

The selection of the Capital site in Federal politics, 1901-1909

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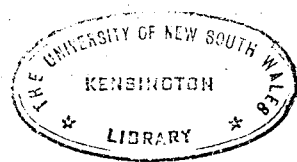
by

G. E. Sherington

THE SELECTION OF THE CAPITAL SITE
IN FEDERAL POLITICS 1901-1909

University of New South Wales

June, 1969



This is to certify that this work has
not been submitted in any form to any
other higher degree institution.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
SUMMARY	i
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	ii
ABBREVIATIONS AND NOTES	iii
LIST OF MAPS, TABLES AND PHOTOS	v
INTRODUCTION	vii
 CHAPTER ONE - THE CONSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK	
Introduction	1
The Question of Sovereignty	3
The Location of the Site	4
The Temporary Seat of Government	5
Conclusion	10
 CHAPTER TWO - THE FIRST PARLIAMENT	
Introduction	11
Oliver's Report	13
The 1901 Election	17
Early Hopes for a Settlement	22
Parliamentarians on Tour	29
The Royal Commission	37
Cries from the Provinces	47
The Ballot	53
Conclusion	70
Appendix I	75
Appendix II	82
Appendix III	89

	<u>Page</u>
CHAPTER THREE - THE SECOND PARLIAMENT	
Introduction	91
The 1903 Election	92
The Selection of Dalgety	100
The Role of an Individual	122
Carruthers Raises Objections	125
The Failure of a Compromise	139
New Sites	149
Conclusion	156
Appendix I	159
Appendix II	160
CHAPTER FOUR - THE THIRD PARLIAMENT	
Introduction	161
The 1906 Election	164
Consideration of Canberra	169
The 1907 New South Wales Election	174
Moves Towards a Settlement	177
The Final Ballot - The Selection of Yass-Canberra	190
The 1908 Seat of Government Bill	216
Epilogue - The Choice of Canberra	221
Conclusion	231
Appendix I	233
Appendix II	244
CONCLUSION	245
BIBLIOGRAPHY	250

SUMMARY

The question of where to locate the Australian capital was essentially a political problem which plagued not only the founders of the Commonwealth but also their inheritors in the federal Parliament. The intention of this thesis is to explain why the federal legislators took nine years to select the capital site and, as such, to examine the political significance of this topic in these formative years of the new Federation.

The federal Parliament made three attempts to select the site. In 1903 a decision was frustrated by the House and Senate choosing different areas; this result was due mainly to the tactics of Victorian representatives and two members in the federal Government itself. In 1904 Dalgety in Southern New South Wales was chosen but this selection was blocked by the attitude of the New South Wales Government. The final determination on the general Canberra area in 1908 was a compromise mainly effected between federal parliamentary representatives from both New South Wales and Victoria.

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Numerous individuals have aided and guided me in research for this topic but I would like to extend my special appreciation to - Mr. Austin Chapman who kindly loaned to me his grandfather's voluminous collection of newspaper cuttings; Mrs. Peters, a grand-daughter of Patrick McMahon Glynn, for granting me permission to consult the Glynn Diaries in the Australian National Library; and Mr. F.C. Green of Hobart who corresponded with me on this subject. I would also like to thank my supervisor Professor F.K. Crowley who inspired much of the early genesis of my thought on this problem. Finally, I extend appreciation to Mrs. Judith Francis for her many hours of arduous labour.

ABBREVIATIONS AND NOTES

A.N.L.	Australian National Library
A.N.U.	Australian National University
A.N.U.P.	Australian National University Press
C.A.O.	Commonwealth Archives Office
C.P.D.	Commonwealth Parliamentary Debates
C.P.P.	Commonwealth Parliamentary Papers
D.T.	Daily Telegraph (Sydney)
f.n.	Footnote
J.R.A.H.S.	Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society
M.H.R.	Member of the House of Representatives
M.L.	Mitchell Library
M.L.A.	Member of the Legislative Assembly of New South Wales
M.L.C.	Member of the Legislative Council of New South Wales
M.U.P.	Melbourne University Press
n.d.n.	No Document number
n.f.n.	No File number
N.S.W.	New South Wales
N.S.W.A.O.	New South Wales Archives Office
N.S.W.P.D.	New South Wales Parliamentary Debates
N.S.W.P.P.	New South Wales Parliamentary Papers
N.S.W.V.P.	Votes and Proceedings of the New South Wales Legislative Assembly
P.M.	Prime Minister
Q	Queensland
S.A.	South Australia
S.A.P.D.	South Australian Parliamentary Debates

S.M.H.	Sydney Morning Herald
Tas.	Tasmania
Vic.	Victoria
V.A.P.D.	Victorian Parliamentary Debates
W.A.	Western Australia

Special Note: The notation (L) after a newspaper footnote indicates an editorial reference - thus S.M.H. 9 May 1901 (1L) refers to the first editorial.

Grammatical Note: While all proper nouns have been designated by a capital letter, this practice has not been adopted for certain adjectives like 'federal' and its counterpart the adjectival noun 'state' as in the 'federal and state Governments'.

LIST OF MAPS, DIAGRAMS AND PHOTOS

	<u>Page</u>
<u>Chapter Two</u>	
The Sites Recommended by Oliver	16
The seating of the first federal Parliament at its opening on 9 May 1901	21
The Senate Grand Tour of February 1902	31
Lyne leads the Senate team over the style and into the early morning Albury dust (Photo)	36
Senators in the Snowy at Dalgety (Photo)	37
The Sites Examined by the Royal Commission (Excluding Dalgety)	46
The Ballot in the House in October 1903	60
The Dalgety site recommended by the Royal Commission, and the surrounding parishes	81
Analysis of the House of Representatives and Senate Ballots in October 1903	82 - 89

Chapter Three

The seating of the House at the Opening of the second Parliament	101
Districts in the House of Representatives' Ballot in August 1904	116
House of Representatives' Ballot in August 1904	119
The Dalgety federal territory as proposed in the 1905 Bill	147

PageChapter Four

The seating of the House at the Opening of the third Parliament	170
The Sites in the House of Representatives' Ballot in October 1908	203
The House of Representatives' Ballot in October 1908	206
The Yass-Canberra Site	208
Analysis of the House of Representatives' and Senate Ballots in October 1908	233 - 243

INTRODUCTION

On 8 April 1891, the National Australasian Convention rejected by a vote of 26 to 4 the motion of Premier Dibbs of New South Wales that Sydney should be the seat of government of the proposed Commonwealth, and reaffirmed the decision of the drafting committee that the capital site should be chosen by the federal Parliament.⁽¹⁾ On 1 January 1911, the New South Wales Government formally handed over to the Commonwealth the present Australian Capital Territory. The scope of this thesis is a discussion of the history of the issue of the capital site during the intervening period and particularly in relation to the sphere of Australian federal politics during the first decade of the new nation.

The problem to be analysed is not so much why Canberra was finally selected as the site for the Australian capital, but why this subject engaged the attention of the federal Parliament for such a

(1) National Australasian Convention Debates Pages 899-900.

This was Dibbs' famous 'bombshell' which had failed to explode. The vote was rather interesting. Dibbs was supported only by Sir George Grey and Sir Harry Atkinson of New Zealand, and Alexander Forrest of Western Australia. Grey seconded the motion to repay a "debt of gratitude" for New South Wales' assistance during the native war. Ibid Page 900. Atkinson got on the wrong side of the table "by mistake" and was unable to go back after the tellers had begun to take the division.

S.M.H. 8 April 1891.

considerable extent of time. One must avoid any tendency to assume that Canberra was an inevitable choice. The Canberra site was not seriously considered until 1906, after federal members had already made two unsuccessful attempts to select the site. It should be noted at this stage that a discussion of the selection of the capital site constituted a major proportion of F.A. Watson's A Brief History of Canberra which was published in 1927. However, Watson's work was based mainly on the official published debates and parliamentary papers, and by his own admission in the preface, he omitted most of the "intimate details" of the "battle of the sites" and the "battle of the plans" because he thought it would be "unwise at present to publish such details". Watson's style is generally narrative in outlook, and he gives only a superficial account of the federal Parliament's deliberations and debates.⁽²⁾

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- (2) F.A. Watson A Brief History of Canberra Canberra (Federal Capital Press of Australia) 1927 Pages 71-143. See Appendix I of Chapter 2 below for a discussion of Watson's prefaced statement.
- More recent texts have added little knowledge.
- See also L.F. Fitzhardinge "In Search of a Capital City" in H.L. White (ed) Canberra: A Nation's Capital Sydney (Angus and Robertson) 1954 Pages 3-13 and L. Wigmore The Long View Melbourne (F.W. Cheshire) 1963 Pages 30-45.

D. Wright has recently examined another aspect of this subject. The final constitutional provision on the capital, the phraseology of which will be discussed in chapter one, provided that the federal Parliament should select the site in New South Wales but outside a radius of one hundred miles from Sydney. As a result, this constitutional clause necessitated negotiations between the Commonwealth and New South Wales Governments over the cession of the proposed federal territory. Indeed, the attitude of Carruthers who was Premier of New South Wales from 1904 to 1907, was a major contributing factor in the delay in deciding upon the site. In his study of Commonwealth and States 1901-10, Wright has devoted part of a chapter to analysing the correspondence between the Commonwealth and New South Wales authorities and the impasse which developed between the federal and state Governments.⁽³⁾

It is one of Wright's conclusions that the failure to settle the capital site at an early date "satisfactorily poisoned relations between the Commonwealth and New South Wales during the first decade".⁽⁴⁾

There is no intention in this thesis to substantially re-assess Wright's work but as relations between the Commonwealth and New South Wales Governments were to especially affect federal parliamentary discussion after 1904, this facet of the problem can not be neglected. Similarly, there has been some consideration of the relevancy and significance of this question as it affected New South Wales politics.

(3) D. Wright Commonwealth and States 1901-10 Ph.D Thesis
A.N.U. Chapter 2 Pages 109-53.

(4) Ibid Page 151.

Yet this issue is mainly examined in the realm of federal politics. The structure of this work is generally based along chronological lines and is divided into four chapters. The first chapter is in the form of an introductory discussion analysing the terminology which defined the limits of discretion of the federal Parliament in the selection of a site, while the narrative of the next three corresponds with the life of the first three Parliaments respectively. The nature of this particular problem lends itself to such division for two reasons. First, while the proceedings in each Parliament were partly bound and influenced by the decisions of its predecessor, each newly elected legislative body, with its coterie of 'fresh faces', confronted this issue in the light of the prevailing and immediate situation. Secondly, there were three phases to this question; the first constitutes the period up to the end of 1903 including the examination of sites by both federal members and two Royal Commissions but culminating in the failure of the House and Senate to agree on a site; the second period embraces the federal Parliament's selection of the Dalgety site in 1904 and the subsequent fruitless negotiations between the federal and state Governments of 1905-6; the final phase covers the attempts to reach a compromise decision, which, while beginning as early as the end of 1905, only became really significant and achieved success during the third Parliament.

However, whilst this problem can be studied in three distinct but related phases, there were common themes running throughout this period of discussion, which in themselves formed a major influence on federal political opinion. As such, the question of the capital site must be examined in the light of the general political trends of this period.

The first federal representatives who met in Melbourne in May 1901, constituted more of a conglomeration of illustrious and imminent public figures than an assemblage of defined parties with set policies. In the first federal Parliament as a whole, there were fourteen former colonial Premiers and twenty other members had held Ministerial office. Over two-thirds of the Parliament had sat in colonial legislatures. Much of the rivalry and antipathy of the colonial era was carried over into the relations in the new Parliament. Mistrust and sometimes irrational jealousy between the major commercial centres of Sydney and Melbourne coloured much of the early discussion and this was no more evident than in the debates on the selection of the capital site. The banter between the press organs in Sydney and Melbourne only served to heighten tension.

On a narrower plane, it has been demonstrated elsewhere that while the issue of the Tariff constituted the nominal dividing line between non-Labour members, political associations were quite often formed on the basis of local interests such as the North Queensland sugar farmers' lobby.⁽⁵⁾ As far as this study is concerned, the 'roads and bridges' mentality was most aptly revealed in the attention which certain New South Wales representatives were required to pay to the demands of the federal capital leagues which were set up to secure the capital site for their respective areas.

After the 1903 election, the instability of federal politics was emphasised rather than remedied. There were five changes of office in the period 1904-9, yet no Government was removed from power by

(5) See I. Campbell Politics, Parties and Pressure Groups 1900-1905 M.A. Thesis Sydney 1962 Pages 88-102.

the electors until 1910. Much of the second Parliament was devoid of constructive legislation because of the attempts to find some form of workable majority. Despite the 'alliance' between the radical Protectionists and Labour members during the period 1904-6, the decision of the 1905 Labour Conference that its federal party should govern in its own right virtually determined that the division between the federal political parties would ultimately be on a Labour/non-Labour basis. The outcome of the ballots for the capital site in both 1904 and 1908 was directly influenced by the existing relations between non-Labour members. On the other hand, Labour representatives were always more divided on this question than their fellow members and at no stage were the Labour leaders able to control a party vote on this matter, even when they wanted to at the end of discussion on the issue in 1908.

Professor Alexander has recently described the Australian political scene between Federation and the outbreak of the First World War as one of "Political Alignment and Social Experiment".⁽⁶⁾ The question of the selection of the capital site was a peculiar issue at a time when important decisions and policies had to be formulated. This subject could be regarded as an annoying canker on the body politic, but on examination, it does serve to throw some light on the prevailing political mood of the new Commonwealth.

(6) Fred Alexander Australia Since Federation Melbourne
(Thomas Nelson) 1967 Chapter One Pages 5-49.

CHAPTER ONE - THE CONSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK

Introduction

The Federal Convention of 1897-8 endorsed its predecessor's policy by not only rejecting Sydney as the capital of the future Federation but also by refusing to nominate any site or area. Despite protests by Lyne, the Convention agreed that the federal Parliament should decide the site for the capital⁽¹⁾. It was also provided that the capital should be in federal territory, effectively excluding the major cities as possible sites⁽²⁾.

The failure to acquire enough votes in New South Wales for the 1897-8 Federation Bill brought certain clauses of the proposed Constitution under review, including that pertaining to the capital. The Colonial Premiers' Conference of January 1899 amended the provision on the capital to the present section one hundred and twenty-five of the Australian Constitution:-

The seat of government of the Commonwealth shall be determined by the Parliament, and shall be within territory, which shall have been granted to or acquired by the Commonwealth, and shall be vested in and belong to the Commonwealth, and shall be in the State of New South Wales and be distant not less than one hundred miles from Sydney.

(1) Australasian Federal Convention Debates

Third Session Volume 1 Pages 700-12.

(2) Ibid Volume III Pages 1802-16.

Such territory shall contain an area of not less than one hundred square miles, and such portion thereof as shall consist of Crown lands shall be granted to the Commonwealth without any payment thereof.

The Parliament shall sit at Melbourne until it meets at the seat of Government.

Ostensibly, this clause was an effective compromise between the interests of Sydney and Melbourne. The capital had to be in New South Wales but it could not be within one hundred miles of Sydney. As a concession, Melbourne was to retain the federal Parliament until the seat of government was established⁽³⁾. However, while there was no dispute on these points, the vague terminology of section one hundred and twenty five was to provide room for debate and controversy. It is necessary to examine these problems at the outset for they lay at the basis of the latter dispute between the Commonwealth and New South Wales and affected the federal Parliament's consideration of the capital site issue. The main questions in dispute were:- how was the site to be selected, where should the site be located, and where should the Australian capital be situated in the meantime. These issues are discussed in this chapter under three headings -

- (1) the question of sovereignty,
- (2) the location of the site and
- (3) the temporary seat of government.

(3) For the purposes of this study, the terms "capital" and "seat of government" remain synonymous.

The Question of Sovereignty

By limiting federal Parliament's choice to an area in New South Wales, the Colonial Premiers had further complicated the process of selection of the capital site. In their monumental text on the Australian Constitution, Quick and Garran noted that under the terms of section one hundred and twenty five, it was uncertain whether the federal Parliament had full and plenary powers to make a selection or whether it was limited to sites which had previously been offered by the New South Wales Legislature. They concluded that while the Commonwealth possessed a reserve power to at least acquire the constitutional minimum area of 100 square miles, it also was obvious that much would depend on the maintenance of good-will between the federal and state Governments. ⁽⁴⁾

During the early years of Federation, the Commonwealth and New South Wales Governments avoided any controversy on this point. But relations between the federal and state authorities soon deteriorated after a new administration under the Premiership of Joseph Carruthers acceded to power in New South Wales. Carruthers' determination to enforce the 'rights' of New South Wales in this matter was to add a new dimension to the debate in the federal Parliament. The Premier's case was to be mainly concerned both with the extent of area of the federal territory which he claimed should be limited to the constitutional minimum of 100 square miles, and the geographical position of the capital. It is this second point which requires further elaboration.

(4) J. Quick and R. Garran The Annotated Constitution of the Australian Commonwealth Sydney (Angus and Robertson) 1901 Pages 981-2. See Section 51, subsection XXXI and Section 111 of the Australian Constitution.

The Location of the Site

After their deliberations, the Premiers had issued a Memorandum elaborating upon the decisions which they had made. In respect to the capital, this document stated:-

while the capital cannot be fixed at Sydney, or in its neighbourhood, provision is made in the Constitution for its establishment in New South Wales at a reasonable distance from that city.⁽⁵⁾

The crucial phrase in this statement was "reasonable distance". Just what constituted "reasonable distance" from Sydney was uncertain. On his return to Sydney after the conference, Reid said that he expected that the site would be selected "in the very heart of our territory ... in the neighbourhood of the Great Southern Railway" while Barton also spoke of a capital "100 to 150 miles" from Sydney.⁽⁶⁾ Undoubtedly, most opinion in Sydney believed that the capital would be located somewhere in the centre of the State near to the 100 miles limit. Sydney's representatives were to urge such claims in the federal Parliament. However, the Premiers' Memorandum tended to be ignored over the ensuing years and it was not until 1905 that Reid revived interest in the document by making further revelations regarding the Premiers' discussions. After 1905 consideration of the Memorandum was to have a certain bearing on the final determination of the site.

(5) Report of Premiers' Conference 1899.

C.A.O. C.R.S. A18 n.f.n.

(6) S.M.H. 4 February 1899.

The Temporary Seat of Government

The final problem of constitutional interpretation was related to but separate from the question of the selection of the site. However, lying constantly in the background to the debate on the capital site, this particular aspect of the matter was to help prejudice New South Wales' attitude towards Federation.

While the Constitution provided that the federal Parliament should convene in Melbourne until it met at the seat of government, no reference was made to the temporary location of the executive and administrative offices of the Commonwealth. Throughout the 1899 federal Referendum campaign, Reid tried to convince the New South Wales electorate that although Melbourne would retain the Parliament for a short period, the seat of government of the Commonwealth would have to be in New South Wales from the outset.⁽⁷⁾ Twelve months later, R.E. O'Connor argued in a special memorandum that to fix the seat of government even temporarily outside of New South Wales would be as

(7) S.M.H. 7 and 9 February, 4 March, and 2, 4 and 17 May 1898. The Daily Telegraph maintained that Melbourne had acquired the capital permanently. See 7 March, 15 April, 12 May (2L), 16 May (1L) and 30 May (2L) 1899. Deakin claimed that if Reid had been a little more "exigeant", then the last provision in favour of Melbourne would not have been "insisted upon". The Victorians were prepared to share the parliament between Melbourne, Sydney and the other capital cities. A. Deakin The Federal Story 1880-1900 (M.U.P.) 1963 Page 102.

much a "breach" of the Constitution as to locate it "permanently" outside that State.⁽⁸⁾ Lyne tried to enforce this opinion by successfully urging upon the other Premiers and the Colonial Office that while the Governor General should remain in Melbourne during the sitting of Parliament, he should have his main residence in Sydney.⁽⁹⁾

In practice, the Commonwealth executive and administration became centred in Melbourne. Despite difficulty in finding accommodation,⁽¹⁰⁾ the Cabinet met in Sydney for the first few months of 1901, but once the Parliament was convened, the Executive moved to Melbourne where it remained virtually permanently until 1927, and much of the administration of the Commonwealth was carried on in the southern city until after World War II. Quite apart from the question of executive control of bureaucracy, the parsimonious condition of the early Commonwealth made it virtually impossible to retain major central office buildings in both Melbourne and Sydney. In early 1902, there were complaints in the Senate about Home Affairs Minister Lyne even retaining an office suite and a bed in Sydney.⁽¹¹⁾

Some effect of the location of the central administrative offices in Melbourne can be seen in the following survey. Of the heads of the

-
- (8) Opinion of R.E. O'Connor respecting the Seat of Government of the Commonwealth N.S.W.V.P. 1900 Volume II Page 123. For a contrary view, see Quick and Garran op.cit Page 980.
 - (9) C.P.P. 1905 Volume II Pages 1103-10.
 - (10) Attlee Hunt The Commonwealth's Infancy Argus 5 December 1932.
 - (11) C.P.D. Volume X Pages 13119-25.

Commonwealth departments in 1904, Attlee Hunt (External Affairs) and Garran (Attorney-General) had no previous public service, Miller (Home Affairs) had come from New South Wales and Scott (Post Master-General)⁽¹²⁾ from Queensland which were the home States respectively of the inaugural Ministers of these two departments - Lyne and Drake, while Allen (Treasury), Collins (Defence), Wallaston (Trade and Customs) and Reddin (Public Service Commissioner) had all been in the Victorian colonial public service. The Victorian representation was more marked in the central staffs of the departments for over half the members came from that State while only one-fifth came from New South Wales.⁽¹³⁾

The growing control of Commonwealth administration from Melbourne soon provoked complaints from the Sydney press that their city's commercial interests were being subjected to inconvenience in such matters as the registration of patents and the delivery of mail.⁽¹⁴⁾ One issue in particular was to cause concern. At the time of the passage of the 1903 Judiciary Bill, a large Sydney deputation consisting of rep-

(12) Both the Post Master-General's Department which had the largest employment in the service, and the Trade and Customs Department were transferred to the Commonwealth from the former colonial administrations. The appointment of Scott over Outtrim, the former head of the Victorian Post and Telegraph Department, who remained only a sub-head in his home city, was to cause a certain amount of embarrassment and difficulty. See L. Blain "An Early Administrative Contretemps" Public Administration (Sydney) Volume 15 1956 Pages 245-9.

(13) Classification of the Public Service.
C.P.P. 1904 Volume III passim.

(14) See S.M.H. 1 July 1903 (3L) and 22 January 1904 (4L).

representatives of commerce, insurance and law waited upon Barton and urged that until the federal city was created, as much of the administration as possible, including in particular the business of the High Court, should be carried on in Sydney.⁽¹⁵⁾ The pressure was successful for provision was made in the Judiciary Bill that until the capital was established, the principal seat of the High Court should be at such place as the Executive appointed from "time to time".⁽¹⁶⁾ Despite protests in 1905 by Attorney-General Symon that the Court should be centred in Melbourne and not go on circuit,⁽¹⁷⁾ Full Court sittings (including all the Justices) continued to be held in both the major Australian cities.

While Sydney's interests achieved a minor triumph in the matter of the High Court, another matter continued to cause dissatisfaction. In accordance with the pre-Federation arrangement, the Governor-General continued to maintain residences in both Sydney and Melbourne, but the lengthy sessions of the federal Parliament forced him to remain for long periods in the southern city. In December 1902, Barton informed Tennyson of the growth of a "really strong" feeling amongst Sydney's population that they were not seeing enough of the Governor-General.⁽¹⁸⁾

It was not long before the topic became a subject of dispute between the Commonwealth and New South Wales Governments. It had

(15) D.T. 25 August 1903.

(16) Section 10 of Act No. 6 of 1903.

(17) See C.P.P. 1905 Volume II Pages 1121-59.

(18) Edmund Barton to Lord Tennyson 11 December 1902.

Tennyson Papers AN.L. MS 1963/260.

originally been arranged that the Sydney and Melbourne vice-regal mansions should be rent-free. In 1905, Premier Carruthers, already arguing with the Commonwealth over the selection of the capital site, complained that Lyne's pre-Federation compact with the other colonial Premiers had never been "fairly honoured" as the Governor-General's residence had for all "practical purposes" been "permanently fixed" in Melbourne. Carruthers threatened to cancel the 'free rent' arrangement with the Commonwealth unless satisfactory steps were taken to remedy the situation.⁽¹⁹⁾ In reply, Deakin maintained that while there was no intention to deny New South Wales its rights, it was necessary that the Governor-General should remain in Melbourne during the sitting of the federal Parliament. This situation would have to continue until the selection and occupation of the permanent seat of government.⁽²⁰⁾ Arrangements were finally made to allow the Governor-General to continue to maintain a Sydney residence, but further difficulties in this question arose later between the Fisher and McGowen Ministeries.⁽²¹⁾

Interests in Sydney received these developments in the executive and administrative structure of the Commonwealth as an indication that Melbourne was exercising an undue and improper influence on Federation. The protracted delay in settling the site for the capital appeared to strengthen the southern city's claims to remain as the permanent seat of government. This helped to increase suspicions in New South Wales regarding the sincerity of both the federal Government and federal Parliament's intention to select a site.

(19) Premier N.S.W. to P.M. 12 July 1905.

C.P.P. 1905 Volume II Page 1117.

(20) P.M. to Premier N.S.W. 24 July 1905 Ibid Pages 1117-8.

(21) For a fuller discussion of this issue see D. Wright op. cit Pages 211-19.

Conclusion

Like many other clauses in the Australian Constitution, the capital provision was a compromise. Yet while section one hundred and twenty-five appeared to pay due regard to the interests of both Sydney and Melbourne, its vague phrasing left important issues unresolved. It was only to be expected that in the early years of Federation parochial jealousies would highlight and play upon these controversies.

The debate on these constitutional issues was to be carried on mainly between the federal and state Governments. As noted, much of this particular aspect of the topic has already been covered by another scholar. However, these points of dispute did provide a backdrop to the debate in federal Parliament and they certainly affected the attitudes of the New South Wales representatives. As such, they were significant in the manner in which they served to intensify the various provincial differences that were the basis of much of the discussion.

CHAPTER TWO - THE FIRST PARLIAMENT

Introduction

The first stage in the discussion on this topic brought forth expressions of good intent but little action. Unlike later years, the Commonwealth remained on good terms with New South Wales while the See Ministry was in office⁽¹⁾. There was slight disagreement regarding procedural matters, but both administrations concurred in the principle that the federal Parliament had full discretion in the selection of the site. It was only on the issue of the extent of the area of federal territory that some difficulty finally arose.

In order to assist the Parliament in its decision, an ample amount of information was collected on prospective sites. Two Royal Commissions produced a mass of evidence, although their conclusions were rather divergent. Members of the first federal Parliament were also given an opportunity to inspect numerous areas in New South Wales.

Despite these favourable circumstances, the federal Government allowed the matter to drift. Undoubtedly the formation of Commonwealth administration and the problem of the tariff seemed more urgent than the selection of the capital site. On the other hand,

(1) B.R. Wise later claimed that much of the good will between the Commonwealth and New South Wales in the early years of Federation was due to the influence of O'Sullivan and himself.

W.M. Hughes later likened the situation faced by the Commonwealth in 1901 to that of "a bridal couple returning home from their honeymoon to be overwhelmed by enterprising real estate agents with offers of eligible sites for their home".⁽²⁾ Two of the "real estate agents" were in the Government itself. Both Sir William Lyne, Minister for Home Affairs until Kingston's resignation in August 1903, and Austin Chapman, Government whip in the House and later Minister for Trade and Customs, were determined to secure the capital for their respective electorates. As Minister officially in charge of this topic, Lyne was able to direct much of the attention in his own interest, while Chapman used all his erstwhile whipping ability to gather votes for his candidate.

The result of this struggle was to help delay the debate and ballot for a site until almost the end of the first Parliament's life. It had already been aptly demonstrated during the first two years of Federation that as well as the local constituency demands which were involved, many federal representatives had to pay heed to the various provincial influences. The conflict between Sydney and Melbourne's press and commercial interests was most obvious but the question of the cost of the construction of the capital concerned federal members from States other than New South Wales and Victoria. On a less parochial plane, many Labour members wanted to acquire a sufficiently large area for the federal territory, which would forever remain the property of the Commonwealth. The impending second federal election

(2) W.M. Hughes Policies and Potentates Sydney (Angus and Robertson) 1950 Page 55.

was to bring the clash between these opposing forces to the fore. The result was to be the failure of the House and Senate to agree on a site, so leaving the issue unresolved.

Oliver's Report

Even before the new Commonwealth was formally created, the first moves were made in the search for a site. On 14 November 1899, the New South Wales Government commissioned Alexander Oliver, the President of the State's land appeal court, to enquire into and report on capital sites. A circular was sent out to the various federal capital leagues which had been established, requesting information in regard to climate, physical conditions, accessibility, ownership and value of land and miscellaneous matters⁽³⁾. During the next nine months Oliver travelled extensively over New South Wales taking evidence and examining the numerous contenders. Over forty sites were submitted, of which twenty-three were considered, and of these, fourteen were inspected.

Oliver presented his report in October 1900. In his introduction, the Commissioner pointed out that it had "clearly" been a "paramount duty" to "discharge" his mind of every "sentiment and symbol of bias" in favour of New South Wales as well as of his "disposition" to favour the "supposed interests" or "pretensions" of Sydney.⁽⁴⁾ Oliver

(3) F.A. Watson op.cit Page 75.

(4) Report of the Commissioner on Sites for the Seat of Government of the Commonwealth N.S.W.V.P. 1900 Volume II Page 27.

had not examined sites north of the main western railway line between Sydney and Bourke because they were not easily accessible to the "ordinary" lines of communication or to the most "densely populated" areas of the other colonies. He also concluded that to select a site near to the one hundred mile radius limit from Sydney would not be reconcilable with the "fair deal principle" between New South Wales and Victoria.⁽⁵⁾ On the other hand, the Albury site was rejected because it would be dominated by Victoria and this also would "hardly be reasonable".⁽⁶⁾

Oliver maintained that the federal territory should be fairly extensive, and he regarded climate and water supply as being of more importance than present accessibility.⁽⁷⁾ Taking these factors into account, Oliver nominated the Monaro area in southern New South Wales as the most suitable district for the capital. This region, in which the most prominent site was Bombala, possessed the salubrious Snowy River and the harbour of Twofold Bay which could become a possible federal port.⁽⁸⁾

The only drawback to this area was its present inaccessibility. The New South Wales railway system terminated at Cooma. Oliver believed that this disadvantage could be overcome by the connection of the southern New South Wales and Victorian Railway services through the Monaro and Gippsland districts, and the creation of a further railroad to Eden, which would be developed to cater for

(5) Ibid Page 37

(6) Ibid Page 43

(7) Ibid Pages 30 and 37

(8) Ibid Page 47

sea traffic from the rest of Australia. Oliver expected that the Commonwealth, New South Wales and Victorian Governments would jointly undertake such a project. However, he estimated that New South Wales' share of the cost of this grandiose scheme would alone be £784,000.⁽⁹⁾

Oliver realised that there would be serious objections to the undertaking of such a costly development in the early years of Federation. Thus, he concluded that either Orange or Yass or Bombala-Eden would be suitable sites. If the final selection was to be "governed mainly" by consideration of "cost of acquisition" and "present accessibility," then Yass would be entitled to "first place". If the "quality of the soil" and the "character of the climate" were accepted as "controlling factors," then Orange would be the site. But, if the selection was within "reasonable limits" to be made "independently" of "cost" and "present accessibility," Southern Monaro combined "more distinctively appropriate features" than either Orange or Yass. On their "own merits", apart from the above considerations, and "having regard for the future", Southern Monaro would be first and Orange and Yass would be bracketed equally second.⁽¹⁰⁾

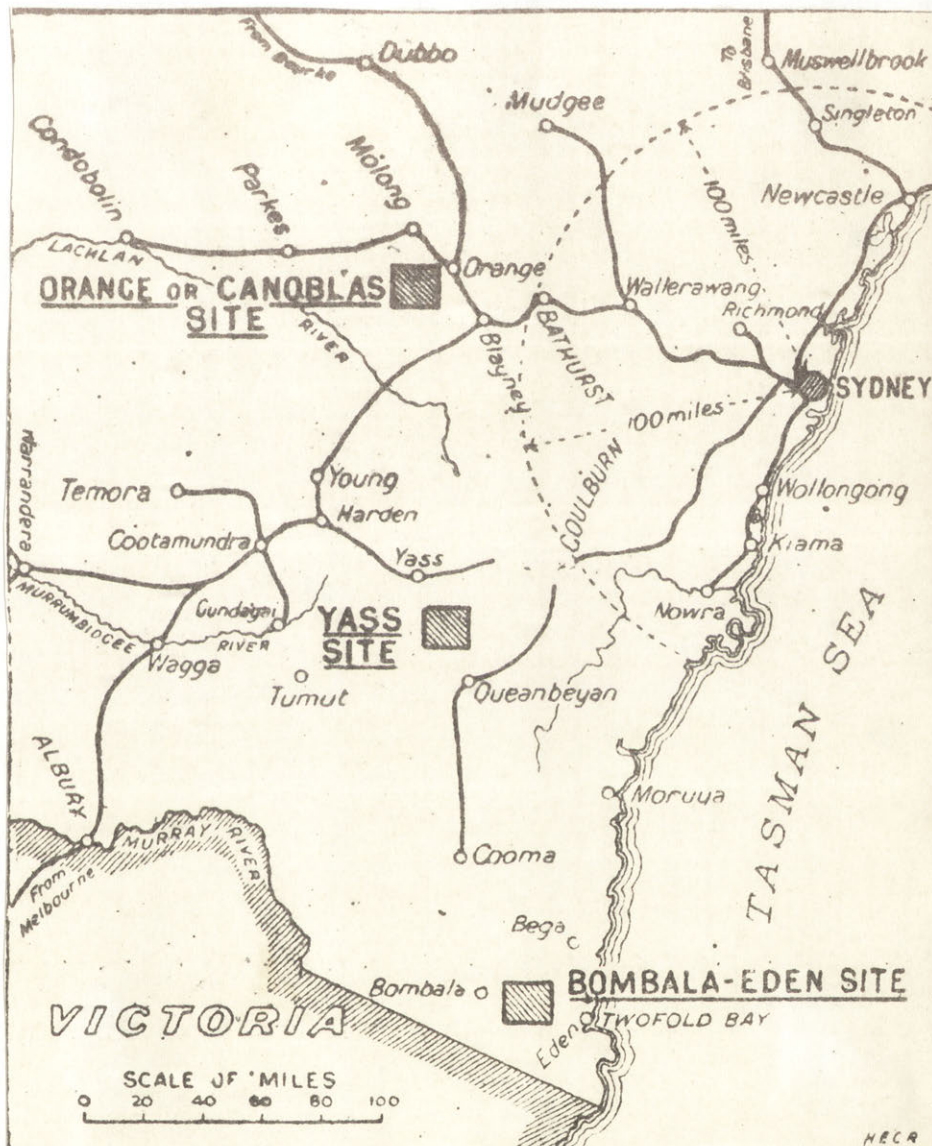
Oliver's report was significant not only in its recommendations but also in the particular issues which it raised. The questions of an adequate water supply, climate, location and accessi-

(9) Ibid Pages 48-9

The plan of constructing a second route from Sydney to Melbourne had been considered for a number of years Ibid

See also S.M.H. 13 October 1888

(10) Ibid Page 51



The Sites Recommended by Oliver

bility, and overriding all these, the consideration of cost, were all to be raised in the discussion of this topic during the next eight years. Unlike Oliver's approach, attitudes in the federal Parliament towards these issues were to be far from objective.

