber of Commerce and Mines, became a justice of the peace, and began his longstanding membership of Gympie's hospital, ambulance, and agricultural show society committees. In October 1908, his business partnership was dissolved but at about the same time Mackay selected and began developing a farm at Cooroy, which he was to hold for three years. The year after the purchase, he stood with George Alexander Buist for the anti-Labor People's Progressive League in the state seat of Gympie—then a two-member electorate. They campaigned energetically but failed to unseat the sitting Australian Labor Party (ALP) members, George Ryland and Daniel Mulcahy.

In April 1910, Mackay and a young accountant, William Phillips Watts, opened an auctioneering firm based in central Gympie. The authority and fluency required of an auctioneer resulted in Mackay developing skills in reading and persuading crowds—invaluable preparation for the demands of politics and the Speakership. He 'made a practice of speaking to the back of the hall during electioneering, because the people he had to win over were there, and their interjections enlivened the meetings and enabled him to think what to say next' (Mackay 1983). In February 1911, Mackay was elected to Gympie City Council, where he was outspoken on the responsible use of council finances. The next year, when Gympie became a one-member electorate, he stood again for the People's Progressive League. George Ryland was again the ALP candidate, but Daniel Mulcahy's insistence on running as an independent split the vote, and thus Mackay narrowly outpolled Ryland. From then on, hecklers liked to remind Mackay that he should thank Mulcahy for his success. He did not contest the local council election in 1914, preferring to concentrate on his business interests and parliamentary duties.

Despite his lack of parliamentary experience, Mackay's ability as a public speaker led to his delivering the address-in-reply to the governor's opening speech to parliament in July 1912. He spoke for only half of his allotted hour, mostly about the Gympie goldfield, and was 'warmly applauded from both sides of the Chamber' (*Gympie Times* 1912, 3). During his one term in the Queensland parliament, Mackay promoted the interests of his mining, farming, and business constituents. He petitioned the government to spend more on the mining fields, supported the new Mary Valley railway, and found a new site for Gympie High School. He worked closely with Harry Walker, the member for the neighbouring seat of Cooroora, and when the federal seat of Lilley was created in 1913, they assisted the successful campaign to elect the proprietor of the *Gympie Times*, Jacob Stumm.

The state election of May 1915 resulted in the heavy defeat of the Liberal government. Although Mackay again campaigned energetically, he lost his seat, but admitted that this 'lifted a great load of responsibility from his shoulders' (*Gympie Times* 1915, 3). In June 1915, his business partnership with Watts was dissolved, but he continued in business for two more years, on his own and in short-term partnerships. When he was re-elected to Gympie City Council in 1916, his parliamentary experience gave him the confidence to be more outspoken. In wartime, he and his wife devoted themselves to such fundraising causes as the Red Cross. As mayor in 1917, he 'hated to hear the doorbell ring' (Mackay 1983) for fear that it signalled the arrival of telegrams notifying local families of casualties.

Mackay contested the federal seat of Lilley for the Nationalist Party in May 1917, replacing Stumm, who had come under attack for his German origins. With Stumm's support, Mackay won the seat and held it easily at six subsequent elections. Although boundary changes later placed Gympie outside Lilley, Gympie remained his home. For most of his federal career, he was a modest backbencher, speaking occasionally on matters directly relevant to his constituents, including immigration, land settlement, government finance, and such products as butter, sugar, and pineapples. His calls for a prohibitive duty on Fijian bananas earned him the title of the 'Banana King', but his intervention to support the controversial theories of the long-range weather forecaster Inigo Jones was unsuccessful. Industrious and conscientious, Mackay disliked 'extremists and muddlers' (*Gympie Times* 1917, 2) and had friends on both sides of the House. From 1920 to 1928, he served on the Joint Committee on Public Works, chairing it from 1926 to 1928. In May 1928, the committee won the House's support for its recommendation to commence construction of the Australian War Memorial as soon as practicable, only to have the project delayed by the onset of the Depression. From June to October 1928, he was a member of the Australian delegation to an Empire Parliamentary Association conference in Canada. He served as Temporary Chairman of Committees from 1929 to 1931.

In December 1931, Joseph Lyons led the United Australia Party—formed from the old National Party and breakaway ALP members—to victory at the federal election. On 17 February 1932, Mackay was elected, unopposed, as Speaker, having been nominated and seconded by two future Speakers, Archie Cameron and Walter Nairn. His elevation was seen by the press as a reward for his long parliamentary service, but it also reflected his reputation for impartiality and calm—qualities sorely needed amid the turmoil arising from the Depression. Unlike his predecessor, Norman Makin, Mackay chose to wear the Speaker's wig and gown, and had the mace returned to its traditional place in the chamber. Governor-General Sir Isaac Isaacs loaned the wig.

In his two and a half years as Speaker, Mackay showed that he had learnt much from his wide community experience and years in politics. Despite initial concerns that he would fail to maintain order, he presided firmly but tactfully, using what Makin

described as 'a smooth satin kind of voice' and a 'manner that took the edge off certain bitterness arising in the debate' (c. 1962). He demonstrated a sound knowledge of standing orders and was seen by members and the press alike as being impartial in his rulings. His wife, Edith, sometimes made the long trip from Gympie to Canberra to assist with the social activities associated with the Speakership.

A fleeting challenge to Mackay's authority arose from his October 1933 decision that offensive remarks that had been ruled out of order would not be recorded in *Hansard*. The House supported the ruling, but the Lang Labor firebrand Eddie Ward objected, claiming that Mackay was 'influenced by a desire on the part of honorable members who support the Government to have certain remarks expunged from Hansard' (H.R. Deb. 19.10.1933, 3617). The following month, Mackay ruled that women wearing slacks would not be banned from the House and its precincts, pronouncing that the style 'may be unconventional, but I would hesitate to say that they are more immodest than some short skirts which one sees' (*Argus* 1933, 7). As his ruling was not matched by the President of the Senate, the announcement was taken by the press as implying that women so attired should avoid crossing an invisible dividing line running down the middle of King's Hall.

Mackay's announcement in March 1934 that he would retire from parliament at the next election was a surprise to his colleagues and the press. He explained that his decision arose from unspecified personal reasons and the danger that 'one may remain in parliament too long' (H.R. Deb. 1.8.1934, 1145). According to Mackay's son, worries about 'things that had occurred' (Mackay 1983) were making him anxious and he was not looking forward to the demands of another parliamentary term. Nevertheless, he attended every one of the 154 sitting days in 1934. Significantly, opposition leader James Scullin was effusive in farewelling Mackay, telling him that 'the aptitude with which you fitted yourself for the position within a few days of your election to it won the admiration of every one who has been privileged to witness the manner in which you have discharged your functions' (H.R. Deb. 1.8.1934, 1144).

George and Edith Mackay enjoyed a long retirement in Gympie, eventually celebrating sixty years of marriage. In 1952, Mackay published *A Summary of the History of the Gympie Presbyterian Church*, commenting with self-deprecating humour that possibly 'these pages will, by some critics, be regarded as the next-of-kin to the State Electoral Roll'. A man of impressive bearing who dressed immaculately, Mackay maintained his youthful fitness for most of his life. Devoted to lawn bowls, he became president of the Gympie Bowling Club (1936–39) and in 1955 received a Long Service Jewel for fifty years of service to Freemasonry. He never learnt to drive a car but maintained his independence well into his old age.

Injured in a fall in his garden, Mackay died in Gympie Hospital of lung and bone cancer on 5 November 1961 at the age of eighty-nine. After a state funeral at St Andrew's Presbyterian Church, he was interred in the Two Mile Cemetery

beside his wife, who had died three years earlier. He was survived by his son and three granddaughters. Mackay had lived so quietly in retirement that when he died few people in Gympie remembered him. His portrait by A. E. Newbury is in Parliament House.

This article supplements the original Volume 10 ADB *biography, published 1986, authored by Elaine Brown. adb.anu.edu.au/biography/mackay-george-hugh-7378/text12821*

Select bibliography

Argus (Melbourne). '"Slacks" at Canberra'. 23 November 1933, 7

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 17 February 1932, 18–23

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 13 October 1933, 3540

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 19 October 1933, 3617

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 1 August 1934, 1143–46

Gympie Times and Mary River Mining Gazette. 'Queensland Parliament'. 6 July 1912, 4

Gympie Times and Mary River Mining Gazette. 'Brisbane Notes'. 11 July 1912, 3

Gympie Times and Mary River Mining Gazette. 'Liberal Party Social'. 8 July 1915, 3

Gympie Times and Mary River Mining Gazette. 'Farmers Union Celebration'. 26 June 1917, 2

Herald (Melbourne). 'Mr Speaker'. 18 February 1932, 6

Mackay, George Baird. Interview by Elaine Brown, 1983

Makin, Norman. The Honourable George Hugh Mackay, c. 1962. Papers of Norman Makin, MS 4663. National Library of Australia

Queensland. Legislative Assembly. *Parliamentary Debates*, 3 July 1912, 16–19

Telegraph (Brisbane). 'Federal Speaker to Retire'. 19 March 1934, 1

Makin, Norman John: Speaker 1929–1931

Stephen Wilks and David Lowe

Norman John Oswald Makin (1889–1982), ambassador and seventh Speaker of the House of Representatives, was born on 31 March 1889 at Petersham, Sydney, elder son of John Hulme Makin, pattern-maker, and his wife, Elizabeth, née Yates, both born in Lancashire, England. After emigrating, his father had found work at the Eveleigh railway workshops at Redfern. Norman moved with his family in 1891 to Melbourne, where a neighbour introduced him to the Albert Park Wesleyan Church. In 1898 the family moved again, to Broken Hill where Norman experienced the straitened circumstances of economic depression. He studied at Broken Hill Superior Public School, and his attendance at the local Methodist church consolidated his religious convictions as well as providing opportunities to develop skills in public speaking. Largely self-educated, he later recalled discovering literary greats such as John Ruskin and Thomas Carlyle and saw himself as a 'lad of serious thinking' (Makin c. 1962), who early on dedicated himself to public service and the teachings of John Wesley. Aged thirteen, he left school to work as a draper's parcel-boy, and then in a bookstore. In 1903 he joined the Shop Assistants' Union of New South Wales and witnessed the 1908–09 miners' strike and the militant industrial action of the socialist campaigner Thomas Mann. In 1908 he joined the Amalgamated Society of Engineers and became a pattern-maker.

Makin developed an early fascination with parliament. During a six-month sojourn in Melbourne in 1910–11, he was enthralled to watch from the public gallery some of the giants of the early Commonwealth, including Alfred Deakin, Andrew Fisher, and Sir John Forrest. In 1911 he moved to South Australia, primarily to follow Ruby Florence Jennings, whom he married on 10 August 1912 at Brompton Methodist Church, Adelaide. From 1912 he worked in a foundry at Kapunda and with the Gawler engineering firm James Martin & Co., which built locomotives.

Unsuccessfully contesting the South Australian state seat of Barossa (1915) and the federal seat of Wakefield (1917), Makin nonetheless won admiration within the ranks of the Australian Labor Party (ALP) for his outspoken opposition to Prime Minister

Figure 40: Norman Makin.
Source: Department of the House of Representatives.

William Morris Hughes's efforts in 1916 and 1917 to introduce conscription. He served as state ALP president in 1918–19 and 1929–30. In 1918 he wrote *A Progressive Democracy*, which outlined the history and policies of the ALP's South Australian branch. The following year, he was elected to the safe federal Labor seat of Hindmarsh. In March 1923, he took a decisive step towards the Speakership when Speaker William Watt cast around both sides of the House for members to appoint as Temporary Chairmen of Committees. Makin came to attention when the member for Melbourne Ports, James Mathews, noticed him earnestly studying the standing orders. Watt overcame his initial concern that Makin was too young to hold official parliamentary office, with the eventual result that Makin 'became more convinced that the Speakership would one day be an office in the Parliament that I would occupy' (Makin 1982, 62).

The provisional parliament building in Canberra seemed in 1927 to most members to be less convenient and less comfortable than its Melbourne predecessor. Makin looked forward to a permanent building that, as 'an imposing edifice', would 'truly symbolise national greatness in all its phases within the life and purpose of the Australian nation' (1982, 65). He was secretary of the Federal Parliamentary Labor Party in 1928–29 and 1934–41. Following the election of the government of James Scullin in October 1929, he did not seek selection for the ministry and instead easily fended off two other parliamentarians interested in the Speakership. One of his supporters was an ambitious member of just over a year's standing, John Curtin. Makin was elected Speaker on 20 November 1929. Although he pledged publicly to uphold the traditions of office, he more discreetly told the Clerk of the House, Ernest Parkes, that 'we are here to create precedent as well as to be guided by it' (Makin 1982, 68). Parkes, a seasoned parliamentary officer, reportedly responded helpfully that 'I can always find a precedent for any ruling likely to be given by you' (Makin 1982, 68). Regard for parliamentary tradition did not prevent Makin from objecting to what he considered demeaning trappings of office. As Speaker, he eschewed the gown and wig, while generously accepting the Clerk's choice to don them, thereby consolidating as ALP practice the stance taken by his predecessor, Charles McDonald, in 1910. The new Speaker instead sported a distinctive black suit and bow tie and shunned the mace as 'a relic of barbarism', declaring that he was 'quite capable' of asserting the Speaker's authority without it (H.R. Deb. 21.11.1929, 69). He decried politicians' failure to get on with one another and attributed this to 'an absence of the spirit of God in Parliament' (*Argus* 1931, 6).

As Speaker, Makin was particularly concerned to remain impartial, despite pressure from some party colleagues. When threatening to name the unruly Rowley James, a Lang Labor member who had broken with the government, he simultaneously rebuked Prime Minister Scullin for interjecting, thereby unexpectedly winning James's admiration for his impartiality. Throughout the tumultuous disintegration

of Scullin's government, Makin considered himself to have 'maintained a calm and judicial composure that surprised many' (c. 1962). Looking back, he wondered whether he had been too strict.

In October 1930, Makin received a proposal from the acting prime minister, James Fenton, to bring parliamentary staff under the Public Service Act. He replied that if 'each House of the Parliament is to retain its supremacy and its authority under the Constitution to so conduct its affairs as it deemed right and proper, then it does appear to me that of necessity it must retain control of its particular staff' (Reid and Forrest 1989, 428). (Sir) Walter Kingsmill, President of the Senate, agreed and the proposal was dropped. In the same year, Makin ruled out of order an attempt by opposition leader (Sir) John Latham to expel E. G. Theodore from parliament following a royal commission finding that, as premier of Queensland, Theodore had committed 'fraud and dishonesty' in relation to the 1922 purchase of the Mungana mine by the Queensland government. Makin considered this was not a matter of concern to the Commonwealth, and he had Parkes and others unearth a century-old British precedent to support his ruling.

The main controversy of Makin's Speakership was the exclusion from the House of the Melbourne *Herald* correspondent Joseph Alexander. In March 1931, the newspaper published confidential cables on fiscal policy that Scullin had exchanged with Fenton and his acting treasurer of the time, Joseph Lyons, when visiting London. The Commonwealth Investigation Branch found that Lyons's files had been tampered with, but Alexander refused to divulge how he had obtained the cables. On 23 April, Makin invited Alexander to explain why he should not be banned. Alexander pleaded that the cables were not parliamentary documents and the Speaker should not act as an instrument of the executive. Makin invoked the dignity of parliament in excluding Alexander, to uphold 'the safe custody of all documents and papers that resided in or passed through the agencies of the House of Representatives' (Makin 1982, 69).

The next day, the Nationalist member James Bayley moved that expulsion of a journalist was for the House to decide. Makin responded by declaring that 'while I remain in the Chair I shall be the master of the situation in which I am placed' (H.R. Deb. 24.4.1931, 1281). Latham and the Country Party leader, (Sir) Earle Page, both argued that the Speaker had exceeded his authority. The resulting tied vote was resolved by Makin exercising the Speaker's power to deliver a casting vote. From 1 May to 23 September, Alexander was excluded from the precincts of the House but not from the Senate. This led to his attempting to monitor the House from a position just on the Senate side of King's Hall, before the *Herald's* managing director, (Sir) Keith Murdoch, recalled him to Melbourne. He returned to the House after the Australian Journalists' Association engineered a compromise whereby he provided

an assurance that he had obtained the cables in the ordinary course of his work as a journalist and would 'accept the standards of journalistic conduct outlined by the Prime Minister' (Reid and Forrest 1989, 440).

Soon after, Makin again defended the House when he described a question on the notice paper as offensive to the director-general of posts and telegraphs. He declared that, as Speaker, he would 'require questions of doubtful propriety to be submitted to me so that I may ensure the observance of decorum and correct procedure' (H.R. Deb. 5.6.1931, 2551). Twenty-four years later, as a backbencher, he was one of only four ALP members to vote for the jailing of newspaper proprietor Raymond Fitzpatrick and journalist Frank Browne over a breach of parliamentary privilege.

Even a Speaker as steadfastly impartial as Makin could not avoid the schisms engulfing the Scullin government. In June 1931, another Lang supporter, Eddie Ward, asked Makin to publicly confirm that unnamed sources connected with the Adelaide Stock Exchange had tried to bribe him to join Lyons in breaking with Labor. Makin told the House that he was 'not flattered' by attempts to induce him to 'leave a movement with which I have been associated all my life, and that there was no price, either electoral support or any other, that could buy me' (H.R. Deb. 5.6.1931, 2497). Speaking as a private member during the committee stage of the Financial Emergency Bill, he condemned the government's deflationary Premiers' Plan, saying it 'must inevitably lead to the accentuation of the depression from which the country is suffering' (H.R. Deb. 9.7.1931, 3639).

Makin was better known to the Australian public as Speaker than for any other achievement of his long career. When, early in 1930, residents of the Adelaide suburb of Chicago cast around for a new local name, the press playfully proposed 'Makinville' before Kilburn was chosen. At the end of his Speakership in November 1931, he elicited warm statements of appreciation that were a striking contrast to the polarised politics of the time. Lyons, as opposition leader, thanked him for 'the impartiality, the firmness and the courage which you have invariably displayed' (H.R. Deb. 26.11.1931, 1931), and the government's long-serving member for Melbourne, William Maloney, declared that 'no Speaker, in my experience, has held the scales more evenly than you' (H.R. Deb. 26.11.1931, 1932–33). More irreverently, *Smith's Weekly* dubbed him 'Holy Norman' (1931, 7).

Makin remained so respectful of the office of Speaker that in 1962 he prepared an unpublished guide entitled 'Mr Speaker—A Manual of Parliamentary History, Procedures and Usages Including Political and Military Records of the Speakers of the Commonwealth Parliament'. It included biographies of all Commonwealth Speakers to date, including a memoir of his own Speakership written in the third person. Drawing on his long parliamentary experience, he considered the three best Speakers

were Sir Frederick Holder, whom he had not witnessed, Charles McDonald, and William Watt. His assessments were generous; Carty Salmon and Archie Cameron were among the few he criticised.

As federal president of the ALP (1936–38), Makin represented his party at the 1937 coronation of King George VI. He was a member of the Standing Orders Committee (1932–46, 1956–63) and the Advisory War Council (1940–45), and served as minister for the navy and for munitions (1941–46) and minister for aircraft production (1945–46) in the Curtin and Chifley governments. In 1946 he led the Australian delegation to the London meeting of the newly formed General Assembly of the United Nations. By virtue of Australia's alphabetical advantage, he was the first president (1946) of the UN Security Council. Sir Paul Hasluck recalled that Makin made up for a lack of diplomatic experience by drawing on his time as Speaker to prove a capable presiding officer. He resigned from parliament in 1946 to represent Australia in Washington, DC, and became the first Australian ambassador to the United States of America when the legation was upgraded to an embassy. His time in Washington coincided with an escalation of the Cold War. He was a member of the Far Eastern Commission, which considered the future of postwar Japan, and was also a governor of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development.

Described by the diplomat Sir Laurence McIntyre as having been 'out of his depth in the Washington environment' (1975), Makin was not familiar with the details of foreign policy, but he took advice, made shrewd observations, and showed common sense. A teetotaller and non-smoker, he eschewed the Washington cocktail circuit; some people mocked him when, to save money on flowers, the Makins installed a mechanical fountain as the centrepiece of the embassy dining table. Skilled at reading 'grassroots' opinion, he was the only member of the Australian Embassy to predict Harry Truman's 1948 election as president. As a lay preacher, he gave sermons at Foundry Methodist Church, Washington.

Returning to Australia in 1951, Makin won the federal seat of Sturt in 1954, defeating (Sir) Keith Wilson. After a redistribution in 1955, he served as the member for Bonython until his retirement in 1963. He published *Federal Labour Leaders* in 1961. In 1980 he was appointed AO, and the Methodist Church gave him a certificate in recognition of his seventy-five years of lay ministry.

Short and slim, Makin was dignified, courteous, and considerate. He was hard-working and sincere, consistently representing the interests of the working classes, particularly in the fight against poverty; he spoke of the need to protect them from the ravages of commercialism and finance. At the end of his career as a parliamentarian and diplomat, Makin recalled that 'no place or position gave me greater satisfaction than that of being the Speaker of the Commonwealth Parliament of Australia' (1982, 67). Widowed in 1979, he died on 20 July 1982 at Glenelg, South Australia,

and was cremated. Later that year, his two sons published *The Memoirs of Norman John Oswald Makin*. In 1984 a new federal electorate in South Australia was named after him. His portrait by John Rowell is held by Parliament House.

This article supplements the original Volume 18 ADB *biography, published 2012, authored by David Lowe. adb.anu.edu.au/biography/makin-norman-john-14673/text25810*

Select bibliography

Advertiser and Register (Adelaide). '"No Price Will Buy Me"'. 5 June 1931, 21

Argus (Melbourne). 'Not the Right Spirit'. 23 February 1931, 6

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 20 November 1929, 14

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 24 April 1931, 1281–82

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 5 June 1931, 2497, 2550–51

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 9 July 1931, 3638–39

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 26 November 1931, 1931–33

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 17 August 1982, 1

Canberra Times. 'Mr Norman John Oswald Makin'. 23 July 1982, 12

Green, Frank C. *Servant of the House*. Melbourne: William Heinemann, 1969

Hasluck, Paul. *Diplomatic Witness: Australian Foreign Affairs, 1941–1947*. Carlton, Vic.: Melbourne University Press, 1980

McIntyre, Laurence. Interview by Mel Pratt, 9 September–27 November 1975. Transcript. Mel Pratt collection. National Library of Australia

Mail (Adelaide). 'Exit Chicago!' 22 February 1930, 1

Makin, Norman. Interview by S. Walker, 1974. Transcript. National Library of Australia

Makin, Norman. *The Memoirs of Norman John Oswald Makin, 31 March 1889–20 July 1982*. Mount Martha, Vic.: H. and L. Makin, 1982

Makin, Norman. The Honorable Norman John Oswald Makin, Speaker 1929–1931, c.1962. Papers of Norman Makin, MS 4663. National Library of Australia

News (Adelaide). 'The Small Boy from Hindmarsh'. 10 July 1931, 6

Reid, Gordon and Martyn Forrest. *Australia's Commonwealth Parliament, 1901–1988: Ten Perspectives*. Carlton, Vic.: Melbourne University Press, 1989

Smith's Weekly (Sydney). '"Holy Norman" is Federal Joke'. 18 July 1931, 7

Martin, Stephen Paul: Speaker 1993–1996

John Hawkins

Stephen Paul Martin, economist and twenty-first Speaker of the House of Representatives, was born on 24 June 1948 at Wollongong, New South Wales, one of three children of New Zealand–born Harold Edward Martin, clerk and accountant, and his wife, Vera Marion. Stephen was to remain personally and professionally committed to the city of his birth for most of his life. He attended Wollongong High School, then obtained a bachelor of arts degree from The Australian National University (1968) and a diploma in education from the University of New South Wales (1969). From 1970 to 1973, he worked as a New South Wales state high school teacher. He completed a master of arts at the University of Alberta, Canada (1974), and, on his return to Australia, lectured in economics at the University of Wollongong (1974–77). From 1977 to 1984, he worked as a town planner for the New South Wales Department of Planning and Environment, while completing a master of town and country planning degree at the University of Sydney (1982).

Martin later recalled in his first speech to the House of Representatives that Gough Whitlam 'shook from me the shackles of political apathy' (H.R. Deb. 26.2.1985, 202). He joined the Australian Labor Party, held various party positions in the Illawarra region, was an alderman on the Wollongong City Council (1983–85), and gained further local prominence by serving as a rugby league referee. At the December 1984 election, he won the federal seat of Macarthur, which then encompassed the northern suburbs of Wollongong and some semi-rural areas extending westward to Picton and the Burragorang Valley. As a backbencher, Martin gained prominence by chairing the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Finance and Public Administration (1987–91), and particularly its 1991 inquiry into the consequences of deregulation of the banking industry. The resultant report, *A Pocket Full of Change*, came a decade after the Campbell committee of inquiry had sparked the first steps towards deregulation, and considered for the coming decade requirements for improved competition, stronger prudential supervision, and the fairer treatment of consumers. Although the banking system had become more efficient and finance was

Figure 41: Stephen Martin.
Source: Australian Government Photographic Service (Auspic).

more widely available, the report proposed such improvements as a code of conduct for rates and charges, and the placing of smaller banks and building societies under Reserve Bank of Australia supervision.

As an admirer of the leadership style of Treasurer Paul Keating, Martin supported his challenge to Bob Hawke for the prime ministership. He served as parliamentary secretary to the minister for foreign affairs and trade (1991–93) and reportedly lobbied unsuccessfully for the ministerial vacancy created by Graham Richardson's resignation in May 1992. A 1992 electoral redistribution shifted northern Wollongong from Macarthur to the adjoining seat of Cunningham, which was held by the former Hawke government minister Stewart West. This rendered Macarthur marginal for the Labor Party and, although some party leaders felt that Martin should stay to defend it, he successfully challenged West for preselection in Cunningham, declaring that his home and constituency would always be Wollongong. He won Cunningham at the March 1993 election and held it comfortably at the following three elections.

After the 1993 election, Martin was unopposed in the Labor caucus as the government's nominee to succeed Leo McLeay as Speaker, and in the House defeated the opposition's candidate, Don Dobie, 78 votes to 63 (VP 1993/7, 4.5.1993). Suggestions during the nomination process that his experience as a rugby league referee and high school teacher was sound preparation for the Speakership were only partly tongue-in-cheek. More earnestly, following his election by the House, he reflected that 'a sense of history of this place is something which we all strive to be part of', especially as this can teach 'how we might want to improve things for the future' (H.R. Deb. 4.5.1993, 16). Appropriately for a former referee, he was the first Speaker empowered to suspend a member for an hour without a vote by the House—known colloquially as sending the offender to the 'sin bin'. This echoed a power which Speakers had in earlier parliaments to order a member to withdraw for the remainder of the sitting.

The chamber over which Martin presided was dominated by Prime Minister Keating, the unexpected victor of the 1993 election. Martin recalled that opposition leader John Hewson seemed a 'broken man' (Bramston 2016, 543) following the loss. Keating established a similar ascendancy over Hewson's successor, Alexander Downer, but the political balance in the chamber became more even after John Howard resumed the Liberal Party leadership in January 1995. Martin recalled of this period as Speaker that 'my hair was black when I started; it was grey when I finished' (Bramston 2016, 596). Keating relished the more gladiatorial aspects of question time and did not accept that a Speaker should be wholly independent, later admitting that 'I did make it tougher for the Speaker' (O'Brien 2015, 591). A debate on an opposition motion censuring the prime minister on 24 February 1994 was particularly disorderly, with many interjections and members ignoring the chair. Martin subsequently rejected accusations of bias, but added that 'all of us should hang our heads in shame' (Brough 1994).

As Speaker, Martin was widely seen as more informal than his predecessors. The Clerk and Deputy Clerk no longer wore wigs and, following an overseas study tour, he proposed unsuccessfully that the House adopt electronic voting. He chaired the Standing Committee on the Televising of the House of Representatives (1993–96). Accusations that he favoured Keating came to a head in August 1995 after he ordered the opposition's Peter Costello from the chamber for throwing a copy of a speech across the dispatch box to Keating, but declined to apply the same penalty when the prime minister similarly tossed a document to Howard three days later. Martin left the chamber as the opposition moved a motion of dissent that led to yet further acrimonious exchanges. He was dismayed by Keating's behaviour and reportedly had a message passed to the prime minister's office threatening resignation (Bramston 2016, 597). Keating apologised in the House, saying: 'I am sorry if that issue caused you embarrassment' (H.R. Deb. 31.8.1995, 1030).

After Labor lost office at the 1996 election, Martin held a series of senior shadow ministerial positions, including defence and trade. In 1999 he was awarded a doctorate by the University of Wollongong for a thesis on financial deregulation under the Hawke and Keating governments, and was presented with the Centenary Medal in 2001. He resigned from parliament in August 2002 citing 'political burnout' (*PM* 2002). The ensuing by-election was made notable by the Australian Greens winning their first House of Representatives seat. Martin's commitment to politics had been concurrent with his longstanding interest in sports. He refereed the 1984 Illawarra Rugby League grand final and, in 1989, became a director of the Illawarra Steelers rugby league club, but resigned in protest in 1996 over the dismissal of the club coach and the club's reluctance to open talks with News Limited on Super League. He was also a patron of the Illawarra Academy of Sport.

In 2002 Martin accepted a professorship in economics at the University of Wollongong, and would serve as president and chief executive officer of its subsidiary, the University of Wollongong in Dubai (2004). He served in various senior roles for other universities, including as pro vice chancellor international at Victoria University, Melbourne (2005–08), deputy vice chancellor strategy and planning at Curtin University, Perth (2008–10), and as a professor at the Graduate School of Management, Southern Cross University, Lismore, New South Wales (2010–11), as well as working as a private consultant. He was appointed chief executive officer of the Committee for Economic Development of Australia (2011–17), continuing its program of research and hosting of events featuring economic and political leaders, including prime ministers and Reserve Bank governors, and also boosting its social media presence. Martin chaired the Australian subsidiary of the Bank of China, the Men of League Foundation, a national charity supporting members of the rugby league community who are in need, and the Global Science and Technology Forum, Singapore, and also became a professorial fellow at Sydney Business School. He has

three daughters and a son. As a parliamentarian, he was known for his friendly manner; John Howard summed him up in the vernacular as 'a pretty good bloke' (*PM* 2002). A portrait by Wesley Barton Walters is held at Parliament House.

Select bibliography

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 26 February 1985, 202–6

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 4 May 1993, 4–17

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 24 February 1994, 1282–98

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 31 August 1995, 1020–30

Australia. House of Representatives Standing Committee on Finance and Public Administration. *A Pocket Full of Change.* Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service, 1991

Australia. House of Representatives. *Votes and Proceedings*, 1993, 7

Blewett, Neal. *A Cabinet Diary: A Personal Record of the First Keating Government.* Kent Town, SA: Wakefield Press, 1999

Bramston, Troy. *Paul Keating: The Big-Picture Leader.* Melbourne: Scribe, 2016

Brough, Jodie. 'Speaker Cautions His Own Ranks'. *Canberra Times*, 28 February 1994, 2

Canberra Times. 'New Refereeing Role for Martin'. 24 March 1993, 8

Chamberlain, Paul. 'Speaker's Challenge to Critics: Dump Me'. *Canberra Times*, 8 April 1995, 4

Connors, Tom. 'Time for Blowtorch: Martin'. *Canberra Times*, 28 November 1991, 1

Martin, Stephen. '2001: A Banking Odyssey'. Speech to the National Press Club, Canberra, 28 November 1991

Martin, Stephen and John Hawkins. 'Banking and Deregulation'. *Economic Papers* 11, no. 1 (March 1992): 1–13

O'Brien, Kerry. *Keating.* Crows Nest, NSW: Allen & Unwin, 2015

PM. ABC Radio National, 12 August 2002. Transcript held on file

Redenbach, Stephen C. 'Servant of Two Masters? An Exploration of the Speaker's Role in the Australian Commonwealth Parliament'. PhD thesis, La Trobe University, Melbourne, 1999

Scott, Keith. 'A Switched On Mr Speaker'. *Canberra Times*, 23 February 1994, 12

McDonald, Charles: Speaker 1910–1913, 1914–1917

Brian F. Stevenson

Charles McDonald (1860–1925), watchmaker, trade unionist, and third Speaker of the House of Representatives, was born on 25 August 1860 in North Melbourne, son of Scottish-born Charles Thomas Young McDonald, confectioner, and his English-born wife, Harriet, née Pape. The McDonalds moved between four colonies as new goldfields were discovered, Charles spending much of his childhood in the Mudgee district of New South Wales. Although an average student at Mudgee Public School, he excelled in history and geography. His early interest in stamp collecting and fretwork fostered the 'patience, care and neatness' (Makin c. 1962) that characterised him as an adult. He left school to become an apprentice printer, but later worked as a watchmaker and jeweller in country New South Wales. In 1888 he moved to Queensland to start his own business at Charters Towers. A journalist later said jocularly that the frequently fiery McDonald, drawing on his profession, no doubt possessed 'knowledge of mechanism useful in manufacturing bombs, you know!' (sic., *Queenslander* 1897, 317).

McDonald did not stay self-employed for long, becoming convinced from his reading that 'the Labour movement was the only movement that would emancipate the great mass of humanity' (*Evening Telegraph* 1911). Charters Towers and its burgeoning labour movement provided fertile ground for attempting to put his ideals into practice. Despite watchmakers and jewellers not being occupationally inclined to unionism, he was accepted as an organiser with the Mining and Accident Association and became secretary of the Land Nationalisation League. He responded to comments about this seeming incongruity by claiming to have been born on a goldfield and, more accurately, to have 'knocked about them all his life' (*Northern Miner* 1890, 3). He strengthened his working-class credentials by involvement in such causes as a miners' strike over change room conditions. In February 1890, he became the first acting secretary of the Charters Towers Republican Association.
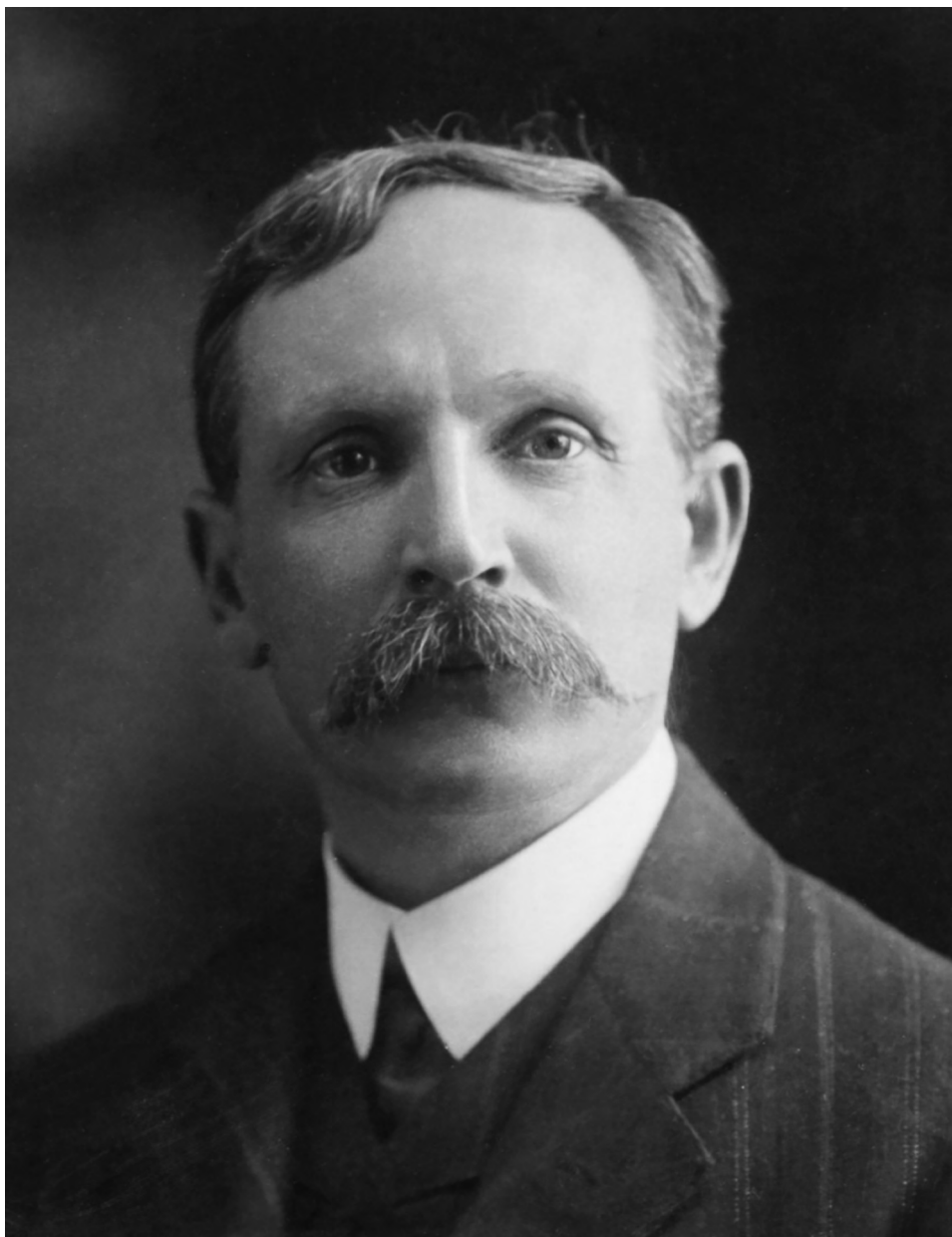
Figure 42: Charles McDonald.
Source: Department of the House of Representatives.

The potential for a central body to safeguard the rights of all unionised workers drew McDonald to the Australian Labour Federation (ALF), formed in 1889 and, despite its name, Queensland-oriented. In April 1890, he spoke in public in favour of a new central body at Charters Towers, 'so that all labourers could mutually protect their interests' (Sullivan 1973, 160). A Charters Towers District Council of the ALF was duly formed, and he had little trouble persuading the local mining union to join it. He was a delegate to the inaugural meeting of the ALF general council in August 1890 in Brisbane, where he was elected its first president (1890–92). In August the following year, he became vice-president of the Queensland-based Associated Workers' Union, Australia's first combined union open to all workers. His engagement with the unsuccessful maritime strike of 1890 and the shearers' strikes that followed reflected his growing leadership role with the ALF. When local miners wanted to retain unspent money that was originally raised to help the strikers, he supported it instead being channelled to the ALF.

A shift away from utopian socialism was apparent in McDonald's and the ALF leadership's increasing moderation, fuelled by the failure of the maritime strike. At Gympie, Queensland, in August 1890, he had told the miners that 'the Australian Labour Federation platform as agreed upon was straight out Socialism', for which there were 'no half and half measures' (Sullivan 1973, 343). The following month, he stressed that the platform was only 'for the purpose of eliciting the opinions of the various districts' and 'the proposed reforms would only have been sought to be brought about by constitutional methods' (*Brisbane Courier* 1890). In January 1891, he and ALF secretary Albert Hinchcliffe were unsuccessful in warning shearers in central Queensland against strike action. Amid such fraught manoeuvrings, on 11 October 1892 McDonald married Mary Ann Tregear, a milliner, at Charters Towers. They were to have one daughter.

Defeat in these great strikes turned the labour movement towards a parliamentary-based strategy. McDonald was one of sixteen Labor candidates elected to the Queensland Legislative Assembly in April 1893, representing the seat of Flinders. The parliamentary officer and future Clerk of the Assembly Charles Bernays recalled that 'there was among them no more active, earnest and energetic worker than Charles McDonald, arriving from Flinders, one of the widest and most inaccessible of our Western constituencies' (1919, 145). Long-distance solo travel by bicycle became the personal trademark of this inveterate political proselytiser, who was said to have 'travelled more over Queensland on the wheel than any man living' (*Queenslander* 1897, 317).

As a republican 'of the red-hot order', McDonald made 'wonderfully strong speeches for such a little man', but his candour 'put some people's teeth on edge' (Queenslander 1897). His stormiest moment in the Legislative Assembly came on 11 September 1894 during debate on the Peace Preservation Bill, enacted by the conservative government of (Sir) Hugh Nelson to deal with another major

shearers' strike. A clash with the Speaker and Chairman of Committees saw seven Labor members removed from the chamber, with McDonald among them shouting as he went: 'A brutal Speaker and a brutal Government!' (Qld LA 1894, 523). He and two others later took out writs against the Speaker, claiming damages for assault, trespass, and false imprisonment. Being on the losing side in this particular episode may have inspired his determination to master parliamentary procedure, becoming one who 'sleeps with the Standing Orders under his pillow' (*Queenslander* 1897, 317). At first, his interjections in the chamber were of nuisance value only, but 'when he really began to show the results of his close study he came to be recognised by the Speaker, the Chairman, and the House generally as one worth listening to on questions of procedure' (Bernays 1919, 145).

By 1899, Labor was the second-largest party in the Queensland parliament and, for a week in December 1899, one of McDonald's colleagues, Anderson Dawson, led the world's first Labor government. McDonald initially denounced the growing Federation movement as 'a middle-class device for diverting attention from the needs of Labour' (Bolton 1972, 210). This was a minority view in the mining towns and coastal ports of north Queensland, including Charters Towers, which in 1899 voted strongly for Federation. He resigned from the Queensland parliament to successfully contest the vast new federal electorate of Kennedy in 1901, which he retained easily for the next twenty-four years.

McDonald seized an early opportunity to make himself conspicuous in the Commonwealth parliament. Towards the end of its first sitting day, 9 May 1901, he inserted a jarring note into otherwise celebratory proceedings by complaining that no standing orders were in place for the new House of Representatives. When Prime Minister (Sir) Edmund Barton assured him that they would be tabled the next morning, ready for use when the parliament resumed on 21 May, McDonald was not mollified: 'There may be very objectionable features in them … in some of the States there are in force the most iniquitous standing orders that were ever framed in any British-speaking community' (H.R. Deb. 9.5.1901, 27). Barton assured him that 'honourable members will not be asked to assent to even their temporary adoption until they have had them for several days, and have had every opportunity to read them' (H.R. Deb. 9.5.1901, 28).

The rise of McDonald to the Speakership was sequential, starting with his June 1901 election to the panel of Temporary Chairmen of Committees. He also was appointed a member of Select Committees on Electoral Act Administration (1904) and Ocean Shipping Services (1905), doing outstanding work on both (Makin c. 1962). In June 1906, he displaced Carty Salmon as Chairman of Committees—the result of some Free Trade members being sufficiently unhappy with the incumbent's performance to join Labor members in voting for McDonald (VP 1906/21–22, 20.6.1906). When Labor won an absolute majority in both Houses in 1910 under the leadership of

fellow Queenslander Andrew Fisher, McDonald was the party's choice as Speaker. The redoubtable trade union pioneer William Guthrie Spence, in moving that McDonald be elected Speaker, praised his impartiality as Chairman of Committees and his knowledge of rules both of the Australian and the British parliaments. George Fairbairn, the Fusionist member for Fawkner and one-time president of the Melbourne Club, objected that McDonald's signing of the Labor pledge would compromise his impartiality, and a future Speaker, (Sir) William Elliot Johnson, agreed that someone so prone to 'violent partisanship' (H.R. Deb. 1.7.1910, 27) was not suited to the position. But McDonald's performance as Chairman of Committees had been strong enough to brush aside such objections and a half-hearted effort to retain Salmon. His election, 39 votes to 25, marked an early rejection of the principle of a Westminster-style independent Speaker (VP 1910/4–5, 1.7.1910).

With his party's approval, McDonald was the first Speaker of the House to dispense with the wig and gown. This was matched by the new President of the Senate, Henry Turley, and established a precedent for all Speakers drawn from the Labor Party. He also declined to use the mace as a symbol of authority. When McDonald, now residing at Kew in suburban Melbourne, visited Charters Towers in March 1911, he was applauded by his constituents for affirming that, as Speaker, 'he endeavoured to follow out the one golden rule, to be fair to both sides' (*Evening Telegraph* 1911, 6).

> Who worthily the chair doth fill.
> McDonald wants no wig or gown—
> His dignity's sufficient crown.
> He rules the House with iron hand—
> No tricks or nonsense will he stand.
> But members know the game is fair
> While Queensland Charlie fills the chair. (*Truth* 1915, 6)

As a Speaker in wartime, McDonald came under pressure concerning the content of *Hansard*. Prime Minister William Morris Hughes, anxious to appease Australia's nominal ally Japan, demanded the excision of all mention of that nation from *Hansard* and that no unfriendly references be permitted in debate. The issue of conscription for active service overseas also raised sensitivities; after the Labor backbencher Joseph Hannan delivered a fiery speech in September 1916 condemning its proposed introduction, McDonald refused a request from the defence minister, (Sir) George Pearce, to omit some of Hannan's remarks from *Hansard*. His reasoning was that 'the omission of portions of the official reports of debates, even in the present exceptional circumstances, is highly objectionable, and, if allowed, must inevitably destroy the true value of the record'; he would only permit such omissions with 'the sanction of the House thereto' (McDonald 1912–17, 1916).