The 1901 Election

Oliver's report had opened discussion but the issue first entered the federal political arena during the election campaign for the new Commonwealth Parliament. The subject of the capital occupied pride of place in Barton's Manifesto at Maitland. The Prime Minister stated that while the federal territory would be nationalised, fair value would be given to the owners of the land but the Government would not "play into the hands of speculators". Due inquiry would be made into the suitability of various sites, and although New South Wales would receive "fair play", a "just arrangement" would be made between the Commonwealth and State. As regards Oliver's report, this covered a lot of ground and would be "very useful".⁽¹¹⁾

At a later date, Barton expressed a wish for the New South Wales Parliament to name its own selection of a site. There could be no guarantee of the federal Parliament accepting this choice but every consideration would be given to such a preference.⁽¹²⁾ The Prime Minister also made it clear that the Commonwealth would require an area larger than the statutory limit of 100 square miles.

(11) S.M.H. 18 January 1901

(12) S.M.H. 21 February 1901

The land would be leased for long periods and the increment which the Commonwealth received, would be used to offset the cost of developing the capital.⁽¹³⁾

Barton's policies were designed for a national audience. At this early stage of the Commonwealth there were no federal party structures for any of the parties. The organisations in the various states often had their own particular policies catering for a provincial electorate. Thus, while the Protectionist groups in New South Wales and Victoria may have adopted a relatively common plank on the fiscal policy, they diverged on the capital site question. The programme of the New South Wales Protectionist ticket for the Senate stressed an early selection of the site⁽¹⁴⁾ but the National Liberal Manifesto which was issued in Melbourne, only noted Barton's policy of nationalisation of the federal territory.⁽¹⁵⁾ Similarly, the policy statement of the New South Wales Labour Senate team gave an assurance to press both for an early selection of the site and the nationalisation of federal territory⁽¹⁶⁾ whilst the Manifesto of the United Labour Party of Victoria only

(13) S.M.H. 22 March 1901.

Deakin was probably the originator of the idea of nationalisation of federal territory.

See J. La Nauze Alfred Deakin Melbourne (M.U.P.) 1965 Volume 1 Page 224.

(14) Argus 14 March 1901.

(15) Argus 11 March 1901.

(16) Worker (Sydney) 16 March 1901.

pledged its candidates to the nationalisation scheme.⁽¹⁷⁾

One surprising feature of the campaign was Reid's failure to formulate any policy on this topic. The Free-trade leader often provoked anti-Victorian sentiment in his speeches in his home State,⁽¹⁸⁾ but he was quite content to concentrate on the fiscal issue. The policy statement of the Australian Liberal Organization, the body supporting Reid's campaign, made no mention of the capital site.⁽¹⁹⁾

Debate on the capital site was most relevant in the particular constituencies which embraced or were near likely sites. W.G. Spence, elected for Darling, supported the plan for locating the capital at Orange, while Cruickshank, the successful candidate for Gwydir,

(17) Argus 7 March 1901

H. S. Broadhead notes that the Labour candidates in the various States were just as much concerned with local interests as with the meagre federal Labour platform. The Australian Federal Labour Party 1901-1905 M. A. Thesis Melbourne 1959 Page 20.

(18) Examples of Reid's parochialism can be seen in the following comments:-

"New South Wales had suffered at the hands of the adjoining state" S.M.H. 29 March 1901.

"The question is whether Victoria is going to lead Australia in this tariff cause or New South Wales" D.T. 5 February 1901.

"The Victorians were not leaving a stone unturned to secure a victory for protection" D.T. 14 March 1901.

(19) D.T. 9 February 1901.

preferred the Armidale site.⁽²⁰⁾ In the Eden-Monaro electorate, Austin Chapman, who was elected as a supporter of the Barton Government, promised in his victory speech to secure the capital for the Monaro district.⁽²¹⁾ Just across the border in the Victorian constituency of Gippsland, the former Victorian Premier McLean also expressed a preference for a site in the Eden-Monaro area.⁽²²⁾

Outside local demands, it was in the press that this issue created most interest. Editorial opinion in the smaller States generally accepted that the obligation to New South Wales would have to be carried out.⁽²³⁾ In Sydney, the Sydney Morning Herald urged electors to question candidates on this topic,⁽²⁴⁾ while the Daily Telegraph was fearful lest a site would be chosen in such a location as would serve Victorian requirements.⁽²⁵⁾ On the other hand, the Age pointed out that there were more "urgent and pressing" matters which would push the question of the capital into the background for

(20) S.M.H. 2 and 7 March 1901

(21) Monaro Mercury 1 April 1901

(22) D.T. 19 March 1901

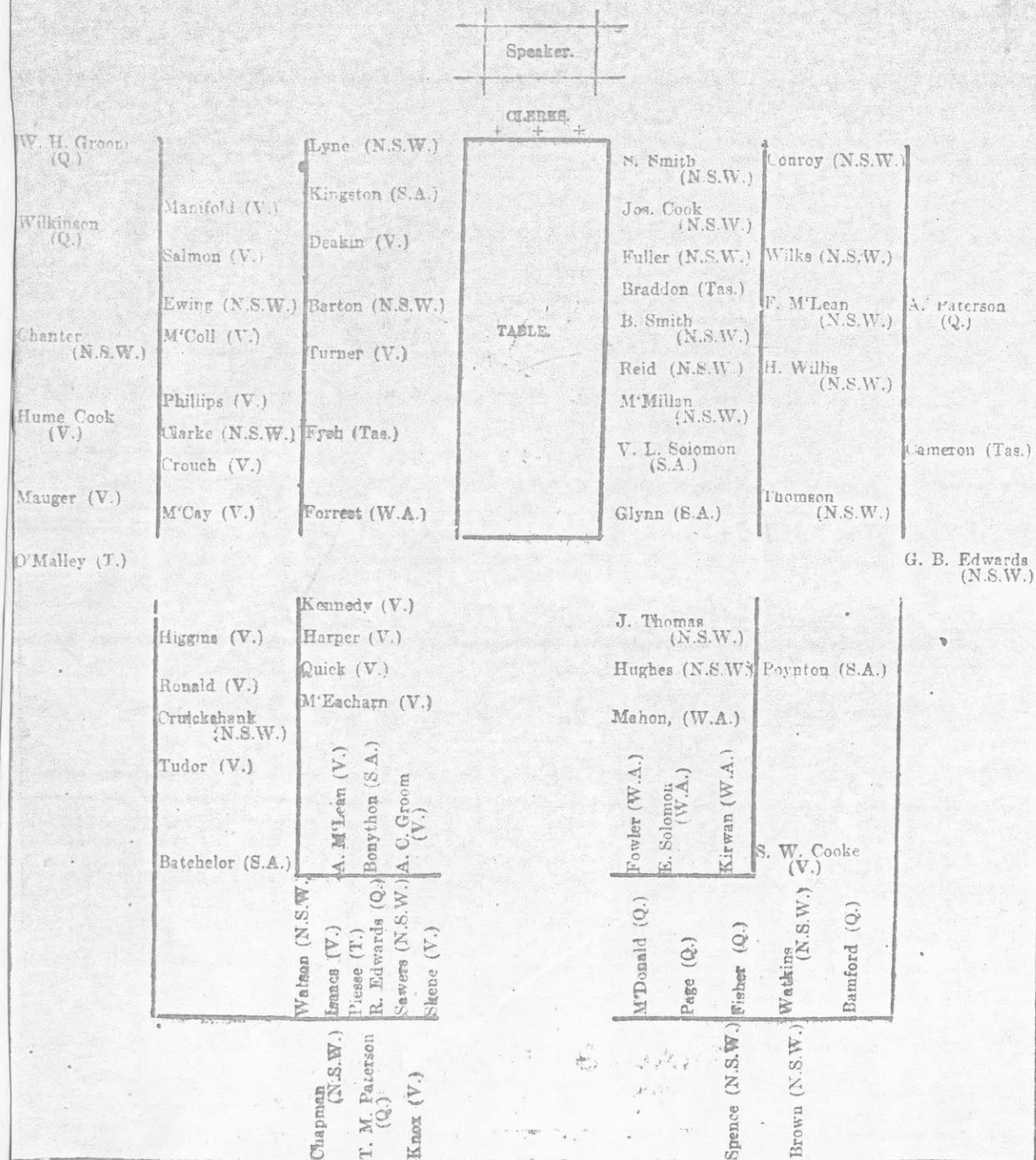
(23) See Advertiser 18 January 1901 (1L) and Courier 23 January 1901 (1L).

(24) S.M.H. 21 February 1901 (2L).

(25) D.T. 25 January (1L) and 25 February (1L) and 18 March (3L) 1901.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

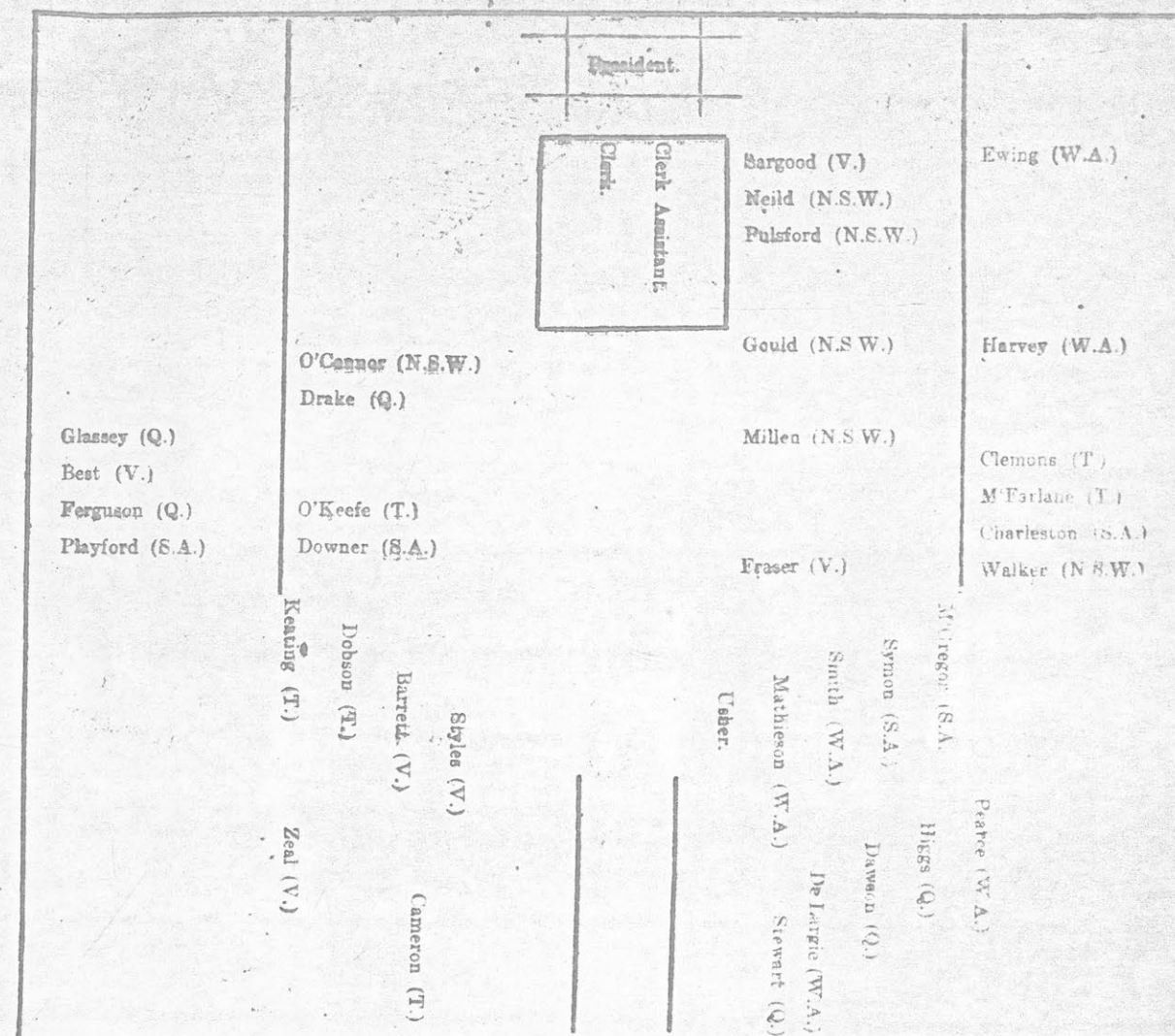
MINISTERIAL	42
OPPOSITION	32



There were a few absentees when the Speaker was elected, but the diagram above shows how members will sit in a full House. Only one Victorian, Mr. Winter Cooke, sits in Opposition. The totals are 42 Ministerialists and 32 Opposition, but a number of those who sit in the Ministerial Corner are in favour of a low tariff, so that on a division on the fiscal issue the majority will no doubt be found to support such a tariff.

THE SENATE.

MINISTERIAL	14
OPPOSITION	21



It will be seen that 21 members took their seats on the Opposition benches, and 14, including two members of the Federal Ministry, ranged themselves to the right of the President. The corner benches, as usual, are very well filled, 16 members in all favouring them at the outset. Directly opposite Senator O'Connell are five staunch free traders, and a revenue tariffist in Senator Fraser (V.), who has taken his old seat next the gangway. Taking their seating as an index, parties are divided thus:-

Ministerial. Opposition.	
New South Wales ..	1
Victoria	4
Queensland	3
South Australia .. .	2
West Australia .. .	6
Tasmania	4
	11
	21

The labour party has concentrated itself in the corner benches, but the fiscal question separates the Victorian labour Senators from their fellows.

some time.⁽²⁶⁾ The jealousy between the major press organs of Sydney and Melbourne and the influence of these cities' conflicting commercial interests were to overlay much of the consideration of this subject.

Early Hopes for a Settlement

Despite the echoes of provincialism during the election campaign, the prospects for an early settlement of the capital site still seemed good. Lyne, the former Premier of New South Wales, was now Minister of Home Affairs and so officially in charge of this matter. He gave assurances that there would be no delay in taking positive steps for as soon as Parliament had finished most of its "urgent work", there would be an adjournment to allow members to visit and inspect the various prominent sites.⁽²⁷⁾

The federal Cabinet considered the matter early and on 13 April 1901 Barton asked Premier See if he was prepared to offer any sites. In accord with his election policy, the Prime Minister requested an area larger than the constitutional minimum of 100 square miles and suggested that Crown lands should be reserved in the respective districts.⁽²⁸⁾ The state Government responded by reserving 400 square miles around the sites of

(26) Age 18 January 1901 (1L)

(27) D.T. 15 April and 17 and 18 May 1901

(28) P.M. to Premier N.S.W. 13 April 1901 N.S.W.V.P.
1901 Volume I Page 879

For this and ensuing correspondence see D. Wright op.cit
Pages 112-5.

Bombala, Yass and Conobolas (the sites which Oliver had recommended in his report) and offering to meet the Commonwealth if it preferred any other site.⁽²⁹⁾

The question was soon discussed in the federal Parliament. On 19 July, King O'Malley (Tasmania) introduced a motion stipulating that the federal territory should be not less than 1,000 square miles and the freehold should "forever" remain the property of the Commonwealth. O'Malley made it clear that his proposal could be endorsed by establishing the capital at Bombala⁽³⁰⁾. Barton accepted O'Malley's proposal regarding the nationalisation of the federal territory but he maintained that a reference to the size of the area could limit the choice of site and cause difficulties with the New South Wales Government.⁽³¹⁾ Therefore, he suggested that the motion be amended to read that the Commonwealth acquire an area which was "well watered, healthily situated" and "large enough" to meet probable requirements. The motion as amended was passed later in the session.⁽³²⁾

(29) Minute by Secretary for Lands Ibid Page 880.

Premier N.S.W. to P.M. 24 April 1901 Ibid Page 881.

(30) C.P.D. Volume III Pages 2807-9.

O'Malley had a predilection for changing his mind over the best site. In 1897 he had supported Albury as the capital. W.A. Bayley Border City (Albury City) 1954 Page 114. Later O'Malley was to take much of the credit for the early establishment of Canberra.

(31) Ibid Page 2814-8.

(32) C.P.D. Volume XII Pages 15897-8.

While the Parliament was setting out the formal requirements for the capital, pressure groups had their own interests to promote. The federal capital leagues which had been formed prior to Oliver's inspection, remained very active. Numerous pamphlets were published, setting out the advantages and assets of the various sites.⁽³³⁾ Some groups were not prepared to accept Oliver's conclusions. A deputation from Tumut waited upon See to press their district's claims for consideration.⁽³⁴⁾ New sites were also coming into prominence. Despite Oliver's reluctance to examine any area north of Sydney, a federal league was formed at Armidale to sponsor that site's bid for selection.⁽³⁵⁾

It was at this stage that difficulties arose between the Commonwealth and New South Wales Governments on the question

(33) A selection includes -

The Federal City and the Claims of Southern Monaro

Issued under the auspices of the Bombala Railway and Federal Capital League 1 May 1900.

Price Warung (William Astley) Bathurst; The Ideal Federal Capital

Candolas; The Ideal Site for the Federal Capital of Australia. Issued by the Orange Federal Capital League 1902.

All these pamphlets are available in A.N.L. or M.L.

(34) D.T. 18 May 1901.

(35) See G.S. Harman "Armidale's bid to be selected as the Site of Australia's Federal Capital" Armidale and District Historical Society Journal and Proceedings No. 7 October 1964 Pages 10-14.

of the nomination of sites. Barton had refused to recommend any areas himself, for, ostensibly, both he and Lyne claimed that in the first instance this was the responsibility of the state Government.⁽³⁶⁾ There were difficulties too in the federal Ministry speaking as one on a site, for Chapman, who was Ministerial Whip, was anxious to secure the capital for his own electorate, and Lyne himself had the sites of Albury and Tumut in his constituency.

On his part, See was just as reluctant to nominate any site. As he told one M.L.A., the Commonwealth Parliament had the "right" of deciding the site and it was the "duty" of the state Government to put before the federal authorities the "various sites brought under notice".⁽³⁷⁾

But as in the federal Ministry, individual members of the state Cabinet had vested and conflicting interests in this matter. Waddell, the state Treasurer, was "most anxious" to have the site of Carcoar-Garland inspected, as this issue was a "burning question"

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- (36) P.M. to Premier N.S.W. 30 April and 26 July 1901.
N.S.W.V.P. 1901 Volume I Pages 881-2, 833.
 Minutes by Barton 18 July 1901 and Lyne 22 July 1901.
C.A.O. C.R.S. A18 printed Senate Paper 1901 n.f.n.
 quoted in Wright op.cit Page 113.
- (37) Sir John See to R.D. Meagher 18 January 1902.
Sir John See Papers M.L. A3655/87.

in his constituency,⁽³⁸⁾ and Edward O'Sullivan, the Secretary for Public Works, represented the Queanbeyan electorate which contained a prominent site.

When Barton inquired as to whether any further sites would be submitted, and if the New South Wales Government favoured any particular district,⁽³⁹⁾ See simply passed the matter on to Oliver, who replied in a memorandum which was forwarded to the federal Government. Oliver stated that he had inspected Tumut and was now prepared to recommend that site. As regards other districts, he did not favour Albury but was prepared to examine the New England area, and he pointed out that the site of Lake George was included in the extended Yass area of his report.⁽⁴⁰⁾ Inspections were later made of both the Armidale and Lake George areas.⁽⁴¹⁾

Despite the state Government's unwillingness to name a preference for a site, it has been noted that there was no "real

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- (38) T. Waddell to John See 12 September 1901.
N.S.W.A.O. Public Works Department, Federal Capital Site Commission - Proposed Sites, 4/883.3
- (39) P.M. to Premier N.S.W. 29 August 1901.
C.A.O. C.R.S. A18 Printed Senate Paper 1901 n.f.n. quoted in Wright op.cit Page 114.
- (40) Principal Under-Secretary N.S.W. to P.M. 23 September 1901 Ibid quoted in Wright op.cit Page 114.
- (41) N.S.W.A.O. Public Works Department, Federal Capital Site Commission - Proposed Sites, 4/882.2 and 4/884.6.

difference" between the views of the Prime Minister and Premier as to the right of the federal Parliament to choose the territory for the seat of government,⁽⁴²⁾ but interests in New South Wales were perturbed at the delay which was being caused by the apparent impasse between the Commonwealth and New South Wales authorities. There was criticism of See's attitude. The Sydney Morning Herald claimed that as the State was surrendering the area, its Parliament did have some "right of recommendation" in the matter.⁽⁴³⁾

On 19 December, the Premier introduced a motion into the New South Wales Parliament, recognising the sole right of the Commonwealth to determine the capital and pledging the state Government to make a speedy cession of the territory once the site was chosen.⁽⁴⁴⁾ In reply, J.H. Carruthers, a leading member of the state Opposition, asserted that the federal Parliament could only choose a site in territory which had already been granted by New South Wales.⁽⁴⁵⁾

The consistency of Carruthers' own position on this question was shaky. During the federal election campaign, he had denigrated Barton's request for an expression of opinion on the capital by the state Parliament as a proposal which would divide opinion in New

(42) D. Wright op.cit Page 115.

Wright mistakenly says that the "Government" would choose the territory.

(43) S.M.H. 10 (1L) and 26 (1L) July and 13 December (1L) 1901.

(44) N.S.W.P.D. (second series) Volume IV Page 4613.

(45) Ibid Pages 4616-25.

South Wales and leave the Parliament in Melbourne.⁽⁴⁶⁾ A motivation to score off the See Government had induced a change in his opinion. Of more importance, Carruthers' speech demonstrated that if the Government in New South Wales would not interfere with the choice of the federal Parliament, the Opposition were committed to a different course.

In the Commonwealth Parliament, many of the New South Wales representatives were critical of the federal Ministry's failure to do anything concrete. Wilks (Dalley) even asked Lyne if the Cabinet had considered the possibility of the selection of the site and erection of temporary buildings to enable the federal Parliament to hold its second session in its own capital.⁽⁴⁷⁾ This request seemed to have some validity as the federal Parliament's occupancy of its temporary home remained uncertain for a number of months. The Victorian Parliament had vacated its impressive residence in Spring Street and had moved to the Exhibition Building. Many of the Victorian state members were very unhappy with the situation. There were complaints about the heating, dampness and unhealthy condition of the new quarters.⁽⁴⁸⁾ Some were also perturbed about the fate of their old home. One member said that the new tenants had "turned half the lobbies into bedrooms" and were "knocking all the walls to pieces".⁽⁴⁹⁾ On their part, federal representatives were not over enthused about the conditions under which they were working. Senator Nield (New

(46) D.T. 26 March 1901.

(47) C.P.D. Volume V Page 5641.

(48) V.P.D. Volume XCVII Pages 27, 298, 373, 555 and 1198.

(49) Ibid Page 552.

South Wales) soon referred to the lack of ventilation in the Chamber,⁽⁵⁰⁾ and there was no modern sewerage system established until 1907.⁽⁵¹⁾

Difficulties arose in the negotiations on the terms of the Commonwealth's occupancy of the state Parliament building. Agreement was finally reached in December 1901. The Commonwealth was to be responsible for the maintenance and repair of the premises, while Victorian Parliamentarians were to have access to and use of such facilities as the Library and billiard room.⁽⁵²⁾ Thus, the federal Parliament settled into the quarters which few could perceive in 1902, would remain as its home for over a quarter of a century.

Parliamentarians on Tour

The temporary residence of the Parliament having been finalised, the matter rested for a period while members turned their attention to the Tariff. It was not until February 1902 that further measures were taken in the settlement of the capital site.

(50) C.P.D. Volume VI Page 8281.

(51) C.P.D. Volume XL Page 4847 quoted in J. La Nauze.
Alfred Deakin Volume 1 Page 236.

(52) Agreement between the Governor-General and Victorian Lieutenant-Governor for the Use and Occupation of Parliament House, 9 December 1901.
C.P.P. 1902 Volume 11 Pages 937-8.

The next step in this matter was a minor grand tour of New South Wales. As noted, Lyne had promised that members would be able to inspect various sites. A lull in the business of the Senate provided an opportunity. On 6 February, the upper house was adjourned for nineteen days to enable a tour to be made of eleven sites - Albury, Wagga, Gundagai, Tumut, Yass, Goulburn, Lake George, Orange, Armidale, Cooma and Bombala with the port of Eden included - all of which Oliver had reported on. ⁽⁵³⁾

The tour left Melbourne by train on 11 February and was to last for fourteen days and cover a total of over 3,000 miles. ⁽⁵⁴⁾ (see map). Only a third of the Senate attended but those who did were banqueted and feted by all the local federal capital leagues. Despite the conviviality, some of the sites were not in their best condition, for during 1902 Eastern Australia was suffering one of its worst droughts. At Albury, which was inspected first, an early morning dust storm blew up, obscuring the view. The discomfort which the Senators suffered virtually ruined that site's prospects. ⁽⁵⁵⁾

Over three days were spent in Southern Monaro and it seemed that the district impressed the travellers. Both Baker (South Aus-

(53) C.P.D. Volume VIII Pages 9813-39.

(54) The tour was adequately covered by the press. Full details appear in the Sydney Morning Herald and the Age of 14-26 September 1902. See also G. Cockerill Scribblers and Statesmen (private publication) n.d. Pages 139-50.

(55) G.F. Pearce From Carpenter to Cabinet London (Hutchinson and Co. Ltd.) 1951 Pages 60-1.

See also Cockerill op.cit Page 139.



The Senate Grand Tour of February 1902.

tralia) and Stewart (Queensland) were enthusiastic in their praise.⁽⁵⁶⁾ The Snowy River seemed a magnificent asset in a time of drought, although a cold swim at Dalgety, during mid-February, cooled the ardour of some.⁽⁵⁷⁾

Earlier reports would suggest that Austin Chapman had made arrangements for the tour which had originally been planned for November 1901.⁽⁵⁸⁾ This would explain why most time was spent in the Monaro district. The matter was discussed in the House, where some New South Wales member criticised the brief examination around Bathurst and Orange. Even Labour leader Watson described the tour as being "absolutely unfair" to all sites except Bombala.⁽⁵⁹⁾ This same debate also revealed the strength of parochial interests in this matter. McLean (Gippsland, Vic.) said that New South Wales representatives were showing a "feverish desire" to get away from Victoria, and he was "heartily tired" of the "clamour" on this matter.⁽⁶⁰⁾ In reply, Joseph Cook (Paramatta, N.S.W.) claimed that the only "clamour" came from Victorians who wanted "to get away from a bond which has been deliberately entered into, and on the faith of which federation took place".⁽⁶¹⁾ Interest was not confined to the members from the two largest States for McDonald-Patterson (Brisbane, Q.) reminded

(56) Bombala Herald 25 February 1902.

(57) Cockerill op.cit Page 148 (see Photo below).

(58) Age 29 August and 25 November 1901.

(59) C.P.D. Volume VIII Page 10226.

(60) Ibid Page 10225.

(61) Ibid Page 10226.

the House that if the future development of Australia was taken into consideration, then the site would be in northern New South Wales. ⁽⁶²⁾

The tour also created interest in both Sydney and Melbourne. At a meeting at Sydney Town Hall, called by the Mayor at the instigation of the Sydney Chamber of Commerce, J.H. Carruthers urged that New South Wales should never "surrender" to the federal Government the "right" of "wandering over the four corners of New South Wales ... picking out places from which they thought they might select a site". Carruthers suggested that New South Wales should offer a number of sites and the federal Government could appoint a board to examine them. Motions were passed by the meeting, calling on the federal Government to take steps to decide the capital site without further delay. ⁽⁶³⁾

In Melbourne, the response to such protests was positively cold. The Age asserted that the choice of a site should not be made in "a state of frenzy". The capital "may be built" within "twenty years" but not under "frenzied counsels" nor at the "dictation" of state interests. ⁽⁶⁴⁾ The Argus claimed that the building of the capital in some "remote country district" was an "extravagance" which Federation could not afford. It suggested that as "jealousy" between Sydney and Melbourne was natural, the Parliament could alternate between the two cities. The question of a "permanent" seat of government could with "great advantage,"

(62) Ibid Page 10236-7.

(63) S.M.H. 14 February 1902.

(64) Age 18 February 1902 (1L).

be allowed to "stand over".⁽⁶⁵⁾

The conflict of interests between the two major Australian cities was obvious and it boded ill for any attempt to achieve an important decision on this question.

For the time being, the federal Government pressed on with its sight-seeing plans. In May, while Austin Chapman was in England for the Coronation, Lyne organised a trip for the Representatives. Although the excursion covered much the same ground as on the previous occasion, there was a more equitable examination of the various areas. Many Representatives appeared just as indifferent to the choice of site as their colleagues in the upper chamber. Only about half the House attended, and this included two-thirds of the Labour representation. All States except South Australia were represented.⁽⁶⁶⁾ As well as examining the sites,

(65) Argus 19 February 1902 (1L).

See also Argus 26 (1L) and 30 (3L) August 1902.

(66) S.M.H. 8 May 1902.

Details of the tour appear in S.M.H. and Age 8-24 May 1902.

See also L.F. Fitzhardinge "W.M. Hughes in Search of a Federal Capital" J.R.A.H.S. Volume 51, Part I March 1965 Pages 87-92. This appears in abridged form in Fitzhardinge's William Morris Hughes Sydney (Angus and Robertson) 1964 Volume I Pages 148-151.

Also J.W. Kirwan "In Search of a Federal Capital" Review of Reviews Australasian Edition Volume 25, 20 July 1902 Pages 34-8 and J.W. Kirwan My Life's Adventure London (Eyre and Spottiswode) 1936 Pages 186-209.



Lyne leads the Senate team over the style
and into the early morning Albany dust.



Senators in the Snowy at Dalgety

the tour also inspected both Jervis Bay and Twofold Bay as possible federal ports. Whereas the Senators had suffered heat, the Representatives had to bear the effects of an early winter and this deterred some from visiting the Monaro area.⁽⁶⁷⁾ Like the Senators before them, a few of the tourists were frozen by a swim at Dalgety, although the local policemen told Hughes that it was warmest autumn in the district for years.⁽⁶⁸⁾

Both tours were enjoyed by most members, but it was unlikely that they went far to determine attitudes to the question of selection. One "tourist" later commented that those on the Representatives' trip had been "favourably impressed" by Queanbeyan, had expressed "admiration" of the "beauties" of Tumut and had considered the possibility of a large federal area and a port in the Bombala district, but "few" if "any" of the members of either House had yet "definitely committed themselves" in favour of a site.⁽⁶⁹⁾

The Royal Commission

A further lull of five months occurred while the Parliament was considering the Tariff. In June 1902, Watson inquired as to when a body of experts would be set up to inquire into the best

(67) Attlee Hunt to Edmund Barton 14 May 1902.

Barton Papers A.N.L. MS51/506.

(68) W.M. Hughes Policies and Potentates Pages 67-9.

(69) J.W. Kirwan "In Search of a Federal Capital" Page 38.

location for a site.⁽⁷⁰⁾ Then on 25 September, Lyne introduced a motion to establish a Royal Commission to examine sites at Albury, Bombala, Lake George, Orange and Tumut in relation to general suitability, climate, soil productiveness, cost of building, water supply, accessibility and cost of resumption. Lyne justified the creation of the Commission on the grounds that before the Parliament came to a decision, it should have before it the report of a body appointed by a Commonwealth Ministry.⁽⁷¹⁾ Some of the Sydney representatives found this explanation unsatisfactory. Conroy (Werriwa) said that the appointment of the Commission was a "mere pretext" for delaying a decision on the site.⁽⁷²⁾ Others were dissatisfied with the range of the inquiry. Sawers (New England, N.S.W.) protested at the omission of Armidale from the list of sites and he was supported by the Queenslanders McDonald (Kennedy) and Groom (Darling Downs).⁽⁷³⁾ Lyne agreed to extend the investigation to Armidale and to include Bathurst and Lyndhurst in consequence to their proximity to Orange. He also pointed out that the Lake George area practically included the sites of Goulburn and Yass.⁽⁷⁴⁾

In the Senate, there were complaints made about the expense involved in the creation of the Commission. Senator Styles (Victoria) said that the financial distress caused by the drought precluded such an inquiry at that time.⁽⁷⁵⁾ Despite attempts to reduce the number

(70) C.P.D. Volume X Page 13663.

(71) C.P.D. Volume XII Pages 16128-36.

(72) Ibid Page 16152.

(73) Ibid Pages 16136-9, 16141, 16148-9.

(74) Ibid Pages 16158-61.

(75) Ibid Pages 16483-4.

of sites, the Senate accepted the resolution as it had been passed in the House with an amendment that the committee of experts should be restricted to three.⁽⁷⁶⁾

The Ministry again showed little haste in this matter for the Commission was not appointed until December 1902. The Commissioners were J.W. Kirpatrick of New South Wales who was elected chairman, H.C. Stanley of Queensland, G. Stewart of South Australia and A.W. Howitt from Victoria.⁽⁷⁷⁾ The Commission's inquiries were conducted from January to June 1903 and were to be marked by a certain amount

(76) Ibid Pages 16501-2.

(77) J.W. Kirpatrick was one of the best known and most successful architects in New South Wales. For the previous twelve months, he had been working on city planning in relation to the major cities of the world.

H.C. Stanley was born in Edinburgh and studied engineering in that city. He migrated to Queensland in 1863 and became Engineer-in-Chief of Queensland Railways in 1891, in which capacity he had designed half of the total mileage of Queensland railways of 1901.

G. Stewart entered the South Australian Engineer-in-Chief's Department in 1866 and became its head in the early 1880's. He had travelled extensively over South Australia.

A.W. Howitt was an old Victorian colonist who had arrived at the time of the gold strike. He became a police magistrate at the goldfields. He had only just retired from the Victorian public service after serving as Secretary of Mines and Water Supply and later Commissioner of Audit.

D.T. 15 and 19 December 1903.

of controversy and political engineering concerning both Lyne as Minister in charge of the matter, and Austin Chapman.

Conroy (Werriwa, N.S.W.) had claimed that Oliver's report provided sufficient information for members and that one of Lyne's reasons for instituting a new commission was because the Minister was a little "weak" in his electorate and he wished to make a "little political capital".⁽⁷⁸⁾ The Chairman of the Commission, Kirkpatrick, had apparently been associated with Lyne for a number of years,⁽⁷⁹⁾ and Bruce Smith (Parkes, N.S.W.) later said that his appointment had not "inspired confidence" on the part of the New South Wales people.⁽⁸⁰⁾ As the findings of the Commission were to prove favourable to the sites in the Hume electorate, Lyne left himself open to the charge that he had exercised an undue control over the affairs of that body.

These claims were reinforced by a further incident. The Commission had been instructed to conclude its investigations by the end of April 1903. The Ministry's failure to expedite an early establishment of the Commission plus the subsequent lengthy interviews and examinations delayed the presentation of the report. At the end of June, Senator Nield (New South Wales) stated that he had learnt from an "authoritative source" that the Commission would recommend Lyndhurst as the capital.⁽⁸¹⁾ It should be noted that

(78) C.P.D. Volume XII Page 16151.

(79) Argus 24 August 1903.

(80) C.P.D. Volume XVII Page 5694.

(81) D.T. 30 June 1903.

the Commission had been instructed only to report and not to make a recommendation. The Chairman of the Commission informed Lyne that not only would none of the Commissioners give "any information" regarding the "contents of the report," but until the investigations were completed, it would only be "guesswork" on the part of any member of the Commission to say which site would be "most favoured" in the "final result".⁽⁸²⁾ Once the report was presented, Nield pressed for the production of the minutes of the Commission. Barton was prepared to publish the minutes of the evidence taken by the Commissioners,⁽⁸³⁾ but the Government maintained that the minutes of the proceedings of the Commission remained the property of the Chairman.⁽⁸⁴⁾

If Lyne used his influence to an unwarranted extent, so did Chapman. Some federal members had wanted to extend the scope of the inquiry to include Dalgety in Southern Monaro, a site which had impressed some of them on their tour of the area. Senator Nield (New South Wales) had moved an amendment to this effect, but it was narrowly defeated, although five of the New South Wales Senators supported it.⁽⁸⁵⁾ However, Lyne had pointed out in the House that the Commission would need to visit Dalgety to examine it as a source of water supply for Bombala, and he would not "hesitate" to take the "responsibility" of referring other sites to the Commission if there seemed to be any justification for doing

(82) J.W. Kirkpatrick to Sir William Lyne 30 June 1903.

C.A.O. C.R.S. A322 File No. 4 03/8514.

(83) C.P.D. Volume XVII Page 5385.

(84) C.P.D. Volume XV Page 3788, Volume XVII Page 5628.

(85) C.P.D. Volume XII Pages 16501-2.

so.⁽⁸⁶⁾ O'Connor reminded the Senate of this pledge⁽⁸⁷⁾.

As a result, in February 1902, the Secretary of the Home Affairs Department requested the Commission to inspect Dalgety in relation to the Bombala water supply.⁽⁸⁸⁾ In reply, the Secretary of the Commission stated that this had been arranged, but that there was no intention to inspect Dalgety as a possible site, as had been requested by Miller M.L.A. for Monaro.⁽⁸⁹⁾

The matter did not rest there for the Dalgety Capital Site League was a determined body. During Oliver's earlier investigations in 1900, the League had been disturbed about the treatment which Dalgety had received. The group had urged Miller, the local member, that unless Oliver favourably considered Dalgety in his report, the matter should be brought forward in the State Parliament⁽⁹⁰⁾. Oliver had countered this threat by recommending that the site should be included in an extended Southern Monaro area rather than remain in competition with the Bombala site.⁽⁹¹⁾

(86) Ibid Pages 16131-2 and 16135.

(87) Ibid Page 16501.

(88) Secretary of the Home Affairs Department to the Chairman of Federal Capital Sites Commission 6 February 1903. C.A.O. C.R.S. A322 File No. 4 03/1397.

(89) Secretary of Federal Capital Sites Commission to Secretary of the Home Affairs Department 13 February 1903. Ibid 03/1755.

(90) David Crisp to G.T.C. Miller 7 August 1900. N.S.W.A.O. Public Works Department, Federal Capital Site Commission - Proposed Sites 4/883.2.

(91) Report of the Commissioner on Sites for the Seat of Government of the Commonwealth N.S.W.V.P. 1900 Volume II Page 21.

This suggestion did not seem to suit the League. Not content with the attitude of the new Royal Commission, it apparently petitioned its federal representative Austin Chapman. Chapman wrote to the Commission expressing his regret that it had only inspected Dalgety in relation to water supply and not as a possible site. Chapman referred to the inspection of sites which had not received "such prominence" in Parliament as Dalgety, and he requested to know if a report would be made on the site.⁽⁹²⁾ The Secretary replied to Chapman that as Dalgety was not one of the sites referred to them, the Commission felt unable to take upon themselves the "responsibilities" of making a report on it.⁽⁹³⁾ The Chairman of the Commission told Lyne that he had wished to make a report on Dalgety but the other members refused unless the site was revisited, and this would delay the full report on the sites.⁽⁹⁴⁾ However, Chapman now had the support of Sir John Forrest who had visited the Southern Monaro district and had been impressed by the possibility of a cool, elevated site with a good water supply.⁽⁹⁵⁾

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- (92) Austin Chapman to Secretary of Federal Capital Sites Commission 21 June 1903 [this date is out of sequence with ensuing correspondence] C.A.O. C.R.S. A18 File No. 4 03/7051.
- (93) Secretary of Federal Capital Sites Commission to Austin Chapman 15 June 1903 Ibid 03/7703.
- (94) Chairman of Federal Capital Sites Commission to Sir William Lyne 22 July 1903 Ibid 03/8514.
- (95) Monaro Mercury 1 and 4 May 1903.
From information supplied by F.K. Crowley, it could be assumed that there was a question of personalities involved, for Forrest was a good friend of Chapman.

Such attributes would obviously appeal to a surveyor who came from the hot, dry state of Western Australia. Thus, Forrest probably used his influence to help Chapman obtain a report on Dalgety. As a result, Lyne requested the Commission to inspect the site.⁽⁹⁶⁾

There have been allegations made concerning land speculation in the Dalgety area,⁽⁹⁷⁾ but it seems that Chapman's main motive was to work in the interests of his electorate. On the other hand, although Lyne had earlier stated that he reserved the right to recommend any other site to the Commission, the Parliament had discussed but had not approved that the inquiry should be extended to include Dalgety. It was rather improper of Chapman to use his influence in the Barton Government to secure such an investigation. Local pressure had obviously been put on Chapman but he may have realised that the Commission's conclusions would not prove favourable to Bombala. As Chapman wanted to obtain the capital for his own electorate, it was best for him to have as many candidates in the field as possible.

The report was finally presented on 17 July. As instructed, the Commission had not recommended any particular site as the

(96) Secretary of Home Affairs to Secretary of Federal Capital Sites Commission 8 July 1903 C.A.O. C.R.S. A322
File No. 4 n.d.n.

Barton acknowledged this request in response to a formal question by Chapman on 21 July 1903. C.P.D. Volume XIV
Page 2300

(97) See Appendix 1 for full details.

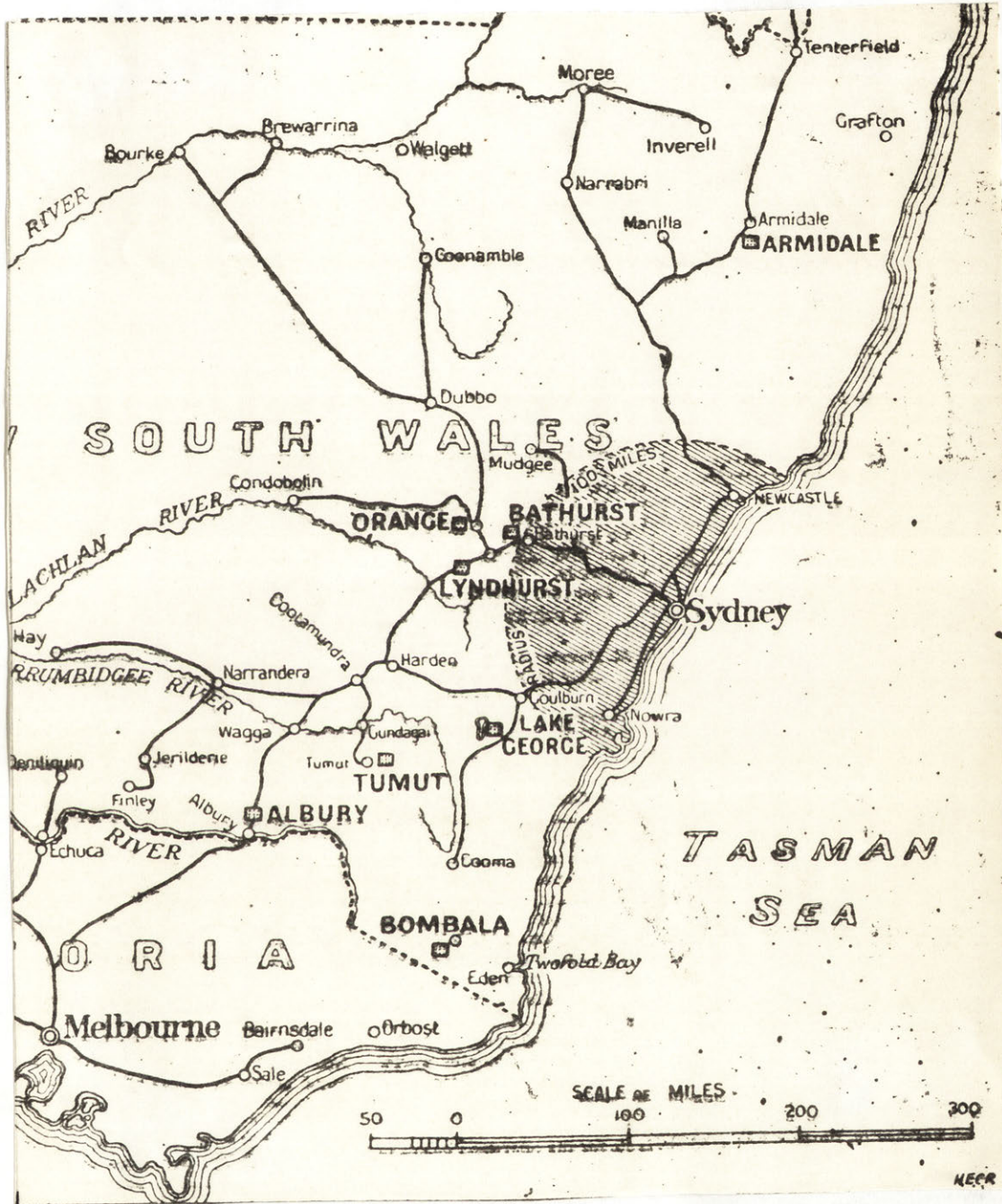
capital, but it had graded the sites in each of the particular aspects of its examination. Albury was nominated first as regards general suitability, cost of building, (in relation to the transport of the necessary materials and men) and accessibility and equal to Armidale, Lake George and Lyndhurst in cost of resumption, while Tumut came out on top in the factors of climate, soil productiveness and water supply. In most respects, Bombala was considered inferior to all the other sites.⁽⁹⁸⁾ The supplementary report on Dalgety considered that site as generally being superior only to Bombala.⁽⁹⁹⁾

In certain cases as at Albury, Bathurst, Lyndhurst, Tumut and Orange, the Commissioners had reported on different city sites from those of Oliver's report but the main difference between they and Oliver was their attitude towards the Monaro area. Unlike Oliver, the Commissioners regarded all the features of the sites as being of equal value, although they did note that in relation to accessibility, Bombala differed from all the other sites, in being 60 miles from a railway.⁽¹⁰⁰⁾ See requested Oliver to make a

(98) Royal Commission on Sites for the Seat of Government of the Commonwealth C.P.P. Volume II 1903 Pages 281-86.

(99) Report on the Proposed Site for the Federal Capital at Dalgety Ibid Pages 311-320.

(100) Royal Commission on Sites for the Seat of Government of the Commonwealth Ibid Pages 222-3.



The Sites Examined by the Royal Commission
(Excluding Dalgety)

further report and the latter took the opportunity to criticise the Commission for its failure to nominate such attributes as water supply as being of greater significance than present accessibility. He contended that there had been insufficient attention given to the Southern Monaro district. Oliver concluded by restating his support for that area.⁽¹⁰¹⁾ The conflict of opinion between Oliver and the Royal Commission only served to add further dispute to what was already a controversial report.

Cries from the Provinces

Whatever the merits of the differences between Oliver and the Commissioners, certain interests wanted to entirely disregard both reports. Suffering from the financial hardships induced by the severe drought of 1901-2, the Governments in the Eastern States were not anxious to support what appeared to be a costly and perhaps unnecessary project. The Commissioners had estimated that in the relation to the costs of the creation of a water supply, the construction of railways and the resumption of a city area and water catchment area, the cheapest site would be Lake George at about £2½ million and the most expensive would be Orange at approxi-

(101) A.Oliver A Short Review of the Contents of the Report of the Commonwealth Commission on Sites for the Seat of Government of the Commonwealth N.S.W.V.P. Volume 1 1903 Pages 709-35.

Oliver had earlier proposed to Barton that he, Oliver, be appointed as Head of the Royal Commission. Alexander Oliver to Edmund Barton 4 May 1902. Sir Edmund Barton Papers M. L. Uncat. MSS/Set 249.

mately £5 $\frac{3}{4}$ million. These figures do not consider the cost of the transcontinental railway which the Commissioners also included in their estimates.⁽¹⁰²⁾ As regards the parliamentary and administrative buildings, an architects' supplement in Oliver's earlier report had reckoned their cost at £2 million.⁽¹⁰³⁾ Premier See of New South Wales commented that under such conditions, the only "sensible" solution was to select Sydney or Melbourne as the capital.⁽¹⁰⁴⁾ His fellow Premiers in South Australia and Queensland agreed with him.⁽¹⁰⁵⁾

The cry was soon taken up by pressure groups in Victoria. The Maffra Agricultural Society passed a resolution requiring their federal representatives to denounce further "needless expenditure" on the capital and calling for a meeting to consider the possibility of altering the Constitution to place the capital in either Sydney or Melbourne.⁽¹⁰⁶⁾ The

(102) Royal Commission on Sites for the Seat of Government of the Commonwealth C.P.P. Volume 11 1903.

(103) Report of the Commissioner on Sites for the Seat of Government N.S.W.V.P. 1900 Volume II Page 55.

(104) D.T. 20 July 1903.

See had arrived at this conclusion by February 1903 after "long and earnest consideration".

Sir John See to V.R. Gasche 25 February 1903. Sir John See Papers M.L. A3664/76.

(105) S.A.P.D. Seventeenth Parliament Second Session of the Legislative Assembly Pages 82-3 and Argus 21 July 1903.

(106) Age 3 August 1903.

At Nagambie an anti-Federal Capital League was formed
Age 8 August 1903.

Maffra Shire Council began to petition other councils in both New South Wales and Victoria, and although the former were indifferent or hostile, the latter responded well. In early September, a large gathering of Victorian shire councils and agricultural society representatives meeting in Melbourne, urged that the selection of a site be postponed for "some years" and that in the meantime the capital should remain temporarily in either Melbourne or Sydney. ⁽¹⁰⁷⁾

In Melbourne the two major press organs continued to argue against the creation of the capital on the grounds of both the unnecessary cost involved at that early stage of Federation and the financial difficulties which the states were at present facing. ⁽¹⁰⁸⁾ The Age even claimed that the capital site provision was the "one conspicuously mercenary sentence in the whole of the Constitution Act". ⁽¹⁰⁹⁾ However, A.C. Palmer as President of the National Citizens Reform League, said that while the Commonwealth must be "saved" from unnecessary expense, he did not wish New South Wales to suspect Victoria of "sharp practice," and he suggested that the Constitution should be altered to allow the capital to remain "temporarily" in Sydney rather than Melbourne. ⁽¹¹⁰⁾ The Reform League organised a meeting at the Melbourne Town Hall but this was disrupted by anti-reformers and the appearance of John Norton. As a result, the gathering failed to pass resolutions

(107) Argus 4 September 1903.

(108) Age 18 July (3L) and 18 August (1L) 1903.

Argus 17 (2L) and 19 (2L) and 26 (1L) August 1903.

(109) Age 26 August 1903 (2L).

(110) Age 13 August 1903.

condemning the present construction of a capital but it did publicise the campaign to defer selection.⁽¹¹¹⁾

The reaction in New South Wales was immediate. Many interests viewed the Victorian moves as an attempt to permanently secure the capital for Melbourne. The Daily Telegraph claimed that if selection was to be postponed, or more significantly, if section one twenty-five of the Constitution was to be amended, then the only alternative could be a Sydney capital.⁽¹¹²⁾ A meeting held in the Protestant Hall was attended by the diverse political figures of O'Sullivan, the Minister for Works, Holman, the deputy-leader of the Labour Party, and John Norton. All supported a resolution that the capital should be in Sydney.⁽¹¹³⁾ However, the Sydney Morning Herald distrusted any proposal to alter the Constitution as it believed that such an attempt could lead to Melbourne retaining the capital permanently.⁽¹¹⁴⁾ This latter view was also shared by the prominent federal politicians Dugald Thomson and Senator Walker.⁽¹¹⁵⁾

(111) S.M.H. 8 August 1903.

The meeting at the Town Hall broke up in disorder. One report claimed that it ended with Norton crying from the platform "Go on and kill Kyabram". Ibid

(112) D.T. 4 (2L) and 14 (2L) August 1903.

(113) S.M.H. 13 August 1903.

(114) S.M.H. 12 August 1903 (1L)

(115) Dugald Thomson to Edward Dowling 22 August 1903.

Australasian Federation League of New South Wales Papers
A.N.L. MS/47 Series 18 File 'T'

J.T. Walker to Edward Dowling 24 August 1903 Ibid File 'W'.

Response came from other interested parties, The President of the Sydney Chamber of Commerce protested that the "unwarrantable" delay in choosing a site was leading to the "locking" up of a "considerable" amount of capital. The "distance" at which the federal capital would be finally located from either Melbourne or Sydney, would have no "small effect" in determining the "augmentation or otherwise of present commercial operations" or "the reservation of funds for investment in another locality". The President urged the Chamber to use its "influence" to "bring matters to a head" in accordance with the Constitution. (116)

Outside Sydney, there was also agitation in many of the country towns which had prospective capital sites in their districts. Alderman Brink of Albury described the Maffra circular calling on shire councils to support deferment of selection as a "gross piece of impertinence". (117) The best response came from the western districts. The Bathurst Federal Capital League was perturbed at the Maffra "threat" and began to organise its own conference to reaffirm the capital site provision in the Constitution. (118) The meeting was convened at the end of August and was attended by representatives of both shire councils and federal capital leagues in western New South Wales, a few local M.L.A.'s and the federal parliamentary representatives, Smith (Macquarie) and Brown (Conobolas). A resolution was passed supporting the one hundred and twenty-fifth section of the

(116) D.T. 28 July 1903.

(117) Argus 15 August 1903.

(118) Bathurst Daily Times 8 August 1903.

Constitution. It was also decided to form a Western Federal Capital League of all the local leagues in the West.⁽¹¹⁹⁾

This pressure outside Parliament soon had its effect on federal politics. New South Wales members of all parties held a caucus meeting to consider measures to "strengthen" the Government's hand in its determination to select a site and to repudiate Victorian press claims about the necessity for a large monetary outlay on the capital.⁽¹²⁰⁾ Earlier, Reid had argued that the question of cost could be partly remedied by locating the site near an existing railway line. There was also no need for a "palatial Parliament" but only "plain, inexpensive buildings".⁽¹²¹⁾

The Government was obviously worried by the controversy which had been created. Barton had earlier blamed the Commission for its lengthy investigations,⁽¹²²⁾ but the deferment of practical consideration of this topic for over two years was now having its effect. An election was imminent and the Government had to satisfy interests in both New South Wales and Victoria. Throughout August and early September both Barton and Deakin assured delegations and various gatherings that while the Government intended to select a site, the initial cost of the capital would be no more than £500,000 over a period of five years.⁽¹²³⁾ The Ministry's assurances silenced some of their critics but they could do little

(119) Bathurst Daily Times 31 August 1903.

(120) S.M.H. 15 and 21 August 1903.

(121) S.M.H. 27 July 1903.

(122) D.T. 20 July 1903.

(123) Argus 4 and 31 August 1903, S.M.H. 22 August 1903 and D.T. 25 August 1903.

to prevent the conflict of provincial interests which was building up and was soon to be reflected in the federal Parliament.

The Ballot

While public debate on the capital site was creating a stir in the constituencies, the federal Parliament was considering the Judiciary Bill, a measure which also raised protests regarding unnecessary expense. It was not until 22 September that Barton finally introduced a motion providing for a joint conference of the House and Senate to select the capital site. The Prime Minister made it clear in his speech that he would not favour any attempt to alter the constitutional provision of the capital. Although he realised that the rights of the States must be considered, Barton appealed to members to carry out their obligation and take a "national" view of the matter. (124)

There was little chance of Barton's appeal being heeded for if the New South Wales members had submitted to the pressure from their constituents, so had their Victorian counterparts. The Age had pointed out that Victoria's federal representatives had "much to answer for" in their "neglect" to rally the "forces of economy and common sense". The question of the capital gave them an opportunity to "atone for past sins of omission". (125)

(124) C.P.D. Volume XVII Pages 5274-82.

(125) Age 24 July 1903 (1L).

The warning was heeded for many of the Southern State's members bluntly refused to consider a choice of site at that time. McLean (Gippsland) claimed that in 1899 part of the Premiers' Agreement was for Melbourne to accrue some benefit in possessing the capital for a period. McLean proposed that prior to the selection of a site, the Government should obtain an estimate of the lowest cost of 100 square miles around the sites of Albury, Bombala and Tumut. (126)

Some of the members from the smaller States were also wary of the project. Sir Langdon Bonython (South Australia) was prepared to make a selection but any expenditure should be left for "future consideration" and he would "strenuously oppose" any "extravagant outlay". (127)

Despite these fears, others were perturbed by the effect that this issue was having on Federation. Kingston (South Australia), who had just resigned from the Government over the terms of the Arbitration Bill, criticised the "struggle" over the capital because it had done more than anything else to provoke an "anti-Federal" spirit. (128) Another South Australian, Poynton, said that the subject had been discussed "as though only two States were interested in this great undertaking". (129)

The House accepted Barton's motion for a joint conference⁽¹³⁰⁾ but the proposal struck trouble in the Senate. Fourteen Senators

(126) C.P.D. Volume XVII Pages 5297-5303.

(127) Ibid Page 5414

(128) Ibid Page 5409-10

(129) Ibid Page 5394

(130) Ibid Pages 5414-38

had met in caucus and decided to support Bombala.⁽¹³¹⁾ Some of these believed that this choice would be defeated in a joint meeting, while others who favoured the postponement of selection, realised that the proposal for a joint conference would mean the almost certain selection of a site. If the House and Senate chose different sites, then the opportunity would be provided for a deadlock between the Houses and subsequent shelving of the matter. So, the Senate rejected the Government's proposals by one vote.⁽¹³²⁾

The Senate's obstinacy was a setback for the Ministry but any further action was temporarily delayed by another development. On 23 September, Barton and O'Connor resigned from the Cabinet to become Justices of the High Court. The day before, Barton had told Tennyson that the "worry" created by the Senate's rejection of the Ministry's proposal on the capital site was one reason why he was still contemplating remaining in federal politics. He felt "ashamed" to leave the Ministry with this matter unsettled for he regarded it as the "crown" of the work of the first Parliament.⁽¹³³⁾ On a more

(131) Argus 24 September 1903.

(132) C.P.D. Volume XVII Page 5271.

(133) Edmund Barton to Lord Tennyson 22 September 1903.

Tennyson Papers A.N.L. MS 1963/245. La Nauze has misread this correspondence for he claims that "Barton's complicated agonies about resigning had been somewhat alleviated by the reflection that his last act would be to move the resolutions about the capital site" Alfred Deakin Volume I Page 316.

O'Connor also told Deakin that before retiring he would have liked to have taken a vote on the capital site. R.E. O'Connor to Alfred Deakin 16 September 1903 Deakin Papers A.N.L. MS 1540/4086.

practical note, the Sydney press observed that New South Wales had lost valuable strength in the Cabinet and Parliament at a time when its interests needed protection in such matters as the capital site.⁽¹³⁴⁾ The Speaker of the House refused to issue a writ for Barton's vacant seat of Hunter but the situation was partly rectified when C.K. Mackellar was elected by the state Parliament to fill O'Connor's vacant Senate position. Mackellar took his place just prior to the capital site vote.

One of Barton's last pieces of advice to the new Prime Minister Deakin was a reminder that "laxity" in the settlement of the capital site would lose seats in New South Wales.⁽¹³⁵⁾ Other members of the Cabinet had to consider their own personal electoral prospect. Lyne was probably anxious to press on with the matter in order to consolidate support in the Hume electorate, while his rival Chapman who was now elevated to the portfolio of Defence, was shrewdly organising votes for Bombala.

So, despite the Senate's attitude and the inauguration of a new Ministry, the Government decided to proceed to attempt to reach a decision on the capital. On 1 October, Lyne who had become Minister for Trade and Customs after Kingston's resignation but still remained in charge of this topic, introduced a Seat of Government Bill into the House.⁽¹³⁶⁾

(134) S.M.H. (2L) and D.T. (1L) 25 September 1903.

(135) Edmund Barton to Alfred Deakin 27 September and 19 October 1903. Deakin Papers MS 1540/468 and 475. Earlier, Watson had warned Barton himself that unless the capital site was settled, it would complicate the election in New South Wales. J.C. Watson to Edmund Barton 19 March 1903.

Ibid MS 1540/458.

(136) C.P.D. Volume XVII Page 5652.

Now that definite steps were being taken, the advocates of the various sites became very active. Two representatives of the Albury Federal Capital League visited Melbourne and interviewed most of the Senate.⁽¹³⁷⁾ Chapman later revealed that in response to this move R. Campbell, the Secretary of the Bombala Federal Capital League, also travelled to Melbourne.⁽¹³⁸⁾ L. Biddulph who was the Secretary of the newly formed Western Federal Capital League, had also issued a circular to all federal members pointing out the advantages of Lyndhurst over Tumut as a site.⁽¹³⁹⁾

The debate on the Bill took place on 6-8 October. Some members criticised the Ministry for its failure to take steps prior to the dying hours of Parliament. The Labour representative Brown (Conobolas N.S.W.) said that the matter was too important to be "rushed" through the House in a "hurried and ill-considered" manner as the Government now proposed. The people of New South Wales had expected that Barton would have given a "little more time and attention" to the subject before he retired.⁽¹⁴⁰⁾

Some of the Victorians claimed that the lateness of the session justified their cry for postponement of a choice.⁽¹⁴¹⁾ Even a member of the Cabinet made a plea for delay. Sir John Forrest did not find any

(137) S.M.H. 2 October 1903.

(138) Bombala Herald 11 November 1903.

(139) D.T. 28 September 1903.

(140) C.P.D. Volume XVII Page 5706.

(141) Ibid Pages 5703 and 5710-11.

of the suggested sites suitable and he wanted more information before a final decision was made.⁽¹⁴²⁾ There appeared little hope for a decision when two of the Ministry were bickering over the choice of site and another was opposed to any selection. Deakin probably took the wisest course and did not speak.

However, the second reading of the Bill was passed and the House then considered the procedure to be employed to select a site. After lengthy debate an exhaustive ballot system was adopted.⁽¹⁴³⁾ Under this system the site with the least votes in each ballot was eliminated. This process continued until a decision was reached. The sites in the ballot were those which the Royal Commission had reported on - Albury, Armidale, Bathurst, Bombala, Dalgety, Lake George, Lyndhurst, Orange and Tumut. In response to the union of the federal capital leagues in Western New South Wales, Dugald Thomson (North Sydney) had earlier proposed that sites in the same area or at least those of Bathurst, Lyndhurst and Orange, should be grouped as one. This suggestion had been opposed by the Government and defeated.⁽¹⁴⁴⁾ Still, most members who favoured a western district site, were to give their vote to Lyndhurst.

The ballot took place on 8 October. The lack of interest in this subject evident in the small attendance on the capital sites' tours,

(142) Ibid Pages 5731-3.

(143) Ibid Pages 5782-5818.

(144) Ibid Pages 5421-36.

was again demonstrated. Only sixty-one members of the House were present and voted.⁽¹⁴⁵⁾ The contest lay between Bombala, Lyndhurst and Tumut (see diagram opposite). It was Tumut which finally won, but only after six ballots. A closer examination reveals certain aspects. In the first ballot, the New South Wales vote was spread over all the sites. Gradually, this vote was concentrated on Lyndhurst which was the site closest to Sydney. Nineteen out of the twenty-three New South Wales representatives supported Lyndhurst in the final ballot. A fuller analysis of the last vote shows the parochial trend more clearly. All the Victorians, South Australians and Western Australians voted for Tumut, whilst all the Queenslanders supported Lyndhurst and the Tasmanians were split in allegiance.⁽¹⁴⁶⁾

It has been remarked that "no ingenuity" could "turn" this issue into a "party question",⁽¹⁴⁷⁾ but considerations other than provincial concerns were present. As Morning Post Correspondent, Deakin had commented that because the Government was divided on the issue, Reid had an opportunity of "rallying his forces".⁽¹⁴⁸⁾ The

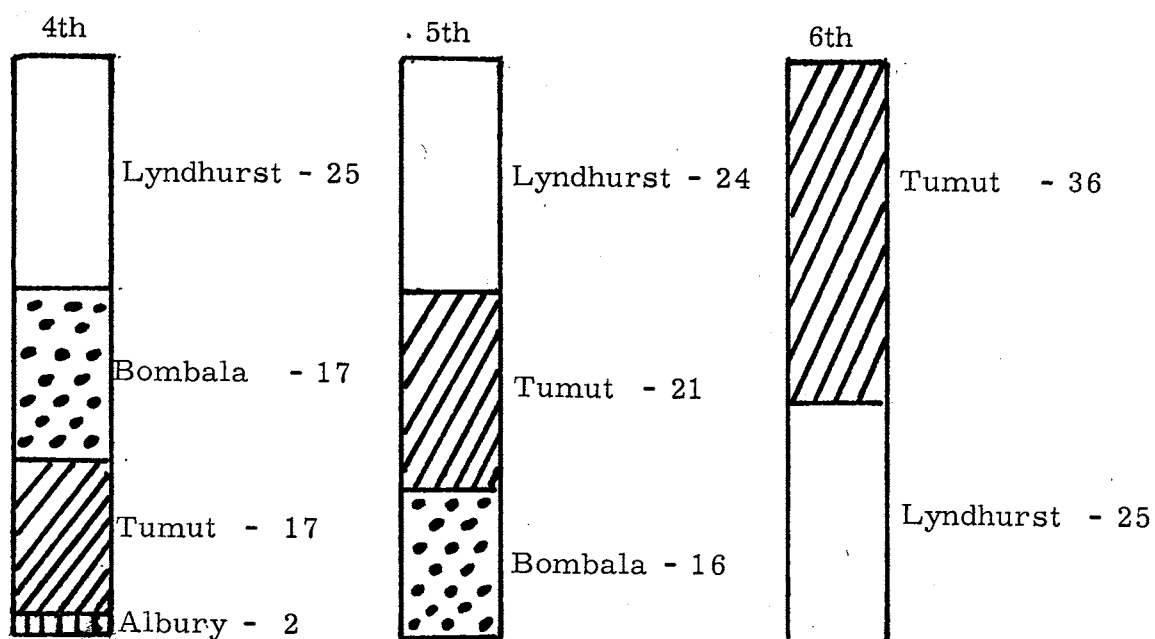
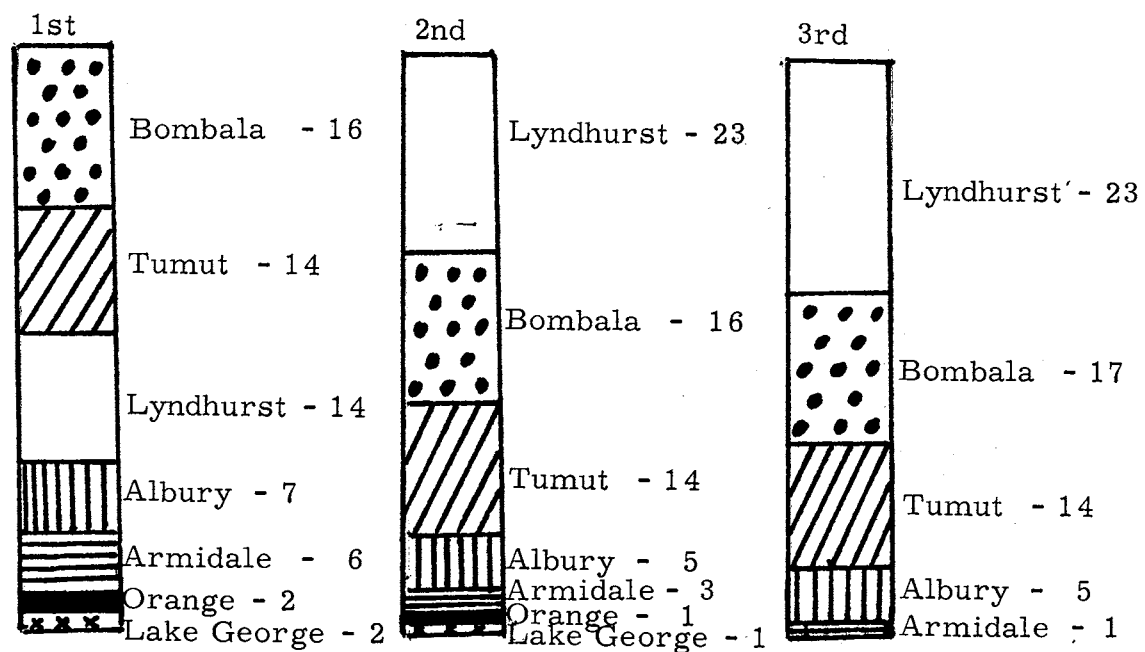
(145) The absentees were Bamford (Herbert Q), Braddon (Tasmania), Cruickshank (Gwydir N.S.W.), Fysh (Tasmania), Glynn (South Australia), Groom (Flinders Vic), Harper (Mernda Vic), McDonald-Paterson (Brisbane Q), Page (Maranoa Q), Phillips (Wimmera Vic), Poynton (South Australia) and Solomon (South Australia). As Speaker, Holder did not vote. Barton's old seat of Hunter was vacant.