McDonald remained a keen student of parliamentary procedure. Pearce noticed when once visiting his office that he had diligently 'tabulated references to and rulings of the Speakers and Presiding Officers of practically every Parliament in the British Empire' (S. Deb. 13.1.1926, 14). But he also sought relief from the pressures of the Speakership. In partnership with his brother-in-law, he acquired a sheep station in north Queensland, which Makin saw as 'a welcome diversion from the exacting office in Parliament' (Makin c. 1962). Like his predecessor and successor as Speaker, Sir William Elliot Johnson, he painted for relaxation, executing bush scenes in watercolours.

In his later years, McDonald was afflicted by poor health. As early as 1913 he was rumoured to have had a 'paralytic stroke', but he assured a Charters Towers gathering that it was mere 'nerve trouble' from which he had already recovered (*Evening Telegraph* 1913, 1). Ensuing political events did not improve his health. When the Labor Party split over conscription in November 1916, he was one of those who remained behind as Hughes stormed out of the caucus room followed by his supporters, and he was at once elected temporary chair of caucus. He subsequently suffered a breakdown but remained Speaker under National Labor and Nationalist governments until the election of May 1917.

Ill health resulted in McDonald being granted three months' leave of absence from parliament in May 1924. A voyage to Britain in a bid to recuperate failed so abjectly that there were fears he might die on the journey home. He survived to resume his place in the House but was unable to take part in debates. Makin, by now his parliamentary colleague, saw him as 'a pathetic case', with 'tremulous head and hands' (Makin c. 1962) caused by Parkinson's disease. He suffered a stroke on 8 November 1925 at his Kew home and died five days later, survived by his wife and daughter. His death just one day before the federal election precipitated a situation unique in Australian federal political history. Because there was only one other candidate for McDonald's seat of Kennedy, his friend the Nationalist Grosvenor Francis, it was deemed that Francis had been elected. McDonald was buried in Boroondara Cemetery at Kew. James Scullin, a future prime minister, was among the pallbearers, as was the Clerk of the House, Walter Gale. In accordance with his wishes, McDonald's coffin was made of Queensland maple from his former home district. His private library—'a veritable treasure house' (Makin c. 1962) of rare books and pamphlets on politics—was gifted by his widow to the Commonwealth Parliamentary Library.

A frugal and hardworking teetotaller, McDonald was known to the press variously as 'Fighting Charlie' or 'Fighting Mac'. While not 'a good or attractive speaker' in debate, he compensated by being 'as persistent as a summer fly when once he determined his attitude on a particular question' (Bernays 1919, 145). He reputedly believed that everything worth saying could be condensed into half an hour, despite once filibustering for more than six hours on the issue of employing Pacific Islanders

in government sugar mills. The journalist Herbert Campbell-Jones thought that the sparely built and stooped McDonald 'conveyed the idea of a boundary rider … tough as hickory [with] the nervous strength which makes the champion athlete' (Campbell-Jones 1935, 317). His even-handedness in the chair may have owed much to his becoming Speaker in the latter half of his career when his health was starting to fade, muting his earlier intensity. The long-serving Labor member William Maloney remembered him as 'beloved by every member on both sides' and 'animated always by a rigid sense of justice' (H.R. Deb. 24.3.1927, 1082). An uncharacteristic ostentation was the wearing of 'an eighty-guinea diamond ring which scintillated under the electric light and excited avarice in the ladies' gallery' (Bernays 1919, 146)—an evident legacy of his long-past days as a jeweller. His portrait by Josephine Muntz-Adams is in Parliament House.

This article supplements the original Volume 10 ADB *biography, published 1986, authored by Tim Moroney. adb.anu.edu.au/biography/mcdonald-charles-7334/text12728*

Select bibliography

Argus (Melbourne). 'Late Mr Charles McDonald: State Funeral'. 17 November 1925, 10

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 9 May 1901, 26–28

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 1 July 1910, 25–34

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 8 October 1914, 27–28

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 15 September 1916, 8614–19

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 24 March 1927, 1081–83

Australia. House of Representatives. *Votes and Proceedings*, 1906, 21–22

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 1910, 4–5

Australia. Senate. *Parliamentary Debates*, 13 January 1926, 14–15

Bernays, Charles Arrowsmith. *Queensland Politics During Sixty Years: 1859–1919.* Brisbane: Government Printer, 1919

Bolton, G. C. *A Thousand Miles Away: A History of North Queensland to 1920.* Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1972

Brisbane Courier. 'The Shipping Strike'. 30 September 1890, 5

Campbell-Jones, Herbert. 'The Cabinet of Captains: The Romance of Australia's First Federal Parliament', 1935. Unpublished manuscript, MS 8905. National Library of Australia

Evening Telegraph (Charters Towers, Qld). 'Mr Chas. McDonald MHR: Welcome Social'. 14 March 1911, 6

Evening Telegraph (Charters Towers, Qld). 'Hon Charles McDonald'. 1 April 1913, 1

Evening Telegraph (Charters Towers, Qld). 'Social and Personal'. 4 April 1917, 5

McDonald, Charles. Papers and correspondence of Charles McDonald, 1912–17, MS 40. National Library of Australia

Makin, Norman. 'The Honourable Charles McDonald, Speaker 1910–1913, 1914–1917', c. 1962. Papers of Norman Makin, MS 4663. National Library of Australia

Menghetti, Diane. 'Charters Towers'. PhD thesis, James Cook University of North Queensland, Townsville, 1984

Northern Miner (Charters Towers, Qld). 'Charters Towers Miners' and Accident Association'. 13 January 1890, 3

Northern Miner (Charters Towers, Qld). 'Valedictory'. 12 January 1927, 4

Queensland. Legislative Assembly. *Parliamentary Debates*, 11 September 1894, 522–23

Queenslander (Brisbane). 'Men of Mark: Charles McDonald'. 14 August 1897, 317

Queenslander (Brisbane). 'Kennedy Seat: A Painful Development—Death of Mr Charles McDonald'. 21 November 1925, 16

Smith, A. N. *Thirty Years: The Commonwealth of Australia, 1901–1931.* Melbourne: Brown, Prior & Co., 1933

Stoodley, June. 'The Queensland Gold Miner in the Late Nineteenth Century: His Influence and Interests'. MA thesis, University of Queensland, Brisbane, 1964

Sullivan, R. J. 'The A.L.F. in Queensland, 1889–1914'. MA thesis, University of Queensland, Brisbane, 1973

Truth (Brisbane). 'Charles McDonald (Speaker of the House of Representatives)'. 7 February 1915, 6

Worker (Brisbane). 'Smoke-Ho'. 7 August 1890, 10

McGrath, David Charles: Chairman of Committees 1929–1931

Peter Love

David Charles McGrath (1872–1934), storekeeper and Chairman of Committees of the House of Representatives, was born on 10 November 1872 at Newtown, Scarsdale, Victoria, son of Irish-born David McGrath, miner, and his English-born wife, Evelyn, née Horsefield. Educated at Scarsdale State School and Creswick Grammar, Charles joined the family hay and corn store at Allendale, where he came to share his father's interest in politics, although they later joined opposing parties. He claimed to have enrolled some seven hundred members while secretary of the Allendale branch of the Australian Natives' Association. A keen sportsman, he made a name for himself as a stocky, energetic rover in the South Ballarat Australian Rules Football team during the 1890s. On 24 May 1898, he married Elizabeth Johnstone Gullan at the Talbot Street Presbyterian Church, Ballarat. They moved to Pitfield Plains in 1900 to open another McGrath store.

In 1902 McGrath helped to establish the Hollybush Social Democratic Club and, in 1904, he won the Legislative Assembly seat of Grenville for the Australian Labor Party. He took a close interest in the mining industry, often speaking in the chamber on behalf of mineworkers and small, independent operators who were threatened by larger capitalist enterprises. Outside the House, 'Bull' McGrath worked to expand the Labor Party's organisation in country areas, undertaking an extensive tour of Gippsland with his fellow state parliamentarian Frank Anstey in November 1904. As Anstey later recalled: 'We pedalled or pushed our bikes into country far remote from the railway lines' (Cook 1979, 386).

In May 1913, McGrath unexpectedly won the federal seat of Ballaarat (as it was then spelt), previously held by Alfred Deakin, following a close contest with H. V. McKay, the famed manufacturer of the Sunshine Harvester. Just six months later, he made a sensational attack on the Speaker of the House of Representatives, (Sir) William Elliot Johnson. Speaking at the Workers' Union Hall in Ballarat, as he did not feel he would be allowed to do so in the House, he claimed that Johnson had lost the confidence of the House. The Speaker had altered a *Hansard* proof concerning

Figure 43: Charles McGrath.
Source: National Library of Australia, PIC Box PIC/7161 #PIC/7161/1-2, Richards & Co. Ballarat.

whether the Loan Bill had been carried, thereby 'acting in a biased manner, and proving himself to be a bitter partisan' (*Argus* 1913, 10). In the House soon after, McGrath refused to apologise and, following a long debate, was suspended from attending parliament for the rest of the session (VP 1913/151–53, 11.11.1913). Defiant as always, he left the chamber declaring that he had 'been hounded out by the Prime Minister and his gang' (H.R. Deb. 11.11.1913, 3053). On 29 April 1915, the House resolved that the decision of two years earlier be expunged from the House record as 'being subversive of the right of an honourable Member to freely address his constituents' (VP 1914–15/181, 29.4.1915).

At the election of 1914, McGrath held his seat with an increased majority and proceeded to press the government to improve soldiers' conditions. In March 1916 he enlisted, embarking as a staff sergeant with the 22nd Army Service Corps, Australian Imperial Force. Promoted to warrant officer in December 1916 and appointed to Australian Imperial Headquarters, he was transferred to No. 1 Company, 1st Army Service Corps, France, in 1917. Following a serious illness, he returned to Australia in April 1918 and was discharged as medically unfit. His commanding officer complained that, on the return voyage, McGrath was 'a nuisance wherever he was, having no idea of discipline or soldierly bearing' (NAA B2455).

Although re-elected unopposed during his absence in 1917, McGrath was defeated at the 1919 poll by one vote. On appeal, the result was declared void and he was returned with a handsome majority at a by-election in July 1920. During the early postwar years, he was a pugnacious advocate of repatriation benefits for servicemen and a stern critic of the means by which imperial honours were awarded. He was a member of the Joint Committee on Public Works from 1926 to 1929.

In the government of James Scullin, McGrath was Chairman of Committees (1929–31) and so—ironically enough in view of his earlier criticism of the Speaker—also acted as Deputy Speaker. Although his appointment by the House was unanimous, the opposition's Roland Green questioned his qualifications beyond numerous past clashes over the standing orders, to which he wryly agreed that, although he had 'not previously occupied the Chair, I have been in touch with it very often' (H.R. Deb. 20.11.1929, 18–19). Despite deafness in one ear, he could 'assure the members of the Opposition that both eyes have their vision unimpaired' (H.R. Deb. 20.11.1929, 19).

As the Depression overwhelmed Scullin's singularly luckless government, McGrath was increasingly drawn towards Sir Otto Niemeyer's orthodox solution to the nation's financial crisis. In March 1931 he followed Joseph Lyons out of the Labor Party. The Labor caucus voted that same month to replace him as Chairman of Committees with Lou Cunningham, only for McGrath to refuse to resign. He was rightly confident that the House would not vote him out as Scullin was not willing to test his government's support.

During the total of seven days in which he occupied the chair as Deputy Speaker, McGrath showed no sign of partisan behaviour such as he had alleged against Johnson. Dissent came briefly in May 1931 when the Labor member John Eldridge challenged his ruling that a member could not be questioned about an alleged statement in a newspaper that he claimed to be untrue (H.R. Deb. 29.5.1931, 2417–18). A few days later, when the notice was called on, Eldridge was found to be absent and so it was withdrawn from the notice paper (VP 1929–30–31/657, 3.6.1931). In the dying days of the Scullin government, McGrath clashed sharply with another former Labor member, the truculent Joel Moses Gabb, who accused him of uttering 'an untruth', and only withdrew the statement under pressure so as 'to conform with parliamentary procedure' (H.R. Deb. 22.10.1931, 1073).

At the December 1931 election, McGrath retained his seat, as a United Australia Party candidate. Despite press speculation that he would be elevated to the Speakership, he was passed over both for this and for reappointment as Chairman of Committees. He served in parliament until 1934, in failing health. On 31 July 1934, he died at his home in Ballarat. Mourned by the many ex-servicemen he had served so well, he was buried with military and Masonic honours in the Ballarat old cemetery. He was survived by his wife, two daughters, and two sons, one of whom, Charles, became chairman of Repco Ltd. As a federal parliamentarian, McGrath was renowned mainly for his success in winning and then holding Ballaarat as a Labor member. A press obituary reported that his appearance was 'at normal times … not the gentlest in the world' and 'at abnormal times there is no fiercer-looking face in the House' (*Canberra Times* 1930, 2).

This article supplements the original Volume 10 ADB *biography, published 1986, authored by Peter Love. adb.anu.edu.au/biography/mcgrath-david-charles-7361/text12787*

Select bibliography

Age (Melbourne). 'Mr McGrath MP'. 1 August 1934, 10

Argus (Melbourne). 'Attack on the Speaker'. 11 November 1913, 10

Argus (Melbourne). 'Federal Parliament'. 17 February 1932, 7

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 11 November 1913, 2982–3053

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 1915, 181

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 20 November 1929, 17–19

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 1931, 657

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 29 May 1931, 2417–18

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 22 October 1931, 1072–73

Australia. House of Representatives. *Votes and Proceedings*, 1913, 151–53

Canberra Times. 'Over the Speaker's Chair'. 5 August 1930, 2

Cook, Peter. 'Frank Anstey: Memoirs of the Scullin Labor Government, 1929–1932'. *Historical Studies* 18, no. 72 (April 1979): 386–87. doi.org/10.1080/10314617908595599

National Archives of Australia. B2455, McGrath D. C.

Punch (Melbourne). 'People We Know'. 27 November 1913, 6

Telegraph (Brisbane). 'Caucus Defied'. 12 March 1931, 9

McGregor, John Robert: Clerk 1927

Stephen Wilks

John Robert McGregor (1873–1927), fourth Clerk of the House of Representatives, was born at Boggabri, New South Wales, on Christmas Day 1873. He was the youngest of eight children of James McGregor, farmer, storekeeper, and town postmaster, and his wife, Christina, née McBeath, both Scottish born. His father was active in the local community, including working to establish a cross-denominational union church and a local public school. John studied at East Maitland Grammar School and passed the junior public examination in 1889.

McGregor was appointed Junior Clerk of the New South Wales Legislative Assembly on 1 February 1891. In March 1900, he was transferred to assist the parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works following the dismissal of a predecessor who had been declared bankrupt. He moved to the House of Representatives in the new Commonwealth parliament as Reading Clerk and Assistant Clerk of Committees on 1 May the next year. In Melbourne, he lived with his sister Jessie in suburban Kew.

Commissioned as a second lieutenant in the New South Wales Military Forces in 1900, McGregor continued with the Citizen Military Forces after Federation. Temporarily leaving parliament on volunteering for service in World War I, he was appointed lieutenant in the Australian Imperial Force (AIF) on 18 February 1916 and promoted to captain in May. He embarked from Melbourne in June and, after four months in England, arrived in France on 22 November as a member of the staff of the 22nd (later 867th) Company, Australian Army Service Corps (AASC), 3rd Divisional Train, responsible for transport and the supply of stores and rations.

The state of McGregor's health was such that it is surprising he was accepted for the AIF. After nearly a year on the Western Front, he was diagnosed with chronic bronchitis, from which it was belatedly discovered that he had suffered during most of the previous ten winters. He was hospitalised with psoriasis on 10 September 1917 and for chronic bronchitis two months later while on furlough in England, where he remained. On 8 December 1917, he was attached to AIF Administrative
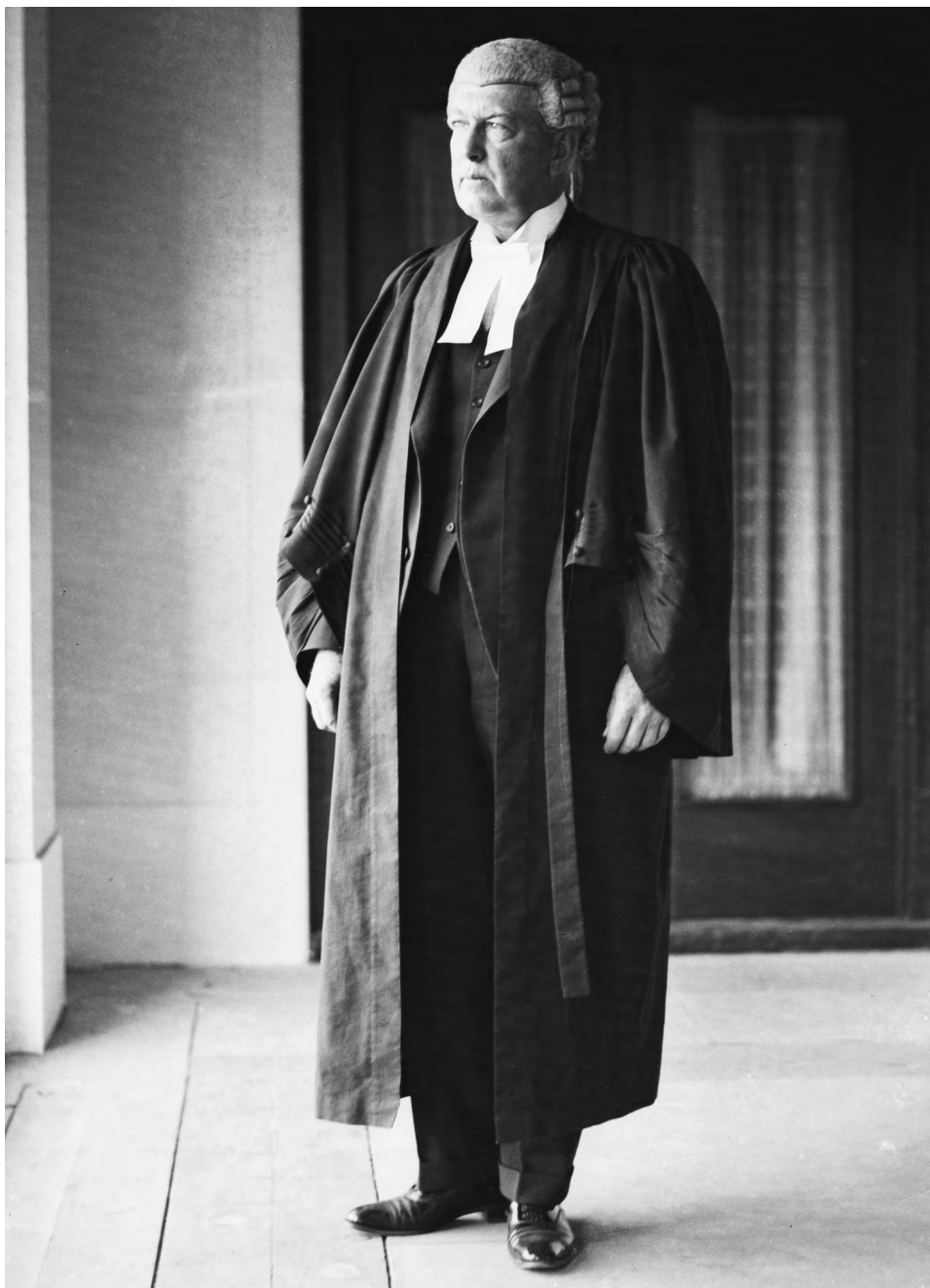
Figure 44: John McGregor.
Source: National Library of Australia, PIC ROW 14/8/4 #PIC/15611/10535 Fairfax Corporation.

Headquarters, London. His duties included helping to organise the AIF's participation in the December 1917 conscription referendum. Serving alongside him was a future Deputy Speaker, Charles McGrath, who had also been with him in the 22nd Company. McGrath later recalled McGregor as being 'held in the highest esteem by all those who belonged to the company' (H.R. Deb. 30.9.1927, 163).

On 27 February 1918, McGregor was posted as quartermaster of the AASC Training Depot on the Salisbury Plain. In late October, he was declared a disabled officer due to recurrent chronic bronchitis and emphysema. His disability was judged permanent and to have been aggravated by stress. Given his age, it was recommended that he be transferred back to Australia to avoid the forthcoming northern winter, the expectation then being that the war would continue into 1919. Medical reports observed that he 'looks older than his years' (NAA B2455). At war's end, he was 'brought to the notice of the Secretary of State for War for valuable services rendered' (NAA B2455). He returned to Australia on 20 January 1919 and on 9 March his AIF appointment was terminated.

McGregor resumed parliamentary service as accountant to the Commonwealth parliament on 1 July 1919. On 1 April 1921, he was appointed Serjeant-at-Arms and Clerk of Committees. He became a close friend of fellow parliamentary officer Frank Green and the Clerk of the House, Walter Gale. All three were members of Melbourne's bohemian Yorick Club and bushwalked together in the nearby Dandenong Ranges. McGregor was also a keen golfer. On 9 January 1924 at the Prahran registry office, he married Madge Francis Lawrence, twenty-two years his junior and private secretary to Speaker William Watt. His career continued to progress and, on 26 February 1925, he was promoted to Second Clerk Assistant. In April 1927, he transferred to Canberra, just a month before the opening of the new parliament building, becoming Clerk Assistant on 1 July. On 27 July, Gale died suddenly in his Parliament House office and, on 1 September, McGregor became Clerk. So shocked was he by his predecessor's unexpected passing that he refused to occupy Gale's former office for the first three weeks of his appointment. He eventually did so for what proved to be the last week of his own life.

On 28 September, at the start of the first full session of the House in its new building, Gale's death was formally reported to the House and a condolence motion moved. McGregor, in the Clerk's chair, appeared unwell. As Sir Elliot Johnson, a former Speaker, was delivering a tribute to Gale, McGregor slumped forward over his papers. Ministers leapt from the front bench to catch him as he slid to the floor. Unable to move or speak but apparently still conscious, he was carried out of the chamber by several members of parliament, including the medical doctors, the treasurer (Sir) Earle Page, and the minister for health Sir Neville Howse. Green stepped into McGregor's place in the Clerk's seat and Page returned to the chamber to deliver the annual budget speech, but Howse accompanied McGregor to the Canberra Community Hospital

at the site of the present day Australian National University campus. He stayed with the stricken Clerk until his death from a cerebral haemorrhage at about 7 pm that evening. Howse returned to parliament to inform Prime Minister Stanley (Viscount) Bruce, whereupon the Speaker, Sir Littleton Groom, interrupted the opposition leader's budget reply to inform the House of McGregor's death. Members rose in silent assent to a motion of condolence and then adjourned (VP 1926–27/359, 28.9.1927).

The death of McGregor so soon after that of his predecessor was greeted with dismay. The *Sydney Morning Herald* called it 'the sort of astonishing tragedy that makes life a million times stranger and more exaggerated than fiction', and observed of the assembled members of parliament that 'if the fine white house of parliament had exploded about their ears they could not have been more shocked' (29 September 1927, 11). More than 300 people attended a memorial service conducted in the parliament's King's Hall. Gale's death was widely seen as contributing to that of McGregor. The two were buried adjacent to each other in the graveyard of St John the Baptist Anglican Church, Reid. Pallbearers included Prime Minister Bruce, Groom, the leader of the opposition, Matthew Charlton, Page, McGregor's successor as Clerk, Ernest William Parkes, and (Sir) George Bell, a future Speaker. A year later, Groom unveiled inside the chapel a memorial tablet commemorating both McGregor and Gale, and recalled 'their generous and kindly natures' (*Sydney Morning Herald* 1928, 15).

Survived by his wife, McGregor had no children. Of medium height with black hair, grey eyes, and a fair complexion, and described as being 'of modest and retiring disposition' (*Herald* 1927, 2), this once popular parliamentary officer is today known mainly for his untimely passing.

Select bibliography

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 28 September 1927, 65–66

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 30 September 1927, 163

Australia. House of Representatives. *Votes and Proceedings*, 1926–27, 359

Canberra Times. 'Parliament: Clerk Appointed'. 16 September 1927, 8

Canberra Times. 'Collapse in House'. 30 September 1927, 8

Evening News (Sydney). 'Shared Fate of Former Friend'. 29 September 1927, 18

Green, Frank C. *Servant of the House*. Melbourne: William Heinemann, 1969

Herald (Melbourne). 'Regard for Late Chief Hastened Clerk's End'. 29 September 1927, 2

Jackson, Dianne, ed. *Boggabri & Districts Settlers' Register: Sesquicentenary Edition, 1860–2010.* Boggabri, NSW: Boggabri & Districts Historical Society Inc., 2009

National Archives of Australia. B2455, McGregor J. R.

Stammer, E. A. 'Boggabri in 1874'. *Boggabri: Our Heritage—Journal of the Boggabri & Districts Historical Society* 1, no. 1 (2006): 14–15

Sydney Morning Herald. 'Tragic Scene'. 29 September 1927, 11

Sydney Morning Herald. 'Late Mr. McGregor'. 1 October 1927, 16

Sydney Morning Herald. 'Memorial Unveiled'. 17 September 1928, 15

Telegraph (Brisbane). 'Tragic Opening'. 29 September 1927, 9

McLeay, Sir John (Jack): Speaker 1956–1966

L. M. Barlin

Sir John McLeay (1893–1982), businessman, lord mayor, and longest-serving and thirteenth Speaker of the House of Representatives, was born on 23 November 1893 at Port Clinton, South Australia, second of six children of Australian-born parents George McLeay, farmer, and his wife, Marguaretta, née Barton. Jack was educated at Port Clinton public school and later, when the family moved to Adelaide for the sake of the children's education, at Unley Central School. Leaving school at fourteen, he took his first job as a grocer's boy with G. Wood Son & Co. Ltd. In 1906 he undertook a commercial course at Muirden College and subsequently became a commercial traveller for the glass and hardware merchants Thompson & Harvey. He was also an enthusiastic participant in basketball, football, cricket, tennis, lacrosse, and athletics.

On 13 May 1915, McLeay enlisted in the Australian Imperial Force and served in medical units on Lemnos, in Egypt, and on the Western Front. As a stretcher-bearer with the 13th Field Ambulance, he was awarded the Military Medal for his initiative in organising the clearance of casualties while under heavy fire near Villers-Bretonneux, France, on 24 April 1918. Discharged as a lance corporal on 17 October 1919 in Adelaide, he joined his brother George in McLeay Bros, an accountancy and general agents firm, which later became a prominent wholesale and retail furnishing business. On 8 June 1921, at St Augustine's Church of England at Unley, he married Eileen Henderson Elden, who was to be his political sounding board until her death in 1972.

With his two brothers, George and Reginald, McLeay was recruited into St Andrews Debating Society by an elder of their Presbyterian church, the former premier A. H. Peake (*Advertiser* 1946, 8). George became secretary of the Liberal and Country League (LCL) and unsuccessfully contested the federal seat of Adelaide in 1922. John bitterly condemned as disloyal the party's subsequent decision to endorse another candidate. Building on his involvement in local community issues, especially the welfare of returned servicemen, he was in 1925 elected to the Unley City Council.

Figure 45: Jack McLeay.
Source: Courtesy of the National Archives of Australia. NAA: A1200, L41484.

He was mayor of Unley from 1935 to 1937. When he successfully stood for the state seat of Unley in 1938, he chose to do so as an independent. He was defeated at the March 1941 election.

As an alderman of the City of Adelaide (1940–46), and then as lord mayor (1946–50), McLeay's stated approach to politics was a simple but effective one of cultivating friendly personal relations and building trust. He recalled beginning his mayoralty wary of some of the notables he would have to deal with but decided that he 'had to have this job to find out how really human these people are' (*Mail* 1949, 7). On 10 December 1949, standing as an LCL candidate, he won the federal seat of Boothby in south-east suburban Adelaide, a recent redistribution having made it a safe Liberal seat that he was to hold for nearly seventeen years. George, meanwhile, was a senator (1935–47, 1950–55), serving as government whip and leader in the Senate, and as a minister in the Lyons, Page, Fadden, and both Menzies governments.

Despite his status as a parliamentarian, McLeay remained the effective manager of McLeay Bros until 1955. He attracted little controversy as a backbencher, but posthumous attention was paid to his role as chair of the Privileges Committee during the Fitzpatrick–Browne case of 1955, before he became Speaker. This related to the gaoling of a Bankstown newspaper proprietor and one of his contributing journalists for three months at the order of the House following their publication of an allegation that a member had been involved in immigration fraud. Andrew Moore's history of the case suggests that although McLeay had assured Fitzpatrick's legal counsel that the committee would not allow Fitzpatrick to incriminate himself, it failed to actually do so (Moore 2011, 104). It is hard to believe that, as Chairman, McLeay would have knowingly allowed an undertaking to be broken by committee members. Any deliberate attempt by him to mislead would have been totally out of character. The committee had rejected the counsel's plea to accompany Fitzpatrick when he gave evidence (Moore 2011, 103–6). It found that the articles were intended to influence and intimidate the member, and advised the House of a serious breach of privilege and that it should take action accordingly. The subsequent request for counsel to act for Fitzpatrick before the House was refused by the Speaker, Archie Cameron, and the prime minister's motion that the pair were guilty of a serious breach of privilege and should be imprisoned for three months was agreed to on division.

In 1956 Cameron was seriously ill. When a move began within the government parties to draft McLeay as his successor as Speaker, McLeay's response was to warn Cameron. On 9 August, Cameron died. He had been a contentious presiding officer, particularly amongst opposition members who deeply resented his perceived partiality. Speculation as to whom the government would nominate as his replacement initially focused on Percy Joske from Victoria, but nothing came of this. McLeay had a strong claim to the position, given his experience as a Temporary Chairman of Committees, chair of the Privileges Committee, and service on several other House and joint

committees. On 28 August, he was chosen by an overwhelming majority at a joint meeting of the government parties. He was a popular choice; even the hardened press gallery journalist Alan Reid saw McLeay as being rewarded for known qualities of decency and loyalty (Cockburn 1982, 5).

Yet when the ballot in the House took place on 29 August, the opposition proposed Norman Makin, who had been Speaker between 1929 and 1931. This evident legacy of Labor's dissatisfaction with Cameron was the only occasion during McLeay's long service that his election as Speaker was challenged in the House. He quickly established himself as an effective and popular presiding officer, not merely because his calm manner presented such a contrast to that of his tempestuous predecessor. His approach to politics drew on his longstanding sense of sportsmanship and thus of giving opponents a 'fair go'. The veteran South Australian Labor parliamentarian Clyde Cameron later said that, although it was evident that McLeay knew less about the standing orders than any other postwar Speaker of his experience, he brought an important evenness of temperament to the chair (Souter 1988, 438).

Nonetheless, McLeay faced constant difficulties in maintaining the standing of the office of Speaker in the charged political atmosphere of the Cold War and the split in the Labor Party. His success was ultimately based on the fundamental fairness of his rulings, which were unaffected by his decision to attend Liberal Party meetings. He coped well with persistent sniping in the chamber from the turbulent Labor parliamentarian Eddie Ward and, on the government side, the unpredictable Bill Wentworth. McLeay compensated for his limited familiarity with the details of the standing orders by preferring to pragmatically interpret them according to his judgement of the mood of the House. Another tactic was to occasionally introduce a note of levity to lighten the mood of proceedings. He drew laughter by advising ministers not to be afraid of Prime Minister (Sir) Robert Menzies and so to stand closer to their leader when replying to questions to ensure that they could be heard right across the chamber (*Canberra Times* 1965, 4). His office door remained open to any member who wished to discuss an issue.

On 17 February 1959—the first of three occasions that McLeay was re-elected as Speaker—the leader of the opposition, H. V. Evatt, congratulated him on his 'efficiency in the Chair and above all by the spirit of fairness and tolerance that you showed during all the debates' (H.R. Deb. 17.2.1959, 8). Philip Laundy observed in his authoritative history, *The Office of Speaker*, that 'this was no empty tribute. Australian political leaders are not in the habit of paying polite compliments to people who, in their opinion, do not deserve them' (Laundy 1964, 390). From 1958 to 1965, McLeay represented the Australian parliament and government on overseas visits that included Ceylon (Sri Lanka), Papua New Guinea, Denmark, and the United Kingdom. For service to parliament and country, he was appointed KCMG in 1962.

Sir John supported the long-delayed reform of the standing orders. 'Temporary' standing orders, based on those used by the colonial assemblies, had been adopted in 1901 and remained largely unchanged until March 1950, when the first permanent standing orders were adopted. In 1960, the House's Standing Orders Committee commenced a further comprehensive review on which it reported in August 1962. The result the following year was that, of 403 existing standing orders, 101 were altered, sixty omitted, and fifty-nine new or substitute ones added. They included changes in procedures for financial legislation, for the committee stage in the passage of bills, and for questions seeking information. On his retirement, McLeay identified these reforms as a career highlight (*Canberra Times* 1966, 3).

During 1964 McLeay also lent his support to a review of the structure and administrative arrangements for the Department of the House of Representatives. This led to a reorganised and expanded department to meet the growing needs of the parliament and marked the start of a period of growth in its functions (Reid and Forrest 1989, 417–18). McLeay's tact and firmness also featured in his handling of relations with the press. In May 1964, he reacted to a claim by the broadcast journalist Frank Chamberlain that some of his rulings were not properly impartial by summoning Chamberlain before him and obtaining a public retraction (Lloyd 1988, 209–10). The following year, McLeay resolved complaints from the Press Gallery Committee about increasing numbers of unauthorised persons—mostly ministerial staff—entering the press gallery of the chamber, especially during question time. He first became involved in this matter as far back as 1957, when he had the relevant rules tightened but, despite continuing discussion between the committee and the Private Secretaries Association, by 1965 he found it necessary to approve the posting of parliamentary attendants at the gallery entrance to control entry (Reid and Forrest 1989, 448).

When, on 12 November 1964, McLeay equalled the record period of service as Speaker of another South Australian, Sir Frederick Holder, of eight years, seventy-six days, he received congratulations from both sides of the House. Prime Minister Menzies thanked him 'for the uniform good temper with which you have presided over us' (H.R. Deb. 12.11.1964, 2865). Perhaps more tellingly, the leader of the opposition, Arthur Calwell, added that 'had we won one more seat in 1961 [and so formed government], we would have kept you on as Speaker. You know my opposition to the wearing of wigs; I would have waived that objection in order to keep you in office' (H.R. Deb. 12.11.1964, 2865). The veteran Labor member Reg Pollard, who had clashed bitterly with Archie Cameron, claimed to be 'the only honourable member here who has enjoyed the experience of being suspended from the sittings by you. May I say how much I enjoyed it and how richly I deserved it?' (H.R. Deb. 12.11.1964, 2865).

McLeay retired from parliament on 31 October 1966, after a tenure as Speaker of ten years and two months. Fond of using military terms as descriptors, he duly described his departure from politics as 'retiring to a strategic position' (*Australian* 1966, 4). Press coverage of his retirement succinctly captured his homespun philosophy of how to preside over the House. The *Australian* headlined him as 'the man they could trust' (1966, 4), and the *Canberra Times* quoted him as concluding: 'Provided you umpire the game, and only umpire the game, and don't try to kick goals, all the players will appreciate you' (1966, 3). During his Speakership, McLeay had no censure or want of confidence motions moved against him and only three motions of dissent against his rulings—all of which were unsuccessful. As a mark of the esteem in which he was held by members of the Department of the House of Representatives, staff and their families hosted a retirement dinner for him and his wife at the Hotel Canberra. In Adelaide he resumed his involvement in running McLeay Bros and in community associations such as the Returned Services League and Legacy.

A big man physically as well as in character, McLeay was described by Reid as being 'as Australian as an inland bullocky' and as having set 'a marvellous example of how to handle men with understanding, sympathy and good, earthy Aussie humour' (Cockburn 1982, 5). McLeay died on 22 June 1982 at Ashford following a stroke and a short illness. He was buried in Adelaide's Centennial Park cemetery after a state funeral, survived by two sons and a daughter. His elder son, John, succeeded his father as member for Boothby, becoming a minister in the Fraser government, and Australian consul-general in Los Angeles (1981–83).

Long after McLeay's death, members of the House of Representatives who served during his Speakership still recalled their high regard for him. Gough Whitlam wrote:

> I believe that all members of the House respected and liked him. On two or three occasions I spoke or acted inappropriately and he helped me. In my experience and observation the House has not had a better Speaker. By deportment and temperament he was ideal for the post … Above all, Sir John allowed lively debates. He was a tolerant and good-humoured person but members sensed when he thought they were going too far … He was an efficient Speaker but not an officious one. (Whitlam, pers. comm.)

Sir Billy Snedden (Speaker, 1976–83), in comparing several of his predecessors, concluded that McLeay was 'the most distinguished of those under whom I served'. McLeay's easy manner was central to his success—the result of 'a raw-boned understanding of what parliament was about' combined with a 'dignity which came from the honesty of the man and his lack of pretence' (Snedden and Schedvin 1990, 215). A portrait by Jack Carrington Smith is held at Parliament House.

This article supplements the original Volume 18 ADB *biography, published 2012, authored by L. M. Barlin. adb.anu.edu.au/biography/mcleay-sir-john-jack-15037/text26234*

Select bibliography

Advertiser (Adelaide). 'Death of Mr. R. B. McLeay'. 1 August 1946, 8

Advertiser (Adelaide). 'Sir John McLeay Dies at 88'. 23 June 1982, 3

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 29 August 1956, 3–7

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 17 February 1959, 8

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 12 November 1964, 2865

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 29 October 1965, 2409

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 17 August 1982, 9

Australia. House of Representatives Standing Committee on Procedure. *A History of the Procedure Committee on Its 20th Anniversary: Procedural Reform in the House of Representatives 1985–2005.* Canberra: Government Printer, 2005

Australian. 'McLeay, the Man They Could Trust'. 29 October 1966, 4

Canberra Times. 'Afraid of PM'. 30 October 1965, 4

Canberra Times. 'Mr. Speaker Has a Kick'. 27 October 1966, 3

Cockburn, Stewart. 'McLeay the Speaker'. *Advertiser* (Adelaide), 8 March 1982, 5

Laundy, Philip. *The Office of Speaker.* London: Cassell, 1964

Lloyd, C. J. *Parliament and the Press: The Federal Parliamentary Press Gallery 1901–88.* Carlton, Vic.: Melbourne University Press, 1988

Mail (Adelaide). 'Jack McLeay—a Fine Lord Mayor'. 11 June 1949, 7

Moore, Andrew. *Mr Big of Bankstown: The Scandalous Fitzpatrick and Browne Affair.* Crawley, WA: UWA Publishing, 2011

National Archives of Australia. B2455, McLeay J.

Personal knowledge of subject

Reid, G. S., and Martyn Forrest. *Australia's Commonwealth Parliament 1901–1988: Ten Perspectives.* Carlton, Vic.: Melbourne University Press, 1989

Snedden, Billy Mackie, and M. Bernie Schedvin. *Billy Snedden: An Unlikely Liberal*. South Melbourne: Macmillan, 1990

Souter, Gavin. *Acts of Parliament: A Narrative History of the Senate and House of Representatives, Commonwealth of Australia.* Carlton, Vic.: Melbourne University Press, 1988

Whitlam, Edward Gough. Personal communication

McLeay, Leo Boyce: Speaker 1989–1993

Michael Hogan

Leo Boyce McLeay, twentieth Speaker of the House of Representatives, was born at Marrickville, Sydney, on 4 October 1945, the elder of two children of Ronald Boyce McLeay, a council worker and one-time riveter during construction of the Sydney Harbour Bridge, and his wife, Joan Ann. Leo went to De La Salle College, Marrickville, which he left before obtaining the Leaving Certificate and became a post office telegram boy for a year. In 1962 he became a telephone technician with the Postmaster-General's Department. He attended North Sydney Technical College for further education connected with this job, and was a member of the Postal Telecommunication Technicians' Association and the Federated Clerks' Union.

With his father's encouragement, McLeay joined the Australian Labor Party (ALP), aged thirteen. He was secretary of the Marrickville State Electorate Council of the ALP (1968–73), state secretary of the New South Wales Young Labor Council (1969), and an alderman on Marrickville Council (1971–77). At the invitation of ALP state organiser Graham Richardson, he became a full-time organiser at the party's New South Wales head office (1976) and assistant general secretary of the New South Wales Branch (1976–79). He was known to friends and enemies alike as 'Leaping Leo'—possibly in reference to his agility in political manoeuvring.

On 20 December 1969, McLeay married Janice Delaney, a high school teacher who was also active in the ALP. They have three sons. Previously frustrated in an attempt to contest the state seat of Marrickville, an opportunity for McLeay arose after the death in 1979 of the sitting member for the safe Labor federal seat of Grayndler, Frank Stewart. Despite the support of the party's state office, he had to fight for preselection using his already well-developed political skills. In his first speech to parliament, he stressed traditional Labor values of social welfare and acknowledged his debts to mentors in the New South Wales right-wing faction of the party: John Ducker, Barrie Unsworth, John 'Johnno' Johnson, Graham Richardson, and Paul Keating.
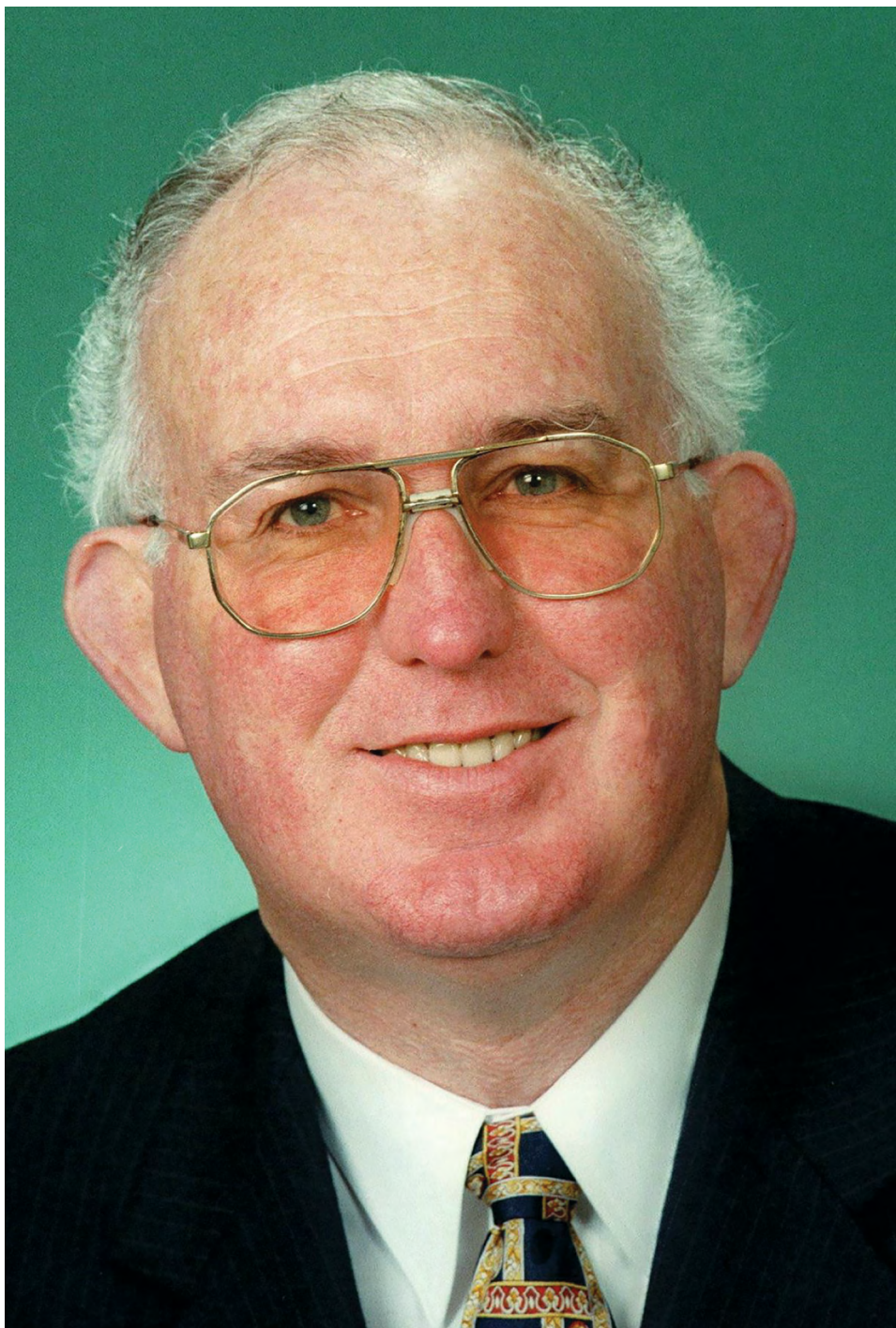
Figure 46: Leo McLeay.
Source: Australian Government Photographic Service (Auspic).