(146) Analysis of all the ballots appears in Appendix II.

(147) J. La Nauze Alfred Deakin Volume I Page 316.

(148) J. La Nauze (ed) Federated Australia Melbourne (M.U.P.) 1968 Page 117.

The Ballot



final ballot was partly a test of strength between the Government and Reid's party. The only supporters of the Government who did not vote for Tumut were three Queenslanders, while all the New South Wales' followers of Reid plus his two Tasmanian supporters voted for Lyndhurst. It should also be noted that the Labour party was divided in opinion.

The success of Tumut had been achieved by an intense amount of 'engineering'. Support for Bombala and Tumut had remained virtually static in the first three ballots. The Victorians had spread their strength between these two sites and Albury. In the fifth ballot, Lyne managed to gather enough support for Tumut to eliminate Bombala and leave the contest between Tumut and Lyndhurst. Lyne even convinced Deakin to change his vote from Bombala to Tumut. According to Austin Chapman, some members decided to concentrate on Tumut rather than Bombala because they believed that the former had the better chance of defeating Lyndhurst.⁽¹⁴⁹⁾ Chapman had probably been content to concur in this procedure because he was confident that the Senate would select Bombala. In the earlier discussion on Barton's proposals for a joint conference Chapman had shown no anxiety to reach a decision before the end of the Parliament. He had asserted that the people of New South Wales were showing no "feverish anxiety" in this matter.⁽¹⁵⁰⁾

(149) S.M.H. 13 October 1903.

(150) C.P.D. Volume XVII Page 5392. A later report said that Chapman had also been grateful for Lyne's assistance in his elevation to the Ministry. S.M.H. 26 January 1904.

The South Australian Glynn who had not been present when the ballot was taken, wrote in his diary that while Lyne's "touting" had secured the selection of Tumut, the "privately expressed opinions" of many members was that the locality "admits of small development". (151)

However, it was not the selection of Tumut but the ensuing decisions on area which were to cause trouble. From the outset of Federation in 1901, some of the Labour representation had argued that it was in the interests of the Commonwealth to acquire a fairly large area. This attitude had been evident in O'Malley's original proposal of July 1901. Thus, McDonald (Kennedy Q) now proposed that the federal territory "shall be not less than 1,000 square miles". (152) Reid and other New South Wales members pleaded with the House not to pass this motion lest it should seem as an unreasonable demand to be made on New South Wales. As noted earlier, Barton had made it clear to See that the Commonwealth would require a sufficiently extensive federal territory, but Deakin now stated that the matter of

(151) Diary Entry 9 October 1903 Glynn Diaries A.N.L.
MS558/713-4.

Ironically, the Tumut Federal Capital League had been afraid that the exhaustive ballot system would mean an early elimination of the Tumut site.

Spencer Groves, Secretary of Tumut Federal Capital League, to Sir William Lyne 21 September 1903 C.A.O. C.R.S. A322
File No. 8 03/12686.

(152) C.P.D. Volume XVII Page 5937.

area would have to be a subject of discussion between the federal and state Governments.⁽¹⁵³⁾ Still, the amendment was passed, although the terminology of this section of the Bill was tempered by the substitution of the word "should" for "shall".⁽¹⁵⁴⁾

What followed reflected the jealousy between the two largest States. Skene (Grampians Vic) proposed that the federal territory "should extend to the River Murray" and Brown (Conobolas N.S.W.) countered with a proposition to extend the territory to the Murrumbidgee. Both amendments were passed.⁽¹⁵⁵⁾ The final amendments were Forrest's suggestion that the site should be at an elevation of at least 1500 feet and a stipulation determining the compensation to be paid for the acquired territory to be rated at the value on 1 January 1903.⁽¹⁵⁶⁾

The House's decisions soon provoked comment in New South Wales. The Daily Telegraph displayed indifference to the selection of Tumut but the area proposals were described as a means either to "drag the Capital down to the Murray" or to cause friction with New South Wales, so deadlocking the situation and leaving the capital

(153) Ibid Pages 5962-84.

(154) Ibid Page 5984.

Deakin later told a Sydney audience that he had had to accept the amendment and "sacrifice" his opinion to enable the Bill to pass.

S. M. H. 5 November 1903.

(155) Ibid Pages 5985-91.

(156) Ibid Pages 5991-8.

in Melbourne.⁽¹⁵⁷⁾ On 9 October, Carruthers introduced a resolution into the Legislative Assembly condemning the federal Parliament's action as unconstitutional. As previously, Carruthers argued that the territory had to be granted first before an actual site was selected and he also objected to the provisions for a large federal area.⁽¹⁵⁸⁾ Even See, whilst he continued to maintain that it was the responsibility of the federal Parliament to select the site, referred to the proposal for 1,000 square miles of federal territory as "ridiculous".⁽¹⁵⁹⁾ Three days later, in opening the Tumut railway extension, the Premier said that although he expected the "friendly and amicable" relations between the federal and state Governments to continue, he would not grant an "inch" more than the statutory 100 square miles as provided for in the Constitution.⁽¹⁶⁰⁾ On the same day, Crick, the Minister for Lands, assured the Assembly that the Ministry would not grant any territory without the consent of the state Parliament.⁽¹⁶¹⁾

Under such circumstances, hopes for a settlement at this stage seemed even more remote than before. Still, the Ministry proceeded with the measure. In introducing the Bill into the Senate on 13 October, Senator Drake appealed for a final decision not only to be fair to both the people of Australia and New South Wales but

(157) D.T. 12 (1L) and 13 (2L) and 14 October 1903.

(158) N.S.W.P.D. (second series) Volume XII Pages 3212-21.
see also D. Wright op.cit Pages 119-20.

(159) Ibid Page 3230.

(160) D.T. 13 October 1903.

(161) N.S.W.P.D. (second series) Volume XII Page 3257.

also to avoid the situation whereby conflicting interests and speculations could emerge.⁽¹⁶²⁾ But the Senate debate was probably marked by more provincial fear and mistrust than had been evident in the House. Senators Nield, Gould, Walker and Pulsford of New South Wales argued that while their State was prepared to accept Tumut as the site, there could be no consideration given to the request for such a large area as 1,000 square miles.⁽¹⁶³⁾ Their colleague Senator Millen, mistrusting the intention of the Senate, maintained that section one twenty-five of the Constitution was a special contract between New South Wales and the other States. New South Wales had entered Federation expecting this condition to be fulfilled.⁽¹⁶⁴⁾

Despite Millen's claims, most Senators from other States seemed to discount any constitutional obligation towards New South Wales. The Victorians were especially hostile. Senator Styles contended that only New South Wales would gain from the establishment of the capital. Commercial interests in that State wanted a small federal area so that they could benefit from the capital's trade.⁽¹⁶⁵⁾ As in the House, an attempt was made to defer a decision on the site. Senator Dobson (Tasmania) moved an amendment to delay the second reading of the Bill for six months. Representing the financial conservatism of his island State, Dobson claimed that the electors should be given an opportunity to voice their opinion as to

(162) C.P.D. Volume XVII Pages 6047-50.

(163) Ibid Pages 6054-62, 6071-84, 6093-6 and 6096-9.

(164) Ibid Page 6051-60.

(165) Ibid Page 6171.

the "desirability" of incurring the "enormous cost" of establishing a capital in the "immediate future" and under "present conditions".⁽¹⁶⁶⁾ He suggested that a compromise could be found by amending the Constitution to allow the capital to alternate between Sydney and Melbourne. However, Dobson's amendment received the support of only the Victorians Barret, Fraser and Styles.⁽¹⁶⁷⁾

After this interlude, the Bill passed its second reading and the vote on the House's proposals took place on 14 October. The usual practice of proposing amendments to a Bill was adopted. Twenty-nine Senators were present and voted.⁽¹⁶⁸⁾ First, Senator Fraser (Victoria) moved an amendment to insert Albury in place of Tumut in the Bill, Senator Nield (New South Wales) then moved that the site should be Lyndhurst, but both proposals were heavily defeated. Senator Clemons (Tasmania) next moved an amendment to insert

(166) Ibid Page 6062.

(167) Ibid Pages 6062-71 and 6179.

(168) The absentees were Cameron (Tasmania), Downer (South Australia), Glassey (Queensland), Harney (Western Australia), Matheson (Western Australia) and Symon (South Australia). Glassey and Symon were paired for the final amendment; Glassey supported Lyndhurst while Symon supported Bombala. The seat of Senator Ferguson (Queensland) had been declared vacant on 6 October, due to his absence without leave for two months. This is the only time in the history of the Senate that the appropriate Constitutional clause (Section 20) has been enforced.

Bombala, which was carried by nineteen votes to ten.⁽¹⁶⁹⁾ All the Victorians and most of the smaller States' Senators voted for Bombala, while all the New South Welshmen, three Queenslanders and one West Australian opposed this selection. Thus, the division of opinion along state lines which had been evident during the ballot in the House, generally reappeared in the Senate.⁽¹⁷⁰⁾

Yet it would seem that the Senate's preference for Bombala was partly unreal. The observant Glynn noted the strategy of the Victorians whereby those in the House had finally voted for Tumut, while their Senatorial colleagues supported Bombala.⁽¹⁷¹⁾ An earlier report had suggested that some Senators would vote for Bombala as a means to deadlock the Houses and so defer a decision.⁽¹⁷²⁾

The result had been expected but the Government now faced the problem of what to do next. Before his retirement, Barton had spoken of such a situation as presenting "very great difficulties".⁽¹⁷³⁾ Senator Playford, the new Vice-President of the Executive Council, told the Senate that Deakin intended to ask the House to accept Bombala as the site.⁽¹⁷⁴⁾ Deakin later denied this statement by announcing that the Ministry remained uncommitted to either site and it was only he who had personally decided to support Bombala.⁽¹⁷⁵⁾

(169) Ibid Pages 6188-9.

(170) See Appendix II for full details.

(171) Diary Entry 23 October 1903 Glynn Diaries MS 558/714.

(172) D.T. 14 October 1903.

(173) D.T. 24 August 1903.

(174) C.P.D. Volume XVII Page 6249.

(175) S.M.H. 17 September 1903.

Whatever Deakin's original intentions, one report claimed that Lyne had protested about Playford's speech and forced the Prime Minister to clarify the situation.⁽¹⁷⁶⁾ Lyne soon showed his determination to continue to fight for Tumut even if this meant, as it certainly would, that the Parliament would fail to reach a decision before the end of the session. When the House considered the Senate's amendments on 20 October, Lyne pointed out to members that the cost of a Bombala site would be considerable because of the need to create an extensive railway system.⁽¹⁷⁷⁾ Most of the New South Wales delegation were also still opposed to Bombala, and the Senate's amendment was defeated by forty votes to nineteen. Chapman was the only New South Wales representative to vote for Bombala while Lyne and Turner were the only members of the Ministry to vote against it.⁽¹⁷⁸⁾ The Senate had rejected the Bill's provisions respecting area but despite further protests by the New South Wales members, the House reaffirmed its earlier decision for a large federal territory.⁽¹⁷⁹⁾

Members from both the Labour party and the Reid Opposition now requested the Ministry to make this question a Government measure and to open discussions for a joint conference of the House and Senate. Watson reminded the Government of its pledge that the matter would be settled that session. The issue was no longer which was the most desirable site but whether a decision would be held over "perhaps even beyond the life of the next Parliament."⁽¹⁸⁰⁾ Significantly, the

(176) Punch (Melbourne) 22 October 1903.

(177) C.P.D. Volume XVII Pages 6269-70.

(178) Ibid Pages 6270.

(179) Ibid Pages 6270-96.

(180) Ibid Page 6299.

reply of the Government came from the two Ministers who had been most intimately involved in this matter. Chapman inferred that the real choice of the House was Bombala as a number of its supporters had been absent when the original ballot was held.⁽¹⁸¹⁾ Lyne maintained that the Government could not dictate to the Senate how to vote, and if the Bill was made a Ministerial issue, it would become a party measure of the "most pronounced kind".⁽¹⁸²⁾

So the Bill returned to the Senate where that chamber reaffirmed its choice of Bombala.⁽¹⁸³⁾ On the same day, Deakin announced that a joint conference of House and Senate would be fruitless. The question would have to be considered by the second Parliament. In the meantime further information would be collected on the Bombala and Tumut areas.⁽¹⁸⁴⁾ A day later the session closed. A contemporary observer later noted that the debates on the capital site during October 1903 had occupied over 800 columns of Hansard but their effect had been "absolutely resultless".⁽¹⁸⁵⁾

(181) Ibid Pages 6300-2.

(182) Ibid Pages 6304-5.

(183) Ibid Pages 6335-47.

(184) Ibid Pages 6402-4.

(185) H.G. Turner The First Decade of the Commonwealth
Melbourne (Mason Firth and McCutcheon) 1911 Page 67.

Conclusion

When the first Parliament was dissolved in October 1903, most members returned to their constituencies, exhausted after a long and wearing two and a half years, but probably satisfied that they had been able to lay the foundations for the Commonwealth. Despite the constructive work in other fields, there could be little cause for congratulations on the question of the capital site. Barton had promised that there would be an early settlement of this issue but in practice the matter was no more advanced at the end of the Parliament than it had been at the beginning.

The Government must bear the ultimate responsibility for this situation. Certainly the consideration of the Tariff had occupied much of the attention of both the Executive and the Parliament but there seems little excuse for the Ministry delaying the presentation of the Seat of Government Bill until the end of the Parliament. The result was that much of the discussion was overshadowed by considerations of the approaching federal election. While it must also be conceded that the Ministry's refusal to sponsor a particular site seemed correct in principle, it was undermined by the unabashed rivalry which took place between Lyne and Chapman. The selection of the capital almost became a toy in the hands of these two. While the Parliamentary tours and the Royal Commission may have been valuable in helping the Parliament to reach a final decision, they were also subjected too much to the influence of these 'parish pump' minded politicians. The final efforts of these two had helped to ensure a deadlock between the two houses.

There were further claims that the Ministry had never intended to reach a decision on a site. Early in 1902, Bruce Smith had proclaimed that Victoria was enjoying the "enormous and undeserved advantage" of having the Tariff discussion carried on in its own capital. The Victorian Protectionist members were within half an hour or an hour's call while the Free-traders from New South Wales, Western Australia and Queensland sometimes had only two-thirds of their "full force" at the time of a division.⁽¹⁸⁶⁾ At the end of the Parliament, Smith repeated his assertion that it had suited the "political exigencies" of the Government to keep the legislative body in Melbourne because Victoria was the strongest Protectionist state.⁽¹⁸⁷⁾

It is unlikely that the maintenance of the Parliament in Melbourne was a deliberate policy of the Government, although one student of this period has commented that pressure groups outside Victoria found it difficult to gain access to "federal" decision making "and that even when federal organisations were set up for such groups, the executives were centred in Melbourne and tended to be composed mainly of Victorian representatives."⁽¹⁸⁸⁾ On the other hand, the location of the Parliament in Melbourne did present a personal and financial problem for many of the representatives. Within two months of the opening of the Parliament, some members were complaining

(186) C.P.D. Volume VII Page 9177.

(187) C.P.D. Volume XVII Page 5696.

(188) I. Campbell Politics, Parties and Pressure Groups in Australia 1900-1905 M.A. Sydney 1962 Pages 15 and 148-158.

that they had not expected their federal parliamentary duties to be so arduous or time-consuming.⁽¹⁸⁹⁾ The first session was to last eighteen months. There were exceptional circumstances pertaining to the foundations of the new Commonwealth but many representatives could not or were not prepared to suffer financial loss in their business or profession outside Parliament. Bruce Smith himself told his constituents that if they required "permanent residence" in Melbourne or "full attendance" in Parliament, then he could not be a candidate for office.⁽¹⁹⁰⁾ The parliamentary salary of £ 400 per annum plus allowances may have been adequate for many Labour members but not to those accustomed to a more luxurious life. As a result, some tended to neglect their parliamentary duties. Many of the New South Wales Freetraders and especially the front bench members - including Reid, McMillan and Smith himself - had an extremely poor attendance record.⁽¹⁹¹⁾ Indeed, Reid's continuous absence from Parliament during the next four years was to create disenchantment amongst his followers. Reid stepped down from the party leadership in November 1908. At the time, P.M. Glynn recorded that the Queenslanders in the party had become the "chief opponents" of Reid's continued leadership because of his "casual" attendances in the House.⁽¹⁹²⁾ It should also be noted that J.C. Watson's aversion to the train journey to Melbourne has been nominated as one of the reasons behind his retirement as Labour leader in 1907.⁽¹⁹³⁾

(189) S.M.H. 30 and 31 (1L) July 1901.

(190) S.M.H. 12 November 1903.

(191) See Appendix III for fuller details.

(192) Diary entry 17 November 1908. Glynn Diaries MS558/1180.

(193) J. La Nauze Alfred Deakin Volume II Page 428.

Melbourne members had an undoubted advantage over their fellow representatives because of the close proximity of the Parliament to their homes and businesses. The recording of attendance on each day is only taken at the opening of Parliament. It would be possible for a member representing a Melbourne constituency to have his attendance recorded and then return to his own business or profession.

New South Wales members were not the only ones who were inconvenienced. The West Australians in the House had one of the best attendance records but mainly because the extreme distance from their home made it necessary for them to remain in Melbourne for most of the Parliamentary sessions. The Brisbane Courier commented that the "great distance" separating Queensland from Melbourne and the amount of time "spent so far from all their interest in life" placed an "embargo" on many of the ablest men entering the federal Parliament. (194) P.M. Glynn (South Australia) dreaded the weekly train journey to Melbourne and found little compensation for the sacrifices involved in public life when Parliament was 500 miles from his home. (195)

Some representatives were unable to continue and retired at the end of the Parliament. Six members of the House and three Senators resigned in 1903, while five other Senators left federal politics at the end of their term in 1906. Some may have intended from the beginning that their sojourn in the federal Parliament would be brief but at least two declared that they had been forced to retire because of the pressure

(194) Courier 4 December 1903.

(195) Diary Entries 17 May 1903, 10 June 1905 and 25 August 1906
Glynn Diaries MS558/684, 843-4 and 901. See also G. O'Collins
 S.J. Patrick McMahon Glynn (M.U.P.) 1965 Page 181.

involved in parliamentary life. Senator Ewing (Western Australia) resigned in April 1903 because his profession as a barrister was "going to the devil".⁽¹⁹⁶⁾ Sir William McMillan found it "physically impossible" to remain away from a business which "required attention from hour to hour".⁽¹⁹⁷⁾

Despite the disadvantages involved for most of the non-Victorian representatives, many other members believed that the creation of a new capital would do little to improve the situation and could even make it worse. The discomforts of the Parliamentary building in Spring Street were at least better than the uncertainties of a bush capital. Some of the Victorians pointed out that the pursuit of extra-parliamentary activities would be even more difficult in the "back-blocks" of New South Wales. James Gibb, elected for Flinders in 1903, claimed that under such circumstances the "best" men would be excluded from the federal Parliament and a home would be created for "professional politicians".⁽¹⁹⁸⁾

Whatever their personal preferences, when the federal representatives were finally obliged to make a decision on the capital, they were also confronted with the prospect of facing the electorate in two months. The 'cry of Maffra', the pressure of Sydney's and Melbourne's commercial and press interests and the demands of local constituencies were most persistent at the end of the Parliament. Thus, conflicting interests were strengthened and the attempt to reach a decision made even more difficult. But throughout the sessions of the first federal Parliament, in this question at least, few members had shown themselves receptive to the federal idea. More were motivated by concern for their particular constituency, region or State. The failure to choose a site did even less to engender federal feeling and it only increased suspicion and bad faith, especially between the two largest States, upon whose co-operation much of the success of Federation depended.

(196) Norman Ewing to Alfred Deakin 17 October 1902 Deakin Papers MS 1540/1551.

(197) D.T. 13 August 1903.

(198) Argus 7 November 1903.

Appendix I

The following account remains much in the realm of historical speculation but it is necessary to give the questions raised consideration as they have some bearing on this topic.

As noted in the introduction to this thesis, F.A. Watson wrote in the preface to this text on Canberra:-

In the following pages I have written a memoir of the history of Canberra and the Federal Capital Territory of Australia, the selection of the site and plan and the construction of the City. I have omitted purposely the intimate history of the "battle of the sites" and "the battle of the plans", and of various political moves for and against the capital City of Australia, as I think it would be unwise at present to publish such details. ⁽¹⁾

In 1965 Mr. F.C. Green, a former Clerk of the House of Representatives, presented a paper to the Tasmanian Historical Association, claiming that the support for the Dalgety site selected as the Australian capital in 1904, was "propaganda" behind which lay "self-interest of some kind". Green had come to this conclusion after visiting Dalgety which appeared to him as a very poor site for the capital. Green maintained that a group of land speculators had acquired land in the Dalgety area and that this same body when "frustrated" by the latter selection of Canberra, had acquired an area adjoining the present Australian Capital Territory and advertised blocks of land for sale in England and South Africa. ⁽²⁾

(1) F.A. Watson op.cit Preface.

(2) F.C. Green "The Battle of the Sites for the Federal Capital" Papers and Proceedings of The Tasmanian Historical Association June 1965 Volume 13 Pages 10-12.

I wrote to Mr. Green requesting further information and he replied to me in the following terms:-

"My statement that the case for Dalgety was engineered by the same group which later established "Canberra Freeholds" to sell land adjacent to Canberra is based on information given to me by Frederick Watson, editor of the Historical Records of Australia. Watson and I were friends; fellow members of the Yorick Club in Melbourne, and later among the early citizens of Canberra City. In the preface of his book on Canberra, Watson stated that he had "omitted purposely the intimate history of the battle of the sites ... as I think it would be unwise at present to publish the full details". When this book was published the Bruce Government was in power, and to reveal certain facts at that time would have created some embarrassment for the Government because of the involvement of Austin Chapman, a former Member of the Bruce cabinet ...

Watson also told me that a Sydney syndicate was financially interested in the Dalgety site. Chapman also had an interest in it, and a Sydney man named Halloran was the agent of the syndicate.

The first I knew of the syndicate's operations in the Canberra area was on 8th May 1924 when Senator Duncan asked whether the Government was aware that a company called "Canberra Freeholds", from an office in Australia House, London, was widely advertising in Great Britain the sale of Canberra land alleged to be in the Capital Territory. On the 9th May the matter was also raised in the House of Representatives by James Scullin and Charles Marr. Prime Minister Bruce promised to

have the matter investigated. On 22nd May Bruce reported to the House that the land was being advertised from Australia House where Halloran and Co., agents of "Canberra Freeholds", had a 2-year tenancy of an office. He said that Halloran had acquired the tenancy by presenting letters of introduction from "Members of the Federal Parliament and other influential gentlemen".⁽³⁾

On 28th May Chapman resigned his portfolio as Minister for Trade and Customs. Bruce had requested the resignation; the reason stated was "ill-health". At the time the Opposition did not realise the real reason.

The head office of "Canberra Freeholds" was "Halloran & Co., Vickery's Chambers, Pitt Street, Sydney".

"Canberra Freeholds", the company which Green mentions, was registered as a company on 1 September 1915.⁽⁴⁾ It is still a registered company in 1968 and is a subsidiary of Realty Realizations, whose address is 153 Elizabeth Street, Sydney.

Was Austin Chapman connected with this company? According to his grandson, Chapman did have real estate interest in the Maroubra area of Sydney, but both Chapman's family and M.O. Ramsey who was Chapman's political manager during the later part of his career, deny that he had any connection with "Canberra Freeholds". Although Green maintains that Chapman was forced to resign by Bruce, it should also

(3) Bruce's statement appears in C.P.D. Volume CVI Page 840.

(4) N.S.W. Companies Office No. 5620 Document 50772.

be noted that Chapman did have a heart condition and had suffered a severe attack in 1908. He died on 1 January 1926, less than two years after his resignation as Minister for Trade and Customs.

What of Green's other assertion that this same land group had been earlier interested in the Dalgety site? As regards Chapman, it should again be noted that in 1908 he contended that it would have suited him financially if Queanbeyan rather than Dalgety was selected as the site for his home was near Braidwood.⁽⁵⁾ Chapman further denied that he had any monetary interest in the Dalgety area.⁽⁶⁾ However, there does also seem slight evidence of land speculation in the Dalgety district.

An examination of the local press and the records of the New South Wales Lands Office revealed that a certain C.W. Pye seemed to have been interested in land dealing in the area. This gentleman was apparently a resident of the Cooma district for in June 1903 he had sold a hotel.⁽⁷⁾ During the period November 1903 - June 1904, Pye purchased a certain amount of crown land in the Parish of Bobundara in the County of Wallace⁽⁸⁾ - this area adjoins the capital city site as proposed by the 1903 Royal Commission (see map). This was the

(5) Age 11 November 1908.

(6) Braidwood Dispatch 1 October 1908.

(7) Cooma Express 26 June 1903.

(8) N.S.W. Lands Title Office Register Volume 1505 Folio 193, Volume 1510 Folio 211, Volume 1512 Folio 223, Volume 1515 Folio 31.

period just prior to the Parliament's selection of Dalgety and it should also be remembered that the crown lands around Dalgety for an area of 400 square miles were not reserved until July 1904.⁽⁹⁾ The Dalgety site was selected in the following month. Section 4 of the Seat of Government Act of 1904 provided that the amount of compensation to be paid by the Commonwealth for any land acquired was to be limited to the value of land as on 1 January 1904.⁽¹⁰⁾ Despite this regulation, C.W. Pye was selling blocks of residential land at Dalgety in October 1904.⁽¹¹⁾

What conclusions can be drawn? Was Pye operating on behalf of a large Sydney syndicate? Possibly, but it was more likely that he was a local resident who was cashing in. It seems also that speculation was not confined to the Dalgety site. During the submission of evidence taken by the Royal Commission at Tumut, a storekeeper R.R. Timmis had claimed that land had been sold by the state Government within the area of reserved crown lands.⁽¹²⁾ This seems not unlikely considering that 'Paddy' Crick was Minister for Lands during this period.

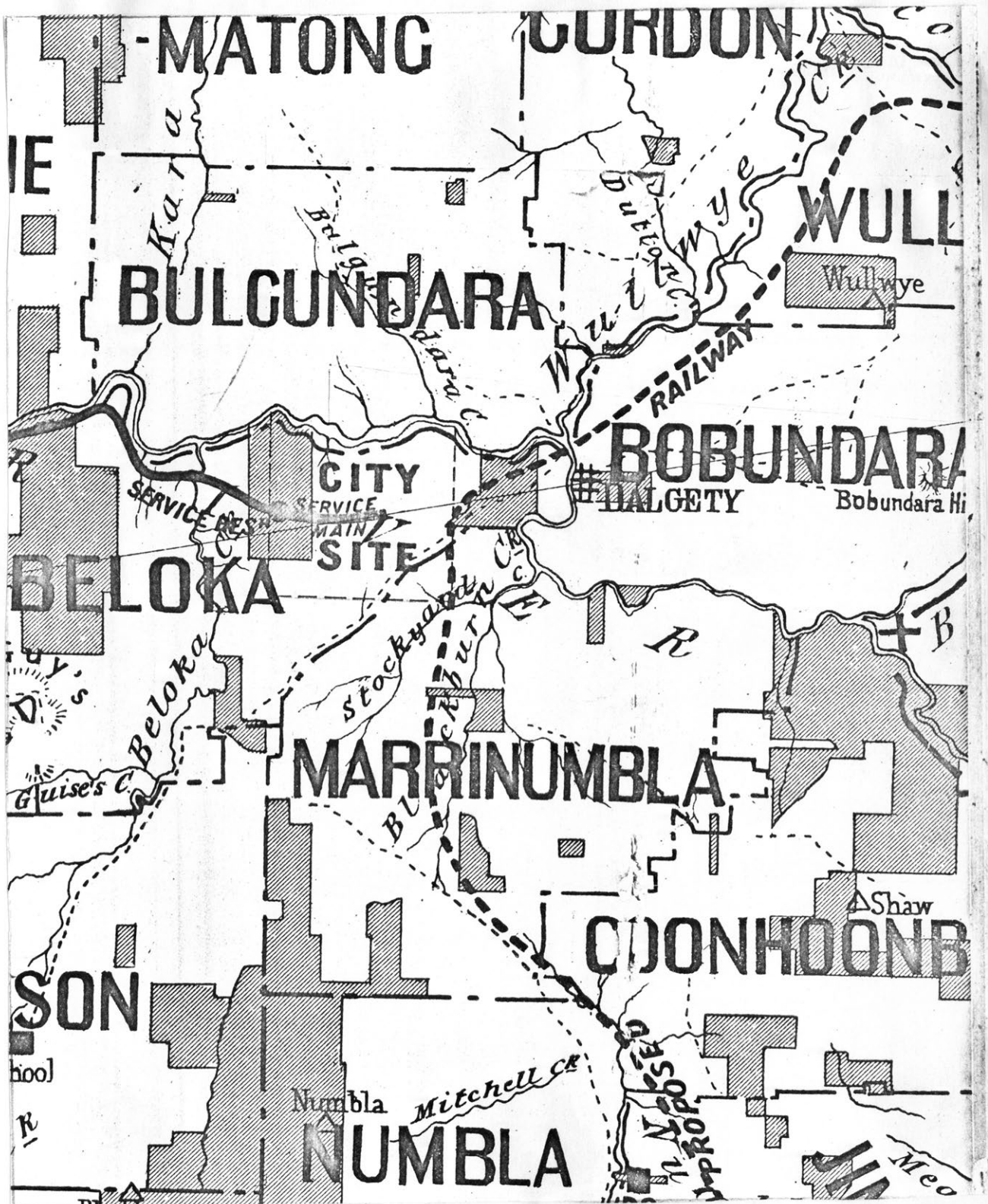
(9) Premier N.S.W. to P.M. 25 July 1904 and Minister of Works to P.M. 28 July 1904 C.A.O. C.R.S. A322 File 13 04/A5428 quoted in D. Wright op.cit Page 120.

(10) Act No. 7 of 1904.

(11) Cooma Express 7 October 1904.

(12) Summary of Evidence of Federal Sites Royal Commission C.A.O. C.R.S. A321.

Thus it may be concluded that while Mr. Green's claims regarding speculation and dishonest advertising by a Sydney company in the Canberra district during the early 1920's seems well substantiated, his charges against Chapman and his own speculation regarding the Dalgety site are rather tenuous and lacking in real substantial evidence. Land speculation seems to have been going on but it is unlikely that it substantially affected discussion in the federal Parliament.

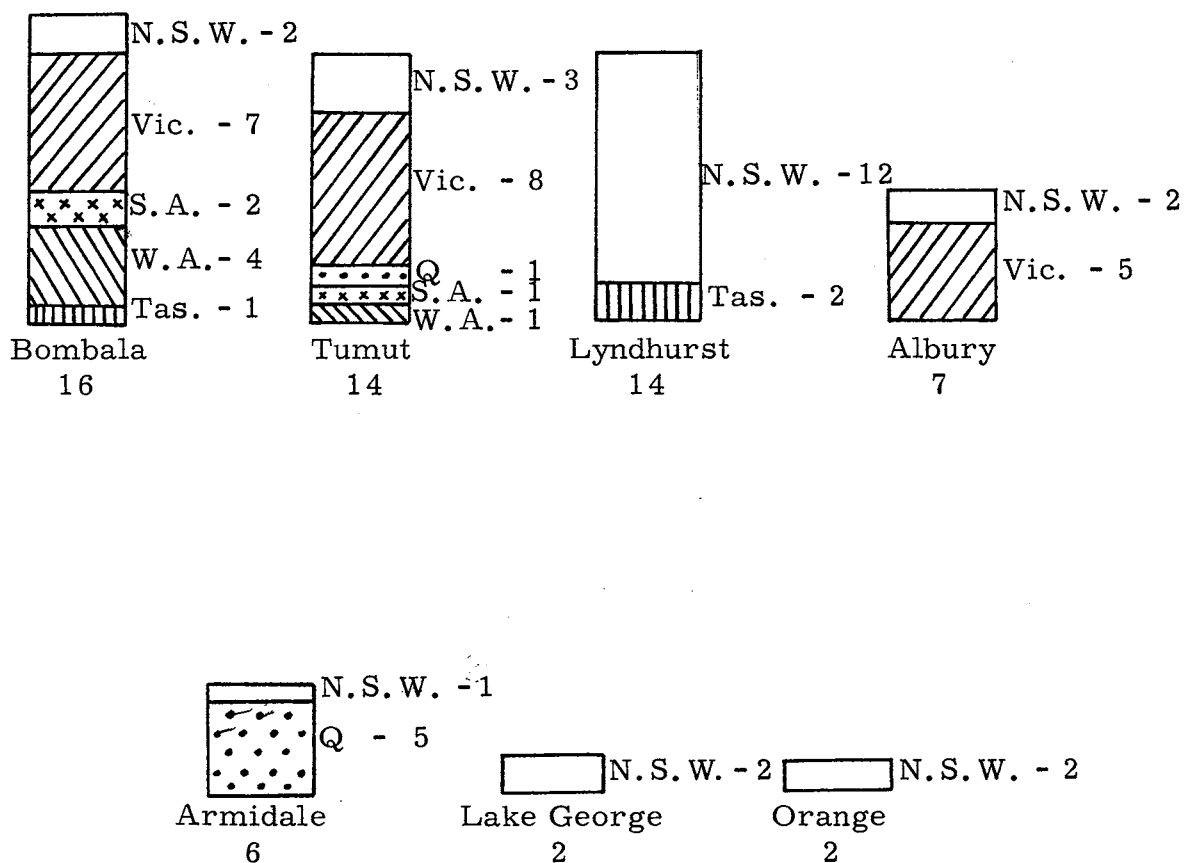


The Dalgety site recommended by the Royal Commission, and the surrounding parishes

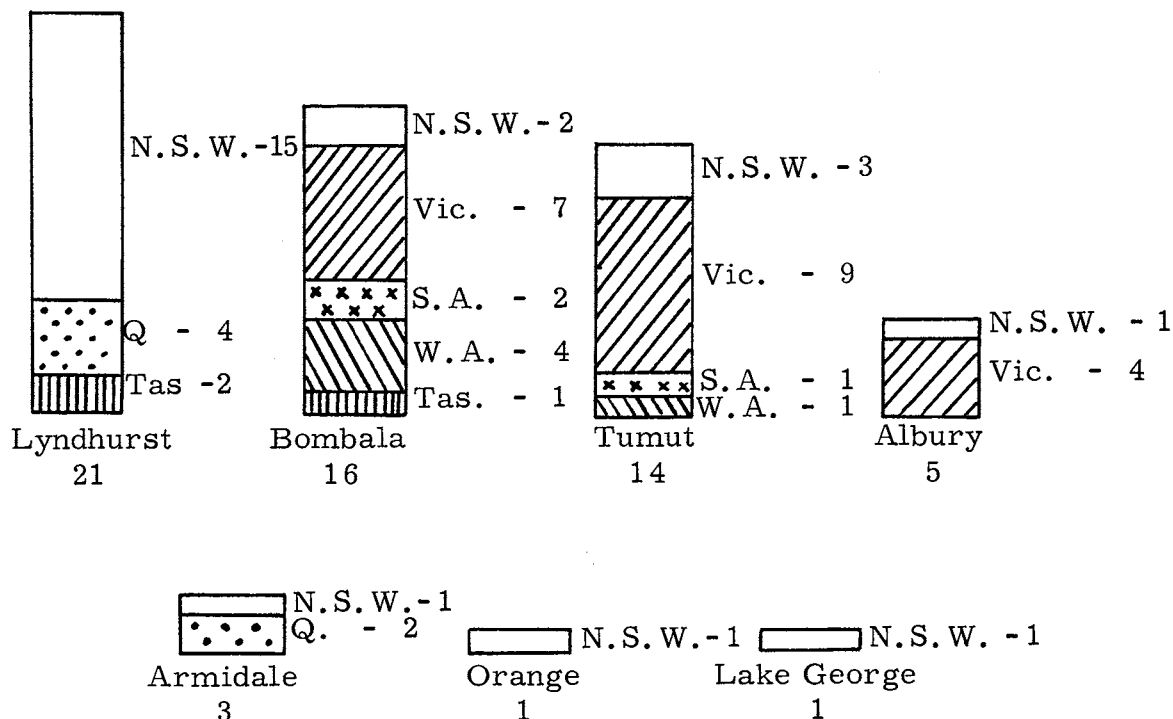
APPENDIX II

The House of Representatives and Senate Ballots

House - 1st Ballot



Comments: Although they were nominated,
Bathurst and Dalgety received
no votes.

2nd Ballot

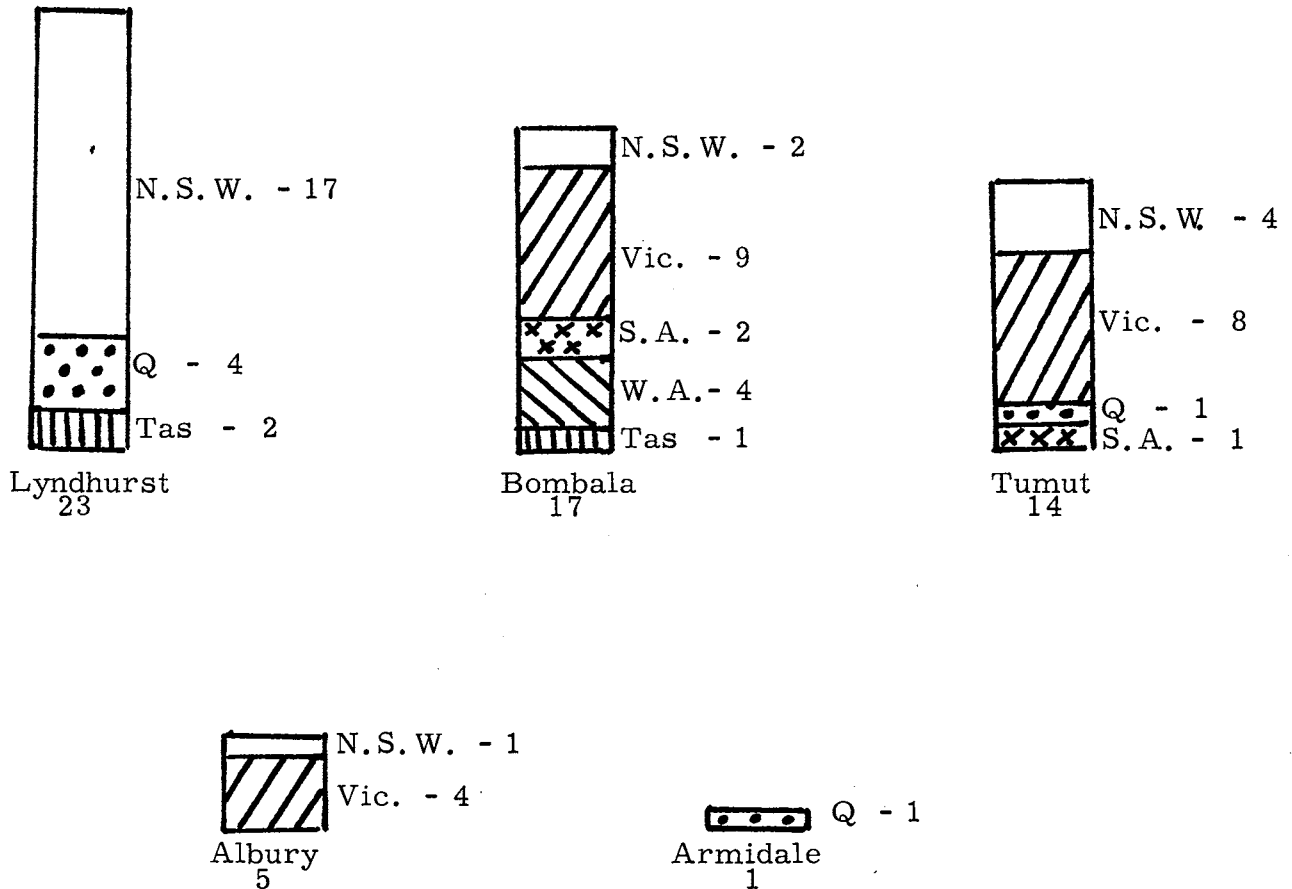
Comments: As Bathurst and Dalgety had received no votes and had been subsequently eliminated, the sites which had received votes in the first ballot were again in the second ballot. But there was an amount of 'vote-switching': -

Edwards (Oxley Queensland), Paterson (Capricornia Queensland), McDonald (Kennedy Queensland) and Watkins (Newcastle N.S.W.) changed allegiance from Orange to Lyndhurst.

Wilkinson (Moreton Queensland) changed allegiance from Tumut to Lyndhurst.

Knox (Kooyong Victoria) and Lyne (Hume N.S.W.) changed allegiance from Albury to Tumut.

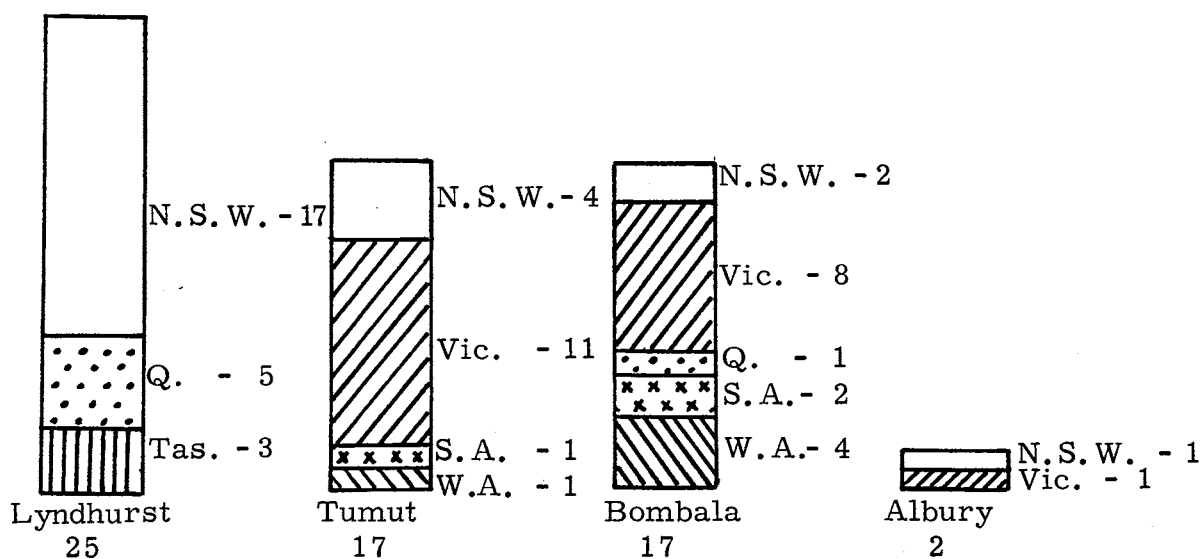
Sawers (Armidale N.S.W.) changed allegiance from Tumut to Armidale.

3rd Ballot

Comments: Lake George and Orange had been eliminated.

Their respective supporters Conroy (N.S.W.) and Brown (Conobolas N.S.W.) now supported Lyndhurst. Fisher (Wide Bay Queensland) changed allegiance from Armidale to Lyndhurst. Sawers (Armidale N.S.W.) re-changed allegiance from Armidale to Tumut.

Mahon (Coolgardie W.A.) did not sign his paper as required but he again supported Tumut. (His vote is not included in above figures.)

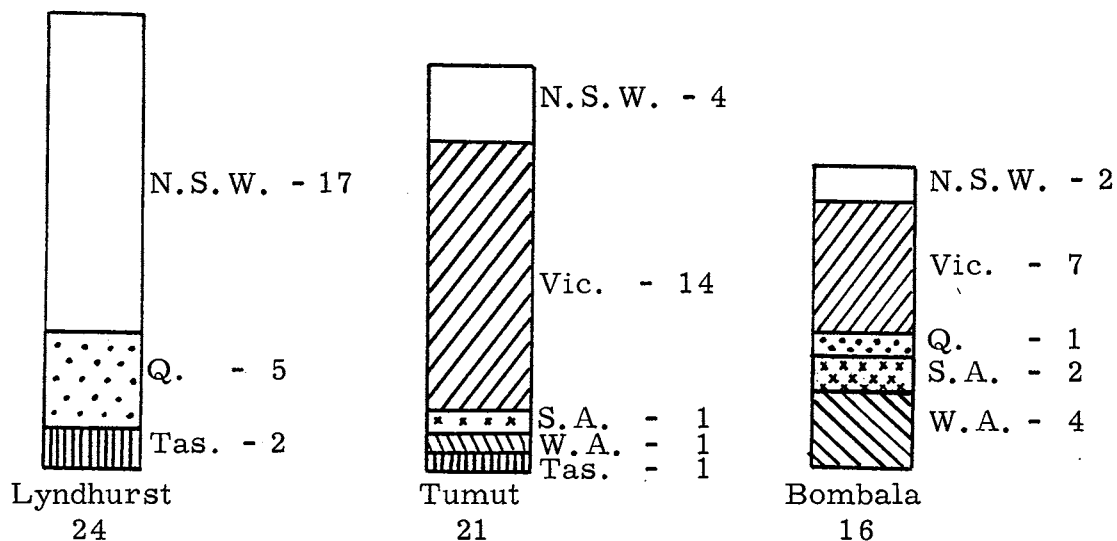
4th Ballot

Comments: Armidale had been eliminated.

Its supporter, Groom, (Darling Downs Queensland) now voted for Lyndhurst. Isaacs (Indi Vic.) and McColl (Echuca Vic.) switched allegiance from Albury to Tumut.

McEachern (Melbourne Vic.) switched allegiance from Albury to Bombala.

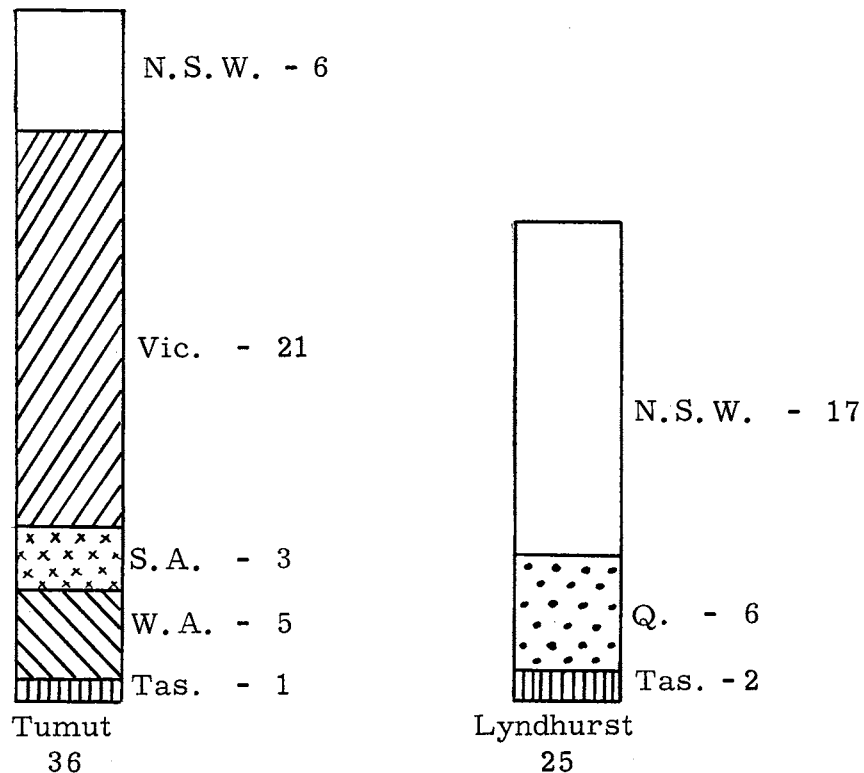
O'Malley (Tasmania) switched allegiance from Bombala to Lyndhurst.

5th Ballot

Comments: Albury had been eliminated.

Albury's former supporters McCay (Corinella Vic.) and Chanter (Riverina N.S.W.) both voted for Tumut.

This was the critical ballot as it ensured the elimination of Bombala. Significantly, Deakin changed allegiance from Bombala to Tumut and O'Malley again changed his allegiance from Lyndhurst to Tumut.

6th Ballot

Comments: Bombala had been eliminated.

All the Bombala Supporters except Fisher, voted for Tumut. Two points should be noted:

1. The final ballot shows the parochial trend of voting:-

All the Western Australians voted for Tumut.

All the Victorians, and all the South Australians who voted, supported Tumut.

All the Queenslanders voted for Lyndhurst.

2. But other trends were also evident:-

All the New South Wales followers of Reid voted for Lyndhurst.

The two Tasmanians who voted for Lyndhurst, were supporters of Reid's policies.

On the other hand, five of the six New South Welshmen who voted for Tumut, were in or supporters of the Deakin Government. The other was the Labour Leader Watson.

The Senate Vote

An amendment to insert Bombala in the Bill was supported by 19 votes to 10.

Ayes

Baker	South Australia	O'Keefe	Tasmania
Barnett	Victoria	Pearce	Western Australia
Best	Victoria	Playford	South Australia
Charleston	South Australia	Reid	Victoria
De Largie	Western Australia	Smith	Western Australia
Dobson	Tasmania	Stewart	Queensland
Fraser	Victoria	Styles	Victoria
Keating	Tasmania	Zeal	Victoria
Macfarlane	Tasmania	Teller	
McGregor	South Australia	Clemons	Tasmania

Noes

Dawson	Queensland	Nield	New South Wales
Drake	Queensland	Pulsford	New South Wales
Gould	New South Wales	Saunders	Western Australia
Higgs	Queensland	Walker	New South Wales
Mackeller	New South Wales	Teller	
		Millen	New South Wales

Pair

Symon	South Australia	Glassey	Queensland
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APPENDIX III

Attendance of Federal Members

A. House

During the first Parliament the House of Representatives sat for 298 days.

The following list includes those Members, other than Ministers, who failed to attend on more than 200 days (i. e. approximately two-thirds of the sessions).

	<u>State</u>	<u>General Fiscal Views</u>	<u>No. of days attended</u>
Braddon	Tasmania	Free Trade	166
Cameron	Tasmania	Free Trade	126
Cruickshank	New South Wales	Protectionist	158
Ewing	New South Wales	Protectionist	177
Harper	Victoria	Protectionist	163
McDonald-Paterson	Queensland	Protectionist	156
McCall	Victoria	Protectionist	183
McLean	New South Wales	Free Trade	87
McMillan	New South Wales	Free Trade	182
Reid	New South Wales	Free Trade	110
Sawers	New South Wales	Protectionist	165
B. Smith	New South Wales	Free Trade	88
V.L. Solomon	South Australia	Free Trade	198

W. Hartnall (Tasmania) attended on 111 days but he took his seat on 4 April 1902 in succession to F.W. Piesse who had died.

Information taken from Votes and Proceedings of the House of Representatives Session 1903 Volume I Pages 191-4.

Of course many of those above would have arranged 'pairs' on a number of divisions.

The Press and some of these members themselves commented on Parliamentary attendance; N. Cameron (Tasmania) said that he had always

been in his place "on all important occasions" though he would not sit there "to listen to all the twaddle that was talked". He claimed that Fysh had paired 45 times, Braddon 87 times and himself 75 times. Mercury 8 December 1903.

The Courier claimed that McDonald-Paterson had failed to give proper attention to Parliament. Courier 23 November 1903.

F.E. McLean promised if re-elected, to "devote the whole of his time to Parliamentary duties". D.T. 23 November 1903.

B. Senate

During the first Parliament the Senate sat for a total of 198 days.

The following list includes those Senators, other than Ministers, who failed to attend on more than 140 days (i.e. approximately two-thirds of the sessions).

	<u>State</u>	<u>General Fiscal Views</u>	<u>No. of days attended</u>
Cameron	Tasmania	Protectionist	62
Downer	South Australia	Protectionist	135
Ferguson*	Queensland	Free Trade	94
Harney	Western Australia	Free Trade	62
Matheson	Western Australia	Free Trade	115
Millen	New South Wales	Free Trade	111
Symon	South Australia	Free Trade	129
Walker	New South Wales	Free Trade	128

* Seat declared vacant on 6 October 1903 due to his absence without leave for two months.

Information taken from Journal of the Senate Session 1901-2 Volume I Page 847, Session 1903 Volume I Page 243.

CHAPTER THREE - THE SECOND PARLIAMENT

Introduction

In contrast to the abortive attempt of the first Parliament, the initial efforts in the second phase of this subject produced a decision on a site. This was partly due to the effect of the outcome of the second federal election. The electoral result failed to give any of the parties an absolute majority in the Parliament. The only remedy was coalition Government, involving concessions and compromises.

Most sections of the Parliament now agreed that it was necessary to end discussion in this matter. The Deakin Ministry compiled further reports on the Bombala, and Tumut areas, as guides for the information of the representatives. The following Labour Administration, with Watson as Prime Minister, was determined to reach a settlement and it took immediate steps by introducing a Seat of Government Bill.

Although provincial interests were not as prominent as during the preceding three years, the battle between the local federal capital leagues still continued. Lyne and Chapman, who had dominated so much of the debate during the first Parliament, were joined in the arena by Sydney Smith and Tom Brown representing the interests of the western districts of New South Wales. Chapman emerged champion for in August 1904, Dalgety in southern New South Wales was selected as the site for the Australian capital.

Only then did events outside the sphere of federal politics enter into consideration. The New South Wales state election of 1904 removed the old Protectionists from office and returned Joseph

Carruthers as Premier. Carruthers had already claimed that the federal Parliament could only select a site from areas which had been offered by the New South Wales Parliament. Thus, basing his case on constitutional grounds, the new Premier raised objections both to the Dalgety site and the terms of the 1904 Bill in reference to the extent of the federal territory and the provision for a federal port. Negotiations of the Reid and ensuing Deakin Governments with Carruthers failed to reach any understanding. Further attempts to reach some form of compromise were frustrated by Carruthers' obstinacy and desire to reap his own political advantage. The outcome was to leave the question of the capital site still unsettled.

The 1903 Election

The failure of the first Parliament to make a selection ensured that in New South Wales at least, this topic would be significant in the second federal election. The Sydney Morning Herald considered that the issue of the capital site was "indicative" of Ministers' "trifling" with the "rights" of New South Wales.⁽¹⁾ In the Government's policy speech, Deakin attempted to justify the position of the Ministry by claiming that it had only sought to pass a measure to enable negotiations to be opened with the New South Wales authorities. Unfortunately matters of area and boundaries which could have been left for "reconsideration at a later stage," had been "imported" into the Bill. The question would have to be "reviewed" without "unnecessary delay" in the next Parliament. The project

(1) S.M.H. 26 October (1L)

was required "as a guarantee of good faith" but was capable of being carried out so as not to offend the "properly economic instincts" of the Australian people. The federal territory should be "large and well chosen", providing for the rent of land to pay the cost of maintaining the capital. In the initial stages of construction, there would be no extravagance, and "temporary habitation" would be provided for the politicians and civil servants who would have to live there. (2)

In all, Deakin's reference was a carefully guarded statement which was designed to placate feelings in New South Wales without offending the susceptibilities of Victorian interests or the fears of the smaller States on the question of cost. As in the 1901 election, it again committed the Government to make an attempt to select a site but it made no reference as to when the capital would be built and made it clear that the initial expenditure would be only slight.

Sir George Turner backed Deakin's promises. As an "honourable" man, he was bound to carry out the "bargain" which he had made with Reid in 1899. But in accordance with his generally cautious financial policy, he would not support "extravagant proposals". (3)

If the two leading members of the Government had committed themselves to the establishment of a federal capital, many of their Victorian backbench supporters gave different assurances to their

(2) S. M. H. 30 October 1903.

(3) S. M. H. 13 November 1903.

constituents. Tom Kennedy (Moirra) pledged himself not to vote for a site in the forthcoming Parliament.⁽⁴⁾ Others were not so forthright but they indicated that they would try to delay selection. Senator Barrett said that a capital would not be needed for many years and any expenditure on it would be a "wicked waste" of public money.⁽⁵⁾ Sir John Quick (Bendigo) was not "anxious" to move the Parliament from Melbourne. He was prepared to select a site to keep faith with New South Wales but the matter should not be rushed.⁽⁶⁾ Even those who nominated particular sites, justified their attitude on provincial grounds. Phillips (Wimmera) favoured Bombala because the capital should be as near Melbourne as possible.⁽⁷⁾

The Victorian non-Labour group which opposed Government and Labour candidates, held similar views. The four Senate aspirants who were endorsed by the Argus and ran on a programme of reform and opposition to the Labour Party's "domination" of federal politics, considered in their platform policy that the current financial position "precludes" the present establishment of the capital.⁽⁸⁾ On the other

(4) Age 25 November 1903.

(5) Argus 6 November 1903. Barrett had been elected as a Labour Senator in 1901, but he stopped attending Caucus meetings in 1902. He stood as a Protectionist in 1903 and was defeated.

(6) Age 31 October 1903.

(7) Argus 1 December 1903.

(8) Argus 21 November 1903. The four candidates all represented prominent industrial and commercial interests. One, Denham, was chief spokesman for the Victorian Chamber of Manufactures. Argus 23 November 1903.

hand, J.G. Wilson (Corangamite) and A. Robinson (Wannon) who were of the same political colour, were content to see the capital located in Sydney as a compromise solution.⁽⁹⁾ These latter two were elected and sat behind Reid during the second Parliament.

As in 1901, Reid had no formulated policy on this matter. Rather, he concentrated his attention on the fiscal issue. At the end of the campaign Reid did promise to "devote the whole of his strength" to compel the Victorians to abide by the constitution, but like Deakin, he saw no need for "huge and expensive" buildings and believed the initial cost should only be £200-300,000.⁽¹⁰⁾

Other members of Reid's party were more specific. Conroy (Werriwa) said that Ministers had never intended to decide the issue.⁽¹¹⁾ Senator Nield spoke of a "combination" who were attempting to "indefinitely" delay the selection of the site. The present Government was "practically a Victorian institution".⁽¹²⁾

(9) Age 9 November 1903 and Argus 28 November 1903.

Wilson had been in the Victorian Parliament and "Mr. Irvine had no more loyal supporter", Argus 3 December 1903. He declared that he was a "Protectionist" but that he would sit in opposition if elected, as a "protest against Trades Hall domination and Socialistic legislation generally". Age 7 December 1903. Both he and Robinson were endorsed by the Victorian Employers Federation and the National Citizens Reform League. I. Campbell The Fiscal Campaigns 1901-03 Government III Honours Thesis, Sydney, 1958 Page 86.

(10) S.M.H. 11 December 1903.

(11) S.M.H. 26 November 1903.

(12) S.M.H. 3 December 1903.

W.H. Kelly (Paddington) promised that he would insist upon removing the capital from the "influences" of Melbourne and "immediately" granting New South Wales her constitutional rights. ⁽¹³⁾

As regards the Labour party, its official platform made no mention of the capital ⁽¹⁴⁾ site but interest was not lacking in New South Wales Labour circles. Speaking at Wagga, Watson "regretted" that the site had not been determined. The Labour Leader believed that the selection of Tumut would be "reasonable" and that an area of 1,000 square miles from which the Commonwealth could derive some monetary benefit, was not "excessive". ⁽¹⁵⁾ In Sydney, the Labour Council discussed the capital site and was divided on the question of the necessary area of the federal territory. ⁽¹⁶⁾ Hughes made this matter a prominent feature in his personal election campaign. He threatened that he was so "disgusted" with the treatment accorded to his State that he would vote to block all public business until the issue was settled. If the Parliament had been in Sydney and not in Melbourne where it was dominated by that city's press, then the tariff would have been lower. ⁽¹⁷⁾

This topic was of only minimal significance in the smaller States. In South Australia five of the seven sitting Members were returned unopposed and the entire campaign caused little stir. The

(13) S.M.H. 6 November 1903.

(14) S.M.H. 30 October 1903.

(15) S.M.H. 13 November 1903.

(16) S.M.H. 30 October and 6 November 1903.

(17) S.M.H. 28 November 1903.

Advertiser had remarked during the earlier debate in the federal Parliament that interests other than those of New South Wales objected to the "Melbourne domination" of Federation, but the constitutional remedy was costly and at that time, inopportune.⁽¹⁸⁾ In Queensland the only candidate to show any real concern was R. Edwards, who represented the border constituency of Oxley. He favoured Armidale and promised to support whichever site "seemed best" for Queensland.⁽¹⁹⁾

The issue did provoke some reaction in Tasmania. The precarious economy of the island State induced its federal representative to pay close attention to any scheme of financial excess. Sir Phillip Fysh who stood for the seat of Denison, contended that the Commonwealth was not in a "financial position" to proceed with either the transcontinental railway or the capital site. Fysh's opponent D.N. Cameron agreed that the Commonwealth was not in a position to undertake such projects in the early years of Federation.⁽²⁰⁾ Senator Dobson also continued his campaign to postpone the selection of a site.⁽²¹⁾

As in the first federal election, this topic stimulated further debate in the particular New South Wales constituencies which con-

(18) Advertiser 15 October 1903 (1L).

(19) Courier 23 November 1903.

(20) Mercury 8 December 1903. Cameron was defeated by Fysh but was later elected for Wilmot after the death of Braddon in February 1904.

(21) Mercury 12 December 1904.

tained prospective sites. Chapman and Lyne, whose rivalry had helped to delay the settlement of the matter, were able to capitalise on their efforts to secure the capital for their respective electorates. In Eden-Monaro, the local federal capital league congratulated Chapman and he promised to continue to fight for the area.⁽²²⁾ In Hume, Lyne was rather embarrassed by the two prominent candidates of Albury and Tumut both being in his electorate. However, the Minister explained that because the Victorians had not supported Albury as he had expected, he had then pressed the claims of Tumut.⁽²³⁾ Despite Lyne's "predicament", it would seem that he had strengthened support for himself in the Tumut and Upper Murray districts, and he was regarded with favour in the free trade centre of Albury.⁽²⁴⁾ Whilst some of their New South Wales back-bench supporters were being decimated, Chapman was returned unopposed and Lyne was elected with an increased majority.⁽²⁵⁾

There was also much fervour regarding the capital in the western districts of New South Wales. Tom Brown, the Labour member for Canobolas who was unopposed for re-election, devoted an entire speech to the subject, in which he denounced the delay in settlement that had been caused by a Government dependent upon "provincial spirited" Victorians. Brown also promised to do all possible to

(22) Bombala Herald 3 and 11 November 1903.

(23) Albury Banner and Wodonga Express 20 November 1903.

(24) Albury Banner and Wodonga Express 27 November (L) and 4 December (L) 1903.

(25) Albury Banner and Wodonga Express 18 and 25 December 1903.

secure a western site.⁽²⁶⁾ Sydney Smith, the whip of Reid's party and the incumbent for Macquarie, declared that he had not only urged the claims of all the western sites but had prevented a "daring" move in the Senate to exclude consideration of all other candidates but Bombala and Tumut.⁽²⁷⁾

Despite this local interest, the influence of this question on the outcome of the election is difficult to assess. As noted, Barton had warned that the subject of the capital could lose the Government votes in New South Wales. Certainly, support for the Ministry had declined in New South Wales since the 1901 poll but this trend was evidence throughout all the States except Western Australia.⁽²⁸⁾ It has been claimed that the 1902 Electoral Act which endorsed the principle of "first past the post", operated against the centre party

(26) The Leader (Orange) 30 November and 14 December 1903. Like Hughes, Brown was a Free Trader who received endorsement from the Free Trade and Liberal Association in 1903.

(27) The Leader 26 November 1903. This referred to a suggestion by Senator Staniforth Smith (Western Australia) that as a compromise between the House and Senate, the federal Parliament should nominate that the capital would be either Bombala or Tumut. The Senate had rejected this proposal. C.P.D. Volume XVII Pages 6335-46.

(28) Colin A. Hughes and B.D. Graham Australian Government and Politics 1890-1964 Canberra (A.N.U.P.) 1968 Pages 286-96.

and most Protectionist representatives occupied that position in New South Wales.⁽²⁹⁾ There were other factors, including the influences of the Australian Protestant Defence Association and the "Orange" Lodges, both of which campaigned against Ministerial candidates.⁽³⁰⁾ Still, the Ministerial representation in New South Wales was halved. This further strengthened Reid's hold in his home State.

The general significance of the election was that the Government's losses in New South Wales and the Labour party's gains in Queensland and West Australia created the 'three elevens' situation in the House. Under these circumstances, stable government could only be ensured by some form of bargaining between the parties. In this regard, the capital site would be a prominent topic and as a result some of the election pledges would become irrelevant.

The Selection of Dalgety

At the opening of the second Parliament, the Government fulfilled one of its election promises and gave notice of its intention

(29) B.D. Graham "The Choice of Voting Methods in Federal Politics 1902-1918" Australian Journal of Politics and History VIII, 2, November 1962 Page 164.

(30) I. Campbell The Fiscal Campaigns 1901-3 Government III Honours Thesis, University of Sydney 1958 Pages 122-3.

MINISTERIAL - - - - -	26
OPPOSITION (including Speaker) - - -	27
LABOUR - - - - -	22

SPEAKER.		CLERKS. + + +			
Ewing (N.S.W.), Min.	Chapman	TABLE.	Reid (N.S.W.), Opp.	G. B. Edwards (N.S.W.), Opp.	R. Edwards (Q.), Opp.
H. Cook (V.), Min.	Deakin		S. Smith (N.S.W.), Opp.	Lee (N.S.W.), Opp.	J. Cook (N.S.W.), Opp.
Mauger (V.), Min.	Sir P. Fysh		Wilks (N.S.W.), Opp.	Liddle (N.S.W.), Opp.	
Salmon (V.), Min.	Sir W. Lyne		Conroy (N.S.W.), Opp.	Blackwood (N.S.W.), Opp.	Kelly (N.S.W.), Opp.
Groom (Q.), Min.	Sir G. Turner		Glynn (S.A.), Opp.	Fuller (N.S.W.), Opp.	G. Wilson (V.), Opp.
Wilkinson (Q.), Min.	Sir J. Forrest		B. Smith (N.S.W.), Opp.	Willis (N.S.W.), Opp.	
				D. Thomson (N.S.W.), Opp.	Johnson, (N.S.W.), Opp.
				Lonsdale (N.S.W.), Opp.	Cameron (T.), Opp.
Higgins (V.), Min.	Kennedy (V.), Min.		Knox (V.), Opp.	Poynton (S.A.), Opp.	PRESS BOX.
Ronald (V.), Lab.	M'Cay (V.), Min.		Gibb (V.), Opp.	Mahon (W.A.), Lab.	
Carpenter (S.A.), Lab.	Sir M. MacEacharn (V.), Min.		Robinson (V.), Opp.	M'Williams (T.), Opp.	
Hutchinson (S.A.), Lab.	Harper (V.), Min.		Fisher (Q.), Lab.	Fowler (W.A.), Lab.	
	McLean (V.), Min.		Skene (V.), Opp.	Thomas (N.S.W.), Lab.	
	Sir L. Bonython (S.A.), Min.			Hughes (N.S.W.), Lab.	
Tudor (V.), Lab.	Isaacs (V.), Min.		Webster (N.S.W.), Lab.	Watson (N.S.W.), Lab.	
Batchelor (S.A.), Lab.	Sir J. Quick (V.), Min.		McDonald (Q.), Lab.	Watkins (N.S.W.), Lab.	
Pamford (Q.), Lab.			Spence (N.S.W.), Lab.		
Thomson (Q.), Lab.			Brown (N.S.W.), Lab.		
Storer (T.), Min.				Page (Q.), Lab.	
Kingston (S.A.), Min.					
Culpin (Q.), Lab.					

Ministerial, Opp. Opposition, Lab. Labour. The above plan represents how parties will be grouped in a full House.

The seating of the House at the Opening of the Second Parliament.

Three Victorian Ministerialists - Crouch, McColl and Phillips are not shown but they sat on the second bench behind the Ministry.

Argus 3 March 1904.

to introduce a Seat of Government Bill.⁽³¹⁾ In the meantime, Sir John Forrest, as the new Minister for Home Affairs, had been in charge of further investigations on this subject. As noted, Deakin had given an assurance to the Parliament that further information would be collected on the Bombala and Tumut areas. Before the end of 1903, Forrest had drawn up instructions for the examination of sites in these districts. The Minister had considered that "good drainage" would be required from the selected site and that "attention" would have to be given to the proximity of a "great water supply". The question of the "accessibility" of the area would have to be considered and the "probability" of connecting it "easily" with "the existing railway systems".⁽³²⁾

C.R. Scrivener and A.H. Chesterman, two surveyors in the employment of the New South Wales Government, were engaged to inspect sites respectively in the Bombala and Tumut districts. As remarked earlier, Forrest himself had become enamoured of the virtues of the Monaro area. As a former surveyor and explorer of the West Australian desert, Forrest was impressed by the need of a large water supply for the capital. The Minister pressed upon Scrivener that the "glory" of the Monaro locality was associated with the Snowy River.⁽³³⁾

(31) C.P.D. Vol. XVIII Page 8.

(32) Office Memorandum to Secretary of the Department of Home Affairs 13 November 1903 C.A.O. C.R.S. A322 File No. 17 03/15495.

(33) Secretary of Home Affairs Department to C.R. Scrivener 17 February 1904 C.R. Scrivener Papers M.L. MS37/1/17.