Although recognised as a right-wing heavyweight of the ALP, McLeay entered parliament with a keen awareness of his lack of formal education. Colleagues gently mocked his working-class and occasionally ungrammatical speech. He abandoned a master's course in public administration as a 'waste of time' (Cumming 1991, 321). Instead, parliament itself, especially contact with ministers and fellow members of parliamentary committees, helped fill the educational gap. He served on numerous House and joint standing and select committees, including several relevant to the management of parliamentary business such as Procedure, Publications, Library, Broadcasting of Parliamentary Proceedings, Privileges, and New Parliament House. Others included Public Accounts, Corporations and Securities, and Primary Industries. He also took an interest in international issues, attending the 1981 International Parliamentary Union (IPU) Conference in Havana. In October 1982, he chaired a subcommittee of the House Standing Committee on Expenditure that produced the *In a Home or at Home* report on aged-care accommodation— a significant contribution to this policy field.

With his standing in caucus, McLeay could have aspired to a ministerial position but instead chose a path towards the Speakership. When Joan Child became Speaker in February 1986, he was elected Chairman of Committees. Although loyal to his own party, he felt that the relationship between the executive and the backbench was 'monstrously overweighted' (Hope 1991) in favour of the executive, and he took a keen interest in improving the functioning of parliament. As a member of the House Standing Committee on Procedure, he proposed the reform of question time to make questions brief and each devoted to a single issue, answers relevant, and to ensure that at least sixteen questions were asked at each question time.

When Child retired, McLeay, on 29 August 1989, realised his ambition to be Speaker. He set about attempting to reform the parliamentary and caucus committee systems, and to modernise the House's administration. As a new Speaker, he understandably relied heavily on the advice of the Clerk of the House. Nevertheless, he was critical of some parliamentary staff and used combative language when later describing his relationship with senior parliamentary officers (Redenbach 1999, 285).

During his twenty-five years in parliament, McLeay joined delegations to fifteen countries in Europe, six in the Americas, eight in East Asia and the Middle East, and others in Oceania and Africa. In 1990 he was elected to the executive committee of the IPU for a four-year term. His factional role within the ALP intensified during the turmoil of 1991 as Keating challenged Bob Hawke for the party leadership. McLeay subsequently described his acting as Keating's campaign director within the party as 'probably the worst thing I did as a Speaker' (Redenbach 1999, 220).

The opposition subjected McLeay to strong criticism for not reining in overlong ministerial responses to 'Dorothy Dixer' questions, especially by Prime Minister Keating. On one occasion in March 1991, question time descended into disarray

in what he described as 'a classic display of rough-house destabilisation' (Loane 1991). On 2 April 1992, he became one of the few Speakers to be the subject of a no-confidence motion. This was moved by the leader of the opposition, John Hewson, amid a barrage of interjections from both sides of the chamber, and was defeated on party lines.

McLeay did not consider himself particularly severe in disciplining opposition members. He saw his strong factional standing as protection against the executive dominating the Speaker:

> Well of course Labor Speakers can't be too independent because they'll get it in the neck. I'm not being big-headed but I don't really think anyone's going to give it to me in the neck. (Cumming 1991, 323)

Ultimately, while McLeay at times bowed to political pressures, it is widely recognised that the main challenge facing all Speakers of his era was the aggressive political culture displayed in the typical question time.

McLeay's Speakership was nonetheless also a time of constructive debate on House procedures and attempts at wide-ranging change. In October 1992, the House adopted a significant reform by converting a number of sessional orders—some originating as long before as 1983—into standing orders, and also commenced the process of formally renaming the Chairman of Committees as Deputy Speaker. He supported these changes, especially provisions to strengthen the committee system as 'a way of bringing all members of the legislature into the policy making framework' (H.R. Deb. 15.10.1992, 2312). Additionally, a weekly private members' business session would provide 'a mechanism here every Thursday for Honourable members to air matters which are of importance to them' (H.R. Deb. 15.10.1992, 2312). He hoped that these changes would together 'put a lot of power back into the hands of backbenchers' (H.R. Deb. 15.10.1992, 2312). The Standing Committee on Procedure was very active during his time as Speaker, submitting eleven reports, including one in June 1992 proposing the reform of question time. Yet there was little obvious change in the day-to-day functioning of the House. McLeay summed up the pressures hampering reforms in simple terms: 'the Government did not want them' (Hope 1991). More successfully, he banned smoking in the parliament building.

The main change in House practice during McLeay's Speakership was the advent of television coverage. Cameras had been permitted in the Senate for six months when the House commenced a trial period of broadcasting on 12 February 1991. He supported the trial and found it 'rather extraordinary' that the Australian Broadcasting Corporation was intending to broadcast question time not live but at 11.55 at night (H.R. Deb. 12.2.1991, 328). Many members and parliamentary officers were concerned that editing by broadcasters and the expected emphasis on

question time would distort proceedings for viewers. Directions to camera operators issued by the Serjeant-at-Arms were specific, within the context of fair coverage, requiring them to focus on members who were actively involved in a debate.

On 6 June, McLeay reported in brief on this 'interesting and informative experience' (H.R. Deb. 6.6.1991, 4998), from which the House agreed to establish a select committee chaired by the Speaker to fully assess the trial by August that year. The committee's unanimous report, *The Eyes Have It!*, was generally well received by members. On 16 October, the House passed a resolution authorising the broadcast and rebroadcast of proceedings using provisions that broadly implemented the committee's recommendations. This provided a statutory basis for televising House proceedings and the establishment of a standing committee to set guidelines and conditions.

In December 1992, McLeay became embroiled in controversy arising from an incident that had occurred more than two years earlier. On Anzac Day 1990, he had hired a bicycle from the Parliament House gymnasium and was hurt when it collapsed as he rode it through suburban Canberra. He sued the Joint House Department for injuries suffered and, in November 1991, his claim for compensation was settled for $55,000 including medical costs, plus $10,000 in legal costs. When this became publicly known, the opposition and the Australian Democrats expressed outrage over the process and the fact that part of the award was based on possible economic loss in employment prospects. Amid this, a highlight of his Speakership came in January 1993 when he led the Australian delegation to the first annual meeting of the Asia Pacific Parliamentary Forum in Tokyo and was elected to the forum's executive committee.

The attorney-general, Michael Duffy, appointed the eminent jurist Sir Laurence Street to conduct an independent inquiry into McLeay's compensation claim. This was still under way as the 1993 federal election became imminent, and McLeay came under strong pressure from his own party to resign as Speaker so that the issue would not feature in the campaign. On 5 February 1993, he announced his resignation, still steadfastly denying any wrongdoing. A fortnight later, Street found nothing 'which would support the inference that Mr McLeay received favoured treatment in relation to his claim' (Duffy 1993). However, as his own Deputy Speaker, Ron Edwards, suggested, he was perceived to have shown 'a lack of sensitivity towards ordinary Australians struggling during a recession' (Boreham 1993).

Following a redistribution, McLeay stood for the seat of Watson and, immediately after the 1993 election, found his talents put to good use as government whip. This position was upgraded the following year to chief whip. An unexpected interest in this later part of his parliamentary career was national security. He was a member of the joint statutory committee on the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation and other intelligence agencies (1999–2004), and of the Joint Select Committee on

Intelligence Services in 2001. He announced his retirement from parliament shortly before the 2004 election. In his farewell speech, he recalled his committee experience with particular satisfaction: 'The time I spent as chairman of the expenditure committee was one of the great times of my life' (H.R. Deb. 23.6.2004, 31379).

McLeay cut an imposing figure, matched by a ready capacity for blunt speech. This could elicit widely differing reactions, which Neal Blewett encapsulated in noting that, while McLeay possessed the 'characteristic virtues and vices' (Blewett 1999, 84) of the New South Wales right, he also had a strong knowledge of social welfare issues. He retained a sense of his Catholic working-class origins, manifested in his continuing commitment to social justice and the ALP. In retirement, he kept a low public profile. As New South Wales director of the Enhance Group, he offered his experience helping private companies navigate the government procurement system. He also became a director of the Mary MacKillop Foundation. Janice McLeay served as a commissioner for the Industrial Relations Commission of New South Wales (1998–2008). Their son Paul was member for Heathcote in the New South Wales parliament (2003–11) and a minister (2009–10). A portrait by David Thomas is in the Parliament House collection.

Select bibliography

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 13 September 1979, 1119–22

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 12 February 1991, 328

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 14 March 1991, 2041–42

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 6 June 1991, 4997–98

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 2 April 1992, 1734–47

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 15 October 1992, 2312–13

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 12 May 1993, 652–53

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 23 June 2004, 31378–79

Australia. House of Representatives. *Standing and Sessional Orders as at 10 February 2003*, Dates of Amendments to Standing Orders, 81–89

Australia. House of Representatives. *Votes and Proceedings*, 1990–91, 876–77, 1084–85

Australia. House of Representatives. *Votes and Proceedings*, 1990–91–92, 1786–88

Blewett, Neal. *A Cabinet Diary: A Personal Record of the First Keating Government.* Kent Town, SA: Wakefield Press, 1999

Boreham, Gareth. 'McLeay's Action was Insensitive, Says Deputy'. *Age* (Melbourne), 11 February 1993, 1

Cumming, Fia. *Mates: Five Champions of the Labor Right*. Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1991

Diaz, Tina. 'Pressure Grows for McLeay Inquiry'. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 1 February 1993, 4

Duffy, Michael. 'Leo McLeay Exonerated'. *News Release, Attorney-General*, 19 February 1993

Hope, Deborah. 'Reflections of the Speaker'. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 29 June 1991, 41

Loane, Sally. 'Keeping Order in an Unruly House'. *Age* (Melbourne), 14 March 1991, 11

New South Wales. Legislative Council. *Parliamentary Debates*, 16 November 2004, 12855–56

Redenbach, Stephen C. 'Servant of Two Masters? An Exploration of the Speaker's Role in the Australian Commonwealth Parliament'. PhD thesis, La Trobe University, Melbourne, 1999

Taylor, Lenore and Dennis Shanahan. 'McLeay Forced to Quit'. *Australian* (Sydney), 7 February 1993, 1–2

Millar, Percival Clarence (Clarrie): Chairman of Committees 1978–1983

Elaine Brown

Percival Clarence 'Clarrie' Millar (1925–2017), public servant, farmer, and Chairman of Committees of the House of Representatives, was born at Norwood, South Australia, on 15 June 1925, second of three children of South Australian–born parents Percival John Turbill, clerk, salesman, and tram driver-conductor, and his wife, Elsie Dorothy Gladys, née Klaebe. Clarrie's father died of tuberculosis on 29 July 1935. After his mother married William Donald Millar, he adopted his stepfather's surname and, with his family, followed an itinerant life across Victoria and Tasmania, finally settling in Hobart. A child of the 'infamous depression of the Thirties' (H.R. Deb. 18.7.1974, 432), he left school at thirteen and worked in various jobs, including as a trainee in the assay department of the Rosebery zinc mine, and as a salesman in a Hobart department store. In 1940 he passed a post office examination and became a messenger, delivering telegrams to the families of war casualties. He also served at the public counter, learnt Morse code, and became a junior assistant telegraphist.

Millar joined the Royal Australian Air Force at South Hobart on 27 September 1943. As he was only eighteen, his mother refused him permission to learn to fly. However, his telegraphic skills led him instead to spend two and a half years as a radio operator—a 'modest radio spy' (H.R. Deb. 1.3.1989, 234)—with the Central Bureau, a joint American–Australian code-breaking organisation that provided signals intelligence. After further training, he was based in Brisbane and then at a secret location near Darwin, where he intercepted the Japanese message that ended the war in August 1945. His superiors described him as well-spoken and conscientious.

Discharged on 27 March 1946 with the rank of leading aircraftman, Millar worked in the telegraph section of the Sydney General Post Office and studied for his matriculation. In 1948 he joined the Department of Immigration. On 26 June that year, at St Swithun's Church of England, Pymble, he married Dorothy Lucy Cooper.

Figure 47: Clarrie Millar.
Source: Courtesy of the National Archives of Australia. NAA: A6135, K22/8/74/43.

They were to have two sons, Robert and David, and three daughters, Wendy, Lisa, and Trudi. In 1950 the Millars relocated to Queensland where Clarrie, with his stepfather and brother John, operated a dairy farm at Biloela in the Callide Valley. The farm encountered financial difficulties, and five years later the family moved to Brisbane, where Millar worked as a real estate salesman before buying a dairy farm at Kilkivan, west of Gympie. He loved the land and became an innovative farmer, practising soil conservation and strip grazing, and improving his herd by artificial insemination. A long-held interest in aviation led him in 1969 to finally learn to fly, using an airstrip on his property and his own light plane.

The community-minded Millar was active in the Queensland Dairymen's Organisation, the Kilkivan United Grand Lodge, and the Kilkivan State School Parents and Citizens Association. Increasingly drawn to politics, he served as president of the Country Party's Wide Bay Divisional Council (1971–74) and as deputy chairman of the Barambah Electorate Council (1971–74), before becoming chairman of the Kilkivan Branch of the Country Party in 1974. Displeased by the Whitlam Labor government, he agreed to stand for the federal seat of Wide Bay, which was held by Labor's Brendan Hansen. Although he was a surprise candidate and was subjected to the Labor campaign slogan 'Clarrie Who?', rising dissatisfaction with Whitlam in rural Queensland contributed to his victory at the double-dissolution election of May 1974. He was to retain the seat at six further elections.

In his first speech to the House of Representatives, Miller attributed his tolerance and concern for the underdog to his early exposure to hardship. Twenty-five years of freedom from 'the spectres of fear, hunger and poverty' (H.R. Deb. 18.7.1974, 432) had, he felt, fostered national complacency. Defending primary producers— 'the peasantry of the seventies'—he pointed to the collapse of the beef market, the amalgamation of farms, and townships 'doomed to die because of the imbalance of social and economic entitlements' (H.R. Deb. 18.7.1974, 433). While committed to free enterprise, he recognised 'the interdependence of all sections of Australian society' (H.R. Deb. 18.7.1974, 433). In the sixteen years of parliamentary service that followed, he proved willing to raise difficult questions and spoke eloquently, usually without notes. A lifetime of reading had endowed him with such a love of language that he 'never used a single word when a whole paragraph would do' (Truss 2018). He spoke on his constituents' interests of dairying, fishing, sugar, timber, irrigation, fertilisers, and transport, especially aviation. When in 1977 the Fraser government prevented further sandmining on Fraser Island, within his electorate, Millar, no fan of 'academic oriented conservationists' (H.R. Deb. 18.7.1974, 435), secured a major compensation package for the affected community. His efforts for Wide Bay were honoured by the naming of the P. C. Millar Bridge on a new road between Maryborough and Tin Can Bay.

Millar's even temperament contributed to his election on 21 February 1978 as Chairman of Committees, controversially replacing the long-serving Philip Lucock, who had hoped to continue in the position. Millar's rise seemed 'meteoric, considering his previous party positions were at the branch and divisional levels and that he has not held a Deputy Chairman of Committees position during his four years in Parliament' (*Canberra Times* 1978, 11). As Deputy Speaker, Millar presided with competence, decorum, and fairness, seldom raising his voice. On 13 September 1979, amid angry exchanges between the opposition and the government, as Acting Speaker, he ruled that the prime minister, Malcolm Fraser, should terminate his extended answer to a question—an act of impartiality that won him 'enduring respect on both sides of the Parliament' (*Gympie Times* 1991, 1; H.R. Deb. 13.9.1979, 1069–72). Yet Millar came to see the Speaker's chair as 'the hottest and loneliest seat in Australia' (H.R. Deb. 11.2.1986, 237). He retained the Chairman of Committees position after the 1980 election and served until the Labor victory at the election of March 1983, after which he became Deputy Chairman of Committees.

In February 1984, following the resignation of Les Johnson, Millar was unsuccessfully proposed as Chairman of Committees by the Liberal member for Cook, Don Dobie, who declared that Millar's knowledge of standing orders was such that 'he has no peer among the rest of us' (H.R. Deb. 28.2.1984, 6). This prompted a sceptical observer to wonder whether 'Millar was a man who combined the saintly temperament of Santa Claus with an encyclopaedic knowledge of the Standing Orders' (Warden 1984). Similar attempts in September 1987 and August 1989 were also voted down along party lines. Millar continued to participate diligently in the work of the Joint Statutory Committee of Public Works (1976–77, 1985–90). Other committees he served on had a focus on the operations of the parliament and the House: the Standing Committees on Publications (1974–77), Standing Orders (1978–84), Privileges (1980–90), Procedure (1980–90), and Selection (1988–90). He led parliamentary delegations to Japan (1978) and Suva (1981) and was a member of delegations to South-East Asia (1976), Italy, Spain, Greece, and Cyprus (1983), and to the Philippines and Korea (1988).

The most difficult period of Millar's career began in January 1987 when the Queensland premier, Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen, launched his divisive 'Joh for Canberra' campaign in an attempt to secure the prime ministership. Although Wide Bay included Bjelke-Petersen's state electorate of Barambah, Millar declined to make way for him. He was nonetheless among those National Party members who opposed maintaining the coalition with the Liberals and were critical of Ian Sinclair's party leadership. In May 1989, he and four other opposition members crossed the floor over amendments to a bill concerning deregulation of the Australian Wheat Board. Soon after, he decided that, as fifteen years in parliament had impaired his health, he would not contest the 1990 election. This made possible a smooth transition to his successor, Warren Truss, a future National Party leader. Farewelling Millar, Prime Minister Bob Hawke

praised him as 'one of the gentlest, most responsible and respected persons in this place' (H.R. Deb. 22.12.1989, 3571). Millar had been one of just five World War II veterans remaining in the House of Representatives.

In retirement, the Millars lived in Brisbane, staying active and enjoying their close family. On 26 January 1991, he was appointed AM for services to the parliament. In 2009 he received a medallion and certificate from the British prime minister, Gordon Brown, acknowledging his signals intelligence service during World War II. As a Freemason, he received his fifty-year jewel in 2011. Millar died in Brisbane on 28 November 2017. He was cremated at a private family service on 5 December, which his daughter Lisa, an Australian Broadcasting Corporation journalist and presenter, joined from overseas by Skype. A memorial service was held on 10 January 2018 at the Samford Valley Community Church. Despite his concerns about the behaviour of some parliamentarians and the high expectations that a democratic system can raise, he had remained 'a Parliamentarian, not a politician' (Truss 2018). With his warmth and wit, Millar was held in high regard in his electorate and on both sides of politics.

Select bibliography

Andrew, Margaret. 'The "People's Man" Retires'. *Gympie Times*, 14 July 1990, weekend supplement, 3

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 18 July 1974, 432–35

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 13 September 1979, 1069–72

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 28 February 1984, 6–8

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 11 February 1986, 237

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 1 March 1989, 232–34

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 22 December 1989, 3571

Braithwaite, Raymond. Eulogy given at memorial service for P. C. Millar. Unpublished manuscript, 2018. Copy held on file

Canberra Times. 'New Deputy Speaker Presides'. 23 February 1978, 11

Canberra Times. 'Sinclair to be Dumped, Says Q'land MP'. 20 April 1987, 1

Canberra Times. 'Millar to Step Down'. 1 June 1989, 2

Gympie Times. 'Millar Honoured'. 26 January 1991, 1

Millar, Robert. Eulogy given at memorial service for P. C. Millar. Unpublished manuscript, 2018. Copy held on file

National Archives of Australia. A9301, 88725, Millar Percival Clarence

Truss, Warren. Eulogy given at memorial service for P. C. Millar. Unpublished manuscript, 2018. Copy held on file

Warden, Ian. 'Time Limit on Gibbering Interjections'. *Canberra Times*, 4 March 1984, 2

Nairn, Walter Maxwell: Speaker 1940–1943

Lenore Layman

Walter Maxwell Nairn (1879–1958), lawyer and tenth Speaker of the House of Representatives, was born on 17 March 1879 at Alberton, South Gippsland, Victoria, third of four children of Scottish-born William Nairn, farmer, and his Victorian-born wife, Margaret, née Merritt. William's death in 1890 imposed hardship on the family, but Walter won a scholarship to South Melbourne College, where he was the school sports champion and also excelled in the classroom, matriculating in 1894. In May 1896, he left depression-ravaged Victoria to follow his brother, William Ralph Nairn, to Western Australia.

In Perth Nairn initially found employment as a proofreader and then as a journalist at the *Morning Herald* and subsequently the *West Australian*. Court reporting decided him on pursuing a legal career and he became a law clerk, initially for the barrister and parliamentarian Norman Ewing and later for the Perth solicitors Penny & Hill. He married Philomena (Mena) Antonia Boladeras at St Mary's Cathedral, Perth, on 13 May 1902, but she died just two years later. On 29 December 1905, he married Mary Josephine Bertram, daughter of an officer of the British Indian Army, at St John Berchmans Catholic Church, Camberwell, Victoria. Sadness returned with the loss of their first child in 1906, but this was followed by the births of a son and a daughter.

With his brother, William, Nairn became active in politics. In 1907 he was the founding secretary and treasurer of the Western Australian Protectionist League. The league supported the Lyne tariff of 1908 that significantly increased protection for Australian manufacturers and, as secessionist voices began to be heard in the west, affirmed its loyalty to the young Commonwealth. After three years of study and articles, he was, in August 1909, admitted to the Western Australian Bar; his employer was accordingly recast as Penny, Hill and Nairn. A sharp-tongued local newspaper predicted that, having been 'an energetic and able pressman', he would make 'a reliable and pushing lawyer' (*Truth* 1909, 4). He was indeed energetic, serving
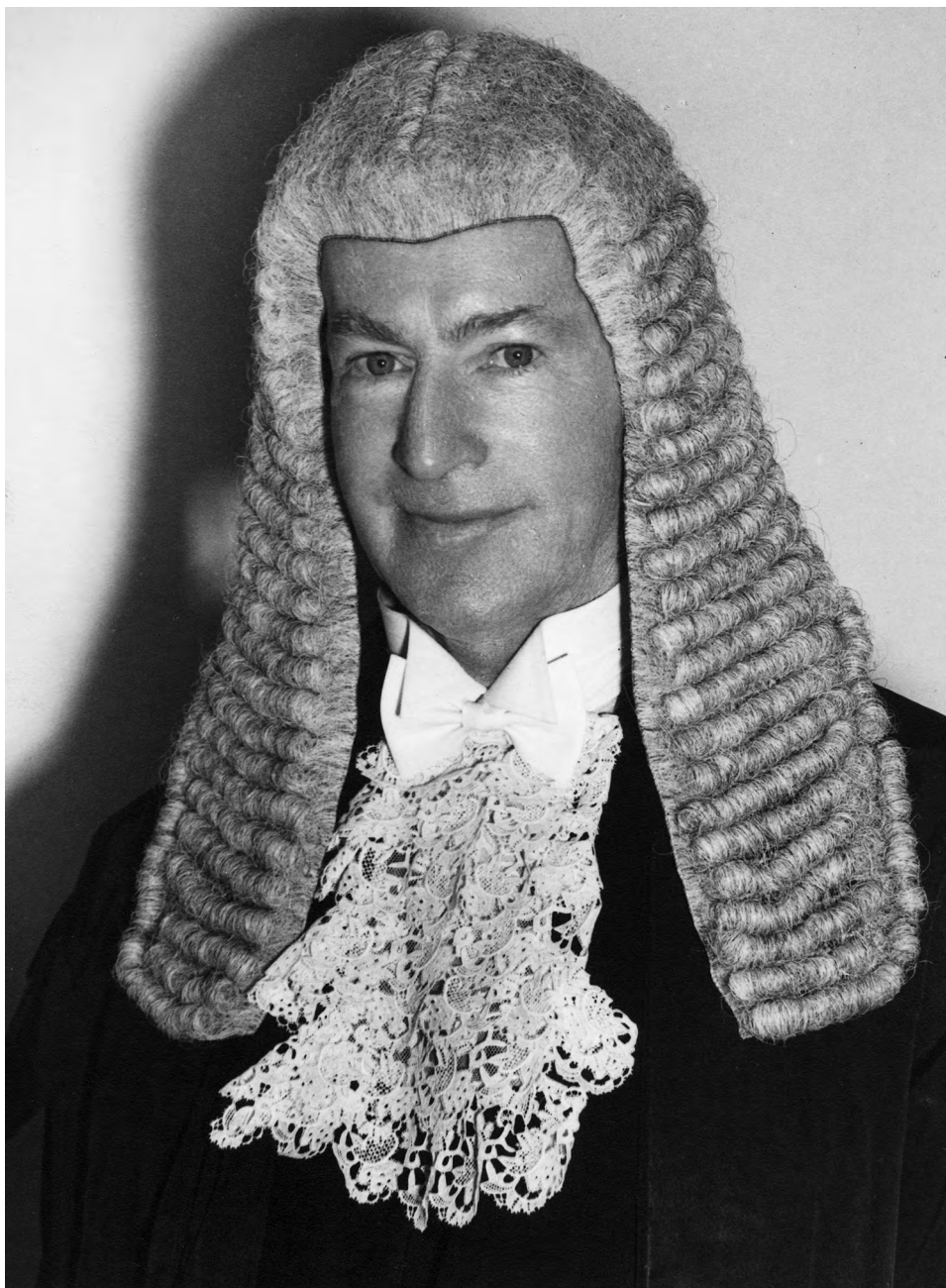
Figure 48: Walter Nairn.

Source: Department of the House of Representatives.

on the committees of the Western Australian Law Students' Society and the North Perth Bowling Club, as well as helping to organise junior sports. His other outdoor enthusiasms included cross-country athletics, lacrosse, tennis, golf, and motoring.

Nairn entered public office in 1909 by winning an extraordinary vacancy on the North Perth municipal council. He resigned before his term was complete to contest the Legislative Assembly seat of North Perth at the election of October 1911. In a campaign speech, he declared that 'he was standing as a Liberal in the truest sense of the term' and held that, as the Labor Party 'gave its best endeavors to a particular class, and not in the interest of the people as a whole' (*West Australian* 1911, 11), it did not deserve to govern. The voters disagreed, and he was defeated as Labor won its first majority in Western Australia. Brother William became the Liberal member for the Legislative Assembly seat of Swan in 1914.

Although Nairn turned to establishing his legal practice, he remained active in the league and its successor Nationalist Party, chairing committees and public meetings. His law career thrived. In 1917 he became junior counsel representing the new Liberal government of Frank Wilson at a royal commission inquiring into the government contract with the British financier S. V. Nevanas to erect the Wyndham freezing works. This ill-managed arrangement had precipitated the fall of the Labor government led by John Scaddan. In April 1924, as royal commissioner, he reported to the Nationalist government of Sir James Mitchell on the affairs of the failed Gosnells Estate Company.

In 1921 Nairn set up his own firm, Nairn and McDonald, in partnership with the brother of the prominent lawyer and future state Liberal Party leader Ross McDonald. The press reported that as 'a nice, quiet, unassuming chap, he was popular amongst the law fraternity' (*Nelson Advocate* 1927, 4). His growing professional reputation was publicly demonstrated in 1927 when a fund was raised in the Kimberley to pay him to represent members of the police party under investigation by the Wood royal commission into the alleged Forrest River Mission (or Oombulgurri) massacre. He was combative in defending the police, arguing that hearsay and rumour had replaced the rules of evidence, drawing the ire of the commissioner. The horrors recounted and denied were reported extensively, as was the subsequent preliminary hearing of murder charges against two constables, which failed due to insufficient evidence.

His reputation as 'a perfect family solicitor' (Makin c. 1962), prominence in local sports, and extensive community service made Nairn an ideal parliamentary candidate. He was persuaded to stand for the Nationalist Party in the federal seat of Perth at the October 1929 election precipitated by the defeat of the Bruce–Page government on the floor of the House of Representatives. The government lost the election, but he won Perth on the preferences of the independent Edward Mann, who, as the previous Nationalist member for Perth, had voted in the House against his own government. He held the seat at four subsequent elections.

Nairn entered the House of Representatives committed to the Nationalist platform of sound finance and rationalisation of the arbitration system. He also promised as a Western Australian representative to resist further tariff increases. Upon returning to Perth after his first experience of parliament, he provided the *West Australian* with some 'Sidelights on Canberra', showing that he was still a sharp wordsmith. Unimpressed by the still underdeveloped 'Siberia' that was Canberra, he thought the site better suited to rearing sheep but did concede its attractive outlook. Parliament's foremost figures impressed him in different ways: James Scullin was a fine public speaker, who 'fills the office of Prime Minister with dignity'; the treasurer, E. G. 'Ted' Theodore, projected 'a suggestion of reserve power behind his utterances'; opposition leader Sir John Latham was, contrary to reputation, 'one of the most unassuming and approachable of men'; and the Country Party leader (Sir) Earle Page, although a man of 'too many words', had the great asset of 'personal popularity' (Nairn 1930). The impartiality of Speaker Norman Makin also made a favourable impression, but 'two fat men' whom Nairn spotted on the House of Representatives benches remained discreetly unidentified.

With an exemplary record of attendance, speaking briefly and to the point, Nairn soon proved to be a conscientious parliamentarian. He moved amendments and asked numerous questions, particularly concerning parliamentary rectitude and government expenditure, and took an early interest in the standing orders, calling for them to be observed both 'in the spirit and the letter' (H.R. Deb. 17.3.1931, 279). When in April 1931 Makin banned the journalist Joseph Alexander from the House for refusing to divulge the source of leaked cablegrams, Nairn was quick to assert that the standing orders did not give the Speaker authority 'to take cognisance of an offence committed outside the House' and that there was nothing to oblige a journalist to divulge a source of information (H.R. Deb. 24.4.1931, 1281).

During Nairn's first few years in parliament, growing Western Australian support for secession was a pressing issue. Although he had opposed secession, he also recognised the need for change if the Australian Federation were to remain intact. Neither major party was responsive to the burden that ever-rising tariffs imposed on states that were more dependent on exports of primary products than on domestic manufacturing. Without redress, he feared, demands for secession could spread to South Australia and Tasmania. He called for the revival of the then dormant Interstate Commission to resolve issues of interstate trade; when this came to no avail, he proposed that Western Australia apply its own tariffs and customs laws. The Commonwealth Grants Commission established in 1933 was, he felt, flawed, as, by focusing on state 'needs' rather than on the 'disabilities' imposed by Commonwealth policies, it effectively transformed Western Australia into a 'mendicant' (H.R. Deb. 26.8.1937, 207). While the grants allotted to states by this agency gradually defused secessionism, he continued to monitor tariff issues closely for the remainder of his parliamentary career.

The functioning of the Federal Bankruptcy Act also engaged Nairn. His legal practice had exposed him to the limitations of the legislation and, in 1932, as a member of the new United Australia Party (UAP) that had succeeded the Nationalist Party, he was appointed to a parliamentary committee to consider amendments to the Act, becoming its chairman in 1937. The committee consulted widely before submitting its report, but he was disappointed by the lack of an effective government response. In 1933 he was appointed one of the Temporary Chairmen of Committees, giving him his first experience of presiding over the House. He was also appointed to the Joint Standing Committee on Public Works (1937–40) and the House of Representatives Standing Orders Committee (1937–43). His committee work helped build his reputation among his parliamentary peers as 'a careful and thorough man' (Makin c. 1962).

Nairn's election to the Speakership on 20 November 1940 was unopposed, but in the party room it had been close-run. When (Sir) George Bell did not seek re-election, Nairn was one of five nominees who contested the ballot. His win over the former minister Sir Charles Marr was so unexpected that it sparked press speculation that Marr would have his name put forward in the House in the hope of drawing support from the opposition and dissident UAP members; in the event, he scotched this by himself nominating Nairn. Opposition leader John Curtin, a fellow Western Australian, welcomed Nairn's elevation as 'evidence of the increasing facility with which the disabilities of Western Australia disappear' (H.R. Deb. 20.11.1940, 22). Nairn was the first Speaker from that state, and the re-election of John Prowse as Chairman of Committees produced a Western Australian pairing.

Finely balanced party numbers and growing political pressures on Prime Minister (Sir) Robert Menzies made presiding over the House challenging. The new Speaker coped well. Herbert Vere Evatt later recalled Nairn's 'coolness and courtesy', and Menzies described him as 'quiet, relevant, clear, and greatly respected' (H.R. Deb. 17.2.1959, 15). Makin observed that 'May's *Parliamentary Practice* was a constant companion with this man' and thought his rulings 'well-founded' (c. 1962). Nairn's manner and judgement served him well. When the short-lived government of (Sir) Arthur Fadden lost the support of the House in October 1941 and was replaced with a Labor government headed by Curtin, Nairn remained Speaker with the blessing of his own party. In the midst of wartime, this provided some much-needed stability and was welcomed by a new government that lacked a parliamentary majority in its own right and effectively gained a vital extra vote in the House from Nairn's continuation.

In mid-1942 Nairn's Speakership was marred by controversies that revolved about the relationship between parliament and the press. When the President of the Senate, James Cunningham, banned all staff of the Sydney *Daily Telegraph* and *Sunday Telegraph* from the Senate chamber and precincts because of an article seen to ridicule senators, Nairn followed suit for the House, as there was 'a duty upon this House

to support and co-operate with the Senate in the maintenance of the dignity and honour of Parliament' (H.R. Deb. 3–4.6.1942, 2187). The editors of the offending newspapers refused to provide the unreserved apologies sought, with the result that the ban and attendant controversy dragged on until late September, when they produced a suitably worded statement. Nairn departed from parliamentary tradition when, on the same day that the House adopted the Senate ban, he moved an amendment to the Australian Broadcasting Bill. As the House was in committee, he was not in the chair at the time, but this was the first occasion a Speaker had in any circumstances moved an amendment to a bill. While the amendment—to exempt totally and permanently disabled veterans from radio licence fees—was hardly contentious, it was nonetheless greeted with surprise before it was withdrawn soon after being proposed; there were also times when Nairn voted against the Curtin government in committee.

Nairn came under further attack for an article he wrote for the *Nationalist*, the monthly journal of the Western Australian National Party and UAP. He had been contributing to this organ since it commenced in 1936, mostly through 'Canberra Notes', a column of often light-hearted political reflections published under his name and title as Speaker. Some of its content was party political in nature and, in his column of 11 June 1942, he pondered: 'Can Labour [sic] Govern?', stating that 'public confidence in the capacity of Labour appears to be on the wane' (Nairn 1942, 4). Despite ending with 'however there is a war on and I am getting into party politics' (Nairn 1942, 4), the article sparked an outcry. William Morris Hughes, leader of Nairn's own party, professed astonishment at this airing of political views by the Speaker. The *Daily Telegraph* reported a growing desire among Labor members to replace him. His response that the whole matter was 'much ado about nothing' (*West Australian* 1942, 7) did not repair the damage to his reputation. A *Canberra Times* editorial linked the two controversies in accusing him of 'playing party politics' in a way that was 'a distinct departure from the traditional impartiality of the Speakership' (1942, 2). Undeterred, he continued producing 'Canberra Notes' until the end of his Speakership.

By remaining as Speaker after his party had lost government, Nairn was already treading on uncertain ground. His anomalous position and the string of controversies drew increasing criticism from both sides of politics. Menzies defended him publicly late in 1942 by reiterating that Nairn remained Speaker 'in accordance with the wishes of the opposition parties' (*Kalgoorlie Miner* 1942, 2). This changed suddenly on 21 June 1943, when Nairn resigned the Speakership in anticipation of Fadden as leader of the opposition moving a motion of no confidence in the Curtin government the following day.

The first Speaker to resign mid-term, Nairn explained that in October 1941 he had remained Speaker with the concurrence of his party 'for the better prosecution of the war' (*Age* 1943, 3). But the imminent no-confidence motion necessarily terminated

the bipartisan cooperation and therefore his Speakership. His decision attracted harsh criticism, with the *Canberra Times* labelling it a 'travesty' that 'degrades the high office of Speaker' (1943, 2). Nairn was caught in the disjuncture between the Westminster ideal of a Speaker above party politics and the reality of how the office had evolved in Australia.

A general election in August 1943 saw a major national swing to Labor. Nairn's parliamentary career ended with his defeat in Perth by Labor's Tom Burke. He resumed legal practice, initially alone but later with the firm of Jackson, McDonald, Connor & Ambrose, the successor to his old partnership. He continued to practise up to the time of his death on 12 December 1958 at Claremont. Survived by his wife and two children, he was given a state funeral and was cremated at Karrakatta cemetery. His death attracted little public attention. Makin recalled him as being somewhat reserved for a politician, 'not what you would call a colourful man' (c. 1962), with a slightly hesitant and staccato manner of speech. His resignation as Speaker had been a decisive signal that, in a choice between party and parliament, the former had priority. A portrait by William Rowell hangs in Parliament House.

Select bibliography

Age (Melbourne). 'Opposition's Motion'. 22 June 1943, 3

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 17 March 1931, 279

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 24 April 1931, 1281–82

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 24 May 1933, 1662–65

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 26 August 1937, 206–7

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 20 November 1940, 21–24

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 3–4 June 1942, 2187

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 22 June 1943, 5–6

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 17 February 1959, 15–16

Canberra Times. 'A Strange Conception of Duty'. 3 July 1942, 2

Canberra Times. 'The Speakership Travesty'. 22 June 1943, 2

Daily Telegraph (Sydney). 'Urge Naming of New Speaker'. 4 July 1942, 5

Kalgoorlie Miner. 'Mr Nairn's Position as Speaker'. 23 November 1942, 2

Makin, Norman. The Honourable Walter Maxwell Nairn, Speaker 1940–1943, c. 1962. Papers of Norman Makin, MS 4663. National Library of Australia

Nairn, Walter. 'Sidelights on Canberra'. *West Australian* (Perth), 16 January 1930, 18

Nairn, Walter. 'Canberra Notes'. *The Nationalist*, 11 June 1942, 1, 4

Nelson Advocate. 'Passing Comment'. 18 March 1927, 4

Sydney Morning Herald. 'UAP Nominee for Speaker'. 20 November 1940, 11

Truth (Perth). 'Purely Personal'. 14 August 1909, 4

West Australian (Perth). 'State Politics'. 2 September 1911, 11

West Australian (Perth). 'Federal Speaker'. 6 July 1942, 7

Nehl, Garry Barr: Deputy Speaker 1996–2001

Tracey Arklay[1]

Garry Owen Barr Nehl, Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives, was born on 19 February 1934 at Newcastle, New South Wales, son of Ivy Nehl, and her husband, William Nehl, moulder, industrial officer, army officer, and later Tobruk veteran. Educated at Sydney Boys' High School (1946–51), where he was a champion rower, he married Suzanne Saul, an art student from St George, Queensland, on 27 January 1956 at St Stephen's Presbyterian Church, Sydney. Their move to Suzanne's family's grazing property in south-west Queensland marked the start of his enthusiasm for regional Australia. They were to have two sons.

Enterprising and restless, Nehl pursued an eclectic lifestyle in a series of jobs across Australia. He was a member of the Citizen Military Forces (1952–54), an office cadet in Sydney, then a station hand, overseer, and manager at his parents-in-law's property (1956–59), a packaging consultant (1959–61), an administrator in the departments of university extension at the University of New England (1965–68) and the University of Sydney, and an editor and author, becoming proprietor of *Scope* newspaper in Armidale, New South Wales (1968). Despite commencing part-time studies at the University of Sydney in economics, in commerce by correspondence at the University of Queensland, and in arts at the University of New England, he never completed a degree.

Having joined the Country Party in Queensland in 1957, Nehl maintained his membership as he moved about eastern Australia. His first experience of elective office was as an alderman on Armidale City Council (1963–64). He was simultaneously executive officer and secretary of the New England New State Movement (1961–64), which was dedicated to persuading the New South Wales government to excise the state's north-eastern region to form a seventh state of the Australian Commonwealth, reflecting a longstanding contention that the area paid too much tax to a Sydney-based

Figure 49: Garry Nehl.
Source: Australian Government Photographic Service (Auspic).

government for what it received in return. Working with such veteran campaigners as Ulrich Ellis, Nehl hoped that a new state would set the pattern for the entire nation, as 'unless we are prepared to decentralise government we are never going to get the balanced government we so badly need' (*Canberra Times* 1967, 13). He ran a branch of the New State movement in Newcastle and chaired the Citizens' Referendum Council ahead of the referendum on statehood that the New South Wales government conducted on 29 April 1967. While the referendum was defeated, nearly 67 per cent of voters outside the Hunter Valley favoured separation, encouraging Nehl and three others to stand as candidates for the New State Party at the 1968 state election. He gained 35 per cent of the primary vote in the seat of Clarence against a Country Party incumbent but failed to win the seat.

Late in 1968, the peripatetic Nehl moved to Coffs Harbour, New South Wales, where he undertook casual work on local newspapers and sold life insurance. In Melbourne, he managed a migrant hostel (1969–71), then in Sydney was a freelance public relations consultant and a personnel manager with Morganite Australia (1972–76), before returning to Coffs Harbour. In 1976 he established a public relations firm, and authored three photographic books: *The Banana Coast* (1978), *Timbertown* (1978), and *Coffs Harbour: The Natural Growth Centre* (1979). He also edited *Banana Bulletin*, the journal of the New South Wales Banana Growers' Federation (1980–84). Although the New State movement was fading, Nehl stayed loyal to the separatist cause and was a proud promoter of his current home. As 'el presidente' of the 'Banana Republic', he publicised the area, visiting New Zealand in 1983 as the republic's putative foreign minister. More conventionally, he served in a series of positions in the National Party. He was a member of its New South Wales research committee (1980–81), the state Campaign Committee (1980–84), the state Central Council and Central Executive (1980–85), and chaired the Coffs Harbour Electorate Council (1980–85). In 1984 he was the successful National Party candidate for the federal electorate of Cowper, a safe seat extending along northern coastal New South Wales.

In his first speech to the House, Nehl extolled 'the virtues and wonders' of Cowper— 'God's own coastline' (H.R. Deb. 19.3.1985, 514)—and later dubbed himself the member for paradise. During his seventeen years in parliament, he pursued a strikingly diverse range of interests and causes. These extended from *Otitis media* ('glue ear') in Aboriginal communities and iodine deficiency in Tibet, to the issues faced by non-custodial parents, and the Australian Parliamentary Antarctic Alliance. In November 1988, he introduced a private member's bill to restore tax deductibility for donations to the Reverend Ted Noffs's Life Education centres. Nehl's loud interjections in debate were likened to fireworks explosions that had 'to be heard to be believed' (Warden 1988).

Nehl sat on numerous parliamentary committees, including Public Accounts; Australian Security Intelligence Organisation; Foreign Affairs, Defence, and Trade; Industry, Science, and Technology; and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs. Although supportive of the committee system, he became concerned by the pressure it placed on busy backbenchers. The Speaker, he also felt, should be more independent of party politics. He served as the shadow parliamentary secretary to National Party leader Charles Blunt (1989–90) and, in April 1990, stood for the party leadership himself after Blunt lost his seat at the previous month's election. The winner of the leadership ballot, Tim Fischer, appointed Nehl party deputy whip—a post he held for the next six years. He was also Deputy Chair of Committees (1990–94) and a member of the Speaker's panel (1994–96).

On 30 April 1996, at the outset of the Howard government, Nehl was elected Deputy Speaker, defeating the opposition's nominee, Harry Jenkins, a future Speaker. Nehl served in this position for more than five and a half years under Speakers Bob Halverson, Ian Sinclair—whom he had known well when a Country Party member in New England—and Neil Andrew. Immediately after becoming Deputy Speaker, he observed that 'not one person was killed' in the recent change of government— a reflection of Australia being 'so fortunate and so privileged' to be a democracy (H.R. Deb. 30.4.1996, 23). Nehl was particularly keen to impart his deeply felt commitment to parliamentary democracy to the young, and so gave generously of his time to school groups visiting Parliament House. He once drew the attention of members to the parliament's ownership of a 1297 edition of the Magna Carta as evidence of 'an unbroken 700-odd years of growth and development of democracy' (H.R. Deb. 26.6.1997, 6607). But he was also conscious of 'the stresses that are involved' in presiding over the House (H.R. Deb. 13.12.1996, 8628). One of his more difficult experiences was when he suspended a meeting of the Federation Chamber (then known as Main Committee) after the opposition's Wayne Swan 'persisted in disorderly behaviour by continuing to interject after being called to order' (H.R. Deb. 8.2.2001, 24233–34), and subsequently reported the matter to the Speaker so that Swan could be named.

Nehl continued to take a public stance on issues about which he felt strongly. He supported the Northern Territory government's legalisation of euthanasia; despite his personal opposition, he could not concur with 'federal intervention in the lawful activities of a democratic government, a democratic parliamentary assembly of this nation' (H.R. Deb. 5.12.1996, 7934). In 2000 he was dismayed by the implications of the goods and services tax for rent charged to long-term residents of caravan parks, declaring that his integrity was at stake because of a promise the Nationals had made at the previous election.

When Nehl retired from parliament in September 2001, Prime Minister John Howard, in thanking him for his service as Deputy Speaker, affirmed that 'he has one of the loudest voices that I have encountered in the national parliament in twenty-seven years … a crowd stopper when there is a really noisy House' (H.R. Deb. 27.9.2001, 31674). In 2005 the genial Nehl was appointed AM for his services to parliament and his community. He was a member of the Coffs Harbour South-East Asian and Vietnam Veterans' Association and co-chaired a 2005 review of medal entitlements for Australians who served in Korea after the 1953 armistice. He retained his longstanding interest in upgrading the Pacific Highway, and became a board member of the Royal Freemasons Benevolent Institution that operates aged-care and nursing homes, a patron of the North Coast Cricket Council, and president of the board of the Coffs Harbour Regional Conservatorium. In extolling the virtues of democracy, he once declared that he would be happy if his epitaph were to read simply that 'he was a parliamentarian' (H.R. Deb. 5.12.1996, 7933).

Select bibliography

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 19 March 1985, 513–16

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 30 April 1996, 19–24

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 5 December 1996, 7932–34

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 13 December 1996, 8628

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 26 June 1997, 6607

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 8 February 2001, 24233–36

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 17 September 2001, 30799

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 27 September 2001, 31674–75

Canberra Times. 'New State "National Asset"'. 16 February 1967, 13

Ellis, Ulrich. *A Pen in Politics*. Charnwood, ACT: Ginninderra Press, 2007

The House Magazine (Canberra). 'Profile'. 11 September 1985, 3

Nehl, Garry. Interview by Greg McIntosh, 25 May 1989. Museum of Australian Democracy Oral History collection. Copy held on file

Robinson, Cynthia. 'Seventh State: The Billion-Dollar Question'. *Australian Women's Weekly* (Sydney), 19 April 1967, 2–3

Warden, Ian. 'Labor's Carnival is Over'. *Canberra Times*, 23 March 1988, 16

Parkes, Ernest William: Clerk 1927–1937

Derek Drinkwater

Ernest William Parkes (1873–1941), fifth Clerk of the House of Representatives, was born on 23 March 1873 at Melbourne, eldest of four children of William Parkes, bootmaker, and his wife Annie, née Hanison, both Irish born. After a state-school education, Ernest joined the Victorian Government Printing Office in October 1887. He transferred to the Victorian Legislative Council in 1894 and acted as Assistant Reader and Assistant Clerk of the Papers from July 1895 until May 1901, when he became Assistant Reading Clerk in the newly established Commonwealth House of Representatives. On 4 November 1902 at St Paul's Church of England, Goorambat, Victoria, he married Susannah Ellen Hall, from Yarrambat, Victoria. She died in April 1925 and, on 31 March 1928, at St Kilda, Melbourne, he married Eliza 'Tottie' Kate Hall, a widow from Benalla, Victoria.

After almost sixteen years as Assistant Reading Clerk, Parkes had three important promotions within a short period: to Reading Clerk (February 1917), to Clerk of the Papers and Reading Clerk (July 1919), and to Clerk of the Records and Assistant Clerk of Committees (April 1921). In February 1925, he was appointed Serjeant-at-Arms and Clerk of Committees. As Serjeant-at-Arms, he carried the mace while escorting the Duke of York, the future King George VI, from the House of Representatives to the Senate chamber when the Duke opened the provisional Parliament House in Canberra on 9 May 1927.

Following his promotion to Second Clerk Assistant on 1 July that year, Parkes could confidently have seen himself as a strong contender for the post of Clerk of the House of Representatives once a number of his more senior colleagues had retired. However, the prevailing steady process of promotion sped up with tragic and unexpected abruptness during 1927. Two Clerks of the House, Walter Gale and John McGregor, died suddenly, on 27 July and 28 September, respectively. Following Gale's death, Parkes was promoted to Clerk Assistant—effectively Deputy Clerk—replacing McGregor, who had become Clerk. After McGregor died, Parkes succeeded him, on 27 October. In November 1929, the new Speaker, Norman Makin, eschewed
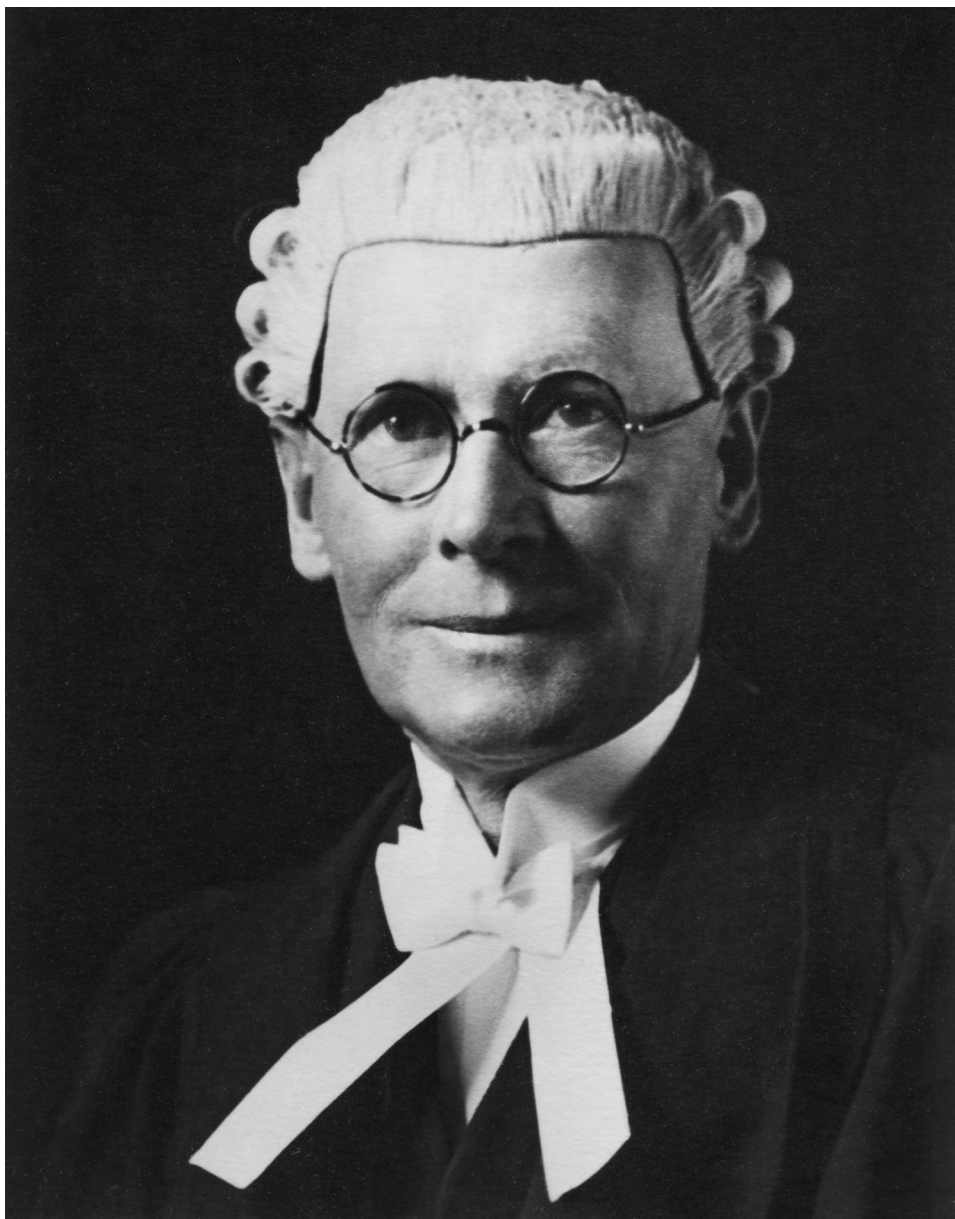
Figure 50: Ernest Parkes.
Source: Department of the House of Representatives.

the wig, gown, and mace, but allowed the more traditionalist Parkes to continue to don formal dress in the chamber (Elder 2018, 210–11). Parliamentary activity and administration during most of his tenure as Clerk reflected the preoccupation of the Scullin and Lyons governments with the consequences of the Depression. This considerably altered parliamentary priorities as these governments concentrated on stabilising public finances, leading, for example, to a marked decline in House of Representatives committee work throughout the 1930s. Senior officials of the parliamentary departments were called on to devise ways of cutting departmental running costs, raising issues of how many such departments could be afforded, and whether presiding officers or the executive should have the main say in decision-making (Reid and Forrest 1989, 413–14).

As early as 1920 the member for Melbourne, William Maloney, described having five separate parliamentary departments as 'the acme of folly' (H.R. Deb. 19.10.1920, 5730). By the early 1930s, the issue of duplication across the departments had become pressing. In August 1932, at the request of the Speaker, George Mackay, and the President of the Senate, (Sir) Walter Kingsmill, the government appointed a Public Service Board inspector, J. T. Pinner, to report on parliamentary administration. Pinner's principal recommendation was for the central provision of services currently delivered separately by each department. He also recommended a wholesale reclassification of positions within the parliamentary departments, which would have seen most salaries plummet.

However, it was Pinner's further suggestions that proved most unacceptable. He raised the possible merger of the parliamentary departments into one unit under a single permanent head bearing the title Clerk of Parliaments, responsible to both the Speaker and the President. Existing heads of parliamentary departments, including Parkes were he to remain Clerk, would answer to this new figure. These proposals were contrary to well-established traditions of parliamentary administration. The new President of the Senate, Patrick Lynch, insisted that Pinner did not possess the requisite 'knowledge of parliamentary procedure' (S. Deb. 23.6.1933, 2573), while Mackay added that savings called for by Pinner 'could be made only by restricting facilities at present available to honorable members' (H.R. Deb. 10.11.1933, 4414). Kingsmill added that Pinner did not appreciate the difference between public servants and parliamentary officers. Some parliamentarians were critical of the presiding officers for permitting the inquiry at all. As Gordon Reid and Martyn Forrest later argued, although Mackay and both Senate Presidents accepted 'that the Executive had a right to influence the form and the practices of parliamentary administration', they resisted whenever—as with Pinner's prescriptions—'the Executive sought control of the day-to-day workings of the parliamentary staff' (1989, 414).

Parkes's preparedness to act decisively to ensure the smooth functioning of the House was most visible during the election of (Sir) George Bell to the Speakership in October 1934. This was delayed by a filibuster by Joseph Gander, who nominated himself as Speaker. His hour-long speech and the refusal of the tellers for the 'no's to act when the House finally voted prompted Parkes as acting chairman to resolve the impasse by declaring the motion decided in favour of the 'ayes'. As Makin later observed, although there was 'a little fuss' over the way Parkes had dealt with the situation, almost all members thought he had acted 'correctly' (c. 1962).

In 1935 Parkes was appointed CMG. He retired on 22 March 1937. He was highly respected by the Speakers and other members whom he had served and by his fellow parliamentary officers at home and abroad. The acting prime minister, (Sir) Earle Page, referred to 'the extraordinary kindness and capacity' (H.R. Deb. 17.6.1937, 22) he had displayed as Clerk. The leader of the opposition, John Curtin, thought him 'a most assiduous and courteous officer' (H.R. Deb. 17.6.1937, 22). The Society of Clerks-at-the-Table in Empire Parliaments, of which Parkes had become a foundation member in 1927, described him as an official held in 'the greatest esteem' for his 'ability' and 'quiet manner' (1936).

Parkes in retirement pursued his favoured recreation of lawn bowls. He was a 'staunch churchman' (*Canberra Times* 1950, 4), with a close interest in the Anglican Men's Movement, and well known throughout Canberra as a lay preacher. Predeceased by his second wife, he died on 20 April 1941 at Canberra and was interred privately at the Canberra cemetery. He was survived by two stepchildren and two sons of his first marriage, the youngest of whom, Norman James Parkes, would also become Clerk of the House of Representatives (1971–76). His eldest son, William Ernest, worked as a gardener at Parliament House for many years. In December 1950, a memorial tablet was unveiled at St John's Church, Reid, honouring his service to the city.

Select bibliography

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 19 October 1920, 5729–30

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 10 November 1933, 4413–17

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 23 October 1934, 18–32

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 17 June 1937, 22

Australia. Senate. *Parliamentary Debates*, 23 June 1933, 2571–74

Australia. Senate. *Parliamentary Debates*, 27 June 1933, 2624–39

Body, A. H. *Firm Still You Stand: The Anglican Church of St John the Baptist, Canberra, Its Parish and Parishioners 1841–1984.* Canberra: St John's Parish Council, 1986

Canberra Times. 'Long Service'. 3 July 1935, 3

Canberra Times. 'Memorial Tablet to Mr E. W. Parkes'. 15 December 1950, 4

Canberra Times. 'Tradition Kept in a Family'. 15 May 1997, 14

Elder, David, ed. *House of Representatives Practice: Seventh Edition.* Canberra: Department of the House of Representatives, 2018

Journal of the Society of Clerks-at-the-Table in Empire Parliaments. 'Editorial'. 3 (1934): 31–32

Journal of the Society of Clerks-at-the-Table in Empire Parliaments. 'Editorial'. 5 (1936): 10

Journal of the Society of Clerks-at-the-Table in Empire Parliaments. 'Editorial'. 11 (1942): 10

Makin, Norman. 'The Honourable Sir George John Bell KCMG Speaker 1934–1940', c. 1962. Papers of Norman Makin, MS 4663. National Library of Australia

Parkes, E. W. 'Precedents and Unusual Points of Procedure in the Australian House of Representatives During 1935'. *Journal of the Society of Clerks-at-the-Table in Empire Parliaments* 4 (1935): 54–56

Reid, G. S., and Martyn Forrest. *Australia's Commonwealth Parliament 1901–1988: Ten Perspectives.* Carlton, Vic.: Melbourne University Press, 1989

Parkes, Norman James: Clerk 1971–1976

Derek Drinkwater

Norman James Parkes (1912–91), ninth Clerk of the House of Representatives, was born on 29 July 1912 at North Carlton, Melbourne, youngest of two sons of Melbourne-born Ernest William Parkes, fifth Clerk of the House of Representatives (1927–37), and his first wife, Susannah Ellen, née Hall, from Yarrambat, Victoria. After attending state schools, in March 1936 Norman joined the Department of the Parliamentary Reporting Staff in the Commonwealth parliament as a clerk and typist. In June 1937, he transferred to the Department of the House of Representatives as Accounts Clerk and Reading Clerk. Department numbers were small and the principle of promotion by seniority was sacrosanct; Parkes would later observe wryly that it was only his father's retirement from the top job as Clerk that enabled him to apply for a position at the bottom. On 22 May 1937 at St Hilary's Church of England, Kew, Melbourne, he married Maida Cleave Silk of Tumbarumba, New South Wales.

Parkes was promoted to the post of Clerk of the Papers and Accountant in January 1939. During World War II, he served part-time as a private in the 21st Battalion Volunteer Defence Corps. In January 1946, he was appointed Clerk of the Records and Assistant Clerk of Committees—a position he held until his promotion to Serjeant-at-Arms and Clerk of Committees in December 1949. As Serjeant-at-Arms, he carried the mace while escorting Queen Elizabeth II between the House of Representatives and the Senate chamber when she opened the third session of the twentieth parliament on 15 February 1954—the first such opening by a reigning sovereign in Australian history. His father had performed the same function at the opening of the provisional Parliament House in Canberra on 9 May 1927 by the Queen's father, the Duke of York, later King George VI. Parkes was promoted to Third Clerk Assistant (July 1954), Second Clerk Assistant (June 1955), and Clerk Assistant (January 1959, redesignated Deputy Clerk in 1964).

January 1968 saw the first Conference of Australian Presiding Officers and Clerks-at-the-Table, organised by the Commonwealth parliament and held in Canberra, with attendance by the presiding officers and Clerks of the six state parliaments and
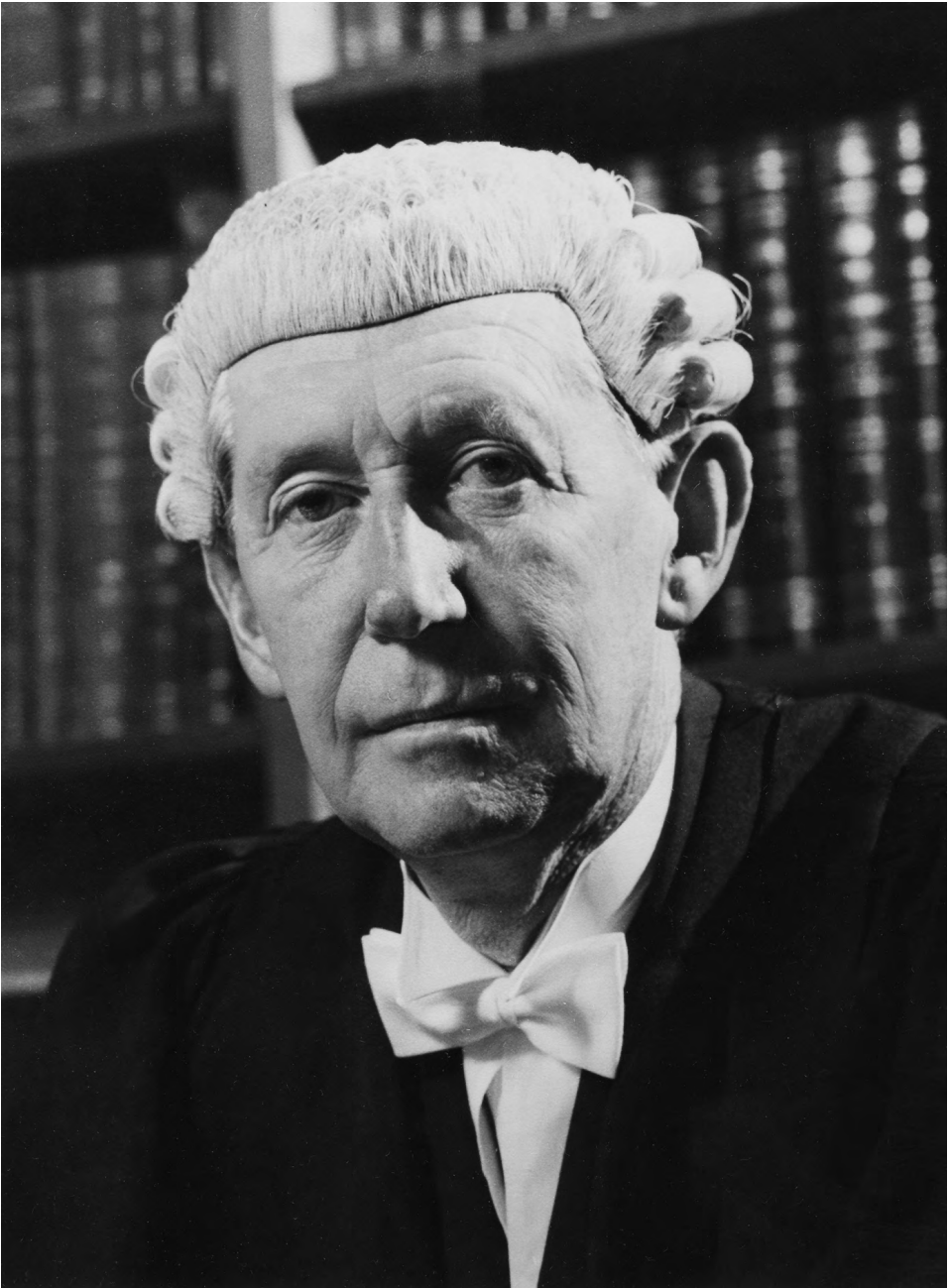
Figure 51: Norman Parkes.

Source: Department of the House of Representatives.

the Territorial legislatures of the Northern Territory and of Papua and New Guinea. Parkes wrote that the Clerks 'had a field day' (1968, 146) discussing instructions to a committee of the whole House.

In February 1971, the future Labor Party leader W. G. (Bill) Hayden, in calling for the abolition of imperial honours, nonetheless identified two officers of the House who deserved knighthoods for their service to Australia: the Clerk of the House, (Sir) Alan Turner, and his deputy, Parkes. Parkes was never knighted, but he did succeed Turner as Clerk of the House on 11 December 1971. As Clerk, he served as Honorary Secretary of the Commonwealth of Australia Branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association. He was also a member of the steering committee for the first, second, and third Australasian Parliamentary Seminars—a significant Commonwealth of Australia Branch initiative undertaken in South-East Asia.

Parkes's tenure as Clerk was marked by three events unique in House of Representatives history. In August 1974, the Senate and the House of Representatives sat jointly for the first time since Federation. Two months earlier, six bills previously rejected by the Senate that had been triggers for the double-dissolution election of 18 May 1974 were again passed by the House of Representatives but rejected in the Senate. The necessary constitutional conditions having thus been satisfied, the governor-general, on the government's advice, convened a joint sitting scheduled to commence in the House of Representatives on 6 August 1974. Parkes and his counterpart from the Senate, J. R. Odgers, worked closely with the Speaker, James Cope, in working out the necessary procedures. Just days before the scheduled sitting, its validity was challenged unsuccessfully before the High Court by the President of the Senate, Sir Magnus Cormack, and Senator James Webster. Among those who received writs of summons to appear before the court were the Speaker and Parkes. In the event, neither attended and the challenge was dismissed. All six proposed laws were subsequently passed by an absolute majority of senators and members.

The second event was the sudden resignation of the Speaker. On 27 February 1975, most government members, including the prime minister, declined to support Cope after he named the minister for labour and immigration, Clyde Cameron. Cope saw this as a vote of no confidence and it led to his immediately announcing his intention to tender his resignation to the governor-general. It was left to Parkes to formally announce to the House later that day that the administrator, standing in for the absent governor-general, had accepted Cope's resignation, and then to preside over the vote that led to Gordon Scholes becoming the new Speaker.

The third event occurred on 11 November 1975 following the governor-general's dismissal of Prime Minister Gough Whitlam and his ministry and the appointment of a caretaker government under the leadership of the former opposition leader Malcolm Fraser. Scholes, with support from Parkes, presided over the tumultuous session that followed, during which the Fraser caretaker government did not have a

majority on the floor of the House and was defeated on several procedural motions and a resolution of want of confidence in the prime minister. Later that day, the Clerk stood immediately behind Whitlam as the former prime minister spoke from the steps of the parliament building, followed by the formal announcement of the dissolution of parliament by the governor-general's official secretary, (Sir) David Smith. These three events, along with the Whitlam government's ambitious legislative program, made for, in the words of John (Jack) Pettifer, Parkes's successor, 'a time of great testing', with the Clerk's performance earning him 'trust, respect and admiration' (Pettifer 1991).

Appointed OBE in 1961 and CBE in 1976, Parkes retired as Clerk of the House on 31 December 1976. Not only was it unique in Commonwealth parliamentary history for a father and son to have served as Clerks of a house of the parliament but, as Prime Minister Fraser pointed out, few families had served the parliament and the people of Australia for so long—a total of seventy-five unbroken years. Whitlam, who had known Parkes for more than forty years, described him as 'a man of experience, distinction and honour' (H.R. Deb. 9.12.1976, 3580).

Along with Pettifer, Parkes in retirement supported the demolition of the old parliament building on aesthetic grounds. He had been an accomplished cricketer; a champion lawn bowler at club, district, and state levels; and a talented table tennis player who once played an exhibition match in Canberra's Albert Hall against the then world champion, Miklos Szabados. Parkes died on 29 January 1991 at Canberra; his wife and two sons survived him. The serving Clerk of the House, Alan Browning, observed that he would be remembered for his 'outstanding knowledge of parliamentary law, practice and procedure, for his warm and friendly personality and above all, for his humanity and humility' (*Canberra Times* 1991). Cope recalled the 'splendid advice, assistance and cooperation' (H.R. Deb. 12.2.1991, 315) he had received from Parkes and the enduring friendship that had developed between them. Pettifer called him 'a man who had in his make-up all the emotion and sentiment of a true "servant of the House"' (Pettifer 1991, 11).

Select bibliography

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 18 February 1971, 349–51

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 27 February 1975, 824–35

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 9 December 1976, 3579–83

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 12 February 1991, 315

Canberra Times. 'In His Father's Footsteps'. 18 February 1972, 1

Canberra Times. 'Adviser to Parliament Was a Man of Humility'. 1 February 1991, 14

Canberra Times. 'Tradition Kept in Family'. 15 May 1997, 14

Parkes, N. J. 'First Conference of Australian Presiding Officers and Clerks at the Table'. *The Parliamentarian (Journal of the Parliaments of the Commonwealth)* 49, no. 3 (July 1968): 144–47

Pettifer, J. A. 'Norman Parkes'. *The Table (Journal of the Society of Clerks-at-the-Table in Commonwealth Parliaments)* 59 (1991): 10–11

The Table (Journal of the Society of Clerks-at-the-Table in Commonwealth Parliaments). 45 (1977): 8–9

Pettifer, John Athol (Jack): Clerk 1977–1982

Stephen Holt

John Athol (Jack) Pettifer (1919–2014), tenth Clerk of the House of Representatives, was born at North Fitzroy, Melbourne, on 16 July 1919, second child and only son of Thomas Joseph Pettifer, parliamentary messenger, and his wife, Annie, née Darroch. The family connection with the Commonwealth parliament dated back to its first sitting in Melbourne in 1901, when Tom started work there as a lift attendant. The family left Melbourne early in 1927 in the lead-up to the parliament's move to Canberra, and initially lived at Ainslie. They were present at the opening of the new parliament building on 9 May 1927. In 1930 Jack became boys' captain at Ainslie Primary School before going on to Telopea Park High School, where in 1931 his attendance overlapped with that of Gough Whitlam.

In 1933 Tom Pettifer was appointed housekeeper of Parliament House, and the family moved into a flat located on the Senate side of the building. Their son had a room to himself down the corridor and later recalled roller skating in the corridors, setting up a punching ball platform in the basement under the Senate chamber, and sunbaking on the roof. Ready access to the Parliament House tennis court sealed an enduring love of the sport.

At the age of fourteen, after completing the Intermediate Certificate, Pettifer left school to become a messenger in the Prime Minister's Department. On 19 April 1939, he joined the staff of the House of Representatives as an accounts and reading clerk—still living in the parliament building. He picked up typing skills at night classes and studied accountancy by correspondence, later graduating from Canberra University College (BCom, 1954).

In June 1941, Pettifer, already a reservist, enlisted in the Royal Australian Air Force and participated in the Empire Air Training Scheme in Canada and the Bahamas. Graduating as a pilot officer in March 1942 and becoming a flight lieutenant in 1944, he served with 86 Squadron Royal Air Force based at Tain, Scotland, as a Coastal Command pilot flying Liberator bombers to hunt U-boats. Returning to
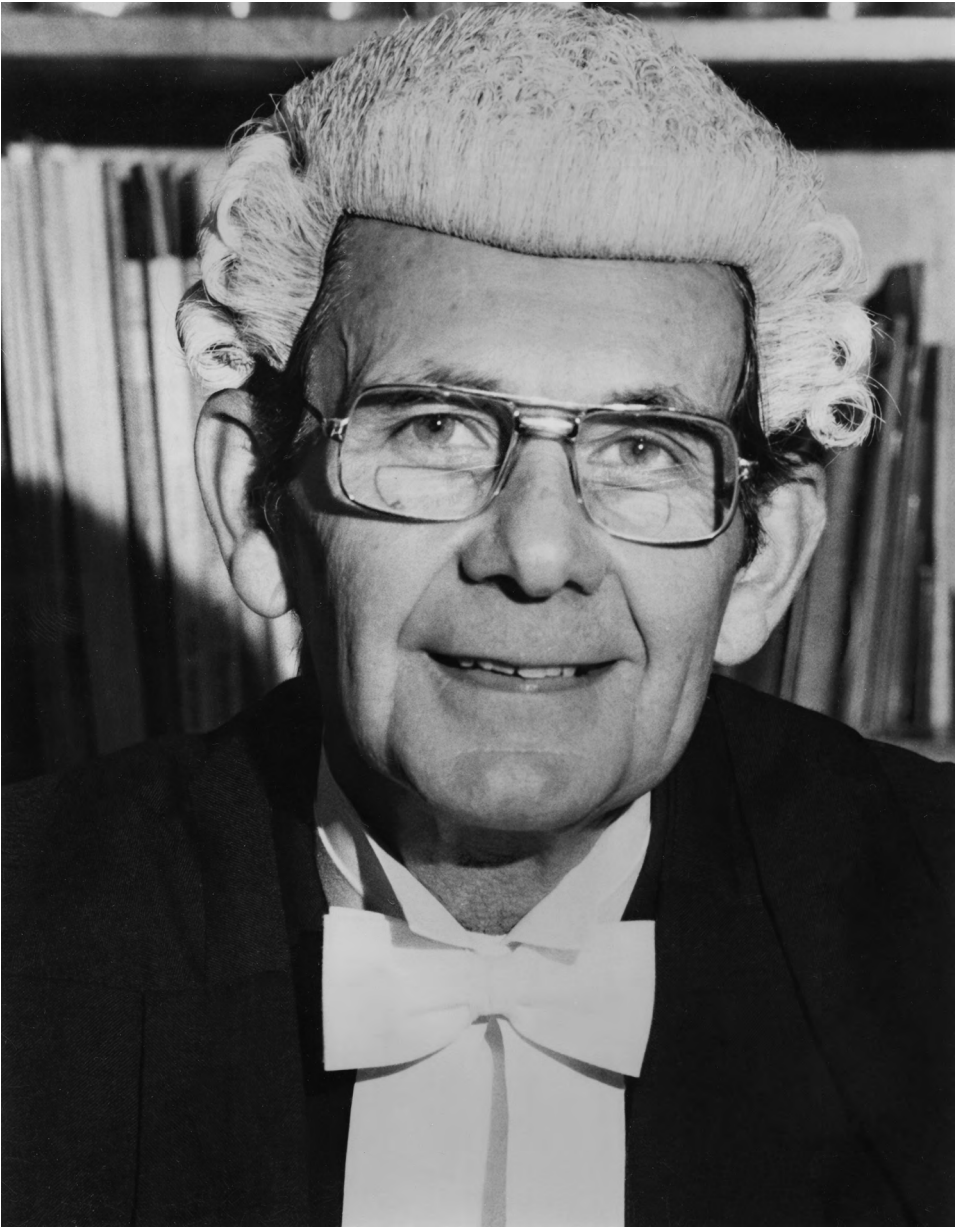
Figure 52: Jack Pettifer.
Source: Department of the House of Representatives.

Australia in October 1945, he was discharged in December and rejoined the staff of the House of Representatives. On 21 December 1946 at Canberra Baptist Church, he married Ruth Wilson, who he had met when she was a ground wireless operator at Tain. They at first lived at Narrabundah and then Red Hill, going on to have four daughters and a son.

Pettifer was promoted to Clerk of the Records and Assistant Clerk of Committees in January 1950. On 1 July that year, he became Serjeant-at-Arms and Clerk of Committees. A year later he was involved in the historic privilege case involving Raymond Fitzpatrick and Frank Browne. Both men were alleged to have published a false report in the *Bankstown Observer* concerning the member for Reid, Charles Morgan, seriously breaching parliamentary privilege. As secretary to the Privileges Committee, Pettifer was responsible for documentation relating to the case, including the transcript of evidence. His role as custodian of such sensitive material inspired a newspaper article from the reporter Alan Reid depicting him as a latter-day Guy Fawkes. The confidential transcript that he was looking after was, apparently, 'almost as lethal' (Reid 1955, 4) as the explosives hidden in the Houses of Parliament in London in 1605.

As Serjeant-at-Arms, Pettifer was the public face of the House's dignity during the case. On 10 June 1955, wearing knee britches, buckled shoes, and a jabot, and bearing the parliamentary mace over his right shoulder, he ushered Fitzpatrick and Browne into and out of the chamber as their penalty, a three-month jail sentence, was determined. On 18 July 1955, Pettifer accompanied the men when they were transferred by Commonwealth vehicle from Canberra police station to Goulburn gaol. The hour-long trip was unexpectedly relaxed, other than Pettifer noticing that Fitzpatrick had brought along an axe—his favoured means of keeping fit. Two days after Fitzpatrick and Browne's sentence expired on 10 September, Pettifer was promoted to Third Clerk Assistant. His next promotions occurred in 1959, to Second Clerk Assistant, and in 1964 to Clerk Assistant. From 1966 to 1969, he was Secretary to the Joint Select Committee on the New and Permanent Parliament House. This committee did much of the preliminary conceptual work for the eventual construction of the new building.

On 26 August 1971, the House had to adjourn because it lacked a quorum—the first time an adjournment had been triggered in this way in fifty-one years. The incident prompted a front-page article in the following morning's *Daily Telegraph* by Reid, who asserted that the House had 'ignominiously collapsed' (1971, 1). He claimed that there was no quorum because some members had left the chamber after the quorum was called and that others did not come in when summoned. Reid was referred to the Privileges Committee for alleged contempt of the House by producing a false report of proceedings that reflected adversely on the presiding officer. The committee took evidence from witnesses including Pettifer, who was one of the

Clerks officiating in the chamber at the time. He told the committee that he had no recollection of any member leaving any part of the chamber when the quorum was called. Under questioning, he indicated that his attention was focused on counting the members actually present in the chamber (NAA A12097, 8).

Pettifer's evidence encapsulated the difficulty the committee faced in determining the validity or otherwise of Reid's assertions. Committee members held a series of contested votes before deciding through the casting vote of the chairman, Nigel Drury, that the article constituted a contempt of the House and that an apology should be demanded. In the small hours of 9 December, the House voted on party lines to agree to the committee's findings but to not impose a penalty. That same month, Pettifer was promoted to Deputy Clerk.

In July 1973, Pettifer told the Parliamentary Joint Committee on the Broadcast of Parliamentary Proceedings that the Australian Broadcasting Commission should televise parliament (but not parliamentary committees). Consideration of this innovation was overtaken during 1975 by the unprecedented crisis of the Senate's failure to pass the Whitlam government's supply bills. On the afternoon of 11 November, Pettifer was on duty as the drama reached its climax. When the House resumed after lunch, he was stunned by a whispered message from the Clerk of the House, Norman Parkes, that the governor-general, Sir John Kerr, had dismissed the Whitlam government and sworn in Malcolm Fraser as caretaker prime minister. For the next two and a half hours, Pettifer went about his professional duties in a highly charged atmosphere as motions of adjournment and lack of confidence were debated and voted on amid constant interjections. A year later, in the London-based journal of the Society of Clerks-at-the-Table in Commonwealth Parliaments, Pettifer recalled these events as 'startling and dismaying' (Pettifer 1976, 29). He considered the need to amend Australia's Constitution to avoid another such crisis as 'urgent and vital' (Pettifer 1976, 36).

On 9 December 1976, Pettifer was selected as Clerk of the House of Representatives in succession to Parkes, effective from 1 January 1977. The appointment came at a fortunate time. During his entire period as Clerk, the Speaker was Sir Billy Snedden, who was keen to make the House less subservient to the executive. In April 1979, the Department of the House of Representatives issued its first annual report. Snedden also authorised Pettifer to prepare discussion papers on ways to reform the operations of parliament. The opening paper focused on developing a more effective committee system to improve the scrutiny of legislation and government operations by members of the House. Party discipline had 'overwhelmed the Westminster system' (Pettifer 1979, 2) and made imposition of the executive's policies on the House now largely a formality. It was time, he suggested, for the House of Representatives to emulate the Senate's system of permanent standing committees, beginning with the establishment of estimates committees and leading up to the creation of some eight standing

committees to cover the full range of government activity. A second discussion paper, in 1980, returned to the issue of televising parliament. He suggested that the success of this in Canada 'must cause very serious consideration to be given to the possibility of televising the proceedings of the House of Representatives' (Pettifer 1980, 26).

Pettifer had resolved, with Snedden's support, to make his own direct contribution to the better functioning of the House. The Senate had had its own definitive reference guide since 1953, *Australian Senate Practice*. To match this, Pettifer led a new Procedure Office within the Department of the House of Representatives that was charged with producing a publication comparable with Erskine May's *Parliamentary Practice*, which was used in the United Kingdom. Information concerning rulings, matters of precedent, procedures, and historical data had long been kept on an array of loose cards, files, and other miscellaneous House records. Amid this work to impose order and clarify House practice, Pettifer was in 1980 appointed CBE. The following year, the inaugural edition of *House of Representatives Practice* appeared. It and successive editions provide an invaluable reference guide, detailing the evolution of the House since Federation.

On 6 May 1982, Snedden informed the House of the Clerk's impending retirement during the winter recess when he turned sixty-three. A resolution expressing the House's appreciation of Pettifer's long and meritorious service was carried unanimously. Prime Minister Fraser described him as 'a great servant of this House and, through it, of Australia' (H.R. Deb. 6.5.1982, 2343), while the leader of the opposition, Bill Hayden, noted that Pettifer was one of a long line of parliamentary officers 'unremittingly dedicated to making the democratic parliamentary institution work' (H.R. Deb. 6.5.1982, 2344).

The dismissal of the Whitlam government continued to occupy Pettifer. In an interview published immediately after his retirement, he repeated his view that the events of 1975 highlighted the need for a constitutional amendment to address the Senate's ability to reject appropriation and supply bills passed by the House (Mannix 15 July 1982, 7). His previous involvement with privileges cases also concerned him. A month after retiring, he appeared before the Joint Select Committee on Parliamentary Privilege. His submission, which he characterised as 'a bit heretical' (Mannix 4 August 1982, 9), contended that power to punish anyone who breached parliamentary privilege should be ceded to the courts.

Despite his personal connection stretching back to 1927, Pettifer in retirement was not sentimental about the existing parliament building. He publicly endorsed the view that it should be demolished after members moved to their new site on Capital Hill. Retention was expensive and the old parliament would be 'a horrible blot in the path of the beautiful sweep of the land axis' (Pettifer 1983, 18) that Walter Burley Griffin intended. An active Christian, Pettifer served as treasurer and a deacon at the

Canberra Baptist Church for twenty-four years until 1994. In 2001 he was awarded a Centenary Medal for his work on *House of Representatives Practice*. Predeceased by his wife in 1985, he remained in his own home until his death on 20 January 2014.

Pettifer was smallish in stature, utterly discreet, and known for his humility. Amid the hurly-burly of parliamentary life, the clarity and depth of his knowledge of the lore and customs of the House meant there was never any question of his being discounted or becoming flustered. Patience and consideration for others characterised his personal life as well as prevailing throughout his professional career.

Select bibliography

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 6 May 1982, 2341–46

Canberra Times. 'The Schools'. 26 March 1930, 3

Canberra Times. 'Browne, Fitzpatrick Moved to Goulburn'. 19 July 1955, 1

Canberra Times. 'Parliament Could Become Television's Vaudeville'. 27 July 1973, 3

Canberra Times. 'Westminster System "Overwhelmed"'. 17 August 1979, 7

Canberra Times. 'Clerk of the House to Retire'. 7 May 1982, 3

Davidson, Gae. 'Murmurings from inside Both Chambers on Parliamentary Reform'. *Canberra Times*, 17 April 1979, 2

Department of the House of Representatives Alumni Newsletter (Canberra). 'Reminiscences of Former Clerk Jack Pettifer'. October 2008, 2

Inglis, Ken. 'What Now for the Old Parliament House?' *Canberra Times*, 15 February 1984, 21

Malone, Paul. 'Views Differ on Use of Old Parliament House'. *Canberra Times*, 15 February 1984, 7

Mannix, Teresa. '75 Years Up and the Two Clerks Retire'. *Canberra Times*, 15 July 1982, 7

Mannix, Teresa. 'Privilege Cases "Better Handled by Courts"'. *Canberra Times*, 4 August 1982, 9

National Archives of Australia. A12097, 8, Article in *Daily Telegraph*—Friday, 27 August 1971—Mr J A Pettifer, Clerk Assistant, House of Representatives

National Archives of Australia. A12372, R/215100/H, Pettifer John Athol

Pearce, D. C. 'The Privileges Committee of the Australian Parliament'. *Federal Law Review* 6, no. 2 (1975): 269–85

Pettifer, J. A. 'Dismissal of a Prime Minister'. *The Table (Journal of the Society of Clerks-at-the-Table in Commonwealth Parliaments)* 44 (1976): 29–39

Pettifer, J. A. 'Development of a Committee System: Discussion paper prepared by the Clerk of the House of Representatives'. Canberra: House of Representatives, August 1979

Pettifer, J. A. 'Televising of Proceedings in the House of Representatives'. *Parliamentarian* (London) (1980): 24–28

Pettifer, J. A. 'Future of Old Parliament House'. *Canberra Times*, 15 December 1983, 18

Pettifer, J. A. 'His Life—As He Remembers It'. Unpublished manuscript

Pettifer, Ken. 'Clerk of House Admired by All'. *Canberra Times*, 21 February 2014, 10

Pettifer, Ken. 'Eulogy for Dad'. Unpublished manuscript, 2014

Reid, Alan. 'Dynamite in Cold Storage'. *Argus* (Melbourne), 13 June 1955, 4

Reid Alan. 'House of Reps. Is "Counted Out"'. *Daily Telegraph* (Sydney), 27 August 1971, 1

Poynton, Alexander (Alec): Chairman of Committees 1910–1913

John Hawkins and Rob Van Den Hoorn

Alexander Poynton (1853–1935), trade unionist, stock and station agent, and Chairman of Committees of the House of Representatives, was born on 8 August 1853 at Castlemaine, Victoria, eldest son of the fourteen children of Alexander Poynton, a miner and farmer from Liverpool, England, and his Irish wife, Rosanna, née McFadden. Alec's father took some part in the Eureka rebellion at Ballarat, one of his brothers served as lord mayor of Perth (1934–37), and a nephew, Sir Alexander George Wales, was lord mayor of Melbourne (1934–37). His formal education ended at the age of fourteen when his father was crippled in a mining accident. On 15 July 1880, he married seventeen-year-old Harriet Brown at the Free Church of England, Ballarat, with whom he was to have eight children.

Poynton's youthful experience of working on his father's farm but then making way for some of his brothers fostered a lasting interest in issues of land availability. Subsequently working as a miner, shearer, and station hand, his involvement in labour disputes helped to also implant a strong commitment to unionism. He became president of the Creswick branch of the Amalgamated Miners' Association, and in 1887 moved to Port Augusta, South Australia, as a union organiser, serving as branch secretary and treasurer of the Amalgamated Shearers' Union, and as treasurer of the Australian Workers' Union (1887–94). In 1890 he stood unsuccessfully for the South Australian House of Assembly seat of Newcastle. Three years later, campaigning on local issues such as irrigation, a land tax that exempted farmers, the extension of pastoral settlement, and a poll tax on camels, he won the adjoining state seat of Flinders as an independent Labor candidate. Although an independent, he attended caucus meetings of the United Labor Party but was not bound by its decisions. While an early supporter of Premier Charles Kingston, he was one of four members who, in November 1899, crossed the floor to bring down the Kingston government, citing the premier's overbearing nature and tardiness in implementing land reforms—an act

Figure 53: Alec Poynton.
Source: National Library of Australia, PIC/6459/26 LOC B21, T. Humphrey & Co. Melbourne.

for which he was expelled from the Australian Workers' Union. Poynton then became commissioner for Crown lands under Premier Vaiben Solomon, but this government lasted just eight days.