Scrivener was similarly impressed for after due examination of the Monaro area, he nominated Dalgety on the banks of the Snowy River as "finer" than any other site yet considered.⁽³⁴⁾ P.T. Owen, the Inspector-General of Works in New South Wales, also believed that "on the whole", with the possible exception of its "winter climate", Dalgety was "far and away" the "best" site.⁽³⁵⁾

Accompanied by Deakin for much of the journey,⁽³⁶⁾ Forrest himself inspected both the Bombala and Tumut areas. In his report, Forrest formed his judgment of the sites on nine points - distance from Sydney not less than 100 miles and height above sea level not less than 1500 feet; abundant water supply; good summer and winter climate; rail accessibility from Melbourne and Sydney; great water power for electricity; water frontage for sport, recreation and beauty; commanding sites for public buildings; fertile territory; surrounding and adjacent scenery. Taking these factors into consideration, Forrest agreed with Scrivener that mainly because of the potential of the Snowy River, and the area's climate and scenery, Dalgety was "superior" to any other site which he had examined.⁽³⁷⁾

(34) Federal Capital Proposed Sites; Report by C.R. Scrivener on Proposed Sites in the Southern Monaro District C.P.P. 1904 Volume II Pages 493-6.

(35) P.T. Owen to C.R. Scrivener 26 May 1904 C.R. Scrivener Papers MS37/1/79.

(36) Deakin recorded this visit in his diary but made no comment on any site. Diary entries 1, 2, 8 and 9 April 1904 Deakin Papers MS1540/Box 49.

(37) Minute by Sir John Forrest on Localities in the Tumut and Southern Monaro Districts C.P.P. 1904 Volume II Pages 511-4.

So, despite the report of the Royal Commissioners, the Southern Monaro area again came into prominence. Like Oliver previously, both Forrest and Scrivener realised that the question of access to this area was still a problem. Forrest pointed out that the extension of railway lines from Cooma in New South Wales and from Bairnsdale in Victoria would develop the surrounding countryside and as such, was "a necessary work" quite apart from the issue of the federal capital. (38)

As well as compiling reports, the Government also allowed both old and new members an opportunity to inspect the sites in the Tumut and Bombala districts. (39) Before the Ministry could pursue the matter further, it was defeated on a Labour amendment to the Conciliation and Arbitration Bill. But the Watson Government, which now assumed office, committed itself just as strongly to reaching a decision on the capital. On 18 May, in presenting the Government's programme, Watson declared that the selection of a site would do much to dissipate the inter-provincial jealousy between New South Wales and Victoria. Thus, the Prime Minister gave notice of a Seat of Government Bill. In keeping with Labour policy since 1901, the intended Bill would contain provision for an area of 900 square miles, although the Ministry would not recommend a particular district. Every site which had a "chance" would be open

(38) Minute by Sir John Forrest on Localities in the Tumut and Southern Monaro Districts Ibid Page 513.

(39) S.M.H. 26 and 28 March and 8 and 12 April 1904.

for selection. Once the Bill was passed, negotiations would be opened between the Commonwealth and New South Wales Governments.⁽⁴⁰⁾

On the same day as Watson's statement, the publication of the proposed coalition agreement between the Deakin and Reid parties noted that the federal capital measure was only of secondary importance to the Conciliation and Arbitration Bill.⁽⁴¹⁾ Thus, all sections of the Parliament seemed willing to expedite a settlement.

A day later, McGregor, the Vice-President of the Executive Council, introduced into the Senate a Bill, the terms of which complied with Watson's promise.⁽⁴²⁾ Debate on the second reading of the Bill commenced six days later and was to be protracted over a period of a month. (The measure could not be sent to the House until that chamber finished most of its consideration of the Conciliation and Arbitration Bill). As in the previous October, some Senators were disturbed by the possible cost of the project but the

(40) C.P.D. Volume XIX Pages 1269-70. Holman claimed that the Watson Ministry thought the actual site could be finally determined within a year and their proposed banking scheme would finance the project. "The Rise and Fall of the Watson Ministry" Red Funnel 1906 Page 50.

(41) Age 19 May 1904.

(42) C.P.D. Volume XX Page 1293. Hughes wrongly stated that the Government introduced a Bill which nominated Dalgety as the Capital. Policies and Potentates Page 56.

Fitzhardinge repeats the error. William Morris Hughes Vol. I Page 167.

influence of new 'blood' (ten new Senators had been elected in 1903) seemed to have its effect. The new Labour Senator Turley (Queensland) revealed a glimpse of federal feeling by urging that it was necessary to establish the capital, not only to keep faith with New South Wales, but also to locate the Parliament in its own home.⁽⁴³⁾ Thus, although Senator Dobson (Tasmania) again decried the plan as a waste of money and pleaded for delay, he was only supported by the Victorian Senator Styles.⁽⁴⁴⁾

In the committee stages of the Bill, the Labour Senator Pearce (Western Australia) proposed that the site should be in the Southern Monaro area. The New South Wales Senators Millen and Nield both pointed out that the drawback to sites in this area was still their inaccessibility which could delay the erection of the capital and the Parliament's move from Melbourne, but the Senate accepted Pearce's proposal by seventeen votes to six. The only dissidents were five New South Wales Senators and Senator Dawson (Queensland).⁽⁴⁵⁾

As in the previous debate during late 1903, the subsequent discussion on the area of the federal territory provided more acrimony

(43) Ibid Pages 1774-5.

(44) Ibid Pages 1510-17, 1746-59 and 1782.

(45) Ibid Pages 1864, 1886-7 and 1891. The absentees were Senators Best (Victoria) and Higgs (Queensland) who were paired, Senator Gray (New South Wales) who was sick (Evening News 6 June 1904), and Senators Clemons (Tasmania), Craft, De Largie and Matheson (Western Australia), Frazer and Zeal (Victoria), Givens, Playford and Symon (South Australia) and Stewart (Queensland). Full details of the voting appear in Appendix I.

than the consideration of the site. The Ministry were committed to an area of 900 square miles despite the claim of the See administration that it would refuse to grant such an expanse. Senator McGregor, the Vice-President of the Executive Council, said that such a large area was necessary to secure the "unearned increment", provide for a natural reserve and secure water resources under federal control.⁽⁴⁶⁾ Other Labour Senators envisaged more spectacular schemes. Senator Findley (Victoria) suggested an area of five thousand square miles in which an experiment in the "collective ownership of land and industry" could be instituted to provide an object lesson for the world.⁽⁴⁷⁾

The New South Wales Senators were entirely opposed to the Ministry's proposal for a large federal area. Senator Nield warned that his State would never consent to "such unfair demands".⁽⁴⁸⁾ Nield's pleading went unheeded and the area clause of the Bill was passed with the amendments that the land within the federal territory should only be held on leasehold and the value of the compensation to be paid to the private holders of alienated property should be determined as at 1 January 1904.⁽⁴⁹⁾

Once the general district and the extent of the federal territory had been determined, the Senate was to nominate a site. Senator

(46) Ibid Page 1780-1.

(47) Ibid Page 1967.

(48) Ibid Page 1963.

(49) Ibid Page 1975.

McGregor suggested Dalgety but Senator Turley (Queensland) pointed out that this site was 100 miles from Twofold Bay and the majority of the Senators who had voted for the Southern Monaro area, had realised the "necessity" for a federal port. As a result, it was agreed that the site should be within fifty miles of Bombala.⁽⁵⁰⁾

The Senate's decisions prompted comment in New South Wales. While neither See nor Carruthers expressed an opinion about a Monaro site, both were adamant that the state Government should not grant such a large area as 900 square miles.⁽⁵¹⁾ On 8 June, when McGregor proposed the formal adoption of the Committee's report, the Senate again discussed the area provisions of the Bill. Senator Nield repeated his caution that the Bill in its present form would be a "dead letter".⁽⁵²⁾ This provoked angry reaction from his fellow Senators. Dawson (Queensland), the Minister of Defence, said that the New South Wales Senators were "stone-walling" and Best (Victoria) declared that obstinacy by New South Wales on this issue would only mean a delay in "fixing" the site. The report was adopted without further amendment.⁽⁵³⁾

At this stage the lower House was still considering the Conciliation and Arbitration Bill. On 14 June, Watson stated that while under normal circumstances the Seat of Government Bill would be considered after the Arbitration measure, he reserved the "right"

(50) Ibid Pages 1980-2.

(51) S.M.H. 6 and 14 June 1904.

(52) C.P.D. Volume XX Page 2085.

(53) Ibid Pages 2086-90.

to proceed with the capital site legislation if the Arbitration Bill had to be recommitted.⁽⁵⁴⁾ On 24 June, McCay (Corinella, Vic.) moved a successful amendment to the Arbitration Bill, requiring that the approval of the majority of workers in an industry be obtained before the court could give preference to unionists. One of the results of this vote was that the final decision on this Bill was deferred until after the House considered the capital site. This was to have unfortunate repercussions for the fate of the Watson administration.

On the other hand, the New South Wales Government began to display greater interest in this matter. On 13 June 1904, See resigned as Premier and was succeeded by Waddell who represented the seat of Bellabula which embraced the Lyndhurst site. Paddy Crick, the Minister of Lands, was Member for Blayney which was in close proximity to the Lyndhurst site. The Western District Federal Capital League, which had been formed in the previous September, was very active. It had presented a case which stressed the advantages of the western districts as regards centrality, accessibility and proximity to Sydney.⁽⁵⁵⁾ In early June, a deputation of the Lord Mayor and Aldermen of Carcoar (the town near the Lyndhurst site) had waited upon Waddell to press the claims of Lyndhurst.⁽⁵⁶⁾

Three weeks later, Waddell informed Watson of his intention to seek the opinion of the electors regarding the capital site at the

(54) Ibid Page 2311.

(55) The Federal Capital; The Case for the West; Revised Statements of the Western Federal Capital League.

Bathurst July 1904.

(56) S.M.H. 6 June 1904.

forthcoming state election. The Premier argued that the Constitution made it "necessary" for the Government of New South Wales to "approve of the site chosen". He requested Watson to postpone further action until the New South Wales Parliament "has expressed its opinion", which it would do immediately after the election. (57)

One student has remarked that "both See and his immediate successor, Waddell, continued to behave amicably towards the Commonwealth", (58) but Waddell's correspondence was an important change of tone in the attitude of the state Government, for Waddell, unlike See, now claimed that the New South Wales Parliament should have some say in the choice of site.

Watson replied that the Cabinet had given "careful attention" to the matter but could not agree to postpone selection, as the matter was now "ripe for early settlement". It was three years since Barton requested See to express a preference for a site and as no reply had been received, the federal Government considered that no longer delay than was "absolutely inevitable" should elapse before this "important" question was determined. (59)

Despite Watson's refusal to defer a decision, further attention was given to the Lyndhurst site for Forrest had already carried out

(57) Premier N.S.W. to P.M. 29 June 1904 C.A.O. C.R.S.
A322 File No. 12 04/4834.

(58) D. Wright op.cit Page 120.

(59) P.M. to Premier N.S.W. 13 July 1904 C.A.O. C.R.S.
A322 File No. 12 04/4834. Wright has ignored this correspondence.

a survey. Forrest regarded Lyndhurst as completely inferior to Dalgety and especially deficient in water supply.⁽⁶⁰⁾ Still, Watson requested the reservation of crown lands around both Dalgety and Lyndhurst, and the state Government duly carried this out.⁽⁶¹⁾

One further site now came under discussion. Although Lyne no longer possessed his Ministerial influence in this question, he was just as determined to advocate sites in his constituency. The prospects of the Tumut district seemed to be vanishing rapidly but Lyne soon found a new aspirant for honours - the small town of Tooma on the Upper Murray, near the Victorian border. Lyne was aided by the preferences of certain members of the Labour Cabinet. Watson himself had voted for Tumut in 1903 and at least two Ministers - Dawson and Hughes - were opposed to a Southern Monaro site. A survey of Tooma was conducted by A.H. Chesterman, a New South Wales' Engineer, who reported that while the site had many "marked advantages" in regard to physical characteristics and water supply, the factor of accessibility which could be viewed from

(60) Federal Capital Sites; Report by the Right Hon. John Forrest on suggested Sites at Lyndhurst. N.S.W.P.P. 1904 Volume II Pages 117-21. For a contrary opinion see also Report by L.A.B. Wade on water supply. Ibid Pages 165-6.

(61) Premier N.S.W. to P.M. 25 July 1904 C.A.O. C.R.S. A322, File No. 13 04/A5428 and Minister of Works to P.M. 28 July 1904. Ibid quoted in Wright op.cit Page 120.

"different standpoints", required "serious consideration".⁽⁶²⁾ Tooma was even further from Sydney and more remote than Dalgety and this certainly ruled it out of consideration as far as Sydney's interests were concerned.

The debate in the House finally commenced on 20 July. In presenting the Bill, Batchelor, the Minister of Home Affairs, declared that it was necessary to settle this question because first the crown lands had been reserved, secondly the Commonwealth Departments needed accommodation and finally there was "restiveness" in New South Wales. Like the non-Labour parties, the Government hoped that the initial expense, apart from the acquisition of land and the cost of communication, would be kept within Barton's earlier estimate of £500,000. The Minister reaffirmed the Cabinet's desire for an extensive federal territory.⁽⁶³⁾ Although the Cabinet had adopted an "open" policy on the question of the site, all Ministers assumed a strictly neutral note and none expressed a personal preference. The Government was divided in opinion but the situation was not complicated by the rivalry between individual Ministers, which had marred discussion of this issue under the Barton and Deakin Cabinets.

In actual time, the ensuing debate was more drawn out than the discussions in the Senate had been for the Bill occupied the attention of the House for over forty hours. As in the Senate, the

(62) Federal Capital: Proposed Sites, Tooma District.

C.P.P. 1904 Volume II Pages 507-10.

(63) C.P.D. Volume XX Pages 3398-3405.

mood of the House was favourable to settlement. The only move made to postpone a decision was based on a suggested compromise. J.G. Wilson (Corangamite Vic.), a follower of Reid, proposed that the Constitution be altered so as to remove the 100 mile limit clause and allow the Parliament to meet in either Melbourne or Sydney. Wilson stated that he had no "parochial feeling" in the matter and no desire to press the claims of his own State. Rather, most Victorians preferred to see the capital established in a suitable area at little cost, and his plan would also remove "most of the irritation" which existed in New South Wales.⁽⁶⁴⁾ Another Victorian Robinson (Wannon), who was also a supporter of Reid, said the scheme would involve "no sacrifice of Victorian rights" as the capital had benefited his State little. On the other hand, it would ensure "economy" and "safeguard the rights" of New South Wales.⁽⁶⁵⁾

The proposal received scant support and was overwhelmingly defeated.⁽⁶⁶⁾ It was indicative of the attitude of the House that, unlike the previous October, the only formal support for delay came from Victorians who were concerned not so much with the provincial interests of their State, but rather with the need to preserve economy. Although Hume Cook (Bourke) claimed that the Victorian people were glad to secure the "advantages" which the federal Government and its services brought,⁽⁶⁷⁾ few of his state colleagues were now willing to continue to obstruct the selection of a site. Perhaps the fluid and

(64) Ibid Pages 3409-13.

(65) Ibid Pages 3413-7.

(66) Ibid Pages 3477-8.

(67) Ibid Page 3433.

complex political situation of the second Parliament had induced the non-Labour members at least, to subordinate provincial interests to the task of finding some workable agreement.

This mood was also reflected by the New South Wales representatives who generally dominated the debate. D. Thomson (North Sydney) did draw attention to the 1899 Premier's Memorandum as a guarantee that the site should be "reasonably" close to the 100 mile limit from Sydney,⁽⁶⁸⁾ and most of the New South Wales section of Reid's party favoured the Lyndhurst site. On the other hand, there was a realisation that some form of compromise would have to be reached. Conroy (Werriwa) said that although the selection of Tooma would be a "violation" of the compact because it was on the southern border, if Dalgety was chosen, his State would have "no serious cause of complaint" as it would require construction of a very short railway line of which the New South Wales Parliament had already approved in principle.⁽⁶⁹⁾ Similarly, Willis (Robertson) described Dalgety as a "magnificent site" which would be "more acceptable" than Tooma as a compromise solution.⁽⁷⁰⁾ It could be claimed that these views were partly inconsistent with the former opposition by the New South Wales members to the Bombala site but it must be remembered that first, as regards immediate railway construction, Dalgety was thirty miles closer than Bombala to the railway terminus at Cooma and secondly, Dalgety possessed the Snowy River as a magnificent water supply.

(68) Ibid Page 3419-20.

(69) C.P.D. Volume XXI Pages 3824-7.

(70) Ibid Page 3816.

Yet, if some provincial differences had been sunk, the debate also marked the culmination of the rivalry between Chapman, Lyne and Sydney Smith, the respective sponsors of Dalgety, Tooma and Lyndhurst. Each made lengthy speeches in support of their nominees and constantly contradicted and interrupted the other two. The Labour representative Brown (Conobolas) reflected similar 'parish pump' politics in a lengthy speech in favour of Lyndhurst. ⁽⁷²⁾

The Government had originally intended that all the various sites should be grouped in districts, but Reid objected that this would favour the Bombala and Tumut areas which had a number of eligible sites, as against the western locality which now only had one - Lyndhurst. ⁽⁷³⁾ In deference to Reid's wishes, the Government proposed that there should first be a ballot of sites in each district, but after lengthy debate, the House rejected this solution. ⁽⁷⁴⁾ As a result, the ballot was finally taken between three districts; the Western, Southern and South-Eastern respectively comprising of sites within 50 miles of Lyndhurst, Batlow and Bombala.

The ballot took place on 9 August. Sixty-nine members were

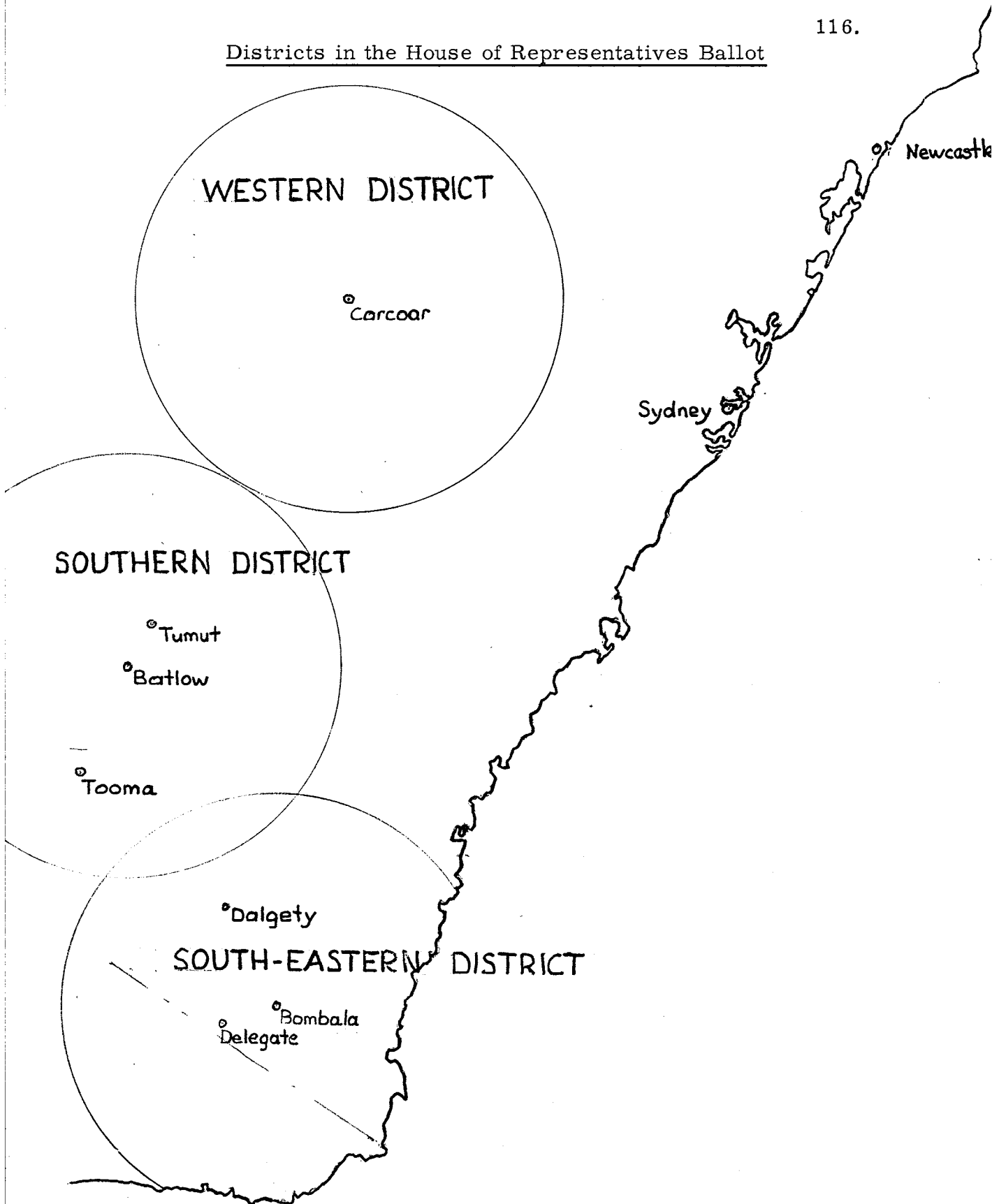
(71) C.P.D. Volume XX Pages 3628-32 and 3695-3709 and

C.P.D. Volume XXI Pages 3849-76.

(72) C.P.D. Volume XXI Pages 3903-19.

(73) C.P.D. Volume XX Pages 3478-9 and 3485-8.

(74) Ibid Pages 3510-25 and 3597-3614.

Districts in the House of Representatives Ballot

present and voted.⁽⁷⁵⁾ In the first ballot, the Western District received 25 votes, the South-Eastern District 22 votes and the Southern District 21 votes.⁽⁷⁶⁾ The vote revealed a similar trend to the previous October. Support for the Western District came from twenty-one New South Wales members, four Queenslanders, two Victorians and one Tasmanian. The latter three - Robinson (Wannon Vic.), Wilson (Corangamite Vic.) and McWilliams (Franklin Tas.) seemed to have supported the western sites first because of their affiliation with Reid, and secondly because the selection of Lyndhurst would involve less outlay of capital as it was near a railway line. The other two districts received support from all the States in rather equal proportions. Strangely, Prime Minister Watson and Batchelor who was the Minister in charge of the Bill, had forgotten to sign their ballot papers and their votes were not recorded, but it was reported that Watson supported the Southern and Batchelor the Western District.⁽⁷⁷⁾

(75) The absentees were Chanter (Riverina N.S.W.), Thomas (Barrier N.S.W.), Quick (Bendigo Vic.), Kingston (Adelaide S.A.) and Cameron (Wilmot Tas.). From statements by Chapman and Lyne, it would appear that Thomas favoured the Southern District while Quick and Kingston supported the South-Eastern District. Ibid Page 3936. Culpin (Brisbane Q.) paired with Thomas in the first ballot. Four years later, Lyne claimed that the Southern District would have been second in the first ballot if two members had not been delayed by trains. C.P.D. Volume XLVII Page 594.

(76) Full details of the voting appear in the diagram on Page 119.

(77) Argus 10 August 1904.

The Southern District was then eliminated and on the second ballot, the South-Eastern District gained 39 and the Western District 28 votes. All the supporters of the Southern District in the first ballot - except Lyne, Mahon (Coolgardie W.A.) and Watkins (Newcastle N.S.W.) - switched their support to the South-Eastern District.

Reid accepted the result by describing it as a "fair and honest decision of the majority". Although he objected to the Ministry's request for a large area, the People and Government of New South Wales would have to "look after their own interests". He would attempt to get the views which he represented expressed in the Bill, but as long as the procedure remained "bona-fide" - "I am not going to carry my protest further."⁽⁷⁸⁾ G. B. Edwards (South Sydney) said the House had come to an "honest and legitimate decision" which "we must respect".⁽⁷⁹⁾

Lyne, however, expressed his displeasure with the decision. He demanded a test of strength between Dalgety which was the site favoured by most of those who voted for the South-Eastern District, and Tooma which was now the most prominent of the Southern District sites. Despite his prior vote for the Southern District sites, Watson opposed this proposal. The Prime Minister now revealed that in 1901 his first preference was for Lake George. Due to lack of support for that site, he had then "consistently" advocated Tumut. But the selection of Tooma was another matter for the site must be within reasonable

(78) C.P.D. Volume XXI Page 3939.

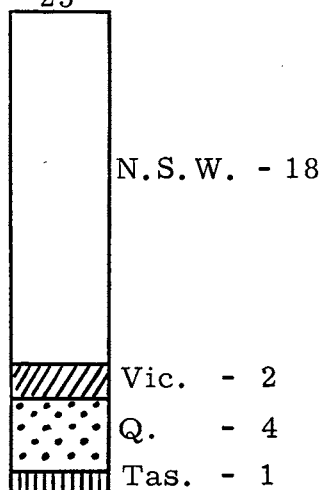
(79) Ibid Page 3940.

House of Representatives Ballot

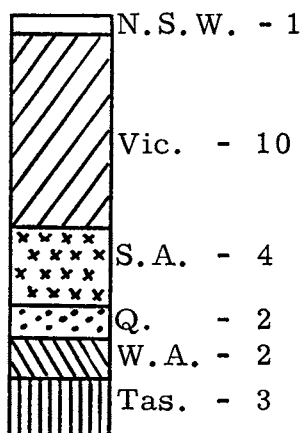
August 1904

First Ballot

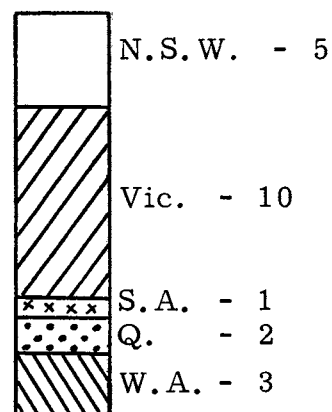
Western
District
25



South-Eastern
District
22

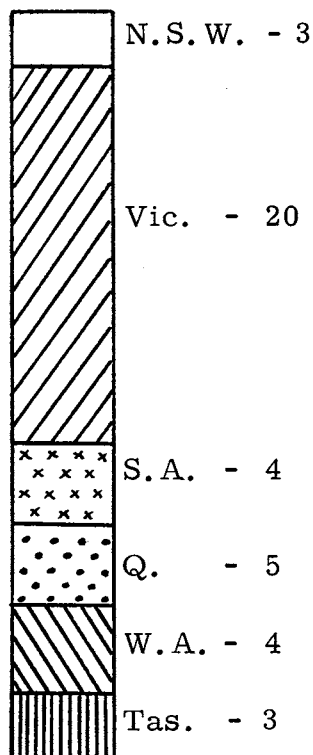


Southern
District
21

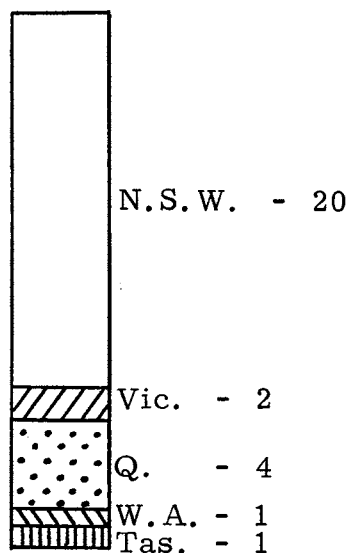


Second Ballot

South-Eastern
District
39



Western
District
28



"howling" distance of the centre of New South Wales. It was also the prime duty of the Government to reach a decision "as early as possible".⁽⁸⁰⁾ The selection of Tooma by the House could cause further difficulties not only with the Senate but with the New South Wales Government as well.

Most members agreed with Watson and an amendment to include Tooma in the Bill was defeated by 34 votes to 24. The majority of the New South Wales representatives voted against the amendment. Batchelor then proposed that the site should be within seventeen miles of Dalgety and the House accepted this amendment.⁽⁸¹⁾

As in the Senate, there was prolonged discussion over the question of area. Batchelor stated that the Bill was a "starting point" for negotiations with New South Wales. Although the Commonwealth could not take the land without that State's consent, the Government must enact the "will" of the Parliament in regard to the area of the federal territory. Despite the statements of certain Labour representatives, there was no intention to carry out "experiments" in land nationalisation.⁽⁸²⁾ For his part, Watson reassured the House that while this section of this Bill was regarded as "a

(80) Ibid Pages 3953-4. A. Millard, who was President of the Lake George Federal Capital League and was elected to the New South Wales Legislative Assembly for Queanbeyan in 1904, later claimed that Watson and his "followers" had been impressed by Lake George in 1901 and had given their word that they would support it. N.S.W.P.D. (second series) Volume XVII Page 2401.

(81) Ibid Page 3954.

(82) Ibid Pages 3964-8.

Government question", the Ministry did not propose to acquire an area larger than 900 square miles.⁽⁸³⁾ The Ministry also accepted Reid's suggestion that the word "should" rather than "shall" should be inserted in the Bill. Cook (Parramatta N.S.W.) continued to protest against the proposal for a federal territory of 900 square miles but Reid bowed with "great reluctance" to the desire of the majority of members to acquire a large area, for he believed that a "mutually conciliatory spirit" would be shown when negotiations were opened between the Commonwealth and New South Wales Governments.⁽⁸⁴⁾

A further amendment providing for the site to have "access to the sea" was accepted after Webster (Gwydir N.S.W.) had drawn attention to the fact that some of the West Australians had supported Dalgety because of the possible provision of a port.⁽⁸⁵⁾ This proposal complied with the earlier request by some Senators that a federal port should be established.

The amendments in the Bill differed only slightly from the earlier decisions of the Senate. As a result, after a short debate in which Senator Trenwith (Victoria), elected as an 'Independent' in 1903, forecast that the "removal" of the question would probably "do more than anything else" to create a national feeling in the Parliament, the Senate accepted all the House's amendments.⁽⁸⁶⁾

(83) Ibid Page 3968.

(84) Ibid Page 3983-5, 3986.

(85) Ibid Pages 3986-9.

(86) Ibid Pages 4018-28. The full text of the 1904 Seat of Government Bill appears in Appendix II.

The Role of an Individual

On 12 August, two days after the Seat of Government Bill finally passed the Senate, the Watson Government was defeated by two votes on a proposal to recommit McCay's amendment clause in the Arbitration Bill. After taking this as a vote of no-confidence, the Labour Ministry resigned and the Reid-McLean Coalition assumed office. Because of the close vote and due to his integral part in this study, it is necessary to examine the position of one member - Austin Chapman.

As whip of the Protectionist party, Chapman had earlier been involved in the negotiations between Deakin and Reid.⁽⁸⁷⁾ When the Deakin party had met to consider the coalition proposals, Chapman was one of those who urged the alliance.⁽⁸⁸⁾ He reaffirmed this support by his vote against the Watson Government on August 12. Ten months later, after his 'removal' from office, Reid claimed that but for the efforts of Deakin, Chapman "whose capacity for negotiation is so well known", and Ewing, he would not have been able to dislodge the Watson Ministry.⁽⁸⁹⁾ Chapman represented a constituency in which he drew heavily upon the support of Labour voters around Cooma, and the local press was rather disturbed by his attitude.⁽⁹⁰⁾ Yet,

(87) Diary entry 25 May 1904 Deakin Papers MS1540/Box 49.

Also S.M.H. 5 May 1904.

(88) D.T. 25 May and Argus 26 May 1904. An earlier report recorded Chapman's vote as "doubtful" Age 19 May 1904.

(89) C.P.D. Volume XXV Page 153.

(90) Cooma Express 25 August 1904.

Chapman continued to support the Reid-McLean Government throughout the remainder of 1904.

However, Chapman soon altered his view. By June 1905, he was one of those strongly urging Deakin to come out and declare himself as leader of the House again.⁽⁹¹⁾ Chapman was an extremely loyal follower of Deakin and it could be claimed that in August 1904 he was simply following Deakin's lead in voting against the Watson Government. Further, it could be argued that he still regarded Deakin as the most able Prime Minister and that he was now giving expression to this opinion by his appeal to his old chief to return to power. Despite this, there still does seem to be a certain amount of inconsistency in Chapman's actions.

This can perhaps be explained by the fact that Chapman apparently negotiated his own agreement with Reid in 1904. In return for Chapman's political support and astute ability as a whip, which was crucial in the confused and 'tight' political situation, Reid guaranteed to take practical measures to establish the capital at Dalgety. One report stated that Sydney Smith, the whip of Reid's party, had given up the fight to obtain Lyndhurst in order to secure Chapman's vote.⁽⁹²⁾

(91) Austin Chapman to Alfred Deakin 12 and 22 June 1905 Deakin Papers MS1540/1032 and 1034. La Nauze says that Chapman was the "most insistent" of those prompting Deakin to take this stand. Alfred Deakin Volume II Page 389.

(92) Catholic Press 25 August 1904. See also Bemboka Advocate 28 November 1908. There were also reports that the Whipship for the Reid-McLean Government was offered to Chapman Age 17 and 20 August 1904.

Evidence of this 'understanding' is further seen in the fact that Reid had already accepted the Parliament's choice of Dalgety as a fair and just settlement. On the other hand, Chapman later told his constituents that Watson and his "lieutenants" Lyne and Isaacs had been bitter opponents of the Monaro district.⁽⁹³⁾ In Chapman's eyes, it could have been unwise to leave the fate of Dalgety in the hands of the Labour administration.

But, as will be shown, the attitude of Premier Carruthers would also prevent the Reid Ministry from initiating steps to locate the capital at Dalgety. In June 1905, at the same time as he wrote to Deakin, Chapman threatened that he wanted the capital site question settled quickly and any "faltering" could lead to his withdrawal of support from the Government.⁽⁹⁴⁾ As Reid had failed to fulfil his condition of the bargain, Chapman could see little reason to support an administration with which he had little political sympathy. Rather, it was only to be expected that he should advise Deakin to realign the old Protectionist forces. Chapman himself would be certain to be a prominent member in the new Deakin Ministry.

But this is to look ahead to future events. In August 1904, not only Chapman but most federal political opinion believed that the capital site had been determined. Certainly negotiations had to be opened with the New South Wales Government but it seemed that the main basis for discussion would be on the question of the area of the federal territory. Almost all sections of the Parliament accepted

(93) Cooma Mercury 9 June 1905.

(94) Bombala Herald 6 June 1905.

Dalgety as a reasonable selection. It was only developments in New South Wales politics that were to upset this calculation.

Carruthers Raises Objections

Even while the federal Parliament had been debating the merits of the various sites, new life had been generated into this issue by the approaching election in New South Wales. As he had earlier indicated to Watson, Premier Waddell promised if he was re-elected, to submit to the new Parliament a resolution favouring the selection of Lyndhurst.⁽⁹⁵⁾ As noted, Waddell was motivated by concern for his own personal electoral chances but he also had to consider the prospects of his party in general. Facing difficulties in other spheres, the Government did not want to be embarrassed by the charge that the former Premier See had ignored the rights of the State.

Indeed, the Carruthers Opposition did capitalise on the See Government's 'neglect' of this issue. The programme of the Reform and Liberal League nominated no preference for any particular site, but it did pledge the party to uphold the "statutory rights" of the State in relation to the capital, and not to "sacrifice" them as had been done in the past.⁽⁹⁶⁾ Thus, both of the major parties gave notice that they were not prepared to accept the choice of the federal Parliament

(95) S.M.H. 28 June and 1 August 1904.

(96) S.M.H. 4 July 1904.

See also Carruthers' statement S.M.H. 7 July 1904.

until the New South Wales Legislature had an opportunity to debate the question.

The Reform Party won an overwhelming victory. Immediately upon assuming office, Carruthers resolved that the capital site would be the "first work" which his Government would tackle. The Ministry would invite the Parliament to express an opinion on the Dalgety site. As regards the question of area, the Commonwealth should pay for any extra land that New South Wales was not prepared to give away.⁽⁹⁷⁾

Prime Minister Reid took an early opportunity to open negotiations with the new state Ministry. Reid argued that because of the nature of the country and the proximity of the Snowy Mountains, the cession of the Dalgety site would probably involve less sacrifice than the transfer of a smaller area in another part of the State.⁽⁹⁸⁾

Nevertheless, Carruthers soon began to form other objections to the Dalgety site, which were distinct from the question of extent of area. In the ensuing dispute with the Commonwealth over the next three years, Carruthers' complaints about Dalgety, quite apart from the constitutional issues which were involved, were to be based primarily on the factors of accessibility and distance from Sydney. Thus, it is necessary to examine the motives behind Carruthers' criticisms.

As noted, all the reports on the Monaro area had remarked

(97) S.M.H. 6 September 1904.

(98) P.M. to Premier N.S.W. 12 October 1904. C.A.O. C.R.S. A33 Volume 7 Page 526 quoted in D. Wright op.cit Page 122.

upon its inaccessibility. Carruthers now took his own steps to garner information on this aspect. After due inquiry, the New South Wales Railway Commissioner predicted that if Dalgety became the capital, the creation of an efficient fast railway service from Cooma via Dalgety to the Victorian border would cost £1½ million, of which the State could expect to pay £½ million. It would also be necessary to improve the Goulburn-Cooma railway to raise it to "express-line standard". Finally, even if the initial construction was only the Cooma-Dalgety line, "through communication" to Melbourne would soon be demanded and this would involve expense and the need to work and maintain a second line to the southern city, without a corresponding increase in traffic. ⁽⁹⁹⁾

The Bombala Federal Capital and Railway League had already sent a deputation to the See administration, seeking an extension of the railway service beyond Cooma. A similar delegation later waited upon Carruthers. The justification for this project was dissociated from the question of the capital but nevertheless, on both occasions, lack of finance was the Government's plea for delaying this development. ⁽¹⁰⁰⁾

(99) Proposed Federal Capital Site (Precis of Departmental Reports on) N.S.W.P.P. 1904 Second Session Volume I Page 182. It should be noted that Section 51 sub-sections (XXXIII) and (XXXIV) of the Constitution grant the federal Parliament powers to acquire and construct State railways "with the consent of a State". However, control over railways was still a jealously guarded State right in this period.

(100) Bombala Herald 23 December 1902.
Evening News 3 July 1905.

It seemed that a Dalgety capital would only involve New South Wales in an expensive project without any foreseeable advantage. In early 1899, Carruthers had expressed a preference for Bombala, which was sixty miles from Dalgety, as the "best" site for the capital.⁽¹⁰¹⁾ Political circumstances had changed his opinion. Having been elected as Premier on a platform of reform and retrenchment in public works, Carruthers could hardly contemplate building a costly and largely superficial railway.

However, the second factor regarding the remoteness of Dalgety from Sydney was just as significant. Even if the Victorian Government had been prepared to assist in the creation of a railway system through the Gippsland and Monaro districts, there would still have been objections raised from Sydney's commercial interests. In March 1906, Premier Bent of Victoria visited East Gippsland and Southern Monaro, ostensibly to consider the possibility of a railway from Bairnsdale to the Victorian - New South Wales border.⁽¹⁰²⁾ In October of that year, a delegation, including the federal representatives Chapman and McLean, urged Bent to institute this plan as a means of tapping the trade of the Southern Monaro district.⁽¹⁰³⁾ Eighteen months later, a Victorian Parliamentary Committee investigated the scheme.⁽¹⁰⁴⁾

(101) D.T. 11 February 1899.

(102) Herald 24 March 1906. Carruthers' comment about Bent's act was - "This is playing the rather low down on us".
N.S.W.A.O. Premier's Department, Federal Capital Site 1901-1909, 7/5911 Part I n.d.n.

(103) Herald 3 October 1906.

(104) S.M.H. 16 March 1908.

Argus 2 May 1908. The railway was never built.

The Sydney press reacted warily to the prospect of Victoria reaping the benefit not only of a Dalgety capital's trade but also the commerce of all of Southern New South Wales.⁽¹⁰⁵⁾ Similarly, the provision in the 1904 Commonwealth Bill for a federal port at Twofold Bay seemed to threaten the supposed right of Sydney to be the main commercial entrepot for the capital. Over half of Carruthers' supporters in the state Parliament represented city seats.⁽¹⁰⁶⁾ The Premier could not afford to ignore the interests of Sydney.

Whilst Carruthers was collating material on the Dalgety area, he also took occasion to reaffirm his own opinion respecting the constitutional issues which were involved. Both state Attorney-General Wade and the legal firm of Solomons and Stephen maintained that the federal Parliament could only select the actual site within an area which had been already granted to the Commonwealth by New South Wales.⁽¹⁰⁷⁾

Basing his case upon this interpretation of the Constitution,

(105) D.T. 19 March 1906 (3L).

S.M.H. 17 March 1908 (2L).

(106) Colin A. Hughes and B.D. Graham Australian Government and Politics 1890-1964 Pages 437-8.

(107) Opinions by C.G. Wade and by J.E. Solomons and C.B. Stephen 18 and 22 November 1904 N.S.W.P.P. 1904 Second Session Volume I Pages 178-9.

See also D. Wright op.cit Pages 121-2.

the Premier now felt free to act. On 9 December 1904, Carruthers introduced resolutions into the Legislative Assembly stating that New South Wales would only grant an area of between 100 and 200 square miles at either Tumut, Lyndhurst, Dalgety or Yass.⁽¹⁰⁸⁾ Although Dalgety was included in the offer, Carruthers pointed out that there were serious drawbacks to this site. Unlike Tumut, Lyndhurst or Yass, Dalgety was not connected to the New South Wales railway system. The Government would be prepared to reserve a catchment area for water supply outside the federal territory, if necessary, but it would not be justified in undertaking large "unproductive" railway construction, and this latter matter would have to be a subject of negotiation with the federal Government. The Premier also refused to consider the establishment of a federal port as this would mean a loss of trade for Sydney.⁽¹⁰⁹⁾

(108) N.S.W.P.D. (second series) Volume XVII Pages 2253-4.

(109) Ibid Pages 2265-6, 2381-3 and 2269.

Wright points out that Carruthers falsely claimed that New South Wales would lose custom duties on goods which passed through the federal port, but went to areas of the State.

Under the Book-keeping system, duties were credited to the State in which the goods were consumed op.cit Page 123 f.n. Wood (Bega) said that as Eden was cut off from most of southern New South Wales by an "impassable" barrier of mountains, the proposed federal port at Twofold Bay would receive the trade of only a narrow strip of tableland.

N.S.W.P.D. Ibid Page 2428.

In the Legislative Council, J. Hughes made the Government's position clearer by declaring that it was mainly on the question of the cost of railway access that the Parliament would have to decide the sites which it was prepared to offer. ⁽¹¹⁰⁾

Many members were only too eager to seize upon the Ministry's suggestion. Some representatives had eligible sites in their own districts, whilst many city members urged that Lyndhurst should be the only site offered to the Commonwealth. ⁽¹¹¹⁾ The House passed the resolutions with the omission of the Dalgety offer. The Council accepted the resolutions in the same form. ⁽¹¹²⁾

The New South Wales Parliament's rejection of virtually all the provisions of the 1904 Seat of Government Bill brought swift reaction from the federal representatives. Austin Chapman immediately called on Reid to "stand up for the rights of this Parliament". ⁽¹¹³⁾ In response, Reid urged restraint but warned the New South Wales Government that its attitude could lead to delay in establishing the capital. He promised the House that the Ministry would uphold "loyally" the decision of the Parliament and any attempt to rescind the choice of Dalgety would meet his "strongest opposition". ⁽¹¹⁴⁾

(110) Ibid Page 2358.

(111) Ibid. See especially the speeches of Ball (Corowa), Pages 2412-3, Nielson (Yass) Pages 2413-9, McLaurin (Albury) Pages 2434-7 and Storey (Randwick) Pages 2402-6 and Norton (Surry Hills) Pages 2441-5.

(112) Ibid Pages 2456-69, 2498-2502.

(113) C.P.D. Volume XXIV Page 8556.

(114) Ibid Page 8560-1.

Carruthers had placed Reid in an awkward situation. Reid could be regarded as the chief spokesman for New South Wales' interests in the federal Parliament, yet he was also the Prime Minister and leader of a coalition Government whose components included the Victorians Turner and McLean, the latter of whom represented the constituency of Gippsland which bordered on the Dalgety site. It should also be remembered that Reid's bargain with Chapman had committed him informally to the creation of a Dalgety capital. Still, the Prime Minister tried to explain to his Sydney audience that he had always been in favour of Lyndhurst but had accepted Dalgety as he did not believe that New South Wales could gain a more "satisfactory" site. ⁽¹¹⁵⁾

Although Reid had corresponded officially with Carruthers on this subject and had even conferred with the state Cabinet, ⁽¹¹⁶⁾ he did not seem to have been fully aware of the Premier's intentions. When Carruthers had introduced his resolutions into the New South Wales Parliament, Reid had stated that as Dalgety was included in the offer of sites, he could see no "practical difficulty" for some "satisfactory" decision would be reached on the question of area. ⁽¹¹⁷⁾ But as shown, Carruthers did have serious objections to Dalgety and had virtually urged the House to refuse to offer the site.

Probably any lack of understanding between the Prime Minister and Premier can be explained by their past relations which had never

(115) S.M.H. 17 December 1904.

(116) S.M.H. 11 October 1904.

(117) S.M.H. 12 December 1904.

been good. In 1901, Reid, who feared a possible rival for the leadership of the federal Free Trade party, had approached Carruthers and requested him to remain in state politics. In 1902, he had promoted the selection of Lee over Carruthers in the contest for the leadership of the state Parliamentary Liberal Party.⁽¹¹⁸⁾ After such treatment, Carruthers was unlikely to feel any obligation towards Reid, especially when he had an opportunity to strengthen his own claim as champion of New South Wales' rights.

The change of administration in New South Wales had demonstrated the difficulties which could arise over the capital site should the Commonwealth and New South Wales Governments fail to reach a common understanding. The problem now became to find a way out of the impasse which had developed. This was to take nearly four years.

Futile Negotiations

Parliamentary debate was interrupted by the proroguing of both the federal and state legislatures, but attempts were made to resolve the deadlock during the recesses. Carruthers tried to discuss the matter with Reid at the Premiers' Conference in Hobart in February 1905. The Prime Minister, however, was more interested in a fishing trip to north-eastern Tasmania.⁽¹¹⁹⁾

(118) I. Campbell The Fiscal Campaigns 1901-1903 Pages 50-4.

See also Alfred Deakin The Federal Story Page 66.

(119) S.M.H. 15 February 1905.

In March, Reid and Dugald Thomson, the Minister of Home Affairs, conferred with Carruthers but the outcome was fruitless.⁽¹²⁰⁾ In further correspondence, Thomson pointed out that Oliver had inspected Dalgety and included the site in his extended Southern Monaro area. Forrest had also urged Dalgety's superiority over other sites.⁽¹²¹⁾ In reply, Carruthers contended that the Dalgety site had never been offered by the state Parliament and it also did not appear to be the "reasoned" choice of the federal Parliament for it had failed to receive a single vote in the 1903 ballot, and federal members did not have "sufficient" evidence when they made their decision in 1904. The Premier repeated that the principal objections to the 1904 Seat of Government Bill were the inaccessibility of the Dalgety site, the proposed area of 900 square miles and the provision for a federal port. He also added that the choice of an area "so near the Victorian border" was placing an undue strain on the 100 mile "embargo" imposed upon Sydney by the Constitution.⁽¹²²⁾

For his part, Thomson reminded Carruthers that Dalgety had been included in the Bombala offer of 1901 and the Parliament had gone to "much trouble and expense" in appointing "expert" Commissioners and arranging visits to the sites to gather information. On the other

(120) S.M.H. 8 and 9 March 1905.

(121) Memorandum by Minister of Home Affairs 17 March 1905
N.S.W.P.P. 1905 Volume I Page 246.

For this and ensuing correspondence, see also Wright
op.cit Pages 125-6.

(122) Premier N.S.W. to Minister of Home Affairs 11 April 1905.
Ibid Pages 242-6.

hand, while the determination of Dalgety was the "mandatory" provision of the Bill, the federal Government would be prepared to open negotiations on the questions of area and access to the sea.⁽¹²³⁾

However like Reid, Thomson tried to protect the interests of his colleagues and himself by informing the press that although he would have preferred a site other than Dalgety, the choice had been made by a majority of the two federal Houses and, as such, the federal Government was bound to follow that decision.⁽¹²⁴⁾

The situation was such that no solution could be reached on the present position of both Governments. After a further conference, Reid promised to consider Carruthers' request that the federal Government should submit a definite proposition which could be laid before the state Parliament.⁽¹²⁵⁾ Before Reid could take such action, his Government had been removed from office.

Carruthers soon took steps to open negotiations with the new Deakin administration. He inquired as to Deakin's attitude and whether he would be prepared to submit the points of dispute to the High Court in relation to:- the right of the federal Parliament to determine the site before the Commonwealth had been granted or had acquired the federal territory; whether the Commonwealth could acquire territory without the consent of New South Wales; the right

(123) Memorandum by Minister of Home Affairs n.d.

Ibid Page 241-2.

Thomson had originally replied through the Press.

S.M.H. 14 April 1905.

(124) D.T. 17 April 1905.

(125) S.M.H. 6 June 1905.

of the Commonwealth to acquire an area of 900 square miles; the interpretation of the one hundred mile limit clause; the right of the Commonwealth to demand "access" to the sea; whether the temporary seat of Government could be outside New South Wales. (126)

Carruthers' inquiries opened a lengthy and rather acrimonious correspondence. Carruthers had to expect little sympathy from a Ministry which contained not only a significant Victorian section, but also the inimitable Austin Chapman who was anxious to protect his own constituent interest by maintaining Dalgety as the capital.

Deakin followed the policy of the previous Reid Government and argued that the federal Parliament had the right to determine the site, and thus the 1904 Act was mandatory. Deakin also agreed with Thomson that as the Parliament had only expressed a "clear opinion" on the matters of area and access to the sea, his Government would seriously consider modifications of these points. In reply to Carruthers' charge regarding the temporary seat of Government, Deakin pointed out that it was necessary to locate the central staffs of the Departments near the Parliament and, anyhow, the Governor-General did reside in Sydney during the Parliamentary recesses. (127)

Although Deakin was prepared to submit the dispute to the High Court, he disagreed with Carruthers on the method of procedure.

(126) Premier N.S.W. to P.M. 10 July and 1 August 1905. N.S.W.P.P. Session 1905 Volume I Pages 241 and 247-8.

For this and the ensuing correspondence from August-November 1905 see also Wright op.cit Pages 127-133.

(127) P.M. to Premier, N.S.W. 9 August 1905 (2 letters)
Ibid Pages 248-9.

The Premier suggested that the Commonwealth assert its claim to Dalgety by driving in a survey peg. Deakin argued that the federal Parliament should first enact further legislation but Carruthers objected that this would give greater validity to the Commonwealth's present position. ⁽¹²⁸⁾

Finally, the two Attorney-Generals Isaacs and Wade met in Melbourne. Both agreed that the question could not be resolved by merely driving in a survey peg. On the other hand, while Wade argued that the 1904 Act was only a "notification of opinion", Isaacs maintained that it was at least a "quasi-determination" of the site and he suggested that the Commonwealth further enact legislation to define the limits of the proposed federal territory, including a clause protecting the rights of New South Wales. ⁽¹²⁹⁾

Carruthers apparently assumed that Isaacs' views meant that the Commonwealth no longer regarded the 1904 Act as mandatory. Thus he urged that the federal Parliament now consider the resolutions of the state Parliament of December 1904. ⁽¹³⁰⁾ He had also advised

(128) Premier N.S.W. to P.M. 21 August and 14 and 26 September 1905. P.M. to Premier N.S.W. 8, 20 and 27 September 1905 Ibid Pages 251 and 259-62.

(129) Federal capital site: Minute by Attorney-General for New South Wales 18 October 1905 Ibid Pages 255-6; Attorney-General for Commonwealth to Attorney-General for N.S.W. 20 October 1905. C.P.P. 1905 Volume II Pages 460-1.

(130) Minute by Premier of N.S.W. 23 October 1905. N.S.W.P.P. 1905 Volume I Pages 264-5; Premier N.S.W. to P.M. 1 November 1905 C.P.P. 1905 Volume II Pages 463-4.

that he had cancelled the reservation of Crown lands in the Dalgety area. On request from Deakin, Carruthers revoked this last act but insisted that he would never grant Dalgety.⁽¹³¹⁾

Deakin rejected Carruthers' suggestions and stated that he intended to ask the Parliament to "definitely determine the precise territory".⁽¹³²⁾ Carruthers warned that such a course would "intensify" the difficulties of negotiation and force the state Government to ask the Parliament and people of New South Wales to consider action to maintain "our unquestionable rights".⁽¹³³⁾ This provoked an angry reaction from Deakin who reaffirmed Dalgety as the legitimate choice of the Parliament and claimed that Carruthers was trying to dictate his own terms. However, Deakin did also point out that when the new legislation was introduced, the New South Wales representatives would have an opportunity to reverse the 1904 decision.⁽¹³⁴⁾ The months of correspondence between the two Governments had achieved nothing. Interest now centred again on the federal political scene where new developments were beginning to take place.

(131) Premier N.S.W. to P.M. 17 October 1905 Ibid Page 460.
 P.M. to Premier N.S.W. 25 October 1905 Ibid Page 463;
 Premier N.S.W. to P.M. 27 October 1905 Ibid

(132) P.M. to Premier N.S.W. 3 November 1905 Ibid Page 465.

(133) Premier N.S.W. to P.M. 8 November 1905 Ibid Pages 467-8.

(134) P.M. to Premier N.S.W. 15 November 1905 Ibid Pages 469-70. Wright notes that Deakin instructed Hunt, regarding this reply to Carruthers, with the words - "Tell him to go to hell - three pages" op.cit Page 133. See also La Nauze Alfred Deakin Volume I Page 273 and f.n.

The Failure of a Compromise

The lengthy debate between Deakin and Carruthers had not been ignored in the federal Parliament. Reid reaffirmed that he was prepared "just as staunchly as ever" to support Dalgety as "absolutely the best site" that New South Wales could expect. If the question were re-opened any alteration would not benefit his State.⁽¹³⁵⁾ On the other hand, his deputy Cook pleaded for an understanding of Carruthers' position and urged that some form of friendly agreement be reached.⁽¹³⁶⁾ Other New South Wales representatives were also beginning to support Carruthers. Conroy (Werriwa) who had earlier regarded Dalgety as a fair choice, now said that most members did not want to decide the issue, and Dalgety had only been selected because its inaccessibility would delay a settlement.⁽¹³⁷⁾ Despite Conroy's claims, some federal representatives were making positive moves to try to attain some form of solution to the difficulties which had arisen.

J.C. Watson and G.W. Fuller (Illawarra) were the chief sponsors of a plan to resolve the deadlock by promoting Lake George as a compromise site. This proposal provoked comment amongst federal members. Senator Higgs (Queensland) wrote to the Age protesting at the moves to change a site at that late stage of the session and claiming that Dalgety was selected after "prolonged

(135) C.P.D. Volume XXVII Page 2721.

(136) Ibid Volume XXV Pages 1138-40, Volume XXVIII Pages 4674-83, 4741-2.

(137) Ibid Volume XXVIII Page 4603.

debate" and a "fair fight". Eighteen months previously, Lake George had not been regarded as a serious contender for honours. Oliver had not considered the area and the Royal Commissioners had been unimpressed, especially on the question of water supply.[It should be realised that the Royal Commission examined Lake George just after the great drought of 1902 when the bed of the lake was completely dry.] Higgs concluded that to select Lake George as a "compromise, so-called", would be a "shameless abandonment of all our ideals concerning the Federal capital what and where it should be". (138)

Watson replied to his Labour colleague through the columns of the same newspaper. The Labour leader argued that the selection of Dalgety was itself a "compromise" as the site had never had the support of a "majority" of federal representatives. There was no reason why the matter should not be "reconsidered," especially if the "interests" of the Commonwealth would not "suffer" and the people of New South Wales would be "reconciled" by the "acceptance of a site reasonably acceptable to them". Lake George had a "good climate" and was not subjected to the winter winds which made Dalgety "disagreeable". The site's soil was good and its surroundings picturesque. The "only remaining question" was water supply but New South Wales engineers claimed that there would be no "difficulty" in establishing a "sufficient supply" at "moderate cost" not only to supply "domestic requirements," but "to keep the lake at any desired level". Finally, no railway construction was needed to Lake George, which meant "a great economy as compared to Dalgety". Watson ended his epistle by expressing a hope that the

Parliament would never have to meet in such "a bleak, barren, blizzard swept spot as Dalgety". (139)

The Higgs-Watson dialogue had raised many of the pertinent issues which were to influence discussion on the capital site over the next three years. Lake George was not a 'new' site but it had only received scant support previously and this in itself was an advantage. If a compromise was to be effected, then some of the Dalgety supporters would have to be persuaded to change their preference of site. A vote for Lake George provided a means for them to do this without unduly compromising their former position. As regards the factors of location and accessibility, Lake George was neither too near Sydney nor the Victorian border, and it was close to the railway line at Yass. The only possible drawback to sites in the Lake George and surrounding district was the question of a sufficient water supply. It must be remembered that Forrest and Scrivener had considered the Snowy River as Dalgety's greatest asset.

Despite Higg's opposition, many of the Labour party seemed willing to follow Watson's direction in this matter. Labour representatives had always been more divided on this issue than their fellow-members and as long as the Commonwealth could still obtain a sufficiently large area, many were at least prepared to vote for a change of site. The Labour Caucus discussed the matter and O'Malley who had been an ardent supporter of the Monaro area, later said that

(139) Age 19 August 1905.

Watson had convinced him to vote for a settlement.⁽¹⁴⁰⁾ Advice also came from another unexpected source. The former Treasurer Turner exhorted members to carry out the federal "bargain" at an early date, as the "full benefits" of Federation would be realised only when the issues of the capital and tariff were settled. Turner favoured the selection of Lake George or any "reasonable place" that promised "to put an end to the trouble".⁽¹⁴¹⁾ Thus, it seemed that when the federal Ministry introduced its proposed new legislation, an attempt would be made to nominate Lake George instead of Dalgety as the capital site.

But before this move could occur, Carruthers took his own steps. On 8 December, the Premier introduced new resolutions into the Legislative Assembly, expressing "profound dissatisfaction" over the Commonwealth's treatment of the State, especially in relation to the capital site, and calling for a referendum to resolve these questions.⁽¹⁴²⁾ Carruthers' speech was a series of bitter

(140) D.T. 9 December 1905.

C.P.D. Volume XXX Page 7402.

The Melbourne Press claimed that Watson was motivated by his intention to seek the seat of Werriwa, which was near Lake George, in the next federal election. Argus 16 December 1905. Chapman imputed similar motives. C.P.D. Volume XXX Page 7392. Certainly Watson's old seat of Bland was abolished in the redistribution, but Watson had stated as early as August 1904 that he favoured Lake George. In 1906 Watson stood for South Sydney.

(141) D.T. 11 December 1905.

(142) N.S.W.P.D. (Second series) Volume XXI Page 4806.

recriminations against the Commonwealth over the question of the capital which he associated with other grievances, mainly concerned with the tariff and centralisation of Commonwealth administration in Melbourne. The Premier covered much of the history of the dispute between the federal and state Governments but he also referred to the Premiers' Memorandum of 1899, the existence of which he had only just become aware. Carruthers claimed that the words - "reasonable distance" from Sydney - in that document was further proof that the selection of Dalgety was not in accord with the terms of the Constitution.⁽¹⁴³⁾ The resolutions were finally passed by forty-two votes to two, after the entire Labour party had walked out in protest at the "gag" being applied.⁽¹⁴⁴⁾

Carruthers' action caused a furore in federal political circles and ruined all immediate prospects of settlement. Watson said that Carruthers' speech had "intensified" rather than remedied bad feeling between the States.⁽¹⁴⁵⁾ Carruthers must have been aware of the possible effects of his act. Why had he been so provocative

(143) Ibid Page 4810.

Also see above Pages 4-5.

(144) Ibid Page 4853.

This may have been a tactical move for the state Labour Party were split on this matter. Holman was just as adamant a States-righter on this occasion as he was to prove later. He supported Carruthers, although he believed the protest had come at the "wrong" time.

D.T. 12 December 1905.

(145) D.T. 11 December 1905.

at such an inopportune time? It must be remembered that Carruthers had already told Deakin that he objected to the federal Ministry's intention to introduce new capital site legislation. Carruthers may have anticipated the federal Government's new proposals by making his own move first. On the other hand, the state Attorney-General Wade maintained that it was because of the failure of the federal Government to take positive measures that Carruthers had acted. Wade pointed out that the recesses of both the federal and state Parliaments were imminent and unless some "protest" had been made, the "prestige" of New South Wales may have been "seriously affected".⁽¹⁴⁶⁾ The charge was partly just for the federal Ministers had been rather amiss in leaving the introduction of any legislation until the end of the session.

Others perceived motives of political bias in Carruthers' act. Griffith (Sturt) said that Carruthers' motions were a political move designed to embarrass Deakin and help Reid.⁽¹⁴⁷⁾ Certainly Reid maintained that New South Wales had good cause for complaint in the attitude adopted by the Deakin Ministry. Both Reid and Cook tried to cover up their own inconsistencies on this matter by arguing, in line with their general campaign of 'anti-socialism', that it was the Deakinite

(146) D.T. 12 December 1905.

Wright also criticises the federal Government for introducing its new legislation at the end of the session "when there was no hope of its being passed" op.cit Pages 133-4. The claim is valid but Wright has not realised that strong moves were being made for a settlement and they only ended after Carruthers' action.

(147) N.S.W.P.D. (Second series) Volume XXI Page 4819.

and Labour representatives of New South Wales, rather than the Victorians, that were causing delay by supporting sites like Tooma which were unfavourable to New South Wales.⁽¹⁴⁸⁾ But it could not be said that Carruthers was motivated by consideration of Reid's position. As shown, twelve months earlier Carruthers had felt no scruple in embarrassing Reid.

Rather, it would seem that Carruthers' main concern was not to reach a settlement but to strengthen his own position in New South Wales. The state Parliament's overwhelming support of Carruthers' resolutions was a strong vote of confidence in his conduct of negotiations with the federal Government. It is also necessary to note that the Royal Commission of 1905 into the 'land scandals' had implicated Carruthers because of the involvement of his legal firm. Facing some embarrassment in other spheres, Carruthers was quite content to exploit a situation which would bring him undoubted political advantages.

Carruthers did nothing to improve the raucus which he had created. A week after the debate in the Legislative Assembly, the

(148) D.T. 9, 11 and 12 December 1905.

Bruce Smith showed his independent position in Reid's party by continuing to put the blame on the Victorians. D.T. 12 December 1905. Lyne contended that Reid was to blame first because he had betrayed New South Wales in 1899 and secondly because he had accepted Dalgety as a fair choice in 1904. D.T. 11 December 1905.

Premier reminded a meeting of the Liberal Association that their party's platform was "insistence on the statutory rights of New South Wales". He referred to criticism of himself as the "wild language" of "escaped lunatics".⁽¹⁴⁹⁾

This caused further ill feeling in the federal Parliament. Senator Pulsford (New South Wales) moved a special adjournment of the Senate to discuss Carruthers' speech in particular and in general, the federal Government's treatment of New South Wales over the capital site issue, but even he was not prepared to associate himself with Carruthers' attitude.⁽¹⁵⁰⁾ Senator Stewart (Queensland) said that Carruthers had come forward "like a bandit or highway robber".⁽¹⁵¹⁾

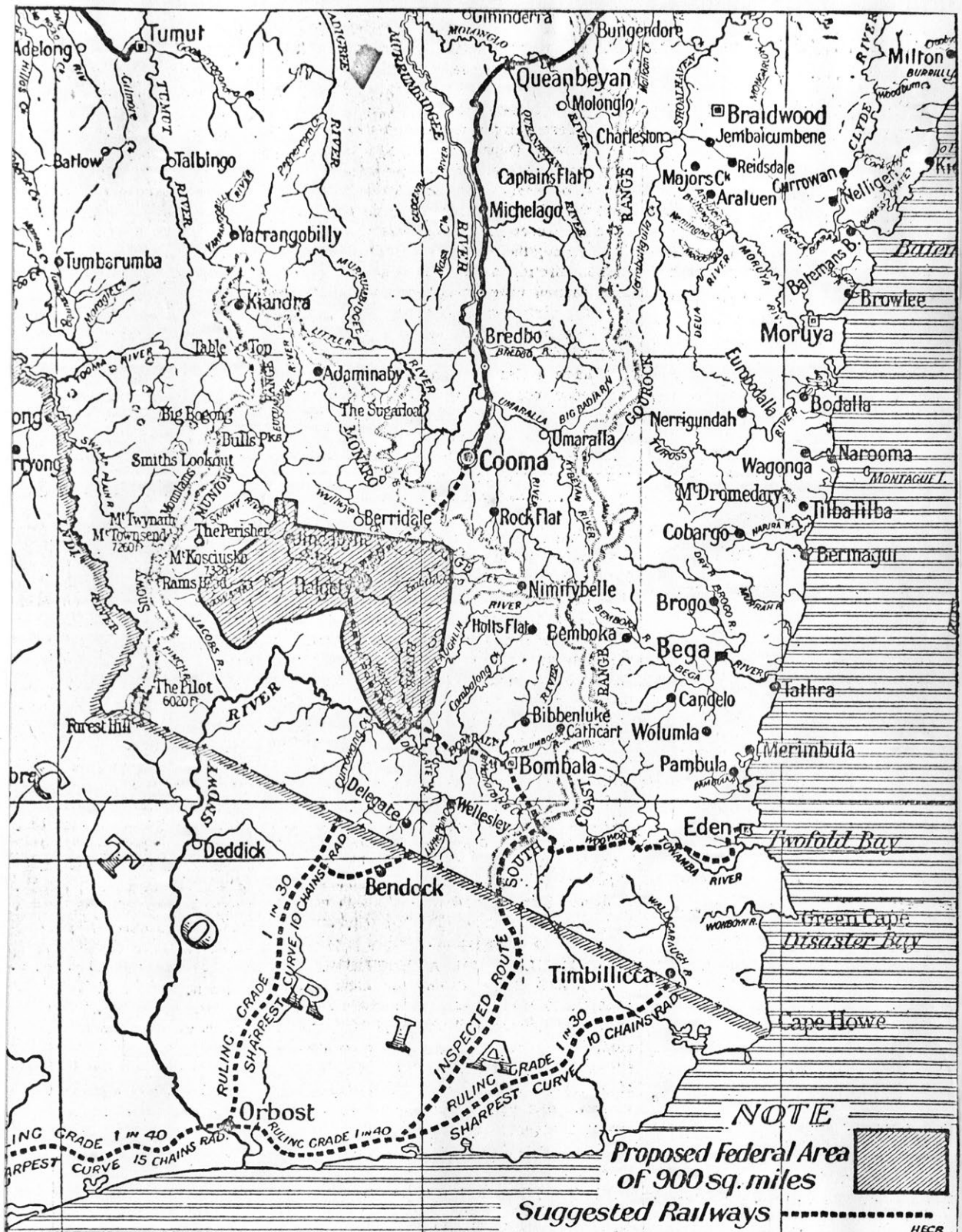
As a result, when Home Affairs Minister Groom introduced the new capital site legislation into the House on December 16, all interest in reaching a settlement had vanished. About half the members had already gone home.

(149) D.T. 15 December 1905.

The Sydney Morning Herald reported that Carruthers had used the term "queer people" rather than "escaped lunatics". But unlike the Daily Telegraph, the Herald thought that Carruthers' act had been futile and purposeless. It was probably trying to smooth over the wounds. S.M.H. 15 December 1905.

(150) C.P.D. Volume XXX Pages 6646-9 and 6661.

(151) Ibid Page 6661.



The Dalgety Federal Territory
 as proposed in the 1905 Bill

In spite of the poor attendance, one important point was raised in what was otherwise a rather futile debate. During the debate on the Seat of Government Bill in 1904, Dugald Thomson (North Sydney) had claimed that the phrase "reasonable distance" in the Premiers' Memorandum of 1899 implied that the site should be placed as close as possible to the 100 miles radius limit from Sydney.⁽¹⁵²⁾ At the time, other speakers had ignored this point. However, as noted, Carruthers had again raised this issue in his latest outburst in the New South Wales Parliament. Carruthers had apparently stirred Reid's memory for the latter now informed the House that the 100 miles limit provision in section one hundred and twenty-five of the Constitution had been a "compromise" between the Victorian delegation's demand for a limit of 200 miles and his own attempt to reduce the provision to 75 miles.⁽¹⁵³⁾ Turner who had been the other principal party in these negotiations, confirmed that while he could not remember any particular conversation with Reid, the Premiers had certainly intended that providing a suitable site could be found, the capital should be located as close as possible to the 100 miles limit from Sydney.⁽¹⁵⁴⁾

(152) See above Page 114. See also S.M.H. 22 November 1904 (3L).

(153) C.P.D. Volume XXX Page 7291.

Wright is obviously unaware of Reid's revelations op.cit
Page 136.

(154) D.T. 20 December 1905.

Deakin wrote that he had suggested to Turner that the site should be at least 100 miles from Sydney.

The Federal Story Page 102.

This was important new evidence. One member Webster (Gwydir N.S.W.) who had been one of the main sponsors of the Tooma site, said that he would now have to reconsider his position. (155) The New South Wales members of Reid's party were now to use the Premiers' Memorandum in conjunction with Reid's revelations as part of their argument against the Deakin Ministry's contention that the selection of Dalgety was a legitimate and fair choice. (156) But little further could be positively done at that stage and the Bill lapsed with the close of the session.