In 1901 Poynton stood for the conservative Australasian National League in the first election for the House of Representatives. He won the seventh and last place in the multi-member electorate that covered all of South Australia, aided by support from both free-traders and elements of the labour movement. In 1903 he was unopposed for the new single-member electorate of Grey, which he held at the next six elections, being unopposed again in 1906 and 1910. Grey was reputedly the largest electorate in the world, as, until 1911, it covered not only more than 90 per cent of South Australia but also the entire Northern Territory, which was then under South Australian control. Poynton did not formally join the Labor Party until May 1904. In 1909 he chaired a royal commission on stripper harvesters, which endorsed Justice H. B. Higgins's famous Conciliation and Arbitration Court judgement of two years earlier that set a minimum award wage for unskilled workers.

During his early years in the federal parliament, Poynton became 'a favourite with all parties in the House' (*Punch* 1910, 6). Although habitually mild-mannered, he could on occasion flare into anger, such as over Speakers' rulings he thought unfair. In his first term, he came close to being suspended from the chamber when he was named by the Chairman of Committees, John Chanter, for initially refusing to withdraw his description of a government amendment concerning reimbursement for the governor-general as a 'wretched subterfuge' and 'a dirty job' (H.R. Deb. 1.5.1902, 12234). Poynton was in June 1909 nominated by Speaker Sir Frederick Holder as one of four Temporary Chairmen of Committees. In December that year, Poynton raised in the House his concerns about how the Senate might alter the Northern Territory Acceptance Bill, which provided for the Commonwealth to take over responsibility for the Northern Territory. The Speaker, Carty Salmon, cautioned Poynton that 'under our Standing Orders it is incompetent for an honourable member to allude to any measures pending in another place' (H.R. Deb. 4.12.1909, 6980). Poynton was not deterred, with the result that three days later Senator John Neild of New South Wales appealed to the President of the Senate about 'utterly unparliamentary and unconstitutional events in another place' (S. Deb. 6.12.1909, 7017), with little result.

Poynton became Chairman of Committees following the election in April 1910 of Andrew Fisher's second government. Despite heading the first Labor government to hold a secure majority in the national parliament, Fisher consulted the leader of the opposition, Alfred Deakin, about Poynton's nomination. Poynton's standing among his parliamentary peers was such that he was appointed without a vote in the House, occupying the position from 1 July 1910 until the dissolution of the parliament on 23 April 1913. His performance as Chairman was largely smooth, even if the Melbourne *Punch* thought him 'a little too peaceful' as 'he allows too much

liberty in committee' (1910, 6). He was nonetheless prepared to direct his own prime minister during a debate on Commonwealth–state financial relations to 'confine his remarks strictly to the amendment before the Chair' (H.R. Deb. 20.7.1910, 553). The Fisher government's ambitious legislative agenda made this a stressful time to be presiding over the House. When it began sitting for more than twelve hours each day, Speaker Charles McDonald called on Poynton to take his place for two to three hours daily, 'as long as the present hours of sitting are observed' (H.R. Deb. 9.9.1910, 2924).

In March 1911, Poynton embarked on an overseas tour that took him to Canada, the United States of America, and the United Kingdom, including attendance with Fisher and other Australian parliamentarians at the coronation of King George V. He claimed to have undertaken this trip for the benefit of his health but was a keen observer throughout of local social conditions. His letters to his wife, published the following year, are enlivened by the outrage an old union organiser felt whenever he espied substandard working conditions. In Britain, he concluded that 'the weakness in the United Kingdom is the indifference with which the average Englishman values humanity in East London and other sweated parts of the Kingdom' (Poynton 1912, 58).

The only serious challenge to Poynton as Chairman of Committees occurred in November 1912 when the member for Wentworth, William Kelly, felt that his time for speaking had been cut short by calls for a quorum and objected to Poynton's ruling that this was consistent with standing orders. The debate that followed rambled through the night and was itself interrupted by calls from exhausted members for a quorum before the House finally upheld the ruling. In December 1912, McDonald's illness led to Poynton presiding as Acting Speaker on 20–21 December 1912, the last sitting days of the fourth parliament.

The Fisher government was narrowly defeated at the May 1913 election, and Poynton was replaced as Chairman of Committees with James Fowler. On the backbench, Poynton was generally a sober contributor to debate, but allowed himself the occasional flippancy—notably, an interjection that a member's comparison of Prime Minister Joseph Cook to a porcupine was 'an insult to the porcupine' (H.R. Deb. 11.11.1913, 3025). He was not reappointed as Chairman when Labor returned to office following the September 1914 election—the post instead returning to John Chanter. Poynton strongly supported the stance Prime Minister William Morris Hughes took during World War I supporting conscription, despite the death of one of his sons in the South African War and another in the current war. When the Labor Party split over the issue in November 1916, he joined Hughes's minority National Labor government, serving as treasurer. His main concern during his brief tenure in this senior position was the increasing difficulty of raising large war loans, which attracted little attention from a public and press more interested in the war's

progress and negotiations to form a more viable national government. Once the National Labor and Liberal parties merged in February 1917 to form the Nationalist Party, the treasurer's job reverted to the veteran former treasurer Sir John Forrest. While Poynton was not treasurer for long enough to bring down his own budget, in December 1916 he presented to parliament a comprehensive statement on the government's financial position.

In January 1918, Hughes fulfilled a promise by tendering his resignation as prime minister after the defeat of the second plebiscite on conscription. Poynton was among the senior parliamentarians sounded out by Governor-General Sir Roland Munro Ferguson as a possible replacement, only for Hughes to stay on. Poynton instead became an able and well-prepared minister in a wide range of portfolios: acting minister for the navy (1918–19), honorary minister (1918–20), assistant minister for repatriation (1919), minister for home and territories (1920–21), and postmaster-general (1921–23). He also delivered the 1919 budget on behalf of the ill and exhausted treasurer, William Watt, a future Speaker. In 1920, he was appointed OBE.

After losing his seat at the 1922 election to Labor's Andrew Lacey, Poynton withdrew from public life. For many years, both before and after politics, he was a partner in the stock and station agency Poynton and Claxton. A third son, Alexander junior, died aged forty-seven in 1929. Stocky and red-cheeked, this widely respected parliamentarian died at Toorak Gardens, Adelaide, on 9 January 1935 and was buried at the North Road cemetery in Nailsworth, survived by his wife and their five remaining children.

This article supplements the original Volume 11 ADB *biography, published 1988, authored by Rob Van Den Hoorn. adb.anu.edu.au/biography/poynton-alexander-alec-8093/text14125*

Select bibliography

Advertiser (Adelaide). 'Death of Mr A. Poynton'. 10 January 1935, 9

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 1 May 1902, 12,234

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 4 December 1909, 6980–87

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 1 July 1910, 36

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 20 July 1910, 553

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 9 September 1910, 2924

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 11 November 1913, 3025

Australia. Senate. *Parliamentary Debates*, 6 December 1909, 7017–18

Broadhead, H. S. 'The Australian Federal Labor Party 1900–1905'. MA thesis, University of Melbourne, 1959

Hawkins, John. 'Alexander Poynton: The Caretaker'. *Economic Roundup* (Department of the Treasury), no. 4 (2008): 125–29

Observer (Adelaide). 'Alexander Poynton'. 13 January 1923, 42

Poynton, Alexander. *My Travels Around the World: Letters to My Wife.* Adelaide: Co-operative Printing and Publishing Company of South Australia, 1912

Punch (Melbourne). 'People We Know'. 11 August 1910, 6

Stockley, David. 'The Federal Parliamentary Labor Party 1904–1913: Its Socio-economic Theory and Practice in its Formative Years'. PhD thesis, University of New South Wales, Sydney, 1976

Weller, Patrick, ed. *Caucus Minutes 1901–1949: Minutes of the Meetings of the Federal Parliamentary Labor Party.* Vol. 1, *1901–1917.* Carlton, Vic.: Melbourne University Press, 1975. doi.org/10.2307/27508242

Prowse, John Henry (Jack): Chairman of Committees 1934–1943

Lenore Layman and Betty Carter

John Henry Prowse (1871–1944), insurance agent, farmer, mayor, and Chairman of Committees of the House of Representatives, was born on 16 June 1871 at Adelong, New South Wales, fifth of fourteen children of English-born James Prowse, miner and farmer, and his Irish-born wife, Mary Ann, née Wylie. Jack was educated at Adelong Public School and King's College, Melbourne. On 6 April 1896, he married Victorian-born Edith Jane McNeilance at Clifton Hill, Melbourne; they had two sons and four daughters.

For twenty-five years, Prowse worked with United Insurance Co., managing the Townsville branch from 1889 until he moved to Western Australia as state manager in 1903. Energetic and enterprising, he was soon 'counted as a decisive acquisition to the business life of the community' ('Truthful Thomas' 1905, 25). He served as mayor of Subiaco (1904–05) and of Perth (1913–14), and was re-elected unopposed in 1914. In keeping with his support for the Greater Perth movement to establish metropolitan-wide local governance, during his mayoralty the municipalities of Perth, North Perth, and Leederville merged to form the City of Perth. Insisting that 'clean citizenship came before clean roads' (*Daily News* 1914, 6), he proved an uncontroversial and competent administrator. Even *Truth* newspaper—not a natural sympathiser—acknowledged the diligence of Perth's 'first bloke':

> I'm down on all loquacit-ee
> With verbiage I don't agree
> For biz is biz I say
> And Perth its ways must pay
> In work I do delight,
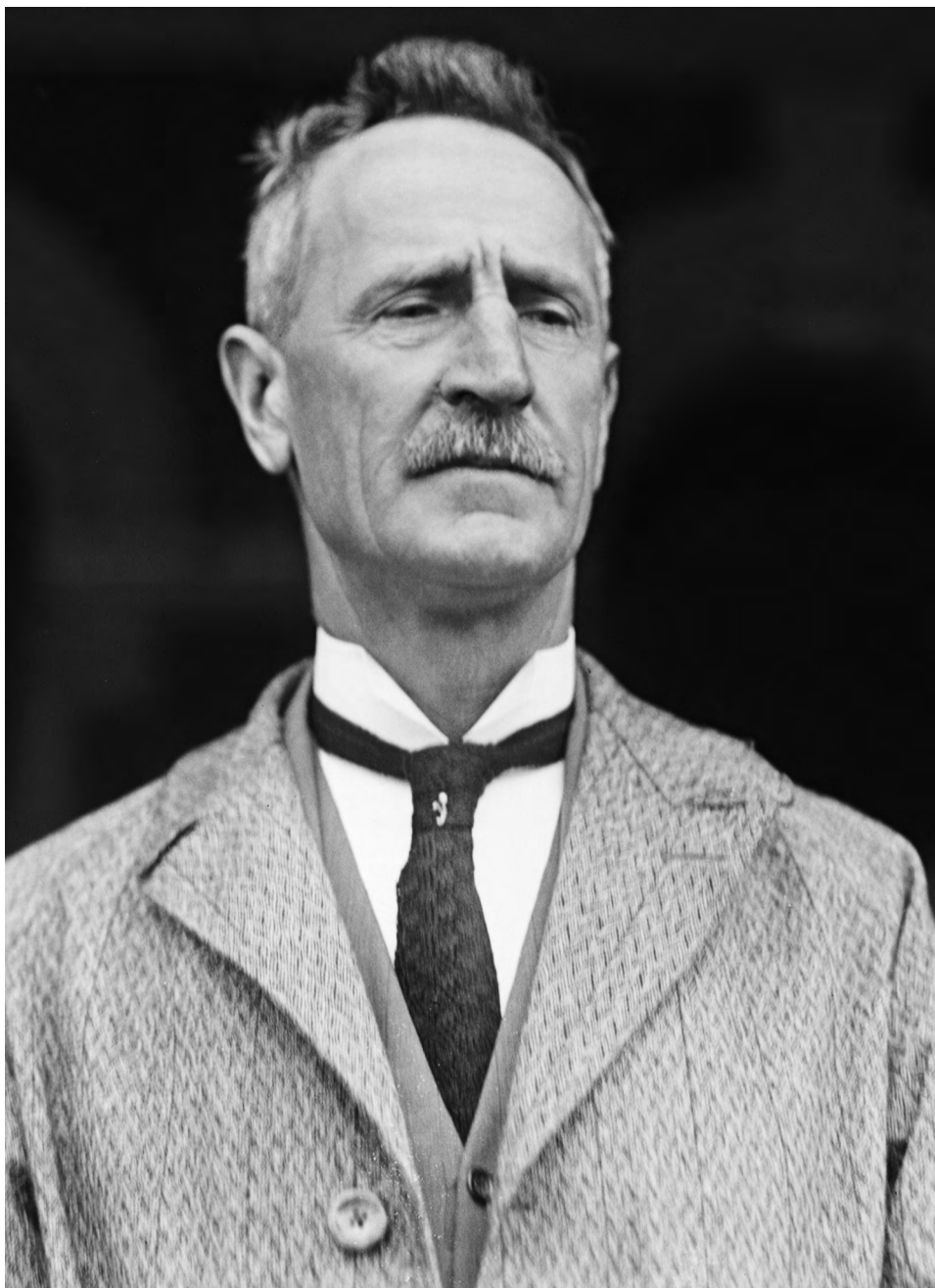> I'm busy day and night. (*Truth* 1914, 1)

Figure 54: Jack Prowse.
Source: *Truth* newspaper collection of photographs, 10028B, State Library of Western Australia, 047927PD.

Prowse was also busy in the early organisation of philanthropic causes in Perth, including the Blind and Deaf and Dumb Institutions, and the Children's Protection Society. He was a grand master of the Grand Orange Lodge, president of the West Australian Temperance Alliance (1905–11), a supporter of local option for liquor licences, and a lay preacher of the Wesleyan Church. An imposing figure, well over six feet (183 cm) tall, he regularly attended church services wearing, regardless of temperature, 'a full suit of black and a silk hat' ('Truthful Thomas' 1905, 25). His interests turned from urban to rural when he and his brother Albert ('Ab') bought Wallatin station north of Doodlakine in the Wheatbelt region in 1910. Sited on salmon gum and gimlet flats, it proved to be a productive wheat farm to which Ab successfully added stud stock. Although the partnership continued until 1940, in 1929 Jack purchased another farm, at Bangadang on the Preston River in the state's south-west near Donnybrook, as his principal residence and sheep stud.

In 1913 Prowse became an executive member of the new Farmers' and Settlers' Association (FSA), and the following year was a foundation director of the rural trading cooperative Westralian Farmers Ltd, which later became Wesfarmers. His administrative experience led to appointment as the first chairman of the Discharged Soldiers' Land Settlement Board, assessing the qualifications of applicants under the terms of the Discharged Soldiers Settlement Act. Authorised by the FSA as a Country Party candidate and helped by recently introduced preferential voting, in 1919 Prowse won the federal seat of Swan, which Labor had won the previous year at a by-election following the death of Sir John Forrest. Prowse insisted at the declaration of the poll that 'the producers of Australia are justly entitled to be heard in the Halls of the Legislature' (*Daily News* 1920). He became an original core member of the Federal Parliamentary Country Party formed in 1920. In August 1922, he roused the vitriol of Prime Minister William Morris Hughes when he joined William Montgomerie Fleming in questioning the propriety of government sugar purchases that Hughes had approved. This clash ended Fleming's parliamentary career at the election of December 1922, but Prowse convincingly won the new division of Forrest and proceeded to hold it on seven occasions—twice unopposed.

Responding to negotiations for a coalition with the Nationalists, Prowse urged the removal of Hughes as prime minister and advocated tariff reductions for primary producers as major conditions for cooperation. He was appointed government whip in the Bruce–Page government that took office in February 1923. The other positions he held early in his long parliamentary career reflected his reputation as a conscientious committee member and capable chairman. He became a member of the Joint Committee of Public Accounts (1920–23, 1925–29), and made clear his determination to serve without fear or favour. His questioning of the impact of the Navigation Act on Australian coastal trade, particularly on outlying states, resulted in his chairing a 1923 select committee and subsequent royal commission on the operation of the Act (H.R. Deb. 12.7.1923, 1045–48).

Prowse also opposed the 1924 Bruce–Page electoral pact, particularly the immunity clause relating to the non-contesting of seats between the two main non-Labor parties. He preferred an arrangement based on 'the silken threads of friendship' to 'tying the Parties up with a hawser' (*Argus* 1924, 9), and resigned as whip in August. This action possibly cost him a place in the ministry left vacant by P. G. Stewart's resignation over the same issue. In opposing the immunity clause and arguing for revenue tariffs rather than protection of industry, Prowse matched the views of his state party. In October 1927, he was appointed as a Temporary Chairman of Committees and, on 23 October 1934, was elected as Chairman—the outcome of a deal between the United Australia Party (UAP) and the Country Party, which days later, under the leadership of Joseph Lyons and (Sir) Earle Page, re-established a conservative coalition government. Prowse's appointment aroused strident opposition from Lang Labor members, who suspected that he was being sidelined as part of a deal with the UAP over tariff policy.

The lingering bitterness of some Labor and Lang Labor members following the split of 1931 and the defection of Lyons made these few years turbulent ones for presiding officers. Just over a year after his appointment, Prowse was the subject of a motion moved by the new leader of the opposition, John Curtin, that he was 'unfit for office' because of 'gross partiality' (H.R. Deb. 27.11.1935, 1927). Curtin alleged that government members were allowed considerable latitude while Prowse's 'argus-eyed capacity to see, and an uncanny ability to hear' (H.R. Deb. 27.11.1935, 1930) were directed at the opposition benches. Lang Labor leader Jack Beasley seconded the motion. Far from confirming press speculation that he would resign, Prowse, who had the benefit of prior warning, responded with a detailed rebuttal, replete with data demonstrating his even-handedness in the calls he had given to members of the various parties to speak in the House. The motion was lost on party lines.

Despite this difficult beginning, opposition anger with Prowse eased, and he was unanimously re-elected Chairman in November 1937. Six months later, UAP members were the ones criticising him, for not voting in support of the government's National Health and Pensions Insurance Bill. He responded that his acceptance of the position of Chairman of Committees did not impose any restrictions on his voting and that his first obligation was to his rural constituents. After a series of stormy sittings, he later conceded that in the chair he had been 'a little too strict' and so aimed for 'a feeling of mutual understanding' and 'not to adhere too precisely to the rules laid down by the Standing Orders' (H.R. Deb. 22.8.1940, 574). Curtin was now prepared to compliment him on his willingness to listen and an ability 'to get bills through the committee stage expeditiously' (H.R. Deb. 22.8.1940, 572).

Both Prowse and Speaker Walter Nairn continued in their positions as presiding officers following the change of government in October 1941, with Prowse explaining that it was a time 'to forget party and fight with a united front' (*Daily News* 1941, 7).

The minority Curtin government relied on them to use their casting votes judiciously and so they helped to provide political stability during a period of national crisis. But both resigned in June 1943 to support an opposition no-confidence motion against the government. Labor's landslide win in the national election two months later ended both men's parliamentary careers. Prowse suffered a swing against him in Forrest of more than 20 per cent.

Retiring to Bangadang, Prowse keenly felt his narrow failure to attain twenty-five years in parliament despite being seventy-two years of age. Nevertheless, he had reason to be pleased with his parliamentary career. Although it was sometimes suggested that he was unlucky not to have attained a ministry—a failure ascribed locally to his continued vocal opposition to protective tariffs—he did achieve recognition in positions that matched his skills as a chairman. Even (Sir) Robert Menzies, with whom the Country Party had difficult relations in these years, appreciated that he was a 'very assiduous member' (H.R. Deb. 17.7.1944, 29).

On 20 May 1944, Prowse died at Donnybrook. He was buried in Karrakatta cemetery, Perth. His first wife had predeceased him on 29 April 1939, but he was survived by his second wife, Tasmanian-born Jean Germaine, née Murdoch, whom he had married at Toorak Presbyterian Church, Melbourne, on 5 April 1941, with Harold Holt in attendance as best man. In a parliamentary tribute, Prime Minister Curtin captured Prowse's essential attributes: 'a most thorough, efficient and business-like manner', 'quick perception and understanding', and, above all, a 'conscientious conception of the duty that he owed to those who elected him to this chamber' (H.R. Deb. 17.7.1944, 28–29).

This article supplements the original Volume 11 ADB *biography, published 1988, authored by Betty Carter. adb.anu.edu.au/biography/prowse-john-henry-jack-8125/text14193*

Select bibliography

Argus (Melbourne). 'Mr Prowse's Statement'. 7 August 1924, 9

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 12 July 1923, 1045–48

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 23 October 1934, 48–55

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 27 November 1935, 1927–45

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 22 August 1940, 572–75

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 17 July 1944, 28–30

Canberra Times. 'Mr J. H. Prowse'. 24 October 1934, 3

Canberra Times. 'UAP Discontent'. 22 June 1938, 1

Daily News (Perth). 'Services Appreciated'. 24 November 1914, 6

Daily News (Perth). 'New Member for Swan'. 2 January 1920, 6

Daily News (Perth). 'Mr Prowse Still Chairman'. 13 October 1941, 7

Great Southern Leader (Pingelly, WA). 'Mr Prowse's Record'. 7 September 1934, 1

Truth (Perth). 'Mayor Prowse'. 31 October 1914, 1

'Truthful Thomas'. *Through the Spy-Glass: Short Sketches of Well-Known Westralians as Others See Them*. Perth: Praagh & Lloyd, 1905

West Australian (Perth). 'Federal Political Pact'. 7 August 1924, 9

West Australian (Perth). 'Mr J. H. Prowse'. 22 May 1944, 2

Riordan, William James (Bill): Chairman of Committees 1943–1946

Stephen Wilks and A. N. Preston

William James Frederick Riordan (1908–1973), Chairman of Committees of the House of Representatives, was born on 8 February 1908 at Chillagoe, Queensland, son of William James Riordan, engine driver, and his wife, Annie Helen, née Page, both Queensland born. Educated at state schools at Chillagoe, Mareeba, and Gordonvale, and at Brisbane Grammar School, young Bill worked in the Department of Justice in Brisbane for seven years before becoming secretary to his father, a former trade union official who was appointed to the Industrial Court of Queensland in 1933.

Growing up in a family with a trade union and political background (his father was a member of the Legislative Council in 1917–22, and his uncle Ernest was to enter the Legislative Assembly in 1936), Riordan became interested in politics at an early age and joined the Australian Labor Party (ALP). On the death of another uncle, David ('Darby') Riordan, in 1936, he interrupted his legal studies at the University of Queensland and won Darby's federal seat of Kennedy at a by-election on 12 December. At the age of twenty-eight, he was the youngest member of the House of Representatives. He was admitted to the Queensland Bar on 22 April 1941, but never practised. On 19 December 1942, at St Mary's Catholic Cathedral, Sydney, he married Kathleen Amelda Garvey (d. 1970), an interior decorator; they were to remain childless.

The electorate of Kennedy covered much of Central and North Queensland. Representing his constituents in this vast area, Riordan faced a daunting task—communications were poor, the roads being mostly gravel or worse, and telephone services proved unreliable—but he received valuable support from the powerful Australian Workers' Union. In the late 1930s, he was concerned about the vulnerability of northern Australia to potentially hostile forces and, from the opposition backbenches, urged the government to take measures to bolster defence.

Figure 55: Bill Riordan.
Source: *Commonwealth Parliamentary Handbook* Tenth Issue, 1945.

Labor gained office under John Curtin in October 1941. Riordan was elected Chairman of Committees on 22 June 1943 in the wake of the unexpected resignations of Walter Nairn as Speaker and John Prowse as Chairman of Committees when the opposition parties, of which they were members, gave notice of an impending motion of no confidence in the Curtin government. Riordan made good use of his remarkable voice, which contemporaries noted 'thunders and reverberates all over the building' (*Cloncurry Advocate* 1943, 1). He presided over some difficult sessions during the later stages of World War II when the House debated legislation to implement the government's postwar program. A future Speaker, Archie Cameron, responded to being suspended after being named by Riordan by describing him as 'rude, uncouth, unfair and incompetent' and said he feared 'that the clerk's eardrums will be pierced by his cries of order' (*Sydney Morning Herald* 1945, 5). When this comment was raised in parliament, Cameron reluctantly agreed to withdraw—'something which I have never done before in the whole of my parliamentary career' (H.R. Deb. 8.5.1945, 1317).

In September 1945 the opposition leader, (Sir) Robert Menzies, moved a no-confidence motion against Riordan as Chairman of Committees, complaining that he 'has developed a practice of delivering … very hasty rulings, frequently thereafter refusing to honorable members the right to discuss them or to submit arguments in relation to them'. He also objected to what he saw as Riordan's 'very abrupt treatment of honorable members, calling them to order and sometimes bringing about disciplinary measures against them in a precipitate manner' (H.R. Deb. 18.9.1945, 5493). Menzies had particularly in mind an incident of a few days earlier when Larry Anthony, the Country Party member for Richmond, was named and suspended during the budget debate; yet he recognised Riordan's personal popularity by adding that 'the honorable member, in his personal capacity, enjoys the goodwill of honorable members, including myself' (H.R. Deb. 18.9.1945, 5493). During the debate that followed, Riordan's main defender was a former Speaker, Norman Makin, who assured members that 'my patience would not have been equal to that of the Chairman of Committees, who is to be commended for his admirable restraint' (H.R. Deb. 18.9.1945, 5499). The motion was defeated along party lines.

Following the election of September 1946, Riordan was appointed minister for the navy in the second Chifley government, and held the portfolio until Labor's defeat at the general election of December 1949. Since postwar defence policy had been broadly settled, his roles as minister were to run his department and implement the re-equipment program, which included the introduction of a fleet air arm. Although he knew little about naval matters, he carefully read the papers submitted to him, effectively represented the navy in cabinet, and made himself available to politicians of all parties who sought his assistance.

Riordan adhered firmly to ALP principles and embraced the socialisation objective the party had adopted in 1921. A member (1941–42) of the Joint Parliamentary Committee on Broadcasting, he had endorsed the minority Labor report that recommended the nationalisation of commercial radio stations. He backed the government's proposal to regulate the marketing of primary products: in 1946 he spoke approvingly of the sugar industry, in which prices and charges for milling and refining were fixed by the government, and workers' wages were determined by arbitration. Legislation introduced in 1947 to nationalise the private banks also received his support.

An electoral redistribution in 1948 led to Riordan's electorate being halved in size, but it still covered much of Central Queensland. He was able to retain his predominantly rural seat by developing and maintaining strong personal ties with working-class families in the sugar, mining, and meat industries, and in the railways. During parliamentary recesses, he travelled constantly throughout his electorate, but the strain taxed his health. He retired from parliament in 1966 on medical advice. In the ensuing by-election, the Country Party won Kennedy.

A tall, well-built man, Riordan liked people and was unfailingly courteous to them. Due to his impaired hearing, he sometimes used his impressive voice even more loudly in public than he intended. For recreation he played golf. In 1967 he was appointed CBE. He died of pneumonia on 15 January 1973 in Princess Alexandra Hospital, Brisbane, and was buried in Nudgee cemetery.

This article supplements the original Volume 16 ADB *biography, published 2002, authored by A. N. Preston. adb.anu.edu.au/biography/riordan-william-james-bill-11530/text20569*

Select bibliography

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 18 June 1937, 80

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 3 May 1938, 713

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 2 June 1942, 1880–84

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 8 May 1945, 1314–18

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 13 September 1945, 5414–18

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 18 September 1945, 5493–502

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 10 April 1946, 1321–23

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 6 November 1947, 1792

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 11 May 1966, 1684, 1687

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 27 February 1973, 18–24

Cairns Post. 'Kennedy By-Election'. 31 October 1936, 6

Cloncurry Advocate. 'Mr Riordan's Appointment'. 29 October 1943, 1

Frame, T. R., V. P. Goldrick and P. D. Jones, eds. *Reflections on the RAN*. Kenthurst, NSW: Kangaroo Press, 1991

Preston, A. N. Personal communication

Sydney Morning Herald. 'Mr Cameron Withdraws Remarks on Mr Riordan'. 4 May 1945, 5

Sydney Morning Herald. 'Chifley Navy Minister Dies'. 16 January 1973, 11

Rosevear, John Solomon (Sol): Speaker 1943–1949

Frank Bongiorno

John Solomon (Sol) Rosevear (1892–1953), timber mill machinist, union official, and eleventh Speaker of the House of Representatives, was born on 4 January 1892 at Pyrmont, Sydney, sixth of seven children of native-born parents William John Rosevear, carter, and his wife, Maria, née McGuirk. His father was an early member of the Labor Party in New South Wales. Educated at Pyrmont Superior Public School, Sol was sufficiently competent to rank third in his sixth-year class (1905). As a young man, he was a capable runner and swimmer, and would serve as honorary secretary of the Pyrmont swimming club.

After leaving school at fourteen, Rosevear began work in a timber mill. A shop steward when he was seventeen, he was, by 1912, on the managing committee of the Sawmill and Timberyard Employees' Union. The following year, he was a delegate to the interstate conference in Hobart that formed the Amalgamated Timber Workers' Union of Australia. In 1914 he lost two fingers while working a planing machine. On 23 September 1916, at St Bartholomew's Anglican Church, Pyrmont, he married Clara May White, a machinist.

Rosevear was a strike committee member in the defeated timberworkers' strike of 1929. He is said to have been blacklisted by employers in its aftermath, but briefly found employment 'running a one-man mill' (Australia House London 1946) before a slump in the building industry led to his dismissal. As secretary of the Leichhardt branch of the Australian Labor Party (ALP) from July 1926, he was involved in litigation the following year over control of the branch's books, which he had refused to give up in the face of a court action arising from new party rules designed to limit the power of the Australian Workers' Union. In August 1927, he failed to gain preselection for the state seat of Leichhardt. He supported the successful candidature of the former Queensland premier Ted Theodore in the by-election for the Sydney federal seat of Dalley in 1927, but proceeded to contest preselection for the same

Figure 56: Sol Rosevear.
Source: Department of the House of Representatives.

seat in the general election of November 1928. He went on to serve as Theodore's campaign organiser at the 1928 and 1929 general elections. Rosevear also stood unsuccessfully in the Leichhardt municipal elections of 1925, 1928, and 1931.

In Labor's disastrous election defeat of December 1931, Rosevear contested Dalley for the state Labor Party loyal to Jack Lang. His opponent was his former associate and friend, Theodore, who had the endorsement of the federal ALP. Rosevear easily defeated Theodore and three other candidates. Having suffered unemployment during the Depression—Rosevear did labouring work that included shovelling sand at Maroubra Beach—he promoted an unemployed workers' relief movement. He is said to have successfully applied for further unemployment relief just at the time of his election to parliament (Makin c. 1962). He sat in the House of Representatives with the 'Langites' led by Jack Beasley until they reunited (1936) with the federal ALP. In 1936–37 Rosevear was an executive member of federal caucus. When a further split occurred in 1940, he was elected deputy leader of the ALP (Non-Communist), again under Beasley, although he had agonised over whether or not to join this Langite splinter group.

In parliament Rosevear distinguished himself as a 'clear thinker, with a good financial brain, quick intelligence and strong personality' (*Sydney Morning Herald* 1953, 1). Sir Paul Hasluck later recalled that although 'one of the ablest' performers in the House', Rosevear 'showed more interest in the fight' than 'in any theories or principles' (1997, 42). Rosevear's parliamentary colleague Norman Makin described him similarly as 'a devastating critic', but with a capacity for 'constructive thinking' that did not match such verbal aggression (c. 1962). Nor was Rosevear noted for a preparedness to forgive and forget. With other former Langites such as Beasley and Eddie Ward, he kept up a bitter campaign during World War II against Theodore as director-general of Allied Works, although his antipathy did not prevent him from acting as a pallbearer at Theodore's funeral in 1950, representing the Speaker of the House of Representatives, Archie Cameron. Outside parliament, he was usually good-humoured. Rosevear served as a member of the Bankruptcy Legislation Committee (1932–36) and as a Temporary Chairman of Committees (1934–43).

When the Beasley group was finally reconciled with the federal ALP in 1941 and Labor came to power under John Curtin in October that year, many observers believed that Rosevear was unlucky not to secure a post in cabinet. The press gallery journalist Harold Cox judged that his 'intellectual gifts are not equalled by more than a handful of his Caucus colleagues' (Cox 4 December 1947). His omission was probably the result of continuing hostility in caucus to his having aligned himself with the Beasley breakaway group in 1940. Although he was a disgruntled backbencher in the early years of the Curtin government, he was appointed controller of leather and footwear in 1942, and clung tenaciously to the position until 1945. He was also chairman (1944–45) of the Post-war Planning Committee of Leather and Footwear Industries.

Rosevear became Speaker on 22 June 1943, following the resignation of the opposition's Walter Nairn in the lead-up to the election two months later, at which the Curtin government triumphed. He became one of the most controversial Speakers in the history of the office. Few have been so immersed in the internal affairs of their own party while in the role. Although, as his parliamentary colleague Senator Nicholas McKenna said, Rosevear brought to the Speakership 'a new strength and a new power' (S. Deb. 24.3.1953, 1495), he also bore the arts perfected in the hurly-burly of New South Wales Labor politics between the wars. Not all such skills and impulses were well suited to his new role as presiding officer, leading some observers, according to Makin, to consider him temperamentally unsuited to the position.

Symbolically following the ALP practice of refusing both wig and gown, Rosevear gained a reputation for inflexibility in his rulings. Opposition members and journalists regularly accused him of partisanship. Some of his party colleagues concurred; Kim C. Beazley recalled his father observing of Rosevear that

> when he was not in the chair and his deputy or one of his assistants was in the chair, Sol would come in and sit on the government front bench and make interventions, speeches and interjections. He regarded himself as a member of the Government and he was rightly there, in his mind, to defend the Government. No nonsense about independent Speakers, he felt, in those days. (Andrew et. al. 2002, 151).

The opposition moved a no-confidence motion in Rosevear in July 1946, with (Sir) Robert Menzies declaring that in his eighteen years of parliamentary experience he had 'never seen such a gratuitous abuse of power on the part of any presiding officer' (H.R. Deb. 26.7.1946, 3198). The Country Party leader, (Sir) Arthur Fadden, complained that 'if the umpire wears the blazer of one of the competing teams it makes it more difficult for members of the other team to accept his rulings with confidence' (H.R. Deb. 26.7.1946, 3202). But Rosevear also managed to annoy government backbenchers with his insistence that they inform him of any questions they intended to direct to ministers. 'He snaps like an angry bear at Back Benchers like Duthie, and O'Connor, but allows Ministers all sorts of latitude', a political newsletter reported late in 1947 (*Things I Hear* 1947, 3).

When the House was in committee during the budget debate in November 1946, Rosevear launched a ferocious tirade against his former ally Lang. Fred Daly, then a young Labor parliamentarian, recalled it 'as one of the most vitriolic and devastating attacks I have heard made on any individual in Parliament' (Daly 1984, 56); another colleague, Les Haylen, thought that this 'biting and terrible speech' was like 'hungry huskies in the Arctic Circle eating their fallen comrade in the traces so that the remainder could survive' (Haylen 1969, 61). Rosevear said:

> The honourable member for Reid [Lang] was my friend. He would still be my friend politically if he was still in the Labour movement, but he is now no more a friend of mine politically than the right honourable member for North Sydney (Mr. Hughes) who ratted on the Labor party in 1916. I say pointedly to the honourable member for Reid that on a thousand occasions I have heard him proclaim from the public platform and at Labour conferences that if ever the day came when the press of this country lauded him and featured him and the Opposition applauded him, he would no longer be a Labour man. I ask him to look around at his newfound friends. (H.R. Deb. 26.11.1946, 576)

The following year Rosevear made public attacks against judges of the High Court of Australia, arising from the court's August 1947 decision invalidating section 48 of the Banking Act 1945 that required state governments and authorities to transfer their accounts with private banks to the Commonwealth Bank or to state banks. In November, when the House was in committee to examine the details of the Banking Bill 1947 on bank nationalisation, and the Chairman of Committees, Joseph Clark, was presiding, Rosevear told the House that 'men should not be maintained on the High Court of Australia when they reach the stage of life at which they must suffer obvious incapacity' (H.R. Deb. 13.11.1947, 2071). (Sir) John McEwen of the Country Party declared Rosevear's attack to be 'the most dangerous and most menacing speech' he had heard during his time in the parliament (H.R. Deb. 13.11.1947, 2072). Rosevear was characteristically unrepentant, maintaining his 'fundamental objection to people in a state of senility' being able to 'frustrate the will of the people' (H.R. Deb. 13.11.1947, 2071).

While enjoying all of the perquisites to which his high office entitled him, Rosevear continued to play an influential role in caucus. He ran Ward's unsuccessful campaign against Herbert Vere Evatt for the deputy leadership of the federal ALP in 1946, but soon fell out with Ward over the latter's support for striking wharfies and the powers of the Stevedoring Industry Commission to suspend the registration of surplus waterside workers. Some believed that by this time he had grown tired of the Speakership as a 'backwater from which he wishes to escape' (Cox 24 March 1947). Cynics interpreted his apparent drift to the right, and his spearheading of a movement for improved payments and facilities for politicians, as part of a bid for future leadership of the party. He was the moving force in a £500 per annum increase in salaries in 1947—achieved in the face of opposition from the parsimonious prime minister and treasurer, Ben Chifley. Some commentators took seriously Rosevear's hope of succeeding Chifley, and noted his increasingly hostile relations with Evatt, who harboured similar ambitions (Cox, 24 March 1947).

A number of backbenchers, however, while admiring Rosevear's intelligence and debating skills, were unimpressed by his attacks on the High Court and were concerned about the impact of his obvious partisanship on radio listeners to parliament. Some also regarded 'his taste for grog' as a severe barrier to leadership:

Rosevear was said to keep 'a particularly well stocked cupboard in his quarters' (Cox, 24 March 1947). On one occasion, while he was 'entertaining two young Canberra matrons to quiet drinks', a child managed to climb out of a window and fall to the lawn below, albeit without suffering evident harm (Cox, 31 March 1947). Another time, fellow ex–timber worker and Labor parliamentarian Jim Hadley severely injured a leg 'after a recent session with Mr Speaker' (Cox, 31 March 1947). Allegedly, the Speaker was even 'frequently quite drunk in the Chair', but had 'an amazing gift for concealing his condition' (Cox, 31 March 1947). He was also said to have permitted, and participated in, illegal gambling in the parliament on a grand scale (Cox, 27 February 1950).

In 1948 Rosevear led the Australian delegation to the Empire Parliamentary Association conference, held in London. Following his return, he curtailed his official activities due to illness, and was twice admitted to hospital in 1949. He was a vigorous opponent in caucus of the Chifley government's expansion of the size of parliament for the 1949 election to match population increases since Federation, and the introduction of proportional voting in the Senate. Rosevear argued that these measures would not improve the quality of representation, were not justified when members had access to more office staff to cope with increased workloads, and, not least, would work against the ALP.

Although at the election Rosevear held his safe seat with ease, he lost the Speakership as the Chifley government was swept from office. He died of a coronary occlusion on 21 March 1953 in Lewisham Private Hospital, Sydney; his wife and their son and daughter survived him. His funeral service was held at All Souls' Church of England in Leichhardt. According to Hasluck, when the clergyman presiding described Rosevear as a 'great national leader and statesman', a 'devout Christian', and a 'highly moral character', Daly remarked audibly: 'By God, we're burying the wrong man' (1997, 43). But Fadden still thought him 'a most congenial man' and 'always good company' (H.R. Deb. 24.3.1953, 1499). A portrait of Rosevear by Joshua Smith, which won the Archibald Prize in 1944, is held by Parliament House.

This article supplements the original Volume 16 ADB *biography, published 2002, authored by Frank Bongiorno. adb.anu.edu.au/biography/rosevear-john-solomon-sol-11565/text20641*

Select bibliography

Andrew, Neil, George Brandis, Kim Beazley and Geoffrey Lindell. 'Parliament: The Vision in Hindsight'. *Australasian Parliamentary Review* 17, no. 1 (Autumn 2002): 145–53

Australia House London. J. S. Rosevear Biography. National Library of Australia press clippings, 1946

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 22 June 1943, 5–7

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 26 July 1946, 3195–204

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 26 November 1946, 570–76

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 29 November 1946, 813–14

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 13 November 1947, 2070–74

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 24 March 1953, 1496–99

Australia. Senate. *Parliamentary Debates*, 24 March 1953, 1494–96

Cox, Erle Harold. 'Australia's Toughest Mr Speaker'. *Herald* (Melbourne), 4 December 1947, 4

Cox, Erle Harold. Typescript, 24 March 1947, 31 March 1947, 19 May 1947, 27 February 1950, 23 July 1951. Papers of E. H. Cox, MS 4552. National Library of Australia. [The author thanks Bridget Griffen-Foley for references in the Cox Papers.]

Daly, Fred. *From Curtin to Hawke*. South Melbourne: Sun Books, 1984

Fitzgerald, Ross. *'Red Ted': The Life of E. G. Theodore*. St Lucia, Qld: University of Queensland Press, 1994

Hasluck, Paul. *The Chance of Politics*. Melbourne: Text Publishing, 1997

Haylen, Leslie. *Twenty Years' Hard Labor*. South Melbourne: Macmillan, 1969

Makin, Norman. The Honorable John Solomon Rosevear, Speaker 1943–1950, c. 1962. Papers of Norman Makin, MS 4663. National Library of Australia

Nairn, Bede. *The 'Big Fella': Jack Lang and the Australian Labor Party 1891–1949.* Carlton, Vic.: Melbourne University Press, 1995

Sunday Herald (Sydney). 'Ex-Speaker Mr J. S. Rosevear Dead'. 22 March 1953, 1

Sydney Morning Herald. 'Choosing New Ministry'. 4 October 1941, 12

Sydney Morning Herald. 'State Funeral To-day for M. P.'. 23 March 1953, 1

Things I Hear (Sydney). 'Sol's Lost Ground'. 23 December 1947, 3

Salmon, Charles Carty (Carty): Speaker 1909–1910

John Hawkins

Charles Carty Salmon (1860–1917), medical practitioner and second Speaker of the House of Representatives, was born on 27 July 1860 at Amherst, a gold rush town near Maryborough, Victoria, sixth child of English-born parents Frederick Browne Salmon, storekeeper, and his wife, Susannah Carty, née Arnell. Carty attended Scotch College, Melbourne, before his uncle gave him a position at his tobacco importing and manufacturing company, Dudgeon & Arnell. Such work had little appeal and, in 1886, he enrolled in medicine at the University of Melbourne. During his studies, he honed his public speaking skills at Trinity College's Dialectic Society. After two years, he proceeded to Scotland, where in 1891 he completed his medical studies. While in Scotland, he began attending political meetings, finding himself drawn to conservatism. Returning to Melbourne, he set up a general practice at South Yarra.

Salmon soon established himself as a major figure in beneficent causes, including service as honorary surgeon for the South Yarra Relief Committee. He became close friends with Alfred Deakin, who encouraged him to stand as an independent at the December 1893 by-election for the Legislative Assembly seat of Talbot and Avoca, which included Salmon's place of birth. Having won the seat, the well-spoken and highly presentable new member was featured in the press as someone with a promising political future. In 1894 he joined the Victorian Mounted Rifles as surgeon-captain. He served as president of the Australian Natives' Association (ANA; 1898–99) and was a minister in Allan McLean's short-lived government of 1899–1900—initially as minister without portfolio and subsequently as minister for public instruction and commissioner for trade and customs. On 3 October 1900, Salmon married Nancy Anne Harris, daughter of the mayor of Sydney and member of the New South Wales Legislative Assembly, Sir Matthew Harris, at St Stephen's Presbyterian Church, Sydney. They were to have three sons. As a supporter of improved industrial working conditions, protectionism, and Federation, Salmon was a natural ally for Deakin and, in 1901, stood successfully as a Liberal Protectionist for the federal seat of Laanecoorie, which encompassed his state seat. In the first Commonwealth

Figure 57: Carty Salmon.
Source: National Library of Australia, PIC/7269/1-2 LOC Drawer PIC/7269, Swiss Studios Melbourne.

parliament, he became a Temporary Chairman of Committees. He maintained his involvement with the military, transferring to the Australian Army Medical Corps in 1903 and being promoted to lieutenant-colonel in 1912.

At the general election of December 1903, Salmon was re-elected, easily defeating a free-trade candidate. However, the Chairman of Committees in the preceding parliament, John Chanter, lost his seat, with the result that, on 17 March 1904, Salmon was successfully nominated as his successor, narrowly defeating Labor's Lee Batchelor. Initially, this appointment was only to 15 December 1904, the then practice being for the House to vote on the Chairmanship at the start of each parliamentary session. During the long parliamentary recess that followed, rumblings arose about reverting to Chanter, who had lost his seat due to an electoral official's error and regained it at a by-election ordered by the High Court. Some Labor members felt aggrieved by Salmon's rulings, and an argument circulated that the circumstances of Chanter's defeat in the first place made it only fair that he be reinstated as Chairman. Deakin stayed firm in supporting his ally and, on 2 August 1905, Salmon was re-elected Chairman, 35 votes to 27 (VP 1905/25–26, 2.8.1905).

Despite this seeming vote of confidence, Salmon's accommodating nature made it hard for him to assert the chair's authority, fuelling dissent from many of his rulings. During November 1905, he was criticised for his management of calls for a quorum, rulings on relevance and repetition in debate, and even on whether members could bring bedding into the chamber, on which he obligingly felt reluctant to 'deprive honorable members of any comforts which they may require to maintain their attendance here' (H.R. Deb. 16.11.1905, 5371). He was reported also to have proposed declaring parliamentary precincts to be part of the House for determining quorums, including the billiards and smoking rooms.

On 20 June 1906, when Deakin moved (on notice) the election of a Chairman of Committees, sufficient Free Trade members who felt aggrieved by Salmon, particularly over his ruling against stonewalling in debate, voted with Labor members to elect Charles McDonald in his place. The political journalist D. H. Maling reflected that 'a Chairman or Speaker is born, not made, and Mr Salmon's preparation did not commence early enough' ('Ithuriel' 1906). By contrast, McDonald was said to sleep with a copy of the standing orders under his pillow. In congratulating the new Chairman, Deakin spoke of Salmon having held the post 'under circumstances which placed the greatest strain upon both his knowledge of parliamentary practice and his resolute courage in doing his duty' (H.R. Deb. 20.6.1906, 475). More fundamentally, some sections of the press feared that this 'attack on the honesty of the Chair' amounted to 'an open intimation that the Chairman is expected to decide disputes in the interest of party and that any adverse decision will be punished by

a deprivation of office' (*Age* 1906, 4). At the general election of December 1906, Salmon narrowly defeated a Labor challenger. In July 1907, the House re-elected McDonald over Salmon, but Salmon again became one of the Temporary Chairmen.

The fusion of Deakin's protectionists with the free-traders in May 1909 and the ensuing fall of the Fisher Labor government created an unusually tense atmosphere in the parliament. This may well have contributed to the untimely death of the Speaker, Sir Frederick Holder, on 23 July 1909 following a stormy all-night sitting, presenting the House for the first time with the task of finding a replacement Speaker. Holder had been a staunch advocate of Westminster-style independence for the Speaker, including the selection of a Speaker not being the sole preserve of the ruling party. Deakin disagreed, and his determination to elevate Salmon to the Speakership marked a decisive break with the Westminster ideal.

The former Victorian premier (Sir) William Irvine, former prime minister (Sir) George Reid, and the truculent Free Trade member Bruce Smith were all mentioned as possible successors to Holder, but each declined. In a party room ballot, the Fusion chose Salmon over Agar Wynne, reportedly by a mere couple of votes and with a significant number of members unhappy with the result. Salmon's nomination was greeted in the House with anger. Labor proposed the more capable McDonald, with William Morris Hughes dismissing Salmon as a 'notorious partisan' (H.R. Deb. 28.7.1909, 1698). A third candidate, Chanter, was nominated by David Storrer and Sir William Lyne, two former protectionists who opposed the Fusion. Labor's James Hutchinson and King O'Malley then proposed Wynne, evidently hoping to win over defectors from the government. After several hours of debate, controversially and unhappily presided over by the Clerk of the House, (Sir) Charles Gavan Duffy, Salmon was finally elected, 37 votes to 29 (VP 1909/61–62, 28.7.1909).

As Speaker, Salmon was portrayed by the press as 'a Deakin satellite' (*Punch* 1909, 6). He again struggled to assert himself over unruliness in the House—not helped by the circumstances in which he became Speaker. Early in his Speakership, he pleaded ineffectually that 'honourable members must really show a little more consideration for the occupant of the chair' (H.R. Deb. 5.8.1909, 2092). Despite Labor's continuing hostility and the frequent misgivings of party colleagues, Salmon held on as Speaker until 30 June 1910 when, in the wake of a comprehensive Labor election victory, he was replaced with McDonald. In Laanecoorie, Salmon was again re-elected narrowly over a Labor candidate. One of his successors as Speaker, Norman Makin, concluded that he 'seemed to lack firmness and, to a degree, resolution' (c. 1962), as well as suffering from comparison with the highly respected Holder. Salmon's 'pleasant drawing room manner of speaking' was seen by contemporaries as 'exactly suited to the ANA' but not 'to the platforms or in the Parliaments of the country' (*Punch* 1909, 6).

After Laanecoorie was abolished in a redistribution, Salmon narrowly failed to win a Senate seat at the election of 1913. In 1914 he sought preselection for the safe Melbourne suburban seat of Balaclava but then deferred to William Watt, another future Speaker. Salmon finally returned to the Commonwealth parliament by winning the western Victorian seat of Grampians at a by-election in February 1915, but he was never again seriously considered for the Speakership. Outside parliament, he continued to hold an impressive array of leadership positions, including managing director of Dudgeon & Arnell, lay canon of St Paul's Cathedral, Melbourne, and membership of the councils of the Melbourne diocese, Trinity College, and Melbourne Grammar School. In 1914 he became Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Freemasons of Victoria, and commanded a military base hospital in Melbourne. He enjoyed golf, walking, rowing, cricket, gardening, and collecting books, and remained popular for his 'unassuming and genial disposition' (*Malvern Standard* 1917, 5).

Just three days after easily retaining Grampians at the election of May 1917, Salmon collapsed at his Dudgeon & Arnell office and withdrew to his home at South Yarra. He died there on 15 September from a cerebral tumour. His funeral service at St Paul's was attended by Prime Minister Hughes and opposition leader Frank Tudor, with the archbishop of Melbourne delivering the panegyric. A funeral procession with Salmon's coffin mounted on a gun carriage proceeded to the Melbourne general cemetery where the interment was conducted with full military honours and Masonic rites. The scale of proceedings was a measure of the regard in which he continued to be held for service to the community, his indifferent performance as a presiding officer notwithstanding.

This article supplements the original Volume 11 ADB *biography, published 1988, authored by I. R. Hancock. adb.anu.edu.au/biography/salmon-charles-carty-carty-8328/text14611*

Select bibliography

Age (Melbourne). 'Melbourne, Friday'. 22 June 1906, 4

Age (Melbourne). 'Late Mr C. C. Salmon: An Impressive Funeral'. 19 September 1917, 7

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 2 August 1905, 470–77

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 16 November 1905, 5367–76

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 29 November 1905, 5979–92

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 20 June 1906, 473–75

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 28 July 1909, 1669–716, 1727–28

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 5 August 1909, 2092–95

Australia. House of Representatives. *Votes and Proceedings*, 1905, 25–6

Australia. House of Representatives. *Votes and Proceedings*, 1905, 1909, 61–62

Campbell-Jones, Herbert. The Cabinet of Captains, 1935. Papers of Herbert Campbell-Jones, MS 8905. National Library of Australia

Daily Telegraph (Sydney). 'In Federal Session'. 3 August 1905, 4

'Ithuriel' (D. H. Maling). 'Gallery Sketches'. *Australasian* (Melbourne), 23 June 1906, 39–40

Makin, Norman. The Honourable Dr Charles Carty Salmon, Speaker 1909–1910, c. 1962. Papers of Norman Makin, MS 4663. National Library of Australia

Malvern Standard (Melbourne). 'Obituary: Dr Carty Salmon'. 22 September 1917, 5

Nethercote, J. R. 'Choosing a Speaker: Alfred Deakin's Flawed Legacy'. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 5 August 2015. Accessed 10 October 2019. www.smh.com.au/opinion/choosing-a-speaker-alfred-deakins-flawed-legacy-20150805-girzdv.html. Copy held on file

Punch (Melbourne). 'People We Know'. 5 August 1909, 6

Table Talk (Melbourne). 'A Coming Man: Dr C. Carty Salmon, MLA'. 12 January 1894, 3–4

Scholes, Gordon Glen: Speaker 1975

Jenny Hocking

Gordon Glen Denton Scholes (1931–2018), train driver, trade unionist, and sixteenth Speaker of the House of Representatives, was born on 7 June 1931 at West Melbourne, only child of Melbourne-born Thomas Glen Denton Scholes, railway worker, and his wife, Mary Louisa, née O'Brien, a psychiatric nurse. Gordon's parents were Labor voters and nominally Catholic. Although he had his first communion and attended Catholic primary schools—'that was a must' (Scholes 2010)—he was later to marry into the Church of England. His childhood was marked by ill health, loneliness, and disruption as his father's job took them around Victoria. A car accident when he was three led to months of recurrent hospitalisation with pneumonia, rheumatic fever, and resultant heart weakness. He was held in isolation at the Melbourne Hospital for Sick Children, with not even his parents allowed to visit.

Childhood insecurity was exacerbated by World War II, which irrevocably rent Scholes's family. His father enlisted in December 1941 and served in New Guinea, while his mother worked in the munitions factory at Maribyrnong. He turned fourteen in the children's hospital's Mt Eliza campus, again suffering from rheumatic fever. Thomas Scholes had left Melbourne as a champion country footballer and cricketer, but he returned in December 1945 with a bullet wound in the back of his head, ravaged by malaria, and alcohol dependent. A long-term patient at Heidelberg Repatriation Hospital, he 'virtually never came back from the war as far as we were concerned' (Scholes 2010). His son became a lifelong teetotaller, non-smoker, and pacifist.

While his mother worked to support the family, Scholes stayed with various relatives. In all, he estimated that he attended twelve different schools across Victoria. A turning point came with the family's move to Daylesford, where his mother worked in her aunt's hotels and he finished his secondary schooling at Daylesford Technical High School, aged fifteen. He began his working life at the Daylesford Woollen Mills and attended night school at the Ballarat School of Mines to qualify as a fitter and turner, hoping to join the railways as his father, grandfather, and uncle had done before him.

Figure 58: Gordon Scholes.
Source: Courtesy of the National Archives of Australia. NAA: A6135, K21/4/75/3.

SCHOLES, GORDON GLEN

He had always enjoyed the spectacle of boxing and, while living with his grandparents at Brunswick, attended bouts at the West Melbourne Stadium. At Ballarat he trained at Johnny White's gym and proved to be a natural: he was quick, bullocky, and had surprising endurance for a young man with a leaky heart valve. Scholes's attention was drawn to the tragic impact of the White Australia policy on the African-American boxer Clarence Reeves, 'the Alabama Kid', who was incarcerated and deported in 1948 despite having an Australian wife and children. The headlines that his case generated drew the sympathy of the young Scholes—'my first interest, I suppose, in politics' (Scholes 2010). In 1949, despite his limited experience in the ring, he became amateur heavyweight champion of Victoria, as the Canberra press gallery would later rarely fail to note.

Scholes worked for the railways initially as a cleaner and fireman, but he aimed to qualify as an engine driver, as had the former Labor leader Ben Chifley, whom he considered 'a legend' (Scholes 2010). He was thrilled to serve as a fireman on the great coal-fired engine the Spirit of Progress between Melbourne and Sydney, and successfully sat for his driver's certificate at Wodonga. A member of the Australian Federated Union of Locomotive Employees (AFULE) since joining the railways, he also joined the Australian Labor Party (ALP), in 1954. After moving to Geelong, he became AFULE delegate to the Geelong Trades Hall. Not long after, he met the English-born Della Robinson, who was working as a secretary at the nearby Avalon airfield. They married in 1957 at Geelong's Christ Church and had two daughters. Scholes was determined that his own children would have a better childhood than he had, and theirs was a close family. When he was working, his daughters would listen excitedly for their special sign of nine blasts on the train's whistle, signalling that he was on his way home.

In 1962 Scholes was elected president of the Geelong branch of the ALP—a position he occupied for the next two years. The local federal seat of Corio had been held since 1949 for the Liberal Party by the former champion cyclist (Sir) Hubert Opperman, who virtually 'owned the place' (Scholes 2010). Corio received a shake-up at the 1963 election when the charismatic young union leader Bob Hawke ran for the ALP, drawing large crowds. Although Hawke lost, he changed the dynamics of a seat long seen as safe Liberal. Scholes's role as Hawke's campaign manager added to his growing local profile.

Having been drawn to politics 'by the opportunity to make life better for the people he worked alongside and their families' (H.R. Deb. 12.2.2019, 13000), it was fitting that Scholes's own first run at political office arose from the threatened closure of his daughters' kindergarten. He chaired the parents' committee that successfully challenged this and, in 1965, was elected a Geelong city councillor and president of Geelong Trades Hall. The following year, he was preselected by the ALP as its new candidate for Corio, but at the federal election of October 1966, the party suffered

a major defeat nationally and, in Corio, a 6 per cent swing against it in the primary vote. Political hubris led to a rerun after Prime Minister Harold Holt announced Opperman's appointment as high commissioner to Malta just two months after the election, leaving Corio vacant and its voters unimpressed. At the July 1967 by-election, Scholes took the seat with an 11 per cent swing in the primary vote.

Scholes's win was Gough Whitlam's first electoral success since becoming opposition leader five months earlier. Whitlam had campaigned heavily in Corio, without which Scholes believed he would not have succeeded. His first speech to the House of Representatives was long and powerful, focused on 'people in this country who have very little in the way of liberties, either economically or otherwise' (H.R. Deb. 29.8.1967, 538). He called on the government to increase commitments to health, the manufacturing industry, and social services, to restore the economic and political rights of Indigenous people, and, with a nod to his father's experience, to provide greater support for returning servicemen and women. Underpinning these concerns was Scholes's faith in parliament as the preeminent democratic institution. He also urged members to lift their standard of parliamentary debate, warning that they would not receive the public's respect 'while members of the Parliament treat this institution with the contempt which I suggest some members have for it' (H.R. Deb. 29.8.1967, 542). He soon found working life in Parliament House difficult, especially the long weeks away from his family. At the 1969 election, he increased his primary vote by a further 8 per cent. Lacking the seniority and factional support to press for a shadow ministry, he focused on parliamentary procedural matters, having 'always had some feeling for procedure … I knew the nuances of it' (Scholes 2010). He joined the House Standing Orders Committee in 1969 and became Deputy Chairman of Committees the following year.

After leading Labor to national office in 1972 for the first time in twenty-three years, Whitlam reflected that the path to this success had 'started in Corio' (H.R. Deb. 12.2.2019, 13000). Scholes nominated for the Speakership, as did his colleague Jim Cope, and, on 28 February 1973, Cope became Speaker with Scholes as Chairman of Committees. These proved to be among the most difficult positions in the new parliament as the Liberal and Country parties—unfamiliar with being in opposition—made clear their intention to disrupt the government at every opportunity. Whitlam's re-election at the May 1974 double dissolution only intensified their determination, and increasingly Cope struggled to control the House and retain the support of his own party. During a particularly torrid parliamentary day, 27 February 1975, Whitlam led Labor members in voting against a motion to suspend Clyde Cameron following his being named by Cope, with the result that Cope announced that he would tender his resignation to the governor-general and asked Scholes to take the chair as Deputy Speaker. That evening, Scholes formally became Speaker following a vote in the House conducted along party lines: Scholes defeated the opposition's

candidate, 64 votes to 58 (VP 1974–75/509, 27.2.1975). He had left the chamber during the vote on the suspension of Cameron, as did a number of other government members (VP 1974–75/502–3, 27.2.1975).

It could scarcely have been a more difficult elevation for Scholes, who, at forty-three years of age, was the youngest Speaker of the House since Norman Makin in 1929. On his first full day in the office, he gave a press conference—unusually for a Speaker. The press noted his reserved manner but also his 'instant judgment on every word and meaning precisely what he said' (Davidson 1975), along with his call for wider disciplinary powers. Having witnessed the difficulties facing his immediate predecessor, he aimed never to be hampered by indecision or apparent weakness. He worked on projecting his voice and used his commanding physical presence and knowledge of parliamentary procedure to control a fractious House.

Scholes's quiet authority faced its greatest test during the four weeks from 16 October 1975 when opposition senators refused to consider the government's supply bills, putting pressure on the prime minister to call an election. On 11 November 1975, Whitlam arrived at Government House at Yarralumla for a 1 p.m. meeting with the governor-general, Sir John Kerr, expecting to finalise arrangements for a half-Senate election. As Whitlam entered Kerr's study, the governor-general handed him a letter dismissing him and his ministry, and advising that the leader of the opposition, Malcolm Fraser, would be commissioned to form a caretaker government pending an election.

Whitlam's dismissal resulted in Scholes presiding over the most tumultuous session in the history of the House of Representatives, during which basic assumptions concerning the formation of government were upended. The House resumed at 2 p.m. with Labor Party members, now in opposition, still occupying the government benches while the appointed Fraser-led government sat on the opposition benches. This incongruous situation was further confused by Labor members, including Whitlam, at first being unaware that Fraser had already been commissioned by Kerr as prime minister, having been secreted in an anteroom at Yarralumla when Whitlam was dismissed. At 2.34 p.m. Fraser announced his commissioning and sought to adjourn the House. Scholes remained calm throughout but was initially uncertain whether to instruct Labor members to move to the other side of the House. He allowed them to stay on the government benches—an indication of his commitment to the House's primacy in determining the party of government.

Fraser failed to force an immediate adjournment and was defeated on several motions, culminating in a no-confidence motion calling on the governor-general to recommission a government led by Whitlam, which was passed by ten votes. When the sitting was suspended at 3.15 p.m., Scholes immediately attempted to contact Government House; 'as Speaker I was going to … personally deliver to the

governor-general the opinion of the House' (Scholes 2010). The governor-general's official secretary, (Sir) David Smith, refused Scholes an appointment, and it was only when Scholes told Smith that he intended to recall the House if Kerr refused to see him that an appointment was made for 4.25 p.m. Scholes believed that Kerr had agreed to receive the no-confidence motion, later recalling that 'we were acting on the assumption that the governor-general would do what we thought was right' (Scholes 2010). He arrived at Yarralumla at 4.25 p.m. to find the gates locked. As he waited outside, Kerr and Fraser were inside signing the proclamation to dissolve both houses. Scholes finally entered the gates as Smith was driving out, heading for Parliament House with the signed proclamation. When Scholes handed the motion of the House to the governor-general, Kerr told him that he had already dissolved parliament. Scholes was shocked: 'the governor-general refused to accept the last resolution passed by the parliament, which was a confidence vote' (Scholes 2010).

Despite the dismissal of his party colleagues from office, Scholes remained Speaker—the Speakership being determined by the House of Representatives alone. The day following the dismissal, he wrote to the Queen pointing to 'the danger to our parliamentary system' of a prime minister 'imposed on the nation by Royal prerogative rather than through parliamentary endorsement' (NAA A1209). Scholes described Kerr's delay in seeing him as 'an act of contempt for the House of Representatives' and called on the Queen to restore the Whitlam government 'in accordance with the expressed resolution of the House' (NAA A1209). The Queen's private secretary replied succinctly that: 'The only person competent to commission an Australian Prime Minister is the Governor-General, and The Queen has no part in the decisions which the Governor-General must take in accordance with the Constitution' (WhitlamDismissal.com).

As Speaker, Scholes used his title and personal influence as best he could during the bitter election campaign that followed. The ALP was defeated in a landslide and he survived in Corio by a mere twenty votes after the distribution of preferences. Although deeply troubled by Kerr's actions, Scholes found that they had also strengthened his 'unshakeable belief in the Westminster system' (Blazey 1983). In opposition, he was manager of opposition business in the House (1976–77) and held the shadow portfolios of post and telecommunications, primary industry, defence, and Australian Capital Territory, but was 'never an outspoken or particularly noticeable "shadow minister"' (Longhurst 1984).

With the election of the Hawke government in March 1983, Scholes was elevated to cabinet as minister for defence. The decision to scrap and not replace the ageing aircraft carrier HMAS *Melbourne* was unpopular with a defence establishment that was likened at the time to a 'seething, rancorous, tradition-minded and authoritarian ant-hill' (Blazey 1983). The press increasingly focused on his understated performances

in the House, and, in December 1984, he was dropped from cabinet and became minister for territories. He held this portfolio until July 1987, during which he was instrumental in securing self-government for the Australian Capital Territory and in managing work on the new Parliament House.

In 1993 Scholes retired from politics after twenty-six years as the member for Corio. He remained active in his community, played golf, and revived his interest in stamp collecting as a longstanding member of the Geelong Philatelic Society. In 1993 he was appointed AO, and he received a Centenary Medal in 2001. Scholes died at Geelong on 9 December 2018. He was remembered by his many local friends as a 'generous and gentle man' (Geelong Philatelic Society) and was recalled as a Speaker who 'held true to his duty' during an unprecedented time 'when so many acted without scruple' (H.R. Deb. 12.2.2019, 13000). His wife and daughters survived him. The portrait by Brian Dunlop that hangs in Parliament House depicts Scholes in a characteristically informal pose.

Select bibliography

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 29 August 1967, 536–42

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 27 February 1975, 879–86

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 12 February 2019, 12999–13001

Australia. House of Representatives. *Votes and Proceedings*, 1975, 502–10

Australia. Senate. *Parliamentary Debates*, 12 February 2019, 9857–62

Australian Capital Territory. Legislative Assembly. *Debates*, 19 February 2019, 357–60

Blazey, Peter. 'Gordon Scholes: Prince atop the Defence Ant Hill'. *Australian*, 25–26 June 1983, 6

Davidson, Gay. 'Speaker Has Not Sought Support Clarification'. *Canberra Times*, 1 March 1975, 3

Geelong Philatelic Society. 'Vale: Gordon Scholes OA, Member of Geelong Stamp Club'. Accessed 24 December 2019. www.stampboards.com/viewtopic.php?f=22&t=84739. Copy held on file

Hywood, Gregory. 'Defence Minister Faces a Crisis of Self-Confidence'. *Australian Financial Review*, 25 January 1984, 7

Longhurst, Frank. '"Intuition" Told Scholes of Change in Wind'. *Canberra Times*, 12 December 1984, 1

National Archives of Australia. A1209, 1975/2448, Double Dissolution of Parliament, 11 November 1975

Scholes, Gordon. Interview by Gary Sturgess, 2010. Transcript. Old Parliament House Political and Parliamentary Oral History Project. National Library of Australia

WhitlamDismissal.com. 'Letter from the Queen's Private Secretary'. Accessed 31 December 2019. whitlamdismissal.com. Copy held on file

Scott, Bruce Craig: Deputy Speaker 2012–2016

Brian F. Stevenson

Bruce Craig Scott, grazier and Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives, was born on 20 October 1943 at Roma, Queensland, one of three sons of Sydney-born John Malcolm Scott, bank officer and grazier, and his Queensland-born wife, Betty Isobel. He was educated at Roma, where the rugby league legend Arthur Beetson was a schoolmate, at Muckadilla State School, and the Anglican Church Grammar School in Brisbane. As a child, Bruce suffered from polio, from which it took many years to recover and necessitated his learning to walk again.

'Growing up on the land and listening to my parents' (Scott, pers. comm.), Scott gravitated to what was then the Country Party. He joined the Young Country Party (YCP) in 1962, remembering it as 'probably more of a social club in those days, but we had a lot of fun' (H.R. Deb. 4.5.2016, 4432). The YCP also had its serious side: at monthly meetings, members debated issues of concern, and local Country Party parliamentarians would attend at least one meeting annually to explain policies and parliamentary processes. From these experiences, Scott developed an early interest in debate and meeting procedures. In 1967 he married Joan Hulbert; they had three children.

Scott became a sheep and wool producer, and a grain grower. In 1983 he was awarded an Australian Nuffield Farming Scholarship, which enabled producers to travel overseas and study an agricultural topic of their choosing. This was 'a life-changing experience' that 'enabled me to look outside of my own community at the global opportunities that were presenting themselves' (H.R. Deb. 4.5.2016, 4427). He studied wool and meat production in the United Kingdom and Europe, and developed an interest in conservation farming, involving minimal tillage of the soil. After his return, he became active in agricultural politics, and went on to serve as president of the Queensland Merino Stud Sheepbreeders' Association (1983–86), the Maranoa Graziers' Association (1987–90), and the Australian Association of Stud Merino Breeders (1989–91).

Figure 59: Bruce Scott.
Source: Australian Government Photographic Service (Auspic).

In 1989 Scott successfully mounted a preselection challenge to the sitting National Party member for the federal seat of Maranoa, and proceeded at the election of March 1990 to win this vast seat, which covered one-third of Queensland. Maranoa had been in conservative hands since 1943 and, during his incumbency, it remained one of the party's safest seats. As a new fember, he valued the advice on procedure and standing orders he received from Ian Sinclair, the long-serving fember for New England and a future Speaker.

In his first speech to the House, Scott called for government grants to help victims within his electorate of the Charleville floods, warning that without this 'history will record 21 April 1990 as the day Charleville became Australia's Pompeii' (H.R. Deb. 10.5.1990, 330). He reminded the House that 'decentralisation of our population is a must if we are to continue to have a productive rurally based economy' (H.R. Deb. 10.5.1990, 330), and advocated joint ventures for processing the raw outputs of mining and agriculture as key to Australia's future. In opposition for the first two terms of his career, Scott was quick to earn a place in the shadow cabinet, serving in several portfolios concurrently: shadow minister for rural and regional development (1992–94), shadow assistant minister for primary industry (1992–94), shadow minister for local government (1994–96), and shadow assistant minister for primary industry and rural matters (1994–96).

When the Howard coalition government was elected in March 1996, Scott was awarded the veterans' affairs portfolio, which he held until November 2001. From October 1998 until November 2001, he also served as the minister assisting the minister for defence. Veterans' affairs provided him with, he later estimated, responsibility for 350,000 entitled veterans. He recalled:

> I never saw myself as the Minister for Veteran's Affairs but rather as the veterans' minister because it was their voice that I needed to bring to cabinet to make sure that we were, as we often said, looking after the veterans. (H.R. Deb. 4.5.2016, 4430)

He later added that representing veterans, war widows, and legatees was 'a personal honour' (Scott, pers. comm.).

In this emotionally demanding portfolio, Scott dealt with the early days of recognition that post-traumatic stress disorder can be war related, and also with the privatisation of veterans' hospitals, effectively switching the government's role from that of service provider to service purchaser. As minister, he visited Commonwealth war graves around the world, and talked to survivors of both World Wars and other conflicts. He made what he considered pilgrimages to Hellfire Pass in Thailand, Sandakan in Sabah, eastern Malaysia, and Long Tan in Vietnam—all places where Australian military personnel had lost their lives. The legendary army nurse Vivian

Bullwinkel suggested to him a memorial commemorating service nurses on Anzac Parade in Canberra. The new memorial was dedicated in 1999, and the following year a memorial to Australian participants in the Korean War was also dedicated on Anzac Parade. Other new memorials on the Western Front and in Asia helped ensure that the deeds of Australian defence force personnel there would not be forgotten. In Turkey, Scott obtained approval from its government to establish a new site for the Gallipoli dawn service, commencing from 2000.

At home, Scott realised that Remembrance Day was no longer being commemorated by the flying of flags at half-mast, and successfully requested that the governor-general, Sir William Deane, issue an order for the restoration of this custom. As a Centenary of Federation project, Scott also commissioned the digitisation of the 350,000 paper files on World War I veterans, rendering them readily available to families and ensuring that their valuable information would not be lost.

The loss of three seats by the National Party at the federal election of November 2001 changed the ratio of members to ministers among the coalition partners, and Scott was dropped from the new ministry. He served as a member of the Speaker's panel (2002–08) and as Second Deputy Speaker (2008–12), as well as being president of the state branch of the Nationals (2005–06). In September 2010, he was nominated by the opposition for the Deputy Speakership, but the Labor government instead successfully nominated dissident Liberal Peter Slipper for the position. Years later, he recalled this episode as 'such a disappointment' (Scott, pers. comm.).

Scott had to wait until October 2012, when Slipper, now Speaker, resigned and was replaced by the Deputy Speaker, Labor's Anna Burke, creating a vacancy that Scott filled. His nomination was seconded by the independent member Tony Windsor, and his election was greeted by Prime Minister Julia Gillard, praising him as 'one of the gentlemen in this parliament' (H.R. Deb. 9.10.2012, 11668). As Deputy Speaker, he would regularly 'discuss frankly the procedures of the day' with Burke, without their opposing political philosophies intruding, and even finding her 'a delightful person to work with' (Scott, pers. comm.). He felt greatly honoured whenever she asked him to open the parliamentary day and to adjourn the House, including ensuring the return of the mace to the Speaker's office. After the election of the Abbott coalition government in September 2013, he was Deputy Speaker to the Liberals' Bronwyn Bishop.

As Deputy Speaker, Scott presided over sittings of the Federation Chamber, established in 1994 as an alternative venue to the chamber of the House for debate on a restricted range of business. He later explained that 'as a second chamber I wanted it to operate not as a committee but as an extension of the House of Representatives for debate'

(Scott, pers. comm.). The chair's desk was elevated to place its occupant in better view of the members, but, importantly, he ensured that it remained lower than that of the Speaker in the House of Representatives, whose primacy he recognised.

Presiding in the chair required Scott to maintain 'full attention as a point of order could arise very abruptly' (Scott, pers. comm.). He was particularly alert to unparliamentary language or members reflecting adversely on their parliamentary colleagues. The independent member for Kennedy, Bob Katter, occasionally challenged him when reminded not to stray from the topic being debated. Scott was the Australian delegate to the 2015 celebrations in London marking the 800th anniversary of the signing of the Magna Carta.

In August 2015, Scott announced his intention to resign from parliament to pursue other interests and spend more time with his family. He summarised his achievements in Maranoa:

> I have proudly taken the fight of my constituents to the floor of the Federal Parliament, representing them in times of great triumph and despair … I have fought for better agricultural, health and education outcomes and to improve the local telecommunications and transport networks across the electorate (Arthur 2015).

Scott's valedictory speech was greeted with praise from both sides. Jim Chalmers, the Labor member for Rankin, called him 'a terrific bloke' and reflected on 'what a class act the member for Maranoa is' (H.R. Deb. 4.5.2016, 4434).

In retirement, Scott made good use of his experience by joining several rural boards. These included appointment in 2016 to the Royal Flying Doctor Service board and to the board of the Australian Stockman's Hall of Fame and Outback Heritage Centre at Longreach, Queensland. In 2003 he was awarded a Centenary Medal and in 2000 was appointed a Commandeur de l'Ordre de la Couronne for his contribution to Australian relations with Belgium. In June 2020, he was appointed AM.

Select bibliography

Arthur, Penelope. 'Bruce Scott to Quit Federal Parliament'. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 3 August 2015. www.smh.com.au/politics/federal/bruce-scott-to-quit-federal-parliament-20150803-gipzrr.html

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 10 May 1990, 327–31

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 9 October 2012, 11666–70

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 4 May 2016, 4425–34

Davey, Paul. *Ninety Not Out: The Nationals 1920–2010*. Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 2010

Glover, Cassandra. 'Scott Busy in Retirement, Bruce Scott Continues Passionate Rural Work'. *Rural Weekly North and Central Queensland* (Rockhampton), 13 April 2018, 33

Scott, Bruce. Personal communication

Sinclair, Ian McCahon: Speaker 1998

Tracey Arklay

Ian McCahon Sinclair, grazier and twenty-third Speaker of the House of Representatives, was born on 10 June 1929 in Sydney, only child of George McCahon Sinclair, chartered accountant, and his wife, Gertrude Hazel, a teacher, both Victorian-born. Ian won a scholarship to Knox Grammar School in Sydney, where he became school captain, and then studied at the University of Sydney (BA, 1949; LLB, 1952). He served as a pilot in the Citizen Air Force (1948–52) and was admitted to the Bar in 1952.

Despite his urban background, Sinclair gravitated to the Country Party rather than the Liberals. This reflected his keen interest in farming, arising from his father's grazing business and property at Bendemeer in the New England region of New South Wales. He was appointed managing director of the Sinclair Pastoral Company in 1953. The same year, he moved to New England, where he honed his knowledge of livestock industries, including by serving as a director of the Farmers and Graziers' Co-operative Ltd (1962–65). On 11 February 1956 in Sydney, he married Margaret Anne Tarrant, a journalist, at St David's Church, Lindfield.

In 1961 Sinclair was elected to the New South Wales Legislative Council but in 1963 transferred to the federal arena by successfully standing for the seat of New England. He was appointed minister for social services two years later, and held the portfolio for the next three years. His rapid elevation was supported by the leader of the Country Party, (Sir) John McEwen, who in December 1966 appointed Sinclair minister assisting in his own trade and industry portfolio. The first two decades of his federal career were mostly good ones for the Country Party in which it maintained its strength in the coalition with the Liberals. He gained senior ministerial experience in the Gorton, McMahon, and Fraser governments across the portfolios of shipping and transport, primary industry, special trade representations, communications, and defence. Although passed over for the party's deputy leadership in 1966 in favour

Figure 60: Ian Sinclair.
Source: Australian Government Photographic Service (Auspic).

of Doug Anthony, he became deputy leader when Anthony was elevated to the leadership five years later, and was twice leader of the House (1976–79, 1980–82). In 1977 he was appointed a member of the Privy Council.

As a highly experienced and trusted member of successive leadership teams, Sinclair, with Anthony and Peter Nixon, formed a triumvirate in the Fraser government dubbed 'the Mulga Mafia'. They were an assertive and sometimes combative presence in the House, and a significant influence on the government's policy agenda. Sinclair also became known for his capacity to recover from significant career setbacks. In 1979 he was charged with numerous offences under the Companies Act and was temporarily suspended from the front bench, but he returned to the ministry after being acquitted of all charges. On Anthony's retirement in January 1984, he finally became leader of what, since October 1982, has been called the National Party. Sinclair was eventually 'rolled' by his own party room in May 1989 in a dual coup prompted by the 'Joh for PM' campaign that had divided the party and weakened his authority.

By the advent of the government of John Howard in March 1996, Sinclair had recovered to acquire an elder statesman status, which contributed to and gained from his late-career elevation to the Speakership. He was the new prime minister's favoured candidate, but the Liberal party room insisted on one of its own, Bob Halverson, despite a widely held view that Sinclair 'knows parliamentary procedure and practice like nobody else in politics' (Ramsey 1996). His performance in February 1998 as chair of the Constitutional Convention grappling with the issue of an Australian republic was a very public demonstration of his skills. Following Halverson's resignation, Sinclair agreed to Howard's request that he become Speaker, thereby putting an end to reports that he was to become high commissioner in London. He was elected on 4 March 1998, making him the first Speaker to come from the junior party in a conservative coalition. In the words of opposition leader Kim Beazley—reminiscent of comments about such past Speakers as Archie Cameron—Sinclair was a poacher 'now placed in the position of the gamekeeper' (H.R. Deb. 4.3.1998, 358). Significantly, Beazley also said that 'we respect you as a warhorse, as a political figure, as a great survivor, as a person with an encyclopaedic knowledge, as a person who treats this chamber seriously and as a worthy and savage opponent' (H.R. Deb. 4.3.1998, 357).

Sinclair held the Speakership when the House of Representatives—always known for its adversarial atmosphere—was dealing with an array of polarising issues: the High Court's Wik decision on native title, the fragmentation of the conservative vote by Pauline Hanson's One Nation, significant changes to the taxation system, waterfront reform, and the privatisation of Telstra and of unemployment services. Added to this, the Labor opposition was still adjusting to being out of government after thirteen years in office. The outcome was an unruly parliament, fuelling criticism by party colleagues that Halverson was too lenient on opposition members. Sinclair, given

his background as a formidable parliamentary tactician and robust debater, quickly established himself as an assertive Speaker. Yet there were times when he seemed to tire of the more unedifying aspects of adversarial politics, reflecting early in his tenure that 'the chair is not responsible for the views expressed by members of this place—thank goodness' (H.R. Deb. 26.3.1998, 1727). He was also a champion of the work of House committees.

Tradition was important to Sinclair, making him a firm believer in the symbolic importance of parliament and of the role of the Speaker. He combined this with a desire to support the House as a practical and robust chamber that encouraged debate. Physical changes that he instituted were, in part, motivated by nostalgia for the intimacy of the previous parliament building, with the Speaker's chair being moved closer to the central table and seats for visiting guests placed on the main floor. He also rearranged the national flags and the seating of *Hansard* staff so they could better hear proceedings. Increasing use of mobile phones prompted his concern to 'contain non-essential office and electorate activity from interrupting House business' (Sinclair, pers. comm.).

As an arbiter of debate, Sinclair was neither entirely neutral nor simply a government tool. While his personal sympathies were with the government, he insisted that ministers keep answers to questions brief and relevant, and he felt that they made too much use of (then) standing order 321, which allowed them on confidentiality grounds to avoid tabling documents from which they had quoted. Supplementary questions to ministers, which Halverson had controversially permitted, were not allowed. Sinclair ruled against unparliamentary language, reminded members to address their comments through the chair, and rebuked members on both sides of the House when they interjected excessively. He was alert to potential abuses of parliamentary privilege, warning that 'members will recognise … that whatever its merits such a procedure cannot undo nor negate the harm that may be done by the careless or cavalier use of the privilege of freedom of speech with all the publicity that may sometimes flow from that' (H.R. Deb. 23.3.1998, 1255). Less seriously, soon after becoming Speaker, he informed the House of his awareness of a jar of petty cash dubbed 'Sinker's fund'—a play on his nickname—organised by some opposition members as a prize for the first of their number to be removed from the chamber by the new Speaker. He drolly decreed that, as such an award might well raise criminal and constitutional issues, organisers 'might like to donate the funds to a suitable charity' (H.R. Deb. 30.3.1998, 1836).

Sinclair's rulings, though, were on occasion controversial, drawing criticism from the opposition and some sections of the media. At times he allowed the government considerable latitude and was combative towards Labor. This was especially evident during the waterfront dispute, when he allowed the prime minister great latitude in answering questions. He quashed an opposition attempt to amend a motion moved

by the minister for workplace relations and small business, Peter Reith, supporting waterfront reform, ruling that the House's having suspended standing orders so that this motion could be moved without debate also precluded the opposition from moving an amendment to it (H.R. Deb. 8.4.1998, 2801–11). Yet he tried, if at times imperfectly, to preside fairly while dealing with a particularly fractious House.

On 31 August 1998, Sinclair retired from parliament and the Speakership after just six months in the position, so as to coincide with the forthcoming 1998 election. He was warmly farewelled by both major-party leaders. Prime Minister Howard told the House that Sinclair 'was not only the father of the House by dint of being the longest-serving member but also the father of the House in that he knew its nature, its workings and its rules. He understood its moods and he knew how to relate to it and deal with it like few other men and women who have been here—or, indeed are likely to be here—would be able to do' (H.R. Deb. 10.11.1998, 30).

Sinclair's first wife died of a brain tumour in 1967. In 1970, he married Rosemary Edna Fenton, a public relations officer from Lord Howe Island, at St Andrew's Church, Bendemeer. Rosemary was appointed AO in 2002 for her work concerning abused and neglected children. He has four children, including one from his second marriage. Throughout his impressively long and rich career, he continued to represent the same rural electorate, making him on retirement the longest-serving member for New England. To a casual observer, he seemed a stereotypical Liberal Party MP—urbane, educated, and city born. He was graced with a personable nature, despite which press profiles invariably noted his aura of resilience, reminiscent of 'a battle-scarred bull elephant' (Kitney 1984, 24). In 2001 he was appointed AC for his service to the parliament and to rural and regional communities, and also received a Centenary Medal. He remains in retirement an interested observer of politics and has served in senior positions with numerous not-for-profit organisations, including the international aid agency AUSTCARE, the Foundation for Rural & Regional Renewal, Scouts Australia (New South Wales), and the parenting body Good Beginnings Australia. His portrait by Charles Tompson hangs in Parliament House.

Select bibliography

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 4 March 1998, 351–61, 394–95

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 23 March 1998, 1255

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 26 March 1998, 1727

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 30 March 1998, 1836

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 8 April 1998, 2793–801

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 10 November 1998, 29–34

Bramston, Troy. 'Ian Sinclair: Grand Old Man of Politics Has No Regrets'. *Weekend Australian*, 15–16 April 2017, 18

Gordon, Michael. 'The Unsinkable Sinkers'. *Age* (Melbourne), 7 March 1998, 3

Kelly, Paul. 'Ian Sinclair: Those Political Scars Show'. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 20 January 1984, 7

Kitney, Geoff. 'Sinclair Gets His Chance'. *National Times* (Sydney), 6–12 January 1984, 24–27

Peake, Ross. 'Sinclair: I'm Staying for Howard'. *Sunday Times* (Canberra), 8 March 1998, 1–2

Ramsey, Alan. 'Sinkers' Last Tango in Canberra'. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 16 March 1996, 35

Sinclair, Ian. Personal communication, 12 June 2019

Ward, Ian. 'Political Chronicles—Commonwealth of Australia January to June 1998'. *Australian Journal of Politics and History* 44, no. 4 (1998): 567–629. doi.org/10.1111/1467-8497.00037

The Wisdom Interviews: Ian Sinclair. Radio. Interview by Peter Thompson. Sydney: ABC Radio National, 25 August 2002. Accessed 24 September 2019. www.abc.net.au/radio national/programs/bigideas/the-wisdom-interviews-ian-sinclair/3517942. Copy held on file

Slipper, Peter Neil: Speaker 2011–2012

Brian F. Stevenson

Peter Neil Slipper, solicitor and barrister, and twenty-seventh Speaker of the House of Representatives, was born on 14 February 1950 at Ipswich, Queensland, eldest of three sons of Stanley Edward Slipper, a senior mechanical engineer with Queensland railways, and his wife, Joan Margaret, née McIntyre, both Queensland born.

He completed his secondary education at Ipswich Grammar School, where he was a school debater, and matriculated in 1967. At the state election of December 1974 and the federal election of December 1975, Peter was campaign director for the National Party in the state seat of Ipswich West and the federal seat of Oxley respectively: the former fell to the National Party, and the latter was narrowly retained by the future Labor Party leader Bill Hayden. He studied at the University of Queensland (LLB, 1977; BA, 1988), became Rotaract Club president, and joined the Young Nationals, of which he became state president. Practising law, both as a sole practitioner and later in partnership, he was appointed chair of the West Moreton Regional Community Corrections Board, and was also a businessman and farmer. On 14 December 1985 at St James' Cathedral, Townsville, he married Lyn Margaret Hooper, daughter of the former Queensland government minister Maxwell David Hooper. They had two children, Nicholas Peter Sebastian Slipper, and Alexandra Jane Elizabeth Slipper, but the marriage ended in 2001. On 12 August 2006 he married Ingé-Jane Alison Slipper, née Hall, at All Saints' Anglican Church Wickham Terrace, Brisbane, in a high-profile ceremony attended by future prime minister Kevin Rudd.

At the 1984 federal election, Slipper was the successful National Party candidate for the seat of Fisher in the Pine Rivers, Sunshine Coast, Northern Darling Downs and South Burnett regions, having earlier defeated the businessman Clive Palmer, amongst many others, for preselection. In his first speech to the House, he deplored the 'constant guerrilla warfare' waged in the House of Representatives, in contrast to the relative 'courtesy and reasonable co-operation' (H.R. Deb. 28.2.1985, 412) of Westminster's House of Commons. He supported 'the maximum possible freedom of the individual from bureaucratic and government interference', along with 'respect

Figure 61: Peter Slipper.
Source: Australian Government Photographic Service (Auspic).

for the Crown and the rule of law, as well as our judicial system and parliamentary institutions' (H.R. Deb. 28.2.1985, 414). The new member was also 'somewhat saddened by the standard of dress now permitted in this chamber' (H.R. Deb. 28.2.1985, 414). Later that day, the Speaker, Harry Jenkins senior, warned Slipper for a frivolous point of order. Many years later, Slipper told the House that during his parliamentary career he had been ejected from the chamber for misbehaviour on five occasions, and had initially been perplexed by Jenkins's skill in identifying him as the offending interjector amid the clamour of debate; he eventually concluded that Jenkins's wife, Wendy, was pointing him out from the Speaker's gallery (H.R. Deb. 24.11.2011, 13796–97).

A supporter of the campaign to make Queensland premier Joh Bjelke-Petersen prime minister, Slipper lost his marginal seat at the election of July 1987. Reportedly, in seeking a return to parliament, he narrowly failed to obtain National Party endorsement in several different seats. In 1989 he switched to the Liberal Party, again won preselection for Fisher, and made a successful comeback at the 1993 election with the assistance of a favourable electoral boundary redistribution and a strong campaign. His extensive parliamentary committee service included chairing the House Standing Committees on Family and Community Affairs (1996–97) and on Legal and Constitutional Affairs (2004–07). He was government whip (1997–98), parliamentary secretary to the minister for finance and administration (1998–2004), and acting parliamentary secretary to Prime Minister John Howard (2002–03). Following the election of November 2007 and consequent change of government, Slipper was appointed to the Speaker's panel, in February 2008. However, around this time there were reportedly moves to replace him in Fisher with his party colleague Mal Brough, who had lost his seat of Longman at the 2007 election. But as the 2008 merger agreement between the Liberal and National parties in Queensland directed that sitting members be retained, Slipper's endorsement was secure, aided by party factional considerations.

In August 2010, Slipper found himself defending an expenses bill that, among federal parliamentarians from Queensland, was exceeded only by that of former prime minister Kevin Rudd. He responded that the $640,000 he claimed for the second half of 2009 was within relevant guidelines and mostly attributable to expenses associated with the relocation of his electorate office following further boundary changes. The following month, Julia Gillard's minority Labor government, evidently mindful that Slipper seemed unlikely to be renominated by the Liberal National Party for Fisher, successfully nominated him for the Deputy Speakership. Though an effective Deputy Speaker, Slipper's time in this role was marred by investigations into his use of parliamentary entitlements. He defended himself vigorously, contending that 'most of the payments resulted from legitimate differences in interpretation of entitlements applicable at the time' (Lewis 2010).

The resignation of Harry Jenkins as Speaker on 24 November 2011 cleared the way for the House to vote along party lines to replace him with Slipper. In a symbolic protest against this move, the opposition's Christopher Pyne nominated nine Labor members in succession; each declined. Jenkins's return to the backbench and Slipper's election as Speaker effectively gave the government two extra votes in the House. He declared that he would be 'an independent Speaker in the Westminster tradition', noting that the opposition leader, Tony Abbott, had earlier supported this model (H.R. Deb. 24.11.2011, 13797). Drily, he added that he had been 'encouraged in this opportunity to serve the parliament in a new way by the actions of some people in the Liberal National Party in recent times' (H.R. Deb. 24.11.2011, 13797). He also said: 'Frankly, I have got to admit that I am not perfect and I have made some mistakes, as some of the colourful stories about me reveal' (H.R. Deb. 24.11.2011, 13797).

Slipper's elevation to the Speakership and resignation from his party drew outrage from erstwhile colleagues. Michael O'Dwyer, director of the Liberal National Party, said that 'the state executive has determined Mr Slipper has betrayed his colleagues', and former Liberal minister Peter Reith even more bluntly labelled him 'a Liberal rat' (*ABC News* 2011). Gillard's predecessor and successor as prime minister, Kevin Rudd, later judged that the appointment 'made the government look like a desperate bunch of political opportunists who'd do anything for a vote' (Rudd 2018, 489). But some Labor members offered strong support to their former opponent. Michael Danby, the member for Melbourne Ports, described Slipper as 'a man who, with his knowledge of procedure, is perfectly fit for the role of Speaker' (H.R. Deb. 24.11.2011, 13784).

The new Speaker was determined to assert his authority. On his first day in the chair, Slipper ordered four opposition members from the chamber in quick succession, and warned: 'I would counsel all honourable members on both sides to observe civilities because, if that does not occur, our Chamber might often appear to have a lot fewer than 150 members' (H.R. Deb. 24.11.2011, 13819). When parliament returned in 2012, he again raised eyebrows, by donning robes and announcing plans for a longer and more public weekly Speaker's procession, emulating the practice of his distant predecessor Sir Billy Snedden. Whenever delivering a casting vote, he would follow convention and so 'always vote for further discussion; where no further discussion is possible, decisions should not be taken except by a majority; and a casting vote on an amendment should leave the bill in its existing form' (H.R. Deb. 7.2.2012, 12). Up to five supplementary questions would be allowed during question time, including one by non-aligned members each week.

To the surprise of many, Slipper soon established himself as an effective presiding officer. The press gallery found it 'refreshing to now have as Speaker a politician not beholden to either side of the House' (*Age* 2012, 16). But storm clouds soon gathered. It was widely believed that he would not occupy the position for long, as his personal support in Fisher appeared insufficient for re-election as an independent.

What chance he had diminished further when serious allegations against him were made public. The Department of Finance and the Australian Federal Police began investigating claims concerning improper use of travel entitlements, and a former member of his staff, James Ashby, accused him of sexual harassment.

On 22 April 2012, the day he returned from an overseas trip, Slipper issued a statement announcing that he would stand aside as Speaker until the criminal allegations against him had been resolved. When the House next sat, on 8 May 2012, he briefly took the chair to deny all allegations against him. He reiterated that he had 'sought to improve the standing of the House by introducing reforms which have been supported by all sides' (H.R. Deb. 8.5.2012, 4127), before inviting the Deputy Speaker, Anna Burke, and members of the Speaker's panel to preside over the House until the allegations were resolved. He continued, however, to carry out all other functions of the Speaker. Later that day, the opposition unsuccessfully attempted to instead have Jenkins act as Speaker, so 'that the clock should be restarted' (H.R. Deb. 8.5.2012, 4134) to when he had made way for Slipper.

Following the release of offensive text messages sent by Slipper to Ashby, including some pertaining to women, opposition leader Tony Abbott on 9 October 2012 proposed Slipper's immediate removal from office. After a long debate, the motion was narrowly lost along party lines (VP 2010-11-12/1838-9, 9.10.2012), but Slipper was privately counselled by two independents, Rob Oakeshott and Tony Windsor, along with senior government minister and leader of the House, Anthony Albanese. Briefly returning to the chair that same day, he announced his resignation as Speaker. In so doing, he spoke of how he had 'wanted to turn our House into being like the House of Commons, where we had more interactivity and more spontaneity and where the government of the day—whoever was in government—was in fact held accountable to the people of Australia' (H.R. Deb. 9.10.2012, 11644). Two months later, a sexual harassment case initiated by Ashby was dismissed, the Federal Court justice Steven Rares having concluded that Ashby's primary motive was to politically attack Slipper. Ashby successfully appealed, but later abandoned his lawsuit.

At the 2013 federal election, Slipper ran in Fisher as an independent but was unsuccessful. The following month, he said of formal charges concerning the use of public funds to visit Canberra region wineries during 2010: 'What is breathtaking is that I am before a court … despite a number of attempts on my part to solve the matter administratively. Yet others are able to write cheques for much more in repayment, and in their cases the matter's closed and no questions asked' (Grattan 2014). He believed he had been targeted by the coalition parties for accepting the Speakership, and had been denied access to the Minchin Protocol regularly used to resolve administrative differences with members over financial matters. In July 2014, he was found guilty of dishonestly using public funds and was sentenced to three hundred hours of community service and ordered to reimburse $954 to taxpayers.

He appealed and in February 2015 the conviction was set aside on the grounds that there were other potential explanations for the trips, such as seeking to inform himself about these businesses.

Although all formal proceedings against Slipper were ultimately withdrawn or dismissed, the personal price he paid extended well beyond loss of political standing. His mental health suffered from the incessant media attention, and he stated that he twice attempted suicide (Wright 2017). Often overlooked was his competent handling of the House during what was always likely to be a brief occupancy of the Speaker's chair. A man of strong religious views, he became a deacon in the Traditional Anglican Communion in 2003, a priest in 2008, and was also chancellor (senior legal adviser) to the primate until 2012. He subsequently joined the Brazilian Catholic Apostolic Church as a priest in 2016, and in 2017 became its bishop in Australia.

In March 2017, an official portrait by Paul Newton was unveiled in Parliament House, the impressive proportions of which matched Slipper's tall, lean figure. Michael Danby, still a supporter, saw the painting as a 'validation' of Slipper's parliamentary service, and assured him that, with it on display, 'you'll be here haunting this place, making sure that your role in public life is remembered' (Wright 2017). Slipper initially left Queensland to practise as a barrister in Hobart, and in 2019 was appointed honorary consul for Brazil in Tasmania. He established chambers in both Brisbane and Hobart, was appointed to various Law Society of Tasmania committees and the Committee of the Sunshine Coast Bar Association, and became a nationally accredited mediator.

Select bibliography

ABC News. 'Slipper Labelled "Liberal Rat" on Becoming Speaker'. Last modified 25 November 2011. Accessed 18 October 2019. www.abc.net.au/news/2011-11-24/slipper-labelled-liberal-rat-over-speaker-stoush/3693148. Copy held on file

Age (Melbourne). 'Answer the Question? Yes, Minister'. 1 March 2012, 16

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 28 February 1985, 411–15

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 24 November 2011, 13782–807, 13817–19

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 7 February 2012, 12–13, 112–13

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 8 February 2012, 195

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 8 May 2012, 4127

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 9 October 2012, 11573–601, 11644–47

Australia. House of Representatives. *Votes and Proceedings*, 2010–11–12, 1404–5, 1838–39

Grattan, Michelle. 'Slipper Found Guilty over Trips to Wineries'. *The Conversation*, 28 July 2014. Accessed on 18 October 2019. theconversation.com/slipper-found-guilty-over-trips-to-wineries-29790. Copy held on file

Jones, Ross. *Ashbygate: The Plot to Destroy Australia's Speaker*. Isle of Capri, Qld: Independent Australia, 2015

Lewis, Steve. 'Peter Slipper Labelled "Worst Offender"'. *Courier-Mail* (Brisbane), 2 November 2010, 2

Rudd, Kevin. *The PM Years*. Sydney: Pan Macmillan Australia, 2018

Slipper, Peter. Personal communication

Tin, Jason, Samantha Maiden, Steve Lewis and Australian Associated Press. 'Peter Slipper Steps Aside as Speaker after Sexual Harassment Allegations from Staffer'. *Sunday Mail* (Brisbane), 22 April 2012. Accessed 6 April 2020. www.couriermail.com.au/news/queensland/slipper-to-face-mp-vote/news-story/09fcf128264ed372367dc15c91b8d06c. Copy held on file

Wright, Tony. 'A Speaker's Spectre Hangs over Parliament'. *Age* (Melbourne), 29 March 2017, 4

Smith, Anthony David Hawthorn (Tony): Speaker 2015–2021

Stephen Wilks

Anthony David Hawthorn Smith, political adviser and thirtieth Speaker of the House of Representatives, was born on 13 March 1967 in Melbourne, third child and only son of Alan Leslie Hawthorn Smith, chemistry teacher, and his wife Noel Patricia, née Bickford, medical secretary. Tony began his education at Kerrimuir Primary School in suburban Box Hill North, followed by secondary studies at Carey Baptist Grammar School.

Carey marked Smith's family's first association with a figure who would greatly influence his political career; his father taught Peter Costello there, and Costello's father Russell later taught Smith history and politics. He attended the University of Melbourne (BA Hons, 1990; BCom, 1992), where his study of history and politics contributed to his awareness of parliamentary tradition. To meet his costs he worked variously as a nightshift cook, rowing coach, and history tutor. He was active in student politics, becoming president of the university Liberal Club (1988, honorary life member), and of the Victorian branch of the Liberal Students' Association (1989). It was in the latter capacity that he first met Costello, now a rising young industrial relations lawyer, when seeking advice on the issue of compulsory student union fees. He was at once impressed by Costello's energy and political savvy.

In line with the changing composition of the House of Representatives, Smith was the first Speaker with a professional background as a political activist. His first major job outside university began in 1989 as a part-time research assistant at the public policy think tank the Institute of Public Affairs. He took an early interest in the Commonwealth parliament, writing in the *IPA Review* on the importance of the Speaker's preparedness to enforce standing orders during question time, without which 'governments are able strategically to waste time through verbose replies, long on rhetoric promoting the government but short on relevance' (Smith 1990, 10). Later he considered Prime Minister Paul Keating's attempts to improve question time and alleviate the legislative workload as 'at best cosmetic and at worst a further erosion of parliamentary accountability' (Smith 1994, 12).

Figure 62: Tony Smith.
Source: Australian Government Photographic Service (Auspic).

A few months before the 1990 federal election, Smith offered to work for Costello, now the Liberal Party's candidate for the inner Melbourne seat of Higgins. He became his 'researcher, press secretary, letter-writer, trouble-shooter and personal adviser' (Costello 2008, 52), and later was his senior media adviser. Smith stayed with him through the party's narrow loss in 1990 and its unexpected defeat in 1993; Costello later predicted that his former staffer 'will go a long way in politics' (Costello 2008, 40). During 1993–94 Smith was involved in preparing the political case against the Keating government's minister for the environment, sport and territories, Ros Kelly, over the allocation of sporting grants to marginal electorates held by the government. The minister admitted that details of short-listed applications were recorded on a whiteboard in her office that was routinely wiped clean without a permanent record being retained. Reportedly, it was Smith who coined the term 'sports rorts' as shorthand for this affair. After Costello appointed journalist Niki Savva as his press secretary late in 1997, Smith became Costello's senior political adviser with a focus on tax reform. The two worked on helping to lay foundations for the introduction of the goods and services tax in 2000. On 21 December 1997 Smith married Pamela Jayne Read. They had two sons.

In 1998 Smith made his first attempt to enter parliament when he sought party preselection for the House of Representatives seat of Casey, based on Melbourne's eastern fringe, the Dandenong Ranges and the Yarra Valley, and from which a former Speaker, Bob Halverson, was retiring. Preselection went to the minister for health and aged care Michael Wooldridge, who sought a safer alternative to his electorate of Chisholm. Smith instead entered the Commonwealth parliament when Wooldridge retired at the election of 2001. He won Casey comfortably, and held it at the next six elections. As a promising young member, he was chair of the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters (2004–06) and of the Joint Statutory Committee on Public Accounts and Audit (2006–07), and served as parliamentary secretary to Prime Minister John Howard (2007). After the government lost office at the 2007 election he held a series of shadow portfolios, including education, apprenticeships and training (2007–08), assistant treasurer (2008–09), and broadband, communications and the digital economy (2009–10).

Press speculation late in 2010 that Smith could be Tony Abbott's running mate in a leadership challenge to Malcolm Turnbull proved ill-founded. Smith was demoted after the election of 2010, reportedly because Abbott felt he had failed to adequately sell to the electorate the opposition's policies on communications. He became shadow parliamentary secretary for tax reform (2010–13), and deputy chair of the coalition policy development committee (2010–15). When the Abbott government was elected in 2013 he was not appointed to the ministry. Instead, he was again chair of the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters (2014–15), and then of the House Standing Committee on Appropriations and Administration (2015–16, 2016–21).

Smith attributed his elevation to the Speakership to 'sudden and unusual circumstances' (Alcorn 2018, 24). Despite his regard for parliamentary tradition, he had no prior ambition to be Speaker, considering that 'most Speakers of the House of Representatives … are quite a bit older', as the Speakership 'was something they tended to do for the last couple of terms of their careers' (Alcorn 2018, 24). But on 2 August 2015 came the announcement of Bronwyn Bishop's resignation as Speaker, the result of widespread criticism of her use of public funds to pay for her travel by helicopter between Melbourne and Geelong to attend a party fundraising event. Both sides of politics sought a more low key figure than Bishop and one who would stress even-handedness. In the party room ballot Smith received strong support from his fellow backbenchers, despite opposition from Prime Minister Abbott. He comfortably defeated three other contenders, winning the final vote 51–22 over his fellow Victorian backbencher Russell Broadbent.

On 10 August 2015 Smith was unanimously chosen as Speaker by the House. He announced at once that he would absent himself from his party room, as he felt strongly that 'the Speaker should not only be but also be seen to be independent of the partisan day-to-day fray' (H.R. Deb. 10.8.2015, 7747). Press profiles noted his interest in restoring old cars by bestowing on him the tag 'revhead'. He was welcomed effusively by the opposition, but did not pursue a hopeful request by its leader, Bill Shorten, to allow supplementary questions during question time. Smith's elevation was also seen as marking a generational change, affirmed by his being the first male non-Labor Speaker not to don the gown when in the chair. He soon established himself as a firm and even-handed presiding officer. Just nine days after becoming Speaker he used standing order 94 (a) to eject from the chamber his own nominator for the Speakership, Michael Sukkar.

Appreciation by the opposition and the press of Smith's even-handedness grew steadily, drawing on a series of much-publicised statements and rulings. In September 2018 the House Standing Committee on Economics began an inquiry into the proposed removal of refundable franking credits, which was opposition policy. The committee's chair, Tim Wilson, supported claims that Labor was effectively proposing a 'retiree tax' on savings and superannuation balances. In February 2019 the opposition alleged that his conduct of the inquiry raised serious legal and procedural questions that amounted to contempt of parliament. Reportedly, party political material had been handed out at committee hearings; assistance to the inquiry had been provided by a consultant who was a distant relative of Wilson and also managed an asset management investment fund; Wilson had authorised a partisan website partly funded by this relative to collect submissions using a prefilled submission while also gathering personal information for non-committee purposes; the timing and location of a committee hearing had been organised to coincide with a nearby protest against the opposition's policy; and Wilson had not declared that he was a shareholder in his relative's investment fund.

Nonetheless, Smith concluded that Wilson had not 'unduly prevented the committee from performing its work' (H.R. Deb. 21.2.2019, 1329), and so his actions did not meet the high threshold for constituting contempt of parliament. But press reporting stressed Smith's measured comments that the chair nonetheless 'could be seen to have caused damage to the committee's reputation and the reputation of the House committee system more generally' (H.R. Deb. 21.2.2019, 1328), and had 'not always conformed with what I see as the conventions usually observed by chairs of House committees' (H.R. Deb. 21.2.2019, 1329). He also found that 'the handing out of party political material or a display of signs by individual members at hearings of parliamentary committees should not be tolerated by chairs' (H.R. Deb. 21.2.2019, 1329).

On 12 February 2019 Smith presided over a rare defeat for the government in the House on a substantive piece of proposed legislation, the Home Affairs Legislation Amendment (Miscellaneous Measures) Bill, aimed at speeding up immigration medical evacuations from Australia's offshore processing centres. He had received a copy of advice from the solicitor-general, Stephen Donaghue, to the attorney-general, Christian Porter, suggesting that some amendments to the bill passed by the Senate the previous year were unconstitutional, as expanding membership of the Independent Health Advice Panel would increase expenditure under a standing appropriation for remuneration of tribunal members. This seemed contrary to section 53 of the Constitution preventing the Senate from originating laws imposing taxation or appropriating revenue, while section 56 states that a proposed law for appropriation has to have had its purpose recommended by the governor-general to the House in which the proposal originated and in the same session. The Senate should have instead cast the relevant amendments as a request to the House to make these itself.

Porter gave the solicitor-general's advice to Smith on the basis that it was only to assist him in considering the Senate amendments, and expressly requested that it not be distributed any further. Smith disagreed, feeling that 'as Speaker, it's important I ensure in this instance all material available to me is also available to all members of the House' (H.R. Deb. 12.2.2019, 64). He also disagreed with the attorney-general's request that the House not consider the bill as amended by the Senate, instead leaving it to the House itself to decide how it would proceed. Smith's stance at once drew widespread praise from the media. The issue was resolved by the opposition leader successfully moving that most of the Senate amendments be accepted by House, but with an amendment of its own to ensure that the panel members in question would not receive remuneration. Members agreed, 75 votes to 74.

The Speakership also saw Smith dealing with some major new management issues. An electronic petitions website and system for the House was introduced early in 2016, as recommended by the Standing Committee on Petitions. The next year further security measures were implemented at Parliament House following advice

from police and security agencies, most prominently a new security fence around the building perimeter. This required balancing security with the public expectation that it remain accessible, with Smith sympathetic to the latter consideration. During 2019 he and the President of the Senate, his old university friend Scott Ryan, had to manage the new phenomenon of cyber attacks on the parliament, believed to be the work of a sophisticated state actor. Significantly and rarely, his nomination for the Speakership at the commencement of the forty-sixth parliament that year was seconded by an opposition member, Maria Vamvakinou.

In January 2020 Smith was elected president of the Asia Pacific Parliamentary Forum, the last major international event held at Parliament House before the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic. As Speaker, he helped to maintain the effective functioning of the entire parliament amidst hard borders between states, quarantine rules, and social-distancing requirements. In March 2020 just ninety members attended the House in person. Keeping chamber doors open to reduce the need to touch door handles opened up a view directly from the Speaker's chair over 163 metres to that of the President of the Senate. Advice from the Commonwealth's chief medical officer in July led Smith to cancel the forthcoming early August sitting. On 24 August 2020 members convened for a meeting that observed the Agreement for Members to Contribute Remotely to Parliamentary Proceedings reached between the government and the opposition. Members unable to attend in person contributed to debate remotely via secure video link from their electorate offices or nearest Commonwealth parliamentary office; instead of calling for order, the Speaker directed them to mute themselves. The sitting featured containers of hand sanitiser sited throughout the chamber, parliamentarians and parliamentary officers wearing face masks, and members' benches that looked 'spookily sparse' (Wright 2020, 26).

Late in his Speakership Smith made his most publicised assertion of the Speaker's independence from party ties. This arose in October 2021 from Porter's use of a blind trust to receive anonymous donations to partially cover his legal fees for a defamation action he had brought against the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, but subsequently withdrew. The opposition considered this a failure to comply with a House resolution on the registration of members' interests, amounting to contempt of parliament. Tony Burke, the manager of opposition business in the House, thought that 'it beggars belief' that Porter 'has no idea who donated to this trust' (H.R. Deb. 18.10.2021, 9342), and saw a potential precedent for using blind trusts to escape disclosure obligations. The opposition moved that Porter be referred to the House Standing Committee of Privileges and Members' Interests.

Smith was not required to rule on the contempt of parliament question, but rather on whether the opposition motion to refer the matter to the committee should proceed to be debated. Two days later, being satisfied of a prima facie case for scrutiny by the House Privileges Committee, he gave the matter precedence for debate, a ruling which

would normally lead to the matter being sent to the committee. Burke welcomed this, adding that 'it would be the cover-up to end all cover-ups if this House prevents the Privileges Committee from even being able to look at this resolution before us', while recognising that it 'might come back with an answer that I don't expect' (H.R. Deb. 20.10.2021, 9746). But the leader of the House, Peter Dutton, responded that it was 'a workplace entitlement issue and I think it's a broader discussion that should be had', adding that the issue in question 'applies to a number of other members in this place over a period of time in relation to defamation trials' (H.R. Deb. 20.10.2021, 9748, 9747). The motion was defeated on party lines. Again, press reporting heavily favoured Smith.

In July 2021 Smith issued a statement that he would not contest the next election, to allow the Liberal Party and the people of Casey 'the opportunity for renewal' (Grattan 2021). Three months later he added that he would shortly resign as Speaker and return to the backbench. This was not because of any weariness of being Speaker—'I doubt I would ever tire of it'—but so as to be able to spend his remaining time in parliament 'working exclusively for the people of Casey' (H.R. Deb. 28.10.2021, 10308, 10307). His last day in the chair was 22 November 2021, and the following day Andrew Wallace was elected his successor. It was widely reported that had Smith stayed on as Speaker, a then putative future Labor government may well have tried to retain him in the chair.

The tall, blonde, and stern-looking Smith had become known for his firmness in dealing with unruly members. He had little hesitation in rebuking prime ministers and senior minsters for turning parliamentary answers into lengthy political attacks of doubtful relevance to the question asked. Prime Minister Scott Morrison nonetheless lauded him as 'an outstanding Speaker, in the true Westminster tradition' (Morrison 2021). Perhaps more tellingly, Burke said that Smith was 'consistent, principled, and most importantly, fearless' (Burke 2021). With Sir Frederick Holder and Sir John McLeay, he was one of only three Speakers elected by the House unopposed three times in a row, and Holder and he the only two never to have faced such opposition at all.

Smith left the Speakership on a note of reappreciation of the dignity and traditions of the office. As Speaker, he came into his own and had realised his potential. Labor's Tanya Plibersek said as early as 2016 that 'it really does take someone who loves our democracy, who loves our Westminster system and our Westminster traditions, to do your job well. I see that love in you' (H.R. Deb. 30.8.2016, 8). After leaving parliament, he became chief executive of the Australian American Leadership Dialogue, a private diplomatic initiative in support of this bilateral relationship. In February 2022 he shared the 2021 McKinnon Prize in Political Leadership for his work in upholding parliamentary standards and ensuring bipartisan accountability, and in August that year became professor in the practice of politics at The Australian National University.

Select bibliography

Alcorn, Gay. 'Speaking of Which…' *3010* (Melbourne), 2018, 24–25

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates,* 10 August 2015, 7743–48

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates,* 30 August 2016, 5–10

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates,* 12 February 2019, 63–109

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates,* 21 February 2019, 1328–31

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates,* 18 October 2021, 9342–43

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates,* 20 October 2021, 9744–50

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates,* 28 October 2021, 10307–08

Burke, Tony. Twitter post, 14 July 2021. mobile.twitter.com/tony_burke/status/14152004 00014077957. Copy held on file

Costello, Peter with Peter Coleman. *The Costello Memoirs: The Age of Prosperity*. Carlton, Vic.: Melbourne University Press, 2008

Grattan, Michelle. 'View from The Hill: Speaker Tony Smith, Proponent of "Order in the House" to Retire at Election'. *The Conversation*, 14 July 2021. Accessed 8 March 2022. theconversation.com/view-from-the-hill-speaker-tony-smith-proponent-of-order-in-the-house-to-retire-at-election-164494. Copy held on file

Hall, Fleur. 'Reflections on Parliamentary Democracy in the Australian Parliament'. *The Parliamentarian* 102, no. 4 (2021): 398–401

Morrison, Scott. 'Retirement of the Hon. Tony Smith MP'. Media statement, 14 July 2021. www.pm.gov.au/media/retirement-hon-tony-smith-mp. Copy held on file

Smith, Anthony D. 'Parliament Degraded'. *IPA Review* 43, no. 3 (Autumn 1990): 10–14

Smith, Anthony D. 'Time to Raise Parliamentary Standards'. *IPA Review* 46, no. 4 (1994): 12–14

Smith, Anthony D. 'The Australian Speakership'. Speech to the 48th Annual Conference of Presiding Officers and Clerks, Sydney, 5 July 2017

Wright, Tony. 'New Order in the House'. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 5 September 2020, 26

Snedden, Sir Billy Mackie: Speaker 1976–1983

Kay Walsh and Bernie Schedvin

Sir Billy Mackie Snedden (1926–87), lawyer and seventeenth Speaker of the House of Representatives, was born on 30 December 1926 in Perth, youngest of six surviving children of Scottish-born parents Alan Snedden, stonemason, and his wife, Catherine, née Mackie. Billy was three when his father deserted the family, which then struggled financially. From the age of eight, he delivered newspapers in the morning and sold them on street corners in the afternoon—a demanding routine that shaped his work ethic. Snedden attended Highgate State and Perth Boys' schools, but he left in April 1942 to work as a law clerk for T. J. ('Diver') Hughes, while he studied at night for his Junior and Leaving certificates at Perth Technical College. In January 1944, he joined the Commonwealth Crown Solicitor's Office. The next year, he enlisted in the Royal Australian Air Force; he trained as an aircraftman at Busselton, Western Australia, and Somers, Victoria, before being discharged on 14 September. Eligible to further his education under the Commonwealth Reconstruction Training Scheme, he entered the law faculty at the University of Western Australia (LLB, 1950).

While a student, Snedden again worked in the Crown Solicitor's Office and also operated a morning newspaper run and delivered greengroceries on his bike. He participated in cricket and football, debating, and amateur dramatics. Interested in politics, he was attracted to the Liberal Party because of its emphasis on individual freedom, and he was president of the university Liberal Club. He gained experience in political campaigning by standing in a by-election for the state seat of Boulder in December 1948 and in two federal elections, for the seats of Fremantle (December 1949) and Perth (April 1951). At university, he consciously developed his voice and speaking skills, worked on his 'manners', and extended his reading. President of the Western Australian division of the Young Liberal Movement, he was elected inaugural federal chairman in 1951. On 10 March 1950 at St Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Perth, he married Joy Forsyth, a dental nurse. They were to have two sons and two daughters.
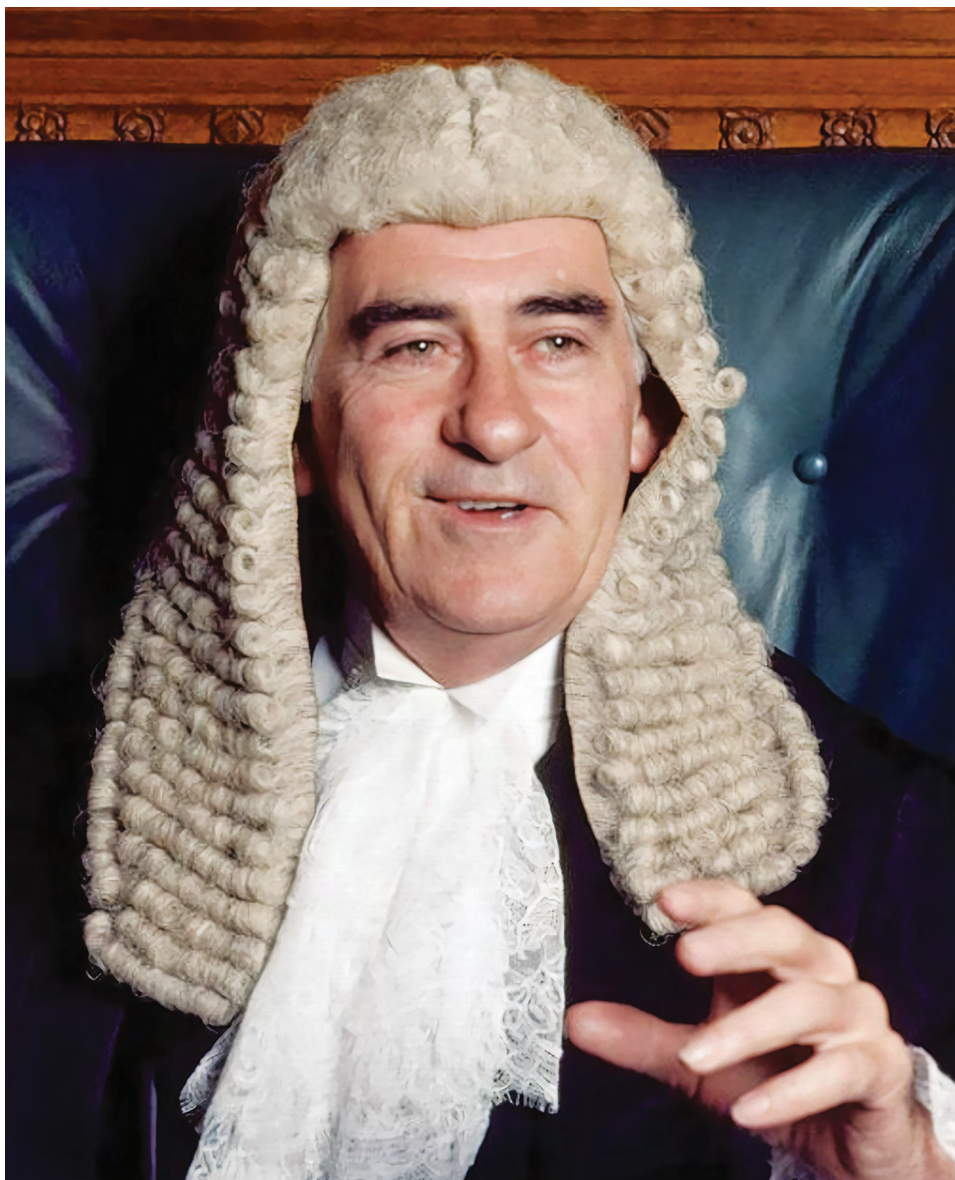
Figure 63: Billy Snedden.
Source: Courtesy of the National Archives of Australia. NAA: A6135, K20/1/81/13.

After completing his degree, Snedden took articles with Hardwick, Slattery & Gibson. In March 1951, he returned briefly to the Crown Solicitor's Office but left for a job with Angus & Coote Pty Ltd, mainly selling hearing aids. He was admitted to the Bar on 21 December 1951. The next year, he was appointed a selection officer in the Department of Immigration; he served in Italy for eighteen months and in England for a year. Deciding to return to Australia and to practise law, he worked for the Legal Service Bureau, Melbourne, until his admission to the Victorian Bar on 1 September 1955. The family settled at Ringwood.

In 1955 Snedden was endorsed by the Liberal Party for the federal seat of Bruce and won it on preferences at the election of 10 December. He combined parliamentary duties with legal work until March 1964, when Prime Minister Sir Robert Menzies appointed him attorney-general. That year he took silk. Continuing to hold the portfolio under Prime Minister Harold Holt, he introduced a bill to deal with restrictive trade practices by administrative rather than penal process. Despite opposition from within the Liberal and Country parties and in cabinet, and resistance from the chambers of manufactures and of commerce, the Trade Practices Act 1965 was passed, albeit in a much weaker form than he had wanted.

From December 1966 to November 1969, Snedden was minister for immigration under Holt and (Sir) John Gorton. He rejected the previous emphasis on 'assimilation' and pursued instead a policy of integration, seeking to broaden the ethnic basis of Australia's immigration intake. Holt appointed him leader of the House in February 1967, a position he held until November 1968, and again, under Gorton, from November 1969 to March 1971. He learned much from Holt about the functioning of the House, including using the standing orders to the advantage of the government, such as curtailing opposition contributions by moving closure, or 'gag', motions. He later boasted of having once moved twenty-eight such motions in one day and of being known as 'Gagging Billy' (Snedden 1983–87). After Holt's disappearance in December 1967, Snedden unsuccessfully contested the party leadership.

Amid growing public dissent about Australian involvement in the Vietnam War, in November 1969 Snedden became minister for labour and national service and a member of cabinet. When (Sir) William McMahon replaced Gorton as prime minister in March 1971, he appointed Snedden treasurer. Growing inflationary pressures, exacerbated by increased welfare spending and fuel excise, complicated government budgeting and management of the economy. Snedden's two budgets—for which McMahon and the treasury had to accept some of the blame—were considered by many observers to be inadequate responses to the economic circumstances. The rising value of the Australian dollar became a contentious issue and almost precipitated a Country Party walkout from the coalition.

Faced with festering internal party divisions, Gorton resigned from a short-lived appointment as deputy leader, and Snedden succeeded him on 18 August 1971. He was appointed a privy counsellor in June the next year. After the coalition parties were defeated at the 1972 election, he was elected party leader and thus leader of the opposition. Amid seething discontent within the Liberal Party, he faced pressing issues of revising the party platform and renegotiating the terms of cooperation with the Country Party. Uncomfortable as opposition leader, he made a number of unfortunate public gaffes. The Labor prime minister, Gough Whitlam— a commanding figure—dominated him in the House. Anxious to placate his critics, Snedden forced an early election by using Senate numbers to hold up appropriation bills. Whitlam requested a double dissolution and won the subsequent election of May 1974. Snedden's position was weakened. He survived one challenge to his leadership, but his chance of becoming prime minister—a long-held ambition—was destroyed when he was ousted as leader on 21 March 1975 by Malcolm Fraser.

Snedden retreated to the back bench. Following the election of December 1975, Fraser as prime minister advised him to leave parliament and proposed a place in the judiciary. Snedden preferred a senior cabinet position, but at the prompting of party colleagues sought endorsement as Speaker, a position he felt bore appropriate status as 'the fulcrum of parliamentary democracy' (H.R. Deb. 17.2.1976, 10). He won the party nomination against six other candidates by an absolute majority on the first vote. On the opening day of the thirtieth parliament, he was nominated in the House by Don Chipp, a close friend. Chipp—himself gravely disappointed at being excluded from the ministry—warned that 'this country is in a crisis state' and 'the dignity of the Parliament needs to be restored', before proposing Snedden as possessing the 'tolerance, character and integrity' to deal with this dire situation (H.R. Deb. 17.2.1976, 10). Elected on party lines by 90 votes to 37 against the Labor candidate, the previous Speaker, Gordon Scholes, Snedden responded in kind to his nomination by promising 'to protect the dignity, the decorum and authority of the House' (H.R. Deb. 17.2.1976, 10).

From the start, Snedden's Speakership was characterised by efforts to improve the status and functionality of parliament. Succinctly proclaiming 'I am a parliamentary reformer' (Snedden 1979), he was particularly concerned by executive dominance of the legislature. He initially sought to enhance the dignity of the Speakership by donning the traditional full-bottomed judge's wig, lace, and black Queen's Counsel gown. In December 1977, he was appointed KCMG, with a formal investiture the following month in London. Shortly after, Sir Billy instituted a Canberra version of the Speaker's procession conducted in the House of Commons, hoping that such pageantry would please visitors and signify the importance of the national parliament. On the first day of each sitting week, he was led into the chamber through the front door of the House by the Serjeant-at-Arms bearing the mace, with robed and bewigged Clerks following.

Snedden felt strongly that some previous Speakers had not been properly impartial. When opposition leader, during a turbulent period in the House, he had moved a vote of no confidence in Speaker James Cope for favouring government members, stating as he did that Cope had a predilection for undignified witticisms that 'fall flat' (H.R. Deb. 8.4.1974, 1118; VP 1974/90–91, 8.4.1974). He advocated adopting Westminster conventions of the Speaker ceasing to be an active member of a political party, retaining the Speakership unopposed while in parliament, and contesting general elections without facing opponents from the major parties. Speaking to the National Press Club in June 1978, he offered to forgo such security of tenure for himself, 'because I cannot be the advocate and the beneficiary' (Davidson 1978). In May and October 1979, he distributed papers to members proposing the adoption of such arrangements, but he was to remain frustrated by the disparity between interest from the public and the media on the one hand, and the paucity of cross-party support on the other. He succeeded only in declining to participate in party room meetings unless an especially important matter was due for discussion.

Recognising the risks posed by his independent-mindedness and tenuous personal relationship with Fraser, Snedden maintained his practice as a barrister. In spite of this evident insecurity, he appeared confident in the chair. To encourage the flow of debate, he took a common-sense approach to interpreting standing orders where he felt they were silent or unclear, such as on unparliamentary remarks and supplementary questions. He attempted to redress any advantage given to government members, particularly ministers, in the standing orders, and ignored excessive demands by party colleagues for the 'call' during question time (Snedden 1983–87). Lengthy and irrelevant questions and answers were curtailed, and he made rulings constraining the incorporation of unread documents into *Hansard* (H.R. Deb. 21.10.1982, 2339–40). He advocated, without success, that the Speaker should have discretion to disallow gag or closure motions, as in House of Commons practice (Snedden 1983–87). In 1979 Snedden commissioned the Clerk of the House, John (Jack) Pettifer, to prepare a paper canvassing the establishment of eight House standing committees on legislation and estimates, replacing ad hoc committees that had operated with little effect. These were intended to relieve the House of the need to examine increasing numbers of bills and to improve opportunities for opposition and backbench members to contribute. Committees along these lines were established after Snedden retired from parliament.

Snedden had more control over the chamber than did some of his predecessors— notably Cope—making him willing to tolerate a degree of rowdiness as an expression of 'deep seated convictions' in a 'truly free democratic parliamentary system' (Snedden 1979, 14). His experience, particularly as leader of the House, made him confident that he 'knew every trick that there was' (Snedden 1983–87). In the chair, he was voluble and earnest, but occasionally used a quick wit to discipline unruly members. He once 'sat down' both Whitlam and Fraser, primly reminding them that their

behaviour should reflect their status 'as leaders in the national parliament' (H.R. Deb. 4.5.1977, 1511). Snedden encouraged Pettifer to document House procedure, leading to publication of the first edition of *House of Representatives Practice* in 1981.

Resentful of the executive's power over parliamentary spending, Snedden agitated for a separate budget, insisting that, as Speaker, he must be consulted on estimates of parliamentary expenditure. To hold governments to account, the parliament needed, he felt, to be financially independent and well resourced. In April 1981, he was a witness before the Senate Select Committee on Parliament's Appropriations and Staffing. This was the first time a Speaker had appeared before a Senate committee, and it led to the Appropriation (Parliamentary Departments) Act 1982–83, which separated funding for parliament from the appropriations for the 'ordinary annual services of government'. The Act provided for a global figure for each parliamentary department, effectively conceding, as the treasurer, John Howard, said in introducing the bill, 'that detailed control over individual expenditure items for the Parliament was not necessary'; Howard added that these figures had 'been agreed to between the leaders of the Houses and the Presiding Officers' (H.R. Deb. 17.8.1982, 270–71, 431). Yet just a few years later, prominent historians of the parliament adjudged that although these financial changes brought more flexibility to budgeting they did not greatly inhibit executive influence, and were 'much more symbolic than real' (Reid and Forrest 1989, 406). A number of parliamentary functions administered by executive departments were transferred to the parliament, including contributions to international parliamentary associations. The Public Service Acts Amendment Act 1982 provided for more parliamentary autonomy in staffing arrangements by enabling the Speaker to appoint and promote departmental officers (other than the Clerk) and to create offices within the department without Executive Council approval.

During his first years in parliament, Snedden had shared an office with other backbenchers, at times resorting to using a desk in the party room. As Speaker, he and the Senate President, Sir Condor Laucke, arranged for some parliamentary staff to work from venues outside the provisional Parliament House, such as the nearby East Block, thereby allowing an office for every member. Snedden believed that the inadequacy of the provisional Parliament House detracted from efficiency, while the inability to accommodate research staff contributed to dominance by the better-resourced executive. As attorney-general, he had represented Menzies on the Joint Parliamentary Committee on the New and Permanent Parliament House and, from April 1976, he and Laucke jointly chaired a new incarnation of this committee. Snedden sought funding and bipartisan support for a permanent parliament building and, in 1978, the Fraser government announced a design competition. When the project finally got under way, he personally scrutinised plans, insisting that the parliament itself should have ultimate say over design elements. He ensured provision for the future televising of parliament, consistent with his view that 'people ought to be able to make their own judgments' about their representatives (Davidson 1978).

The most difficult situation Snedden faced as Speaker arose on 18 February 1982 when Bob Hawke, then an opposition frontbencher, accused Fraser of lying in relation to comments by Victorian opposition leader John Cain concerning royal commissions into the Federated Ship Painters and Dockers Union and the Builders Labourers Federation. Snedden named Hawke when he refused to withdraw the accusation, amid an eruption of interjections and opposition members chanting 'lies, lies, lies' (H.R. Deb. 18.2.1982, 321). His attempt to break the stalemate by suggesting that Fraser 'consider a conciliatory statement' (H.R. Deb. 18.2.1982, 323) was disregarded by the outraged prime minister. A motion to suspend Hawke was put by a government minister, but Snedden realised that if this were carried by the government majority, he would then have to deal in the same way with the many opposition interjectors—a 'charade which would destroy the Parliament's effectiveness' and possibly spark 'physical violence in the place' (Snedden and Schedvin 1990, 222). He instead declined to put the question on the motion and called for thirty seconds of silence. Later that day, he left the chamber fully expecting that Fraser would soon move a no-confidence motion against him. But a count by government whips determined that insufficient government members would support such a move, and Fraser reluctantly let the matter drop. Snedden was clearly more respected by party colleagues than by the prime minister.

Following the Fraser government's defeat in March 1983, Snedden resigned from parliament in emulation of the Westminster convention that 'when the Speaker leaves the chair he leaves the House' (H.R. Deb. 21.4.1983, 6). In his final speech to the House, he reiterated his belief in the Speaker's importance as the 'guardian of the right of each member' to 'speak and to demand the truth' (H.R. Deb. 21.4.1983, 5). Westminster practice was yet to be adopted, but he felt that 'general knowledge and consideration of the convention have expanded' and so 'the status of the Speaker has thereby been enhanced, together with an increase in the public perception of the status of parliament' (H.R. Deb. 21.4.1983, 6).

Having separated from his wife, Snedden moved into a flat in inner-city Melbourne. After so many years away from full-time legal practice, he had difficulty resuming his profession, and joined the boards of a number of retail and finance companies. He became patron of the 'Coterie' group of prominent supporters of the Melbourne Football Club and club chairman (1980–85); he was also a director of the Victorian Football League. Proud of his Scottish heritage, he was a senior vice-president of the Melbourne Scots Club. He continued to work on behalf of the Liberal Party, mainly by raising funds, and joined its state finance committee in 1986.

In retirement, Snedden proudly described the new parliament building under construction as 'my product' (Snedden and Schedvin 1990, 228), yet he never saw the completed structure. He died suddenly of heart disease on 25 June 1987. Following a state funeral at Scots' Church, Melbourne, he was cremated. His estranged wife

and their children survived him. When Clyde Cameron retired after more than thirty years in the House, he described Snedden as 'the best Speaker I have sat under' (H.R. Deb. 18.9.1980, 1574), having made a similar comment about Archie Cameron. Snedden's party colleague Andrew Peacock considered him 'the most gracious man with whom I had worked' (H.R. Deb. 14.9.1987, 28). Yet his 'warmth, vitality and sincerity' (Chipp and Larkin 1978, 154) were largely lost in television appearances in which he often appeared wooden, a major handicap when he was opposition leader. A portrait of Snedden by June Mendoza was completed in 1984 and hangs in Parliament House. After his death, he was widely acknowledged as an energetic and impartial Speaker who had done much to enhance the profile of the office, and to improve procedural efficiency. Few Speakers had so doggedly sought to embed the highest ideals of the Speakership in House practice; in the words of his collaborator and biographer, 'he was Parliament's champion' (Snedden and Schedvin 1990, 252).

This article supplements the original Volume 18 ADB *biography, published 2012, authored by Bernie Schedvin. adb.anu.edu.au/biography/snedden-sir-billy-mackie-15519/text26731*

Select bibliography

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 8 April 1974, 1117–26

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 17 February 1976, 3–10

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 4 May 1977, 1510–12

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 18 September 1980, 1569–77

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 18 February 1982, 320–24

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 17 August 1982, 270–71, 431

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 21 October 1982, 2339–40

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 26 October 1982, 2501–3

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 21 April 1983, 5–6

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 14 September 1987, 24–37

Australia. House of Representatives. *Votes and Proceedings*, 1974, 90–91

Canberra Times. 'Permanent Parliament "To Aid Reforms"'. 20 October 1979, 3

Canberra Times. 'Sir Billy Had Few Enemies, Though Not a Lot of Natural Allies'. 28 June 1987, 2

Chipp, Don, and John Larkin. *Don Chipp: The Third Man*. Adelaide: Rigby, 1978

Davidson, Gay. 'Australia's Tragedy He Did Not Win: Snedden'. *Canberra Times*, 9 June 1978, 1

Kelly, Paul. *The Unmaking of Gough*. Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1976.

National Library of Australia. MS 6216, Papers of Billy Mackie Snedden

Pender, Jim. 'Billy Snedden and the Reform of Parliament'. *Legislative Studies* 11, no. 1 (Spring 1996): 68–72

Reid, G. S. and Martyn Forrest. *Australia's Commonwealth Parliament, 1901–1988: Ten Perspectives*. Carlton, Vic.: Melbourne University Press, 1989

Snedden, Billy. Interview by Catherine Santamaria, June–August 1976. National Library of Australia

Snedden, Billy. *Walter Burley Griffin Memorial Lecture*. Canberra: Royal Australian Institute of Architects, ACT Chapter, 1979

Snedden, Billy. Interview by Bernadette Schedvin, 1983–87. Parliament's Oral History Project. National Library of Australia

Snedden, Billy. 'Ministers in Parliament—A Speaker's Eye View'. In *Responsible Government in Australia*, edited by Patrick Weller and Dean Jaensch, 68–85. Richmond, Vic.: Drummond, 1980

Snedden, Billy Mackie, and M. Bernie Schedvin. *Billy Snedden: An Unlikely Liberal*. South Melbourne: Macmillan, 1990

Tregear, Albert Allan: Clerk 1955–1958

Kay Walsh

Albert Allan Tregear (1896–1976), seventh Clerk of the House of Representatives, was born in Port Melbourne on 15 May 1896, second son of Annie Tregear, née Cameron, and her husband, Gregory Albert Ernest Tregear, both Victorian born. Allan's father was a fireman and later a railway employee, but when a union dispute left him out of work for a number of years, Allan and his older brother William left school to become post office messenger boys in 1911.

In April 1912, Tregear was appointed a messenger in the Commonwealth Public Service and, in March 1913, he was promoted to the Public Service Commissioner's Office. Studying by night, he learnt shorthand and gained accountancy qualifications, and also commenced studies in commerce at the University of Melbourne. He transferred to the clerical division of the public service in May 1914, still in the Public Service Commissioner's Office. In September 1920, he switched to the Department of the Senate as a clerk and shorthand writer, filling a position vacated by John Ernest Edwards, a future Clerk of the Senate.

Tregear was promoted to the Department of the House of Representatives in March 1925, as Clerk of the Papers and Reading Clerk. The parliamentary service was by then preparing to move to Canberra, and in 1926 he accompanied the Speaker, Sir Littleton Groom, to examine the new Parliament House under construction. Tregear returned to Canberra in the immediate lead-up to the ceremonial opening on 9 May 1927, sleeping on a 'bed-settee' in the building. He was displeased to discover some design shortcomings, including staff offices so far from the House chamber that 'you had to run up and down stairs if you wanted a paper' (Tregear 1976, 15). Following the sudden death of the Clerk of the House, Walter Gale, he was appointed Serjeant-at-Arms and Clerk of Committees, on 1 September 1927. He moved permanently to Canberra for the first full session in the new House, held on 28 September. His home for the next nine years was Brassey House, a hostel for unmarried government employees that was within walking distance of the parliament.

Figure 64: Allan Tregear.
Source: Department of the House of Representatives.

Unlike many others who transferred to Canberra, Tregear was not beset by homesickness and boredom. A keen sportsman, he was elected an officer of the Parliamentary Sports Association, was an A-grade wicketkeeper successively for the Ainslie, Manuka, and Forrest cricket clubs, and played competition tennis and golf. He also took an interest in horseracing, having in Melbourne lived next door to a trainer for whom he and his brother did track work. Additionally, he found himself in demand as an auditor or treasurer of sporting and cultural associations. At Brassey House, he helped to organise dances and was active in the fledgling Society of Arts and Literature.

Initially, Tregear had progressed steadily through the Department of the House of Representatives hierarchy. Following the death of Gale's successor as Clerk, John McGregor, Tregear became Second Clerk Assistant, on 10 November 1927. His elevation to a clerk at the table was so sudden that for his first session in the House he had to borrow a wig that happened to be much too large for him; the journalist Brian Penton was amused that this 'very father of all wigs' seemed to transform a 'pleasantly friendly young man' into 'a most ferocious martinet of the restoration' (Penton 1927, 14).

Early in Tregear's career, arrangements for royal commissions differed considerably from those used in later years, and so in 1928 he served as secretary to the royal commission on the moving picture industry with serving federal parliamentarians as the commissioners. He followed up the commission's report during a private visit to the United States in 1930, where he examined the operations of Hollywood studios. Back home, he completed his studies at Canberra University College (BCom, 1934). He was also a keen amateur actor, with his October 1935 performance in a reading of *Pygmalion* and *Galatea* deemed 'outstanding' (*Canberra Times* 1935, 2).

In March 1937, Tregear was promoted to Clerk Assistant—effectively deputy to the Clerk, Frank Green—and remained in this position for more than eighteen years. On 10 April 1937, he married Doris Addie Belford Moore of Ivanhoe, Victoria, at Wesley Church, Melbourne. A daughter of Charles Belford Moore, partner and director in the Moore Pizzey leather goods company, Doris was a champion golfer who became prominent in Canberra golfing and tennis associations. The 'culturally adventurous' (Freeman 2015, 9) Tregears had a family home built on a large block at the corner of Arthur Circle and Moresby Street, Red Hill, an enclave of senior public servants and academics. Designed by Malcolm Johnson Moir, it became known locally as 'Fort Tregear' because of its distinctive cubist mass. In 1940, following a request by the Secretary of the Department of Defence, (Sir) Frederick Sheddon, for the services of an officer with knowledge of parliament, Tregear moved to Melbourne to work at the Department of Munitions under Essington Lewis. That same year, a daughter, Gail Annette, was born. Tregear also spent a period as Secretary of the Joint House Department, while continuing as Clerk Assistant, between December 1942 and August 1944.

From October 1951, Tregear worked for a year in the Table Office of the House of Commons, making him the first Commonwealth parliamentary officer seconded to the British parliament. His report on this experience was published as a parliamentary paper in 1953, providing a systematic analysis of Westminster procedures that included tables comparing House of Representatives and House of Commons practice. He thus became something of an authority on parliamentary reform, and his report was frequently cited. Opposition leader H. V. Evatt quoted him in arguing for the more expeditious production of a daily *Hansard*, and backbenchers Alan Bird and W. C. Wentworth used his report to press for the establishment of House standing committees to consider legislation. Tregear himself told the Public Accounts Committee in 1953 that, compared with House of Commons practice, Australian parliamentarians had insufficient time to consider estimates during budget sessions. As late as 1974, his figures on the number of questions asked in one year in the House of Commons were used by the former Liberal minister (Sir) David Fairbairn to call for the reform of question time.

Tregear was promoted to Clerk of the House of Representatives on 27 June 1955, following Green's retirement. This was soon after the imprisonment by a vote of the House of Raymond Fitzpatrick and Frank Browne for a serious breach of parliamentary privilege, arising from their publication of a newspaper report accusing the member for Reid, Charles Morgan, of involvement in an immigration racket. Tregear, like Green, deplored this as a victory of executive government over parliamentary democracy. On 29 August 1956, he announced in the House the death of the Speaker, Archie Cameron, and took the chair in conducting the election of the next Speaker, (Sir) John McLeay. As Clerk, he became secretary of the Australian Branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association.

Impeccably dressed and so scrupulously non-political that he habitually voted informal at general elections (Tregear 2014), Tregear sat at the table in the House of Representatives during sessions characterised by austerity, emergency, and long, late-night sittings. He had, however, a keen sense of humour, and was known to write humorous doggerel while on duty in the House. One such effort responded in kind to ponderings in verse by Prime Minister (Sir) Robert Menzies about what went on in the minds of the imperturbably discreet Clerks:

> If we look glum and vacant stare,
> When wigged and seated 'neath the Chair,
> Please do not think 'tis Nature's way,
> It's rather service for our pay.
> For if some thoughts we dare repeat,
> We'd find ourselves out in the street.
> A Clerk-at-the-Table is like a bird,
> And like a bird says not a word.

Tregear retired from parliamentary service on 31 December 1958. Menzies paid tribute to his 'complete integrity, complete capacity in his job, and complete impartiality' (H.R. Deb. 1–2.10.1958, 1895). He was appointed CBE in 1959. A former president of Canberra Rotary (1954–55), he became Honorary National Secretary of the National Heart Foundation of Australia in 1959 and was a director of Capital Television Ltd and of the Moore family company. In retirement, he and Doris travelled extensively, including to the United States and Europe. Tregear died in Canberra on 19 December 1976, survived by his wife and daughter.

Select bibliography

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 1–2 October 1958, 1894–97

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 26 May 1988, 3018

Canberra Times. 'Play Reading'. 22 October 1935, 2

Canberra Times. 'Time Inadequate for Estimates'. 22 May 1953, 4

Freeman, Peter. 'Fort Tregear: The Life and Death of a Moderne Masterpiece'. *Canberra Historical Journal* 75 (September 2015): 9–14

Penton, Brian. 'From the Gallery'. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 14 December 1927, 14

Tregear, A. A. *House of Commons Report on Procedure*. Canberra: Government Printer, 1953

Tregear, Allan. 'When the Designers Blundered'. *Canberra Times*, 20 September 1976, 15

Tregear, Gail. Interview by Libby Stewart, 26 June 2012. Museum of Australian Democracy Oral History collection

Tregear, Gail. Interview by Bill Stephens, 17 July 2014. Centenary of Canberra Oral History Project, National Library of Australia

Tregear, Gail. Interview by the author, Canberra, 2 May 2019

Turner, Alan. 'Mr Allan Tregear'. *Canberra Times*, 22 December 1976, 9

White, Harold. 'Bliss It Was to be Alive in Those Days'. *Canberra Times*, 23 May 1987, 2

Turner, Sir Alan George: Clerk 1959–1971

Patricia Clarke

Alan George Turner (1906–78), eighth Clerk of the House of Representatives, was born on 11 December 1906 at Marrickville, Sydney, only son and second child of English-born Frederick Richard Graystone Turner, bank manager, and his Queensland-born wife, Annie Purvis, née Marshall. His father was manager of the Bank of Australasia branch at Yarrawonga, Victoria, when Alan enrolled at Melbourne Grammar School as a boarder in 1921. He left at the end of 1923 after passing the Intermediate Certificate.

In 1924 Turner joined the House of Representatives staff and served successively as secretary to Speakers William Watt, Sir Littleton Groom, and Norman Makin. Early in 1927, Turner transferred to Canberra to work at the new Parliament House in preparation for the first Canberra sitting of the Commonwealth parliament on 9 May. On 7 September 1931 at Melbourne Grammar School chapel, he married Ina Arnot Maxwell, youngest daughter of George Arnot Maxwell, a Nationalist Party member of the House of Representatives. Gough Whitlam, who when a teenage student had observed their romance develop after Ina joined the staff of Telopea Park School, Canberra, in 1928 as a kindergarten teacher, described Turner as the 'debonair, discreet young man from the staff of the Parliament who won her' (H.R. Deb. 9.12.1971, 4497).

During World War II, Turner was seconded (1942–45) to the Department of Supply and Shipping. He was appointed Serjeant-at-Arms and Clerk of Committees on 1 January 1946 and, on 15 December 1949, was promoted to Second Clerk Assistant. On 27 June 1955, he became Clerk Assistant and, on 1 January 1959, succeeded Allan Tregear as Clerk of the House. In 1960 the House Standing Orders Committee decided to undertake a comprehensive review of the orders, which had not substantially changed since Federation. Turner prepared a report that the committee presented to the House on 28 August 1962 and which was adopted in

Figure 65: Alan Turner.
Source: Department of the House of Representatives.

May 1963. The substantive procedural changes that followed involved the amendment of 101 of the 403 existing standing orders, the omission of sixty, and the insertion of fifty-nine new orders.

In 'a significant definition of an Australian parliamentary style' (Reid and Forrest 1989, 160), the complex and time-consuming procedure of preliminary consideration of financial proposals in Committees of Supply and of Ways and Means was abolished, and the initiation of spending and taxing legislation was vested wholly in the executive, not individual members. Replying to doubts about this reform expressed privately by the Clerk of the House of Commons, (Sir) Barnett Cocks, Turner wrote that 'the financial initiative is neatly tied up and I rather doubt whether it is necessary for us to now consider any alteration' (Reid and Forrest 1989, 160). Another major change was the omission of the committee stage of bills, provided that no member raised an objection. Two years after this reform was introduced, Turner regretfully described the resultant exemption of most bills as a 'somewhat strange trend' (Reid and Forrest 1989, 161). He ascribed this to members' preference for discussing general principles rather than detail, the number of bills that were of a machinery nature, and the federal character of much of the legislation presented to parliament, which was often based on prior agreement between the Commonwealth and the states.

In March 1964, the government approved reorganisations of the Senate and House of Representatives departments, with a focus on staffing reforms. The initiative came from Turner, who had the Second and Third Clerk Assistants, John (Jack) Pettifer and Douglas Blake, prepare a report on organisation, working arrangements, and general staffing. The report concluded that the staffing structure of the House had not kept up with changes in the power and structure of the federal government; increased numbers of parliamentarians; the shift of agencies to Canberra; expansion of the activities of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association and the Inter-Parliamentary Union; and greater committee work. Turner submitted recommendations to the Speaker, Sir John McLeay, for changes in staff duties; appointment of two new staff; reclassification of positions attracting extra duties; and redesignating the Clerk Assistant position as Deputy Clerk. Similar proposals were submitted to the President of the Senate, Sir Alister McMullin, by the Clerk of the Senate, Rupert Loof, after a review by the Senate Clerk Assistant, James Odgers. The President and the Speaker then successfully sought the concurrence of the Public Service Board. All this amounted to 'an important landmark in the history of parliamentary administration in so far as they ushered in a period of sustained staff growth and organisational change' (Reid and Forrest 1989, 417–18).

The same year, the government announced plans to amalgamate all appropriations, except those that could be contained in a separate special expenditure bill, into a single bill designated as dealing with ordinary annual services. As the Senate was constitutionally debarred from amending bills concerning such services, this

amounted to an attempt to limit its powers. The government relied on a legal opinion obtained from the solicitor-general that there were no valid objections to the inclusion of capital works expenditure appropriations within a single appropriations bill. When some government senators objected, the treasurer, Harold Holt, sought Turner's opinion; he responded by characterising their views as being 'in contradiction of strong legal opinions as to the meaning of the words "the ordinary annual services of the Government"' (Reid and Forrest 1989, 209). Nevertheless, Turner was conscious of the Senate's growing assertiveness, and so felt that the matter was one for decision not by the courts but rather by a political process involving both houses of parliament, without which it seemed 'inevitable that the Senate view will prevail' (Reid and Forrest 1989, 209). The issue was resolved in May 1965 when the government divided capital expenditure and ordinary annual services into separate appropriation bills.

In the 1965 New Year's Honours, Turner was appointed CBE for 'outstanding public service'. He became Secretary, Joint House Department, in June 1966. The politically turbulent late 1960s and early 1970s—during which he served successively under McLeay and, from 1967, Speaker (Sir) William Aston—frequently involved him in divisive parliamentary sittings during the prime ministerships of Holt, (Sir) John McEwen, (Sir) John Gorton, and (Sir) William McMahon. An attempt by Aston and Turner in 1970 to persuade the executive and members to appoint standing committees of the House of Representatives, similar to those established in the Senate, was unsuccessful.

Late in his term as Clerk, Turner was questioned exhaustively by the Privileges Committee as part of an inquiry into an alleged contempt of the House. This arose from an article in the *Daily Telegraph* of 27 August 1971 by the parliamentary reporter Alan Reid that reflected adversely on the presiding officer. Reid asserted that the House had 'ignominiously collapsed' because a group of opposition members had left the chamber after a quorum had been called, causing an adjournment until the next sitting day. Turner had been in the chamber at the time and refuted the allegation, consistent with evidence provided by his colleague Pettifer, who had also been present. The committee determined that the article indeed constituted contempt and that accordingly both Reid and David McNicoll, editor-in-chief of Australian Consolidated Press, were guilty. In the small hours of 9 December, the House voted along party lines to agree to the committee's findings but to not impose a penalty. Turner was later quoted as stating that 'the [Press] Gallery seems to be here because it is here … The gallery has no formal right to exist and owes its privileges and access to the Chambers of the House of Representatives and the Senate and to its occupancy of rooms in the Parliament entirely to practice and tradition' (Chalmers 2011, 22).

During Turner's tenure as Clerk, he was actively involved in international parliamentary organisations. In 1958 he was secretary of the Australian delegation to the Inter-Parliamentary Union conference in Rio de Janeiro and, from 1958 to 1971, he served as honorary secretary/treasurer of the Australian branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association. The professional journal of the Society of Clerks-at-the-Table in Commonwealth Parliaments praised him for serving the branch with great dedication, 'furthering Australia's interests and reputation in the affairs of the Association' (*The Table* 1971, 13). He was an organiser of many of the association's conferences in Commonwealth countries—notably, those conducted in Australia in 1959 and 1970. Turner accompanied Aston to Commonwealth conferences of presiding officers and Clerks in Canada in 1969 and India in 1971, and at four conferences of presiding officers and Clerks from the Australasia/Pacific region.

On 10 December 1971, Turner retired and was succeeded by Norman Parkes. Aston understatedly described his Clerkship as 'a notable one', citing Turner's major revision of standing orders, the reorganisation of House staff, and the respect he had earned for his 'wise judgment and experienced counsel' (H.R. Deb. 9.12.1971, 4495–96). Prime Minister McMahon described Turner 'as a personal friend' (H.R. Deb. 9.12.1971, 4496). Turner's considerable achievements in modernising the management and practice of the House of Representatives are testimony to his energy and high standing among members. He was also praised for his courteous manner and non-partisan counsel. New members appreciated his convivial welcome and classes on the operation of the House. Throughout his working life and in retirement, Turner's chief recreation was golf.

Knighted for 'distinguished public service' in the 1972 New Year's Honours, Sir Alan died on 26 November 1978 in Canberra Hospital, survived by Lady Turner and their son. He was privately cremated and a memorial service was held at the Presbyterian Church of St Andrew, Forrest.

Select bibliography

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 9 December 1971, 4495–502

Canberra Times. 'Sir Alan Turner'. 28 November 1978, 11

Chalmers, Rob. *Inside the Canberra Press Gallery: Life in the Wedding Cake of Old Parliament House*. Edited by Sam Vincent and John Wanna. Canberra: ANU E Press, 2011. doi.org/10.22459/icpg.10.2011

Howson, Peter. *The Life of Politics: The Howson Diaries*. Ringwood, Vic.: Viking Press, 1984

National Archives of Australia. A12097, 12, Article in 'Daily Telegraph'—Friday 27 August 1971—Mr A. G. Turner, CBE, Clerk of the House, House of Representatives

Reid, G. S. and Martyn Forrest. *Australia's Commonwealth Parliament 1901–1988: Ten Perspectives*. Carlton, Vic.: Melbourne University Press, 1989

The Table (Journal of the Society of Clerks-at-the-Table in Commonwealth Parliaments) (London). 'Sir Alan Turner CBE'. 40 (1971): 13–14

Turner, Alan. 'Australian House of Representatives: Abolition of the Committees of Supply and Ways and Means, and the Money Committee of the Whole: New Financial Procedures and Other Changes'. *The Table (Journal of the Society of Clerks-at-the-Table in Commonwealth Parliaments)* 33 (1964): 37–47

Turner, Alan. 'House of Representatives, Australia: Review of the Standing Orders'. *The Table (Journal of the Society of Clerks-at-the-Table in Commonwealth Parliaments)* 31 (1962): 85–87

Turner, Alan. 'The Legislative Process in the House of Representatives'. *Australian Journal of Public Administration* 23, no. 2 (June 1964): 131–45. doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8500.1964.tb01349.x

Watt, William Alexander: Speaker 1923–1925

John Hawkins and John Anderson

William Alexander Watt (1871–1946), premier, company director, and fifth Speaker of the House of Representatives, was born on 23 November 1871 at Barfold, near Kyneton, Victoria, eleventh and youngest child of James Michie Watt, a farmer who had migrated from Scotland about 1843, and his Irish-born wife, Jane, née Douglas. After James's death in 1872, the family moved to Phillip Island and some six years later settled in North Melbourne. Billy, as he was then known, attended Errol Street State School until the age of fourteen. He worked variously as a newsboy, ironmonger, tanner, clerk, accountant, and eventually became a partner in a hay and corn store. It was rumoured that he was a member of a larrikin gang known as the Bouverie Street Push.

Watt compensated for his limited formal schooling by reading voraciously and taking evening classes at the Working Men's College (later RMIT University) in accountancy, grammar, logic, philosophy, and elocution. He further sharpened his rhetorical skills in the Australian Natives' Association and various debating and literary societies, and he was also active in the Australasian Federation League. He became a protégé of Alfred Deakin, later describing himself as a 'hero worshipper' (Watt 1944, v); he would deliver the oration at Deakin's funeral in 1919. On 21 December 1894, he married Florence Carrighan at the Presbyterian Church, Parkville; she was to die after childbirth in 1896. On 24 April 1907, at the Presbyterian Manse, Essendon, he married Emily Helena Seismann, daughter of Emily Collier and the late John Frederick Seismann, who came from a family of hoteliers, but who had died when Emily was just six.

In 1897 Watt defeated the fiery Labor leader George Prendergast in the seat of North Melbourne to enter the Victorian parliament, becoming one of the 'Young Australia' group of Federation enthusiasts. He served as postmaster-general in the McLean ministry in 1899, making him reportedly the youngest cabinet member in the Empire, but lost his seat to a resurgent Prendergast in 1900. While out of parliament,

Figure 66: William Watt.
Source: Department of the House of Representatives.

he worked as a real estate agent and helped Deakin build the organisational wing of his Protectionist Party. Watt stood unsuccessfully for the first Senate as a Protectionist and was twice more defeated for the Victorian Legislative Assembly.

Returning to the Victorian parliament in 1902 as the member for East Melbourne, Watt switched to Essendon in 1904. Much of his next five years was spent sniping at the conservative premier (Sir) Thomas Bent. In 1909 Watt became the treasurer, deputy premier and the main force in the government of Premier John (Jack) Murray, with an unrivalled grasp of public finance. He acted as premier for six months in 1911 and was premier from May 1912 to June 1914 (other than for a thirteen-day Labor interregnum in December 1913). Notwithstanding opposition from the Legislative Council, the Murray-Watt governments established state secondary education, land taxation, and preferential voting, expanded irrigation, and reorganised public services. Watt was renowned for his oratory, having 'a remarkable command of language, a deep organ voice and formidable debating powers' (Edwards 1965, 79). These gifts were at times manifested in a less becoming propensity for sarcasm and for rhetorical flourishes that obscured his meaning; as one newspaper put it, 'ideals camouflaged behind sesquipedalian sentences' (*Sun* 1918, 3).

It was widely believed that Deakin had regarded Watt as his preferred successor. But (Sir) Joseph Cook was in the federal parliament and Watt was not when Deakin's fading powers forced him to step down in 1913. In early 1914, Watt accepted party requests and resigned the premiership to stand successfully for the blue-ribbon federal seat of Balaclava, despite a 6 per cent swing to the young Labor candidate John Curtin. As the government was defeated, Watt missed out on a ministry. He held the seat comfortably at five subsequent elections, being unopposed in 1922.

During World War I, Watt campaigned in favour of conscription. Plans emerged to form a government combining the Liberals and dissident pro-conscription National Labor members. While Liberals Joseph Cook, Sir John Forrest, and William Irvine all aspired to lead the proposed government, Watt realised that the Labor renegade William Morris Hughes would need to be leader for the plan to succeed and threatened to withdraw Victorian members from the Liberal Party. When a Nationalist Party government was formed in February 1917, Hughes would have preferred Watt as treasurer but was obliged to give the post to Forrest. Watt served instead as minister for works and railways. He and Forrest conducted a bitter feud within the cabinet until Forrest was elevated to a peerage and resigned in March 1918. Watt took over as treasurer and, concerned about the state of government finances, brought down an austere budget that greatly increased taxation.

In April 1918, Hughes and Cook sailed to London, leaving Watt acting as prime minister for the next sixteen months. Leading a weak and weary ministry and suffering heart trouble and nervous tension, he brought comparative calm and orderly processes to government. But his acting prime ministership was dominated by ongoing

squabbles with Hughes about who had ultimate authority to take decisions and the failure of both parties to inform the other of their actions—not helped by cables between Britain and Australia often taking more than a day to arrive. Both parties, but particularly Hughes, displayed a lack of aptitude for cooperative leadership. As acting prime minister, Watt in October 1918 had a new standing order created to introduce the 'guillotine' by which a government could rush legislation through the House with minimal debate (Reid and Forrest 1989, 152–53). When Hughes returned, Watt had to be persuaded to remain in the cabinet.

A product of the urban lower middle class, Watt was by now embedded in the social and political establishment. He had refused a knighthood, partly because he considered he had inadequate means to live up to it, but delighted in his appointment as privy counsellor in 1920 and as a commander of the Légion d'honneur. Manning Clark later portrayed this 'boy from Phillip Island' as having become 'heart and soul a "Yarraside" man' (Clark 1987, 103, 105). Yet during the Depression of the following decade, Watt was notably sympathetic to the unemployed and workers suffering wage cuts.

In April 1920, Watt reluctantly sailed to England for financial negotiations with the British government. Meanwhile, Hughes conducted negotiations with the British on wool, without informing him. Now the roles were reversed, with Watt wanting more autonomy and Hughes back in Australia seeking to control him. In a distraught state and still overseas, Watt resigned as treasurer in June, complaining by telegram that 'it would be incongruous for me to wear the garb of a plenipotentiary and the mind of a telegraph messenger' as Hughes's mere 'channel of communication between British ministers' (H.R. Deb. 2.7.1920, 2530). On his return to Australia in October, having for so long remained loyal to Hughes in public, he delivered a long and bitter speech to the House on his reasons for resigning, but by then most of his colleagues had lost interest and (Sir) Walter Massy-Greene supplanted him as Hughes's heir apparent. After the 1922 election gave the Country Party the balance of power in the House, Watt reportedly entered discussions with the Country Party leader, (Sir) Earle Page, about his heading a coalition government, but these came to nothing. By the time Hughes was finally deposed in February 1923, Watt was a lone figure in parliament and was passed over in favour of Stanley (Viscount) Bruce, who had been in parliament for less than five years. Reports that Watt declined Bruce's offer of a ministry, citing poor health, were probably inaccurate. To his surprise, Watt was instead offered the Speakership over the objections of the incumbent, Sir Elliot Johnson, that 'the position of Speaker should not be a matter for party spoils' (*Argus* 28 February 1923, 11).

Watt's selection was greeted with astonishment and outrage. Labor members drew on their anger that the formation of a Nationalist–Country Party coalition had denied them any chance of governing. His appointment was, said the member for Darling,

Arthur Blakeley, 'a fitting climax to one of the most disgraceful occurrences in the history of this Parliament' (H.R. Deb. 28.2.1923, 18) and one that amounted to 'the elevation of a gentleman whom they fear to a position where he cannot speak' (H.R. Deb. 28.2.1923, 18). Edward Riley, the member for South Sydney, praised Watt's predecessor and wondered why so substantive a figure as Watt had accepted the Speakership; 'perhaps it was the horsehair wig, and gown, and the fact that, as Speaker, he will have a nice young gentleman to carry the mace in front of him' (H.R. Deb. 28.2.1923, 17). Watt replied with restraint: 'I assume that misunderstandings may arise between the Chair and honorable members on the floor of the House which mutual forbearance alone can remove or prevent' (H.R. Deb. 28.2.1923, 23). The *Argus* wondered whether a tragedy of sorts was unfolding, as 'it would be a high price to pay if in finding a Speaker we had lost Mr Watt' ('Ithuriel' 1923). Some suspected that the Speakership would allow him more time to tend to his growing business interests than would a portfolio. He had been chairman of Australian Farms Ltd since 1922; it aimed to attract migrants with capital but was liquidated in 1925.

However, Watt soon proved a capable Speaker, his popularity with other parliamentarians only occasionally marred by abrasive indiscretions. Page thought him endowed with 'a complete knowledge of all parliamentary forms and precedents, a ready and balanced mind, and a facility for promptness and decision' (Page 1963, 58), and approved of his efforts to build cross-party camaraderie at weekly afternoon teas in the Speaker's room. The long-serving Clerk of the House, Frank Green, considered Watt 'probably the best Speaker of the House we ever had', aided by 'a great sense of humour which he often used to break tension' (Green 1969, 60). He was similarly praised by a later Speaker, Norman Makin, as 'the doyen of all Speakers in the Commonwealth Parliament' due to a 'cool and just' demeanour that gave him 'a natural aptitude essential to succeed in this most important position of Parliament' (Makin c. 1962). Makin could not recall 'any instance when his ruling was challenged' (Makin c. 1962) and found Watt a mentor to young members, including himself. The opposition leader, Matthew Charlton, swept aside Labor's earlier concerns by declaring: 'I can say, without fear of contradiction, that we have never sat under a better Speaker' (H.R. Deb. 24.8.1923, 3674).

Watt's Speakership was nonetheless subject to a widely held assumption that he would return to the ministry, such as by resuming as treasurer should the Nationalist-Country Party coalition break up. There were also suggestions that the looming relocation of the parliament to Canberra would interfere unduly with his business interests. Shortly before the 1925 election, he announced that he would not contest the Speakership, and hinted that his interest in foreign affairs was grounds for his appointment to represent Australia in London. In reality, his unhappy experience as treasurer seems to have drained him of most of his ambition. He now became an 'open rebel' (Edwards 1965, 120), willing to cross the floor, such as when he opposed the abolition of Commonwealth per capita grants to the states. After parliament moved

to Canberra in 1927, he was present at fewer than half of the House's sittings and hardly spoke at all in the chamber during 1928 (Sawer 1956, 306 n.). As his interest in politics waned, Watt, from his base in Collins House, took up several chairmanships, among them of Dunlop-Perdriau Rubber, British Dominion Film Ltd, and Taranaki Oil Fields Ltd, and served as a director of Qantas and other companies. He was also the long-serving chairman of the Melbourne Cricket Ground trustees (1924–46), and the first Victorian president of the English-Speaking Union. On medical advice, he resigned his seat in July 1929.

Watt's broad, pugnacious face was likened to that of the Dickensian villain Bill Sikes (Edwards 1965, 79). While generally a conservative dresser, his manner was breezy, his humour witty though mordant, and his aplomb marred by fits of temper and a tendency to intolerance. An agnostic, he enjoyed reading, gardening, bridge, and billiards. He was a convivial member of the Yorick, Athenaeum, and West Brighton clubs, and of the Victoria Golf Club. Having suffered a disabling stroke in 1937, he died at his Toorak home on 13 September 1946. His wife, two sons, and three daughters survived him. Portraits by Emanuel Phillips Fox and William Longstaff are held by the Savage Club, Melbourne, and Parliament House, Canberra. Watt, with Billy Snedden, is one of two former treasurers who became Speaker. Today he is remembered less for his successful service as Speaker than for his unexpected failure to rise to the prime ministership.

This article supplements the original Volume 12 ADB *biography, published 1990, authored by John Anderson and Geoffrey Serle. adb.anu.edu.au/biography/watt-william-alexander-9011/text15869*

Select bibliography

Anderson, John. 'W. A. Watt: A Political Biography'. MA thesis, University of New South Wales, Sydney, 1972

Argus (Melbourne). 'Mr Watt Declines Office'. 6 February 1923, 9

Argus (Melbourne). 'Mr Watt as Speaker'. 28 February 1923, 11

Argus (Melbourne). 'Prospective Speaker'. 28 February 1923, 11

Argus (Melbourne). 'Mr Watt'. 25 August 1925, 11

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 2 July 1920, 2521–44

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 20 October 1920, 5788–824

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 28 February 1923, 17–23

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 24 August 1923, 3674–75

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 23 September 1925, 2670–71

Bowen, Chris. *The Money Men: Australia's Twelve Most Notable Treasurers.* Carlton, Vic.: Melbourne University Press, 2015

Clark, Manning. *A History of Australia.* Vol. 6, *The Old Dead Tree and the Young Tree Green 1916–1935.* Carlton, Vic.: Melbourne University Press, 1987

Dunstan, David. 'John Murray and William Watt: The Odd Couple'. In *The Victorian Premiers: 1856–2006*, edited by Paul Strangio and Brian Costar, 137–49. Sydney: Federation Press, 2006

Edwards, Cecil. *Bruce of Melbourne: Man of Two Worlds.* London: Heinemann, 1965

Green, Frank C. *Servant of the House.* Melbourne: Heinemann, 1969

Hawkins, John. 'William Watt: The Great Orator'. *Economic Roundup* (Department of the Treasury, Canberra), no. 1 (2009): 79–86

Herald (Melbourne). 'Big Three Proposal'. 23 July 1924, 10

'Ithuriel' (D. H. Maling). 'Among the Federal Members'. *Argus* (Melbourne), 3 March 1923, 6

Makin, Norman. The Right Honorable William Alexander Watt, PC, Speaker 1923–1926, c. 1962. Papers of Norman Makin, MS 4663. National Library of Australia

Page, Earle. *Truant Surgeon: The Inside Story of Forty Years of Australian Political Life*. Edited by Ann Mozley. Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1963

Reid, G. S., and Martyn Forrest. *Australia's Commonwealth Parliament 1901–1988: Ten Perspectives*. Carlton, Vic.: Melbourne University Press, 1989

Sawer, Geoffrey. *Australian Federal Politics and Law: 1901–1929.* Carlton, Vic.: Melbourne University Press, 1956

Smith, Arthur. *Thirty Years: The Commonwealth of Australia, 1901–1931.* Melbourne: Brown, Prior & Co., 1933

Studham, David (Melbourne Cricket Club Librarian). Personal communication

Sun (Sydney). 'From Chorus to Spotlight'. 17 March 1918, 3

Telegraph (Brisbane). 'Mr Watt's Statement'. 21 October 1920, 7

Telegraph (Brisbane). 'Nationalist Ministry'. 30 July 1924, 10

Watt, William. 'Foreword'. In *The Federal Story: The Inner History of the Federal Cause*, by Alfred Deakin, v–vii. Melbourne: Robertson & Mullens, 1944

Wright, Bernard Clive: Clerk 2009–2013

Derek Drinkwater

Bernard Clive Wright, fifteenth Clerk of the House of Representatives, was born on 5 July 1949 at Young, New South Wales, eldest of four children of locally born parents Heber Wright, farmer, and his wife, Mona. The family's farm near Boorowa was so isolated that Bernard's early schooling was through correspondence. He later attended All Hallows School, Bathurst (1959–60), and, after moving to Canberra with his family, St Edmund's College (1961) and Daramalan College (1962–67). At The Australian National University, he studied political science and Asian studies (BA, 1971). In December 1971, he joined the Department of Immigration as a clerk.

After becoming a graduate trainee, Wright was promoted in March 1972 to junior Parliamentary Officer in the Department of the House of Representatives. By February 1978, he had reached the top of the ranks and, in August 1981, was appointed a Senior Parliamentary Officer. Steady promotion continued: Clerk Assistant (Administration) (December 1982), Clerk Assistant (Procedure) (April 1986), and Clerk Assistant (Committees) (July 1990). On 5 February 1983, at St Vincent de Paul Church, Aranda, he married Maree Georgina Elliott, a nurse. They were to have a daughter and a son.

Wright developed a deep knowledge of issues of parliamentary privilege. In 1982–84, he was secretary to the Joint Select Committee on Parliamentary Privilege review of the law and practice of privilege in both houses. The committee's final report, presented in October 1984, included special thanks for his labours and resulted in major reforms being enshrined in the Parliamentary Privileges Act 1987. Twenty years after this legislation was enacted, Wright argued that, although it had reduced 'traditional powers and immunities, and the flexibility available to the houses in dealing with matters of privilege and contempt', the parliament was 'now able to point to a set of statutory and procedural arrangements that are not only more appropriate to contemporary parliamentary requirements but also more consistent with community expectations in terms of citizens' interests' (Wright 2007, 27). In April 1991, he became First Clerk Assistant, and was appointed Deputy Clerk in

Figure 67: Bernard Wright.
Source: Department of the House of Representatives.

September 1997. His increasingly evident 'very considerable degree of intellectual leadership' (H.R. Deb. 12.12.2013, 2654) arose from several different and demanding career roles. These included a major contribution to preparing successive editions of the authoritative *House of Representatives Practice* (as assistant editor, 1989, 1997, 2001 and 2005), which was described by opposition leader John Hewson as 'the bible of this place' (H.R. Deb. 14.3.1991, 2045). Wright received the Centenary Medal in 2003.

In December 2009, Wright became Clerk of the House. Eight months later, he was confronted with a situation unprecedented in the previous seventy years. The federal election of August 2010 resulted in a 'hung' forty-third parliament, in which no single party or pre-election alliance held an outright majority. The government of Julia Gillard managed to retain office, despite losing a number of divisions in the House. This situation lasted until the election of September 2013 and placed many unexpected day-to-day demands on the Clerk and the staff of his department. Members, too, found themselves navigating the unknowns of minority government, which, said one of their number, made each sitting day 'another day in paradigm' (Wright, June 2013, 1). The parliament saw 'points of parliamentary law and procedure that had usually been of somewhat academic interest become matters of considerable and immediate political significance' (Wright, June 2013, 5). Weekly sitting hours for the House and the Federation Chamber were increased from 48 to 56, mainly to accommodate private members' business. The Selection Committee was re-established to resume its role in prioritising and allocating time for private members' business, and committee and delegation reports. In this one parliament, Wright worked with three different Speakers: Harry Jenkins, Peter Slipper, and Anna Burke. He was senior editor of the sixth edition of *House of Representatives Practice* (2012), which analysed and placed in reassuring context the innovations and complexities of the forty-third parliament.

Although media attention was focused on the drama of debate and voting in the chamber, Wright documented how 'the impact of the hung parliament on the working of House and joint committees has been no less significant' (Wright, July 2013, 1). Consideration of bills by committees increased substantially, so 'the taxpayer received good value for the cost of supporting committees during the 43rd Parliament', with 'the House committee system well and truly tested' (Wright, July 2013, 5, 8). There were also important developments in funding and operations. The House Appropriations and Administration Committee was appointed to improve the department's financial management and administrative processes, and the Main Committee, established in 1994 as a debating chamber functioning parallel to the House on a limited range of matters, was recast as the Federation Chamber. Anthony Albanese, leader of the House, later recalled that it was in large part due to Wright that both the House of Representatives and the government had functioned 'effectively' during this 'difficult parliament' (H.R. Deb. 12.12.2013, 2653).

As Clerk, Wright continued to publish extensively on parliamentary practice and procedure. Twenty-five years after the passing of the Parliamentary Privileges Act 1987, he wrote in an international journal for parliamentary staff that specifying the '"powers, privileges and immunities" of each House of a national Parliament' had so far not led to the loss of 'desirable flexibility', but he added that its relevance to other parliaments was still 'an open question' (Wright 2012, 45, 52, 53). He also maintained a strong interest in how the constitutional debates leading to Federation in 1901 had shaped Commonwealth parliamentary thinking and practice, and their continuing relevance for latter-day parliamentary staff. In a trenchant analysis of the 1890s constitutional conventions and related meetings, he concluded that delegates' success in negotiating an agreed federal compact illustrated how 'traditional parliamentary processes can be adapted and used' and had 'allowed a political solution to be negotiated to a great legal and governmental challenge' (Wright, January 2013, 28). The delegates had, Wright observed, the support of experienced secretaries, clerks, and assistant clerks drawn from Australia's colonial parliaments, including Charles Gavan Duffy, later Clerk of the House of Representatives, Edwin Gordon Blackmore, later Clerk of the Senate, and the future solicitor-general (Sir) Robert Garran. Wright also drew on records of the conventions to explore the origins of financial powers granted to the executive and parliament—'matters of high importance in terms of their long-term implications' and 'significant for each House of the Parliament because of its respective rights and responsibilities' (Wright, May 2013, 26).

Wright retired in December 2013. Prime Minister Tony Abbott spoke of his 'total dedication to the welfare of this parliament', and the leader of the opposition, Bill Shorten, added that the 'truly modest' Wright had found his 'calling' as a parliamentary Clerk (H.R. Deb. 12.12.2013, 2650, 2651). At Speaker Bronwyn Bishop's request, all members in the chamber farewelled him by standing in tribute. In retirement, he devoted time to farming—a lifelong interest—and continued to write and speak on parliamentary subjects. He wrote in a scholarly survey of developments in both houses over the period 1988–2013 that, in the years leading up to 2013, 'the Parliament's influence seemed greater than had been the case in the 1970s and 1980s', making the frequently applied 'rubber stamp' label 'both lazy and misleading' (Wright 2015, 36, 38). In 2015 he was appointed AO. He served on the Council for the Order of Australia from 2014 and on the Advisory Council (later Board) of the Museum of Australian Democracy at Old Parliament House (appointed deputy chair in 2016). Wright once said it had been his 'good fortune' to work closely with national leaders characterised by 'much idealism, personal integrity, considerable ability and deep commitment', making them 'worthy of the legacy of the Founders' (January 2013, 28).

Select bibliography

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 14 March 1991, 2045

Australia. House of Representatives. *Parliamentary Debates*, 12 December 2013, 2649–54

Wright, Bernard. Interview by Greg McIntosh, 1989. Transcript. Museum of Australian Democracy Oral History collection

Wright, Bernard. 'Patterns of Change—Parliamentary Privilege'. Research Paper Prepared for the Parliamentary Studies Centre, Australian National University, Canberra, December 2007

Wright, Bernard. 'Minority Government for Australia'. *The Parliamentarian* 92, no. 1 (2011): 58–61

Wright, Bernard. 'Australia's Parliamentary Privileges Act 25 Years On'. *The Table (Journal of the Society of Clerks-at-the-Table in Commonwealth Parliaments)* 80 (2012): 45–54

Wright, Bernard. 'Against the Odds—Lessons from the Framing of Our Constitution'. Australia and New Zealand Association of Clerks-at-the-Table Professional Development Seminar for Parliamentary Staff, January 2013

Wright, Bernard. 'The Law Making Powers of the Houses—Three Aspects of the Financial Initiative'. Updated notes for Members, May 2013

Wright, Bernard. 'Hung Parliaments—Are They Good for Parliament?' Australasian Study of Parliament Group, Victorian Chapter Seminar, June 2013

Wright, Bernard. 'Committee Work in a Hung Parliament: A House of Representatives Perspective'. Paper presented to Australia and New Zealand Association of Clerks-at-the-Table, July 2013

Wright, Bernard. 'The Federal Parliament 1988–2013'. *House of Representatives Research Paper*, October 2015

Wright, Bernard. Personal communication