New Sites

A year of futile negotiations ending in bitter recriminations between the federal and state Parliaments had only served to complicate discussion of this subject and stir up provincial sentiment. A large meeting at Sydney Town Hall, chaired by the Lord Mayor and attended by M.L.A.'s, M.L.C.'s and local council representatives, passed resolutions supporting Carruthers' position and calling upon the federal representatives of New South Wales to "stand loyal". (157)

(155) C.P.D. Volume XXX Page 7388.

(156) Ibid Pages 7158-67, 7273-83 and 7301-10.

(157) S.M.H. 18 January 1906.

In a letter read to the meeting, the former Free-Trade leader McMillan urged the state Parliament to choose a site so that its views could be made known.

Deakin requested information on the state Parliaments' resolutions of the previous December. In the correspondence which followed, Carruthers reasserted his opposition to the Dalgety site. The Premier's hand had been strengthened by Reid's statement regarding the 100 miles limit clause. Carruthers claimed that the selection of Dalgety was not in accord with the agreement which had been reached by the Premiers in 1899.⁽¹⁵⁸⁾

In reply, Deakin argued that in 1901 the See Government had offered Dalgety as part of the Southern Monaro site. The federal Parliament had selected Dalgety only after "careful inspection and examination". As regards the 1899 Conference, the Parliament could not consider itself bound by "alleged understandings" which had only been revealed seven years later.⁽¹⁵⁹⁾

Carruthers admitted that See had submitted Eden-Bombala as a site but claimed that this had been done without the state Parliament's consent. In 1899, the electors of New South Wales had accepted the Constitution on the "belief" that the capital would be within the "vicinity" of the 100 miles limit. Anyhow, the main objection to Dalgety was not its "remoteness" but rather its "inaccessibility" which "would necessitate such a heavy outlay of public money before the proper communication could be established"

(158) P.M. to Governor-General 30 December 1905. Governor N.S.W. to Governor-General 28 March 1906 C.P.P. 1906 Volume II Pages 402-4.

(159) Governor-General to Governor N.S.W. 6 May 1906
Ibid Page 405.

that the state Parliament considered this an "insuperable bar" to its "ultimate selection". (160)

The correspondence ended on that note. It was now obvious that while the Carruthers administration remained in office, New South Wales would continue to refuse to grant Dalgety as the site. For its part, the Commonwealth Government was not prepared to take the initiative and bring the constitutional question before the High Court. The only solution to the dilemma was the selection of another site. Carruthers made it clear that he favoured Watson's plan of substituting Lake George as the site for he pointed out that the Yass area, offered by the New South Wales Parliament in December 1904, included Lake George. If the federal Parliament approved of that site, "the matter is satisfactorily ended". (161)

Despite his official attitude, Deakin himself realised that there were a number of drawbacks to the Dalgety area. As Morning Post correspondent, the Prime Minister admitted that "further reflection" had shown that Dalgety was "inconvenient, its winter

(160) Governor N.S.W. to Governor-General 1 June 1906 Ibid Pages 408-10. Carruthers told Watson that the location of the capital at Dalgety would mean a heavy expense for New South Wales. J.H. Carruthers to J.C. Watson 16 August 1906 Watson Papers A.N.L. MS451/1/132.

(161) D.T. 23 January 1906.
Carruthers reaffirmed this in answer to a query by R.A. Crouch (Corio Vic.) Herald 8 March 1906.

climate severe, its position not easily accessible and its connection with our railway system costly", but, on the other hand, Carruthers was trying to make "political capital" out of the issue. (162)

C.R. Scrivener, who had been requested to acquire further information on the Monaro area prior to the introduction of new legislation in 1905, told Groom, the present Minister for Home Affairs, that the one advantage which Dalgety possessed over other sites, was the magnificent water supply of the Snowy River. (163)

Carruthers instructed that further information be gathered on the Lake George area as a means of consolidating support for this district. The Government architect Vernon duly reported very favourably on a site known as Mahkoolma. Vernon pointed out that as regards distance from Sydney, the Mahkoolma site was in a "most literal way" a compromise between the views of Reid and Turner at the 1899 Premiers' Conference. (164)

Carruthers' next step was to invite federal members not

(162) Morning Post 13 February 1906.

(163) Federal Capital Site; Report by District Surveyor Scrivener on the Areas near Dalgety.

C.P.P. 1905 Volume II Page 474.

(164) Federal Capital Sites; Reports respecting Proposed Sites at Mahkoolma, Canberra and Other Sites in the Yass (Lake George) District.

C.P.P. 1906 Volume II Pages 389-99.

only to inspect the Lake George district but to also re-visit Dalgety.⁽¹⁶⁵⁾ Austin Chapman remarked that the latter invitation had been extended as a tactical measure to present Dalgety in its "least favourable aspects" during mid-winter.⁽¹⁶⁶⁾

Some federal representatives adamantly refused to contemplate the possibility of changing the location of the capital site. The President of the Senate Baker (South Australia) would not consider any site which was entirely "surrounded" by any one State.⁽¹⁶⁷⁾ Two trips were organised but less than half the Parliament went, including only two Victorians - Skene (Grampians) and Tudor (Yarra).⁽¹⁶⁸⁾ Of the Lake George sites, that which seemed to impress the tourists most was Canberra which had been viewed by a few on the earlier extended House tour of 1902.⁽¹⁶⁹⁾ Senator Symon (South Australia) who had voted for Dalgety in 1904, now expressed a preference for Canberra.⁽¹⁷⁰⁾

(165) Premier N.S.W. to P.M. 4 July 1906 N.S.W.A.O.

Premier's Department, Federal Capital Site 1901-1909,
7/5911 Part 3 n.d.n.

(166) Age 6 August 1906.

(167) R.W. Baker to Minister for Home Affairs 27 July 1906
C.A.O. C.R.S. A322 File No. 19(a) 06/5064.

(168) Details of the tours appear in D.T. 13-14 August 1906 and
Argus 17-20 August 1906.

(169) L.F. Fitzhardinge "W.M. Hughes in Search of a Federal
Capital" J.R.A.H.S. Volume 51 Part I March 1965 Page 91.

(170) Argus 21 August 1906.

J.C. Watson wrote to Carruthers that other Dalgety supporters had been "shaken" in their allegiance by the sight of Canberra. However, there was some "doubt" expressed regarding this site's water supply and Watson urged Carruthers to obtain an "urgent" report on this aspect.⁽¹⁷¹⁾ Carruthers accepted Watson's advice and agreed to co-operate with him and follow his "lead" in respect to the Canberra site.⁽¹⁷²⁾

As always, Watson's concern in this matter was to reach a settlement and end the interminable debate on this topic. In this regard, the Labour leader showed a much greater obligation towards the federal concept than many of his parliamentary colleagues. Ironically, Watson found himself being publicly praised for his "level headed" attitude by Carruthers,⁽¹⁷³⁾ with whom he had little political or personal sympathy, and yet also becoming the target of abuse from Austin Chapman,⁽¹⁷⁴⁾ with whom he at least had political ties.

Despite Watson's efforts, prospects for any further progress in this question at this stage seemed remote. At the opening of the

(171) J.C. Watson to J.H. Carruthers 15 August 1906.

N.S.W.A.O. Premier's Department, Federal Capital Site 1901-1909, 7/5911 Part 3 n.d.n.

(172) J.H. Carruthers to J.C. Watson 16 August 1906. Watson Papers MS451/1/132.

(173) D.T. 23 January 1906.

(174) Cooma Express 9 February 1906.

last session of the second Parliament, the federal Government had given notice of its intention to introduce a Bill similar to that of the previous December, the intention of which was to further define the limits of the federal territory at Dalgety.⁽¹⁷⁵⁾ However, the measure was included amongst numerous other matters of legislation and it would seem that the Government's main purpose was to reassure its supporters in New South Wales that the capital site issue was not being neglected.

On 14 September, Carruthers asked Deakin when further action would be taken as the members of the present Parliament were in "full possession" of all the "material facts" and it was "highly desirable" to give "immediate effect" to the constitutional provisions regarding the capital.⁽¹⁷⁶⁾ Deakin replied that the Government had intended to "arrive at a final determination" but the inspection of the new sites had delayed consideration of the matter.⁽¹⁷⁷⁾ This answer formally sealed the fate of the present capital site legislation.

There were other cogent reasons behind the Ministry's postponement of this question. First, once the question of the selection of the site had been thrown open again, local influences showed their hand. Lyne claimed that the sites of Albury and Tooma should be

(175) C.P.D. Volume XXXI Page 8.

(176) Premier N.S.W. to P.M. 14 September 1906.

C.P.P. 1906 Volume II Page 411.

(177) P.M. to Premier N.S.W. 18 September 1906 Ibid.

reconsidered before a final decision was made.⁽¹⁷⁸⁾ Austin Chapman was also using all his influence in the Cabinet to preserve Dalgety as the choice of the federal Parliament. Secondly, Carruthers' obstinacy on such issues as immigration and the appointment of a Commonwealth Statistician was continuing to create friction and personal relations between Deakin and Carruthers were never good.⁽¹⁷⁹⁾ Finally, the Government had to consider the impending election and the opinion of their Victorian backbench supporters. All these factors helped to lead to a deferment of further debate on this topic until the third Parliament.

Conclusion

Although significant developments had taken place during the second Parliament, the settlement of this issue was no further advanced at the end of 1906 than at the dissolution of the first Parliament in 1903. Many of the influences which had been evident from the inauguration of Federation, were just as prominent during this second phase of the Commonwealth's life. Some of the parochial differences had been sunk but the pressures of the local federal capital leagues were still very obvious. However, in 1904 the

(178) S.M.H. 27 August 1906.

(179) D. Wright op.cit Pages 65, 193-200, 235. Deakin often took occasion to inform his London audience of Carruthers' "irritableness" or his "weakness of character".
Morning Post 13 November 1905, 2 April and 21 August 1907.

Parliament did reach a decision which most federal political opinion was prepared to accept.

The difficulty had then arisen from another sphere. D. Wright has argued that Carruthers' main motivation was to act in the interests of Sydney and that his case against the Commonwealth was based on very tenuous constitutional grounds. Both these points are pertinent but Wright has failed to examine Carruthers' claim that the major objection to Dalgety was its inaccessibility.⁽¹⁸⁰⁾ It would also seem that the selection of Dalgety was not compatible with the 1899 agreement between the Premiers on the location of the site. Further, the Snowy River may have provided a plentiful source of water supply but, despite Forrest's opinion, the Dalgety climate was far from temperate, especially during the winter months.

Taking these factors into account, many federal members, even if they still remained committed to the plan for a large federal area and port, would have been prepared to consider the selection of another site. But Carruthers seemed more content to play the role of the States-right champion than to come to a settlement. His outburst in December 1905 was clearly provocative and destroyed any

(180) D. Wright op.cit Pages 135-9.

I visited Dalgety in August 1968. The scenery was not over impressive as there were a large number of granite outcrops in the district. The Snowy River at Dalgety is now only a trickle of its former self because of the dam system of the Snowy Mountains Authority.

hopes of a compromise. The final months of the Parliament brought more hopeful prospects but any possibility of a solution was postponed until the eighth year of Federation.

Appendix I
The Senate Ballot
June 1904

Amendment by Senator Pearce that the capital site should
be in the Southern Monaro area. Passed by 17 votes to 6.

Ayes

Baker R.C.	South Australia	McGregor G.	South Australia
de Largie H.	Western Australia	Mulcahy E.	Tasmania
Dobson H.	Tasmania	O'Keefe D.J.	Tasmania
Drake J.G.	Queensland	Smith M.S.C.	Western Australia
Findley E.	Victoria	Story W.H.	South Australia
Guthrie R.S.	South Australia	Trenwith W.A.	Victoria
Henderson G.	Western Australia	Turley H.	Queensland
Keating J.H.	Tasmania	Pearce G.F.	Western Australia
Macfarlane J.	Tasmania	Teller	

Noes

Dawson A.	Queensland	Walker J.T.	New South Wales
Gould A.J.	New South Wales	Teller	
Nield J.C.	New South Wales	Millen E.D.	New South Wales
Pulsford E.	New South Wales		

Pair

Best R.W.	Victoria	Higgs W.G.	Queensland
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Appendix II

No. 7 of 1904.

An Act to determine the Seat of Government of
the Commonwealth.

[Assented to 15th August, 1904.]

Preamble.

WHEREAS it is provided by the Constitution that the Seat of Government of the Commonwealth shall be determined by the Parliament :

Be it therefore enacted by the King's Most Excellent Majesty, the Senate, and the House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Australia, as follows :—

Short title.

1. This Act may be cited as the *Seat of Government Act 1904*.

Determination
of Seat of
Government.

2. It is hereby determined that the Seat of Government of the Commonwealth shall be within seventeen miles of Dalgety, in the State of New South Wales.

Area of Federal
territory.

3. The territory to be granted to or acquired by the Commonwealth, within which the Seat of Government shall be, should contain an area not less than nine hundred square miles, and have access to the sea.

Valuation
of land within
Federal
territory.

4. The amount of the compensation to be paid by the Commonwealth for any land to be acquired by the Commonwealth within the Seat of Government or the surrounding territory shall not exceed the value of the land on the first day of January One thousand nine hundred and four, but in other respects the provisions of the *Property for Public Purposes Acquisition Act 1901* shall apply to the acquisition of such land.

CHAPTER FOUR - THE THIRD PARLIAMENT

Introduction

The end of the second Parliament had seemed to give some promise of a settlement in this vexed problem yet it was certain the federal Government would not be the initiator of any such move. Relations between the Commonwealth and New South Wales Governments had been effectively prejudiced by the lengthy and acrimonious correspondence carried on between Deakin and Carruthers during 1905. The federal Ministry would have to adhere to its argument that Dalgety was a legitimate and constitutional choice of the federal Parliament or suffer the charge of having submitted to pressure from Carruthers. Although the Cabinet was prepared to give the Parliament a further opportunity to express an opinion on the site, Ministers generally remained united in support of Dalgety. The only notable exception was Lyne who had his own constituency obligations. Similarly, the backbench followers of the Government, now almost entirely composed of Victorians, were also determined to preserve Dalgety as the capital site.

Under the circumstances, division of opinion in the Parliament on this question was now centred along more formal party lines. Despite his earlier acceptance of Dalgety as the fairest and best choice that New South Wales could expect, Reid was able to take advantage of the situation and champion the claims of the Canberra site which was now the main rival to Dalgety.

Parochial considerations were not dead. Some Victorians approved of the selection of Dalgety and the subsequent dispute

between the federal and state Governments as the outcome seemed to leave the capital in Melbourne for an indefinite period. Sydney's representatives still hoped to secure the site as close to their city as possible. However, in general, there was a tempering of the inter-state rivalry and jealousy which had marred much discussion in the Parliament. This development was partly due to the changed federal political situation. The 1906 election reduced the Deakin followers in the Parliament by one-third, so ensuring that the Ministry would have to continue to rely on the support of the Labour party in order to remain in office. A fourth party now emerged, comprised of old Protectionists and a group of newly-elected Victorians, both of whom refused to sit behind Deakin while he was maintained in power by Labour votes.

This further splintering of the non-Labour forces concealed the real situation for the 1905 Labour Conference's decision to reject any form of political alliance and to press for its federal party to govern in its own right foreshadowed the ultimate fusion of all the non-Labour groups. Attempts to reach some form of understanding between non-Labour members was to be a significant feature of political developments during the third federal Parliament. Many members realised the necessity to reach agreement on such issues as the capital site in order to foster better relations on other planes.

The Labour party continued to be divided on this question. Watson still argued that the wisest course was the selection of another site as the presence of this dispute was both hampering the development of Federation and furthering the cause of such provincialists as Carruthers. Other Labour members refused to consider acceding to any of the New South Wales Government's requests, and Reid's sponsorship of Canberra seemed to add further reason to

continuing to support the choice of Dalgety. The party was generally united on the need to acquire a sufficiently large federal territory, for this had been a plank of the Labour platform since the inception of Federation, but the question of site provoked angry recriminations amongst federal Labour representatives.

Finally, one further development in New South Wales was to affect consideration of this topic in federal politics. Carruthers continued his assault on the Commonwealth and he revived his fervour for the state election in 1907. However, the Premier's retirement just after this election removed an obstacle in the way of settlement. C.G. Wade who succeeded Carruthers as Premier, was more prepared to compromise and his attitude influenced a number of members.

After an abortive attempt to take further positive steps in this matter in April 1908, the culmination of discussion finally came in October - November of that year, when the federal Parliament conducted a further ballot of sites. The result was that Dalgety was rejected and a compromise - the combined area of Yass-Canberra - was substituted as the federal territory. The determination on the present Australian Capital Territory only came after further investigation by expert opinion.

The 1906 Election

As in 1903, most electoral interest in this issue was centred in New South Wales and Victoria. Indeed, in the other States the most important topics were very much of parochial concern. In South Australia the state election and the proposals for electoral reform of the local parliament created more discussion than the entire federal campaign, while in Western Australia there was debate over the possible secession of the State.⁽¹⁾

The Ministry felt no obligation to formulate any further policy on the capital site. The programme of the Government, announced by Deakin at Ballarat on 17 October, made only a brief mention of the matter. The Prime Minister informed the audience that his Government had endeavoured to reach agreement with New South Wales and had pressed the matter "forward" even to the extent of conducting the parliamentary tours of late 1906.⁽²⁾ Few other Government candidates even mentioned the topic, although Senator Styles, who was the only Senate candidate endorsed by the Ministry, claimed that there was no need for a "bush" capital until the population increased. He favoured the capital remaining in Melbourne or Sydney "for the present".⁽³⁾

(1) See J.R.M. Murdoch "The Western Australian Party in the 1906 Federal Elections" A Note The Australian Journal of Politics and History Volume XIII No. 2 August 1967 Pages 247-50.

(2) Age 18 October 1906.

(3) Age 1 December 1906.

The Labour party included this topic in its Election Manifesto, in which it was noted that "little progress" had been made in the selection of the site and it was desirable for "many reasons" to determine the capital as "early as possible".⁽⁴⁾ This expressed the attitude of many Labour members, especially Watson, who regarded the existence of this dispute as prejudicing Federation and intruding unwanted issues into the election campaign. The association of the late Watson administration with the 1904 Seat of Government Bill could have proved embarrassing for Labour candidates in New South Wales. Thus, even provincialists like Hughes who had championed his State's rights in this problem during the 1903 election, now remained silent.

Reid took the opportunity in his policy speech to blame the "bungling" of the Deakin Government over the capital site issue on the "duel" between Chapman and Lyne and the "desire of the Victorian members of the cabinet to go very slow".⁽⁵⁾ Reid's deputy Joseph Cook extended the charges to include the Labour party. Cook claimed that rather than castigate the other States, New South Wales ought to pluck the "mote" from its own eyes. The federal representatives from New South Wales had been "divided" in opinion. Also, if Watson had given proper "heed" to the matter, the capital site would have

(4) Produced in S.M.H. 5 October 1906. Sawyer writes that "The Election Campaign of 1906 found only the Labour Party with a strong and clearly defined organisation and policy" Federal Politics and Law 1901-1929 (Melbourne University Press 1956) Page 60.

(5) S.M.H. 24 October 1906.

been already decided and as near Sydney as the 100 mile limit would permit. The blame for placing the capital near the Victorian border must be "laid at the door" of some of the Labour and Ministerial representatives from New South Wales.⁽⁶⁾

A number of members of Reid's party in New South Wales employed this issue as a tactic in their general campaign against the Labour party. W.E. Johnson (Lang) spoke of the "intrigue" between Labour members and Lyne to place the capital as "far from Sydney and as close to Victoria as possible".⁽⁷⁾ Hawthorne, the anti-socialist candidate for Newcastle, claimed that his opponent, the Labour incumbent Watkins, had conspired with Lyne to try and ensure the selection of Tooma.⁽⁸⁾

Despite their earlier differences on this subject, Carruthers and Reid seemed to have been reconciled. Carruthers and Reid appeared on the platform together at the end of the campaign to support the candidacy of W.E. Johnson for the Sydney electorate of Lang. The Premier used the occasion to point out that New South Wales had been "deceived" over the capital mainly by Governments in which Deakin had been "a paramount and prevailing influence".⁽⁹⁾ In a public letter to the electors Carruthers called for the return of Reid with increased supporters as he was the "most powerful friend

(6) S.M.H. 24 October 1906.

(7) D.T. 15 November 1906.

(8) S.M.H. 17 November 1906.

(9) D.T. 4 December 1906.

that the State has in the Federal Parliament".⁽¹⁰⁾

The subject of the capital continued to spur interest in those electorates in or near which prospective sites were located. Austin Chapman proudly displayed his triumph in securing the selection of Dalgety. The new electoral boundaries had placed the site of Canberra in Eden-Monaro but Chapman reassured his constituents that the choice of Dalgety as the capital could only be changed "over his political corpse".⁽¹¹⁾ In an obvious reference to the deal which he had made in August 1904, Chapman said that Reid had accepted Dalgety and had then changed his mind, so delaying the final settlement of the capital site.⁽¹²⁾ Just over the border in Victoria, G.H. Wise, the Government candidate for Gippsland which adjoined the proposed Dalgety federal area, promised to carry out the constitutional provisions regarding the capital and to oppose any attempt to alter the site.⁽¹³⁾

(10) D.T. 11 December 1906. This partly refutes Rydon and Spann's statement that although Carruthers said that he would help Reid in the anti-socialist campaign, "he seems to have taken no active part". New South Wales Politics 1901-1910; Sydney Studies in Politics: 2 Melbourne (F.W. Cheshire) 1962 Page 61.

(11) Bombala Herald 13 November 1906.

(12) Monaro Mercury 2 November 1906.

See also Bombala Herald 13 November and Bega Standard 23 November 1906.

(13) Age 20 October 1906.

If Chapman and Wise made their own political gains out of this matter, other candidates faced embarrassment. Lyne was rather anxious to avoid discussion of this topic. The Minister claimed that he was placed in the invidious position of having the three sites of Albury, Tooma and Tumut in his electorate.⁽¹⁴⁾ In the Macquarie electorate, Sydney Smith who was facing general criticism for neglecting his constituents' interests, complained of the "treachery" of other New South Wales representatives in leaving him "alone" to fight for Lyndhurst.⁽¹⁵⁾ Lyne was returned but Smith was defeated in a close contest by the Labour candidate Carr.

The capital site issue seemed to be of only minor significance in an election campaign which was generally marked by Reid's crusade of anti-socialism.⁽¹⁶⁾ It was the Labour party, whose candidates generally avoided this question, which made the electoral gains in New South Wales where this topic had the greatest relevance.⁽¹⁷⁾ The most significant overall result of the election was the emergence of a definite third non-Labour group in the House. Even before the end of the second Parliament, the Protectionists had begun to split over the question of relations with the Labour party. The opening of the third Parliament saw a solid group sitting on the corner benches

(14) Tumut and Adelong Times 11 November 1906.

(15) Bathurst Daily Argus 3 November 1906.

(16) For a discussion of the 1906 federal election, see R. B. Scotton The Anti-Socialist Campaigns 1905-1906 Government III Honours Thesis 1959 University of Sydney.

(17) Colin A. Hughes and B. D. Graham Australian Government and Politics 1890-1964 Pages 292 and 297.

opposed to Deakin's affiliation with the Labour party but also refusing to be dragged under Reid's banner.⁽¹⁸⁾ Although Deakin remained in power, his party's strength had been reduced to only sixteen Representatives and two Senators. Deakin had to rely on the votes of Labour members to remain in office but Labour's determination to govern on its own right heralded the ultimate fusion of all the non-Labour forces. General understanding between non-Labour members plus the continued efforts of J.C. Watson were to help bring about a solution to the capital site problem.

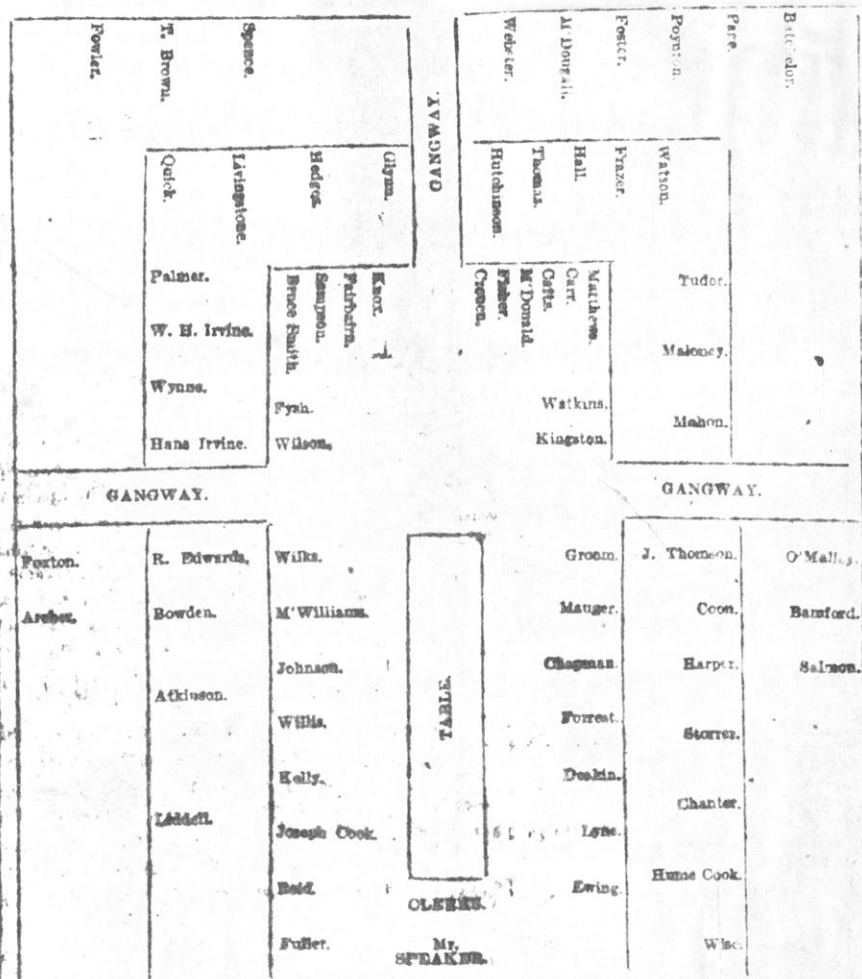
Consideration of Canberra

The new Parliament met on 20 February 1907 and convened for two days. It was then prorogued for five months whilst Deakin attended the Imperial Conference in London. In the intervening period further consideration was given to the capital site. Sir John Forrest who was acting Prime Minister, conferred with Carruthers in April. This meeting revealed or produced little new but it did clarify the attitude of Carruthers. Relations between Deakin and Carruthers had become strained, so that there seemed little chance of them coming to a common understanding. While Forrest was committed to the Dalgety site in lieu of his investigations in 1904, he was also a West Australian who seemed to New South Wales

(18) For the purpose of this study, this group will be referred to as the Corner. Reid was in contact with this group as soon as the new Parliament met. Age 21 February 1907.

Ministerial..	17
Labor..	26
Opposition	19
Corner Protectionists..	13
Mr. Speaker	1
	75

On the assembling of the House members sat thus:—



The Seating of the House at the Opening of the
Third Parliament
Age 21 February 1907.

interests to be more impartial than some of his fellow Ministers. After the conference, Carruthers said that Forrest had discussed the question with him "more sympathetically" than any federal Minister had ever done. ⁽¹⁹⁾

There is no official record of the conference but the pertinent points were revealed in the ensuing correspondence. Forrest informed Carruthers that in his opinion, if Dalgety was rejected as the capital, then the federal Parliament would substitute the site of Tooma on the Upper Murray, an area even more unacceptable to New South Wales than Dalgety. As regards Canberra, Forrest believed that its water supply in summer was "most meagre". In reply, Carruthers said that he was prepared to "consider" Dalgety only if the federal Government paid the cost of railway construction from Cooma to Dalgety, improved the railway from Goulburn to Cooma, and withdrew the "extravagant demand" for a large area and railway access to the coast. However, Carruthers still maintained that the remoteness of Dalgety from Sydney constituted a "grave objection". The Premier requested Forrest to visit Canberra as he was "told" that it was a "good" site and it would be an "acceptable settlement" of the "present difficulty". ⁽²⁰⁾

(19) D.T. 8 April 1907. For his part, Forrest told Deakin that Carruthers had been "very friendly" and that the capital site was the "bottom of all the friction". Sir John Forrest to Alfred Deakin 2 April 1907 Deakin Papers MS1540/1777.

(20) Sir John Forrest to J.H. Carruthers 6 April 1907 and J.H. Carruthers to Sir John Forrest 17 April 1907 N.S.W.A.O. Premier's Department, Federal Capital Site 1901-1909, 7/5911 Part 3 n.f.n.

Forrest duly inspected the Canberra site and compiled a report. The Minister considered that Canberra was inferior to Dalgety in most respects and especially deficient in an adequate water supply. He believed that the only objection to the Dalgety site was that it was too cold in winter.⁽²¹⁾ Forrest's conclusions clashed sharply with those of L.A.B. Wade, the Chief Engineer of New South Wales, who had also made a survey of the Canberra site. Wade found Canberra a very suitable site in respect to water supply, scenery and railway communication.⁽²²⁾ This conflict of opinion provided a basis of further discussion for when the Parliament reconvened.

When the federal Parliament met again in July, the Government announced that a Seat of Government Bill would be presented that session.⁽²³⁾ On 10 July, J.C. Watson moved a special adjourn-

(21) Federal Capital; Proposed Sites; Minute by the Right Hon. Sir John Forrest P.C. C.P.P. 1907-8 Volume II Pages 199-202.

(22) Federal Capital; Proposed Site at Canberra, Report by L.A.B. Wade, Chief Engineer, New South Wales Ibid Pages 205-6. At a meeting held at Queanbeyan in July 1907, the old Queanbeyan resident and newspaper editor John Gale condemned Forrest's report and said that Canberra stood "unrivalled" in "every essential." Dalgety or Canberra Which? Paper read at public meeting in Queanbeyan on 24 July 1907.

(23) C.P.D. Volume XXXVI (second part) Page 7.

ment of the House to discuss a matter of urgent public importance - namely - "the early establishment of the Federal Capital in a suitable position in New South Wales". Watson was determined to press the claims of Canberra as a means of resolving the deadlock between the Commonwealth and New South Wales Governments. The Labour leader described Forrest's report on Canberra as disclosing an "absolutely prejudiced view". Forrest replied that he had not been motivated by political concerns but had simply given an "individual" opinion.⁽²⁴⁾

This debate also saw the first emergence of a rather 'unholy' alliance which was to be a significant feature of discussion on this subject during the ensuing eighteen months. Apparently Watson had moved his motion for debate on this topic without the knowledge of the Government but with the concurrence of Reid.⁽²⁵⁾ As in December 1905, the latter based his case on the Premiers' Memorandum of 1899 and he urged the House to select a site in compliance with that covenant.⁽²⁶⁾

A week later, the Ministry partly answered its critics by introducing a Seat of Government Bill which was designed to situate the capital at a definite site in the Dalgety neighbourhood and to provide for the grant to and acceptance by the Commonwealth of the necessary territory.⁽²⁷⁾ However, for the time being, the Parliament's attention

(24) Ibid Pages 298-306.

(25) Ibid Page 307 and D.T. 11 July 1907.

(26) Ibid Pages 306-8.

(27) Ibid . Page 647.

was turned to the Tariff, and interest in the capital site again centred in the sphere of New South Wales politics.

The 1907 New South Wales Election

In New South Wales discussion on this topic was being re-generated by the approach of a new state election. On 31 July, the Sydney Chamber of Commerce passed a resolution calling on the New South Wales Government to immediately insist upon the Commonwealth fulfilling its obligation in respect of the capital.⁽²⁸⁾ On 7 August, Carruthers carried out his earlier threat of 1905 by revoking reservations of Crown land around not only Dalgety but also at Yass, Lyndhurst and Tumut.⁽²⁹⁾ This marked the beginning of a further extension of Carruthers' campaign against the Commonwealth, in which his main target was the Tariff, but the capital site was a secondary but related grievance.

The immediate issue which provoked Carruthers' anti-federal spirit was the question of whether, under the new federal tariff proposals, the state Government would be required to pay import duties on consignments of wire netting. Carruthers tried to force the matter by attempting to seize the goods from Sydney's custom house.⁽³⁰⁾

(28) D.T. 1 August 1907.

(29) Secretary for Lands to P.M. 8 August 1907 C.A.O. C.R.S. A100 A08/9793 quoted in Wright op.cit Page 141.

(30) For a discussion of this incident and the 1907 state election see H.V. Evatt Australian Labour Leader (Sydney: (Angus and Robertson) 1942 Pages 148-52.

To Carruthers, the location of the Parliament in Melbourne had affected federal political proceedings, especially in relation to tariff legislation. The Premier argued that while the federal legislative body remained in Melbourne, the influence of the southern city would continue to "permeate" Australian politics.⁽³¹⁾ Carruthers promised, if he was re-elected, to conduct a referendum, one question of which would be to ask New South Wales electors whether they were in favour of acceding to the "Melbourne demands" in regard to the capital.⁽³²⁾

It was at this stage that J.C. Watson who had already described Carruthers' assault on the custom house as an "electioneering dodge",⁽³³⁾ decided to enter the state election campaign. Carruthers tried to ignore Watson's presence but the Labour leader pointed out that the Premier was using disputes with the federal Government as a blind to cover state controversies. Further, Watson contended that at the end of 1905, Carruthers had hindered a possible settlement of the capital site -

"It was no use bullyragging people if they wanted a concession from them, and it was too much to expect Representatives from other States to help this State

(31) S.M.H. 24 August 1907.

(32) S.M.H. 26 August 1907

(33) S.M.H. 22 August 1907. J.C. Watson had been one of the founders of the New South Wales Labour party.

See N.B. Nairn "J.C. Watson in New South Wales Politics"
J.R.A.H.S. Volume 4 Part 2 Pages 81-104.

after having their minds inflamed by such a man as Mr. Carruthers".⁽³⁴⁾

Carruthers took no notice and simply appealed to the electors to give him a majority so that he could send "a message to Melbourne" as well as to the Labour party, that New South Wales had reached a turning point in her experience of Federation.⁽³⁵⁾

The electorate seemed to only partly heed Carruthers' appeal for the Ministerial party made little gain in votes or seats, although an increased percentage of electors voted as compared to 1904.⁽³⁶⁾ Carruthers retired as Premier soon after the election⁽³⁷⁾

(34) S.M.H. 9 September 1907. Evatt notes that Holman journeyed to Melbourne to confer with federal Labour leaders but fails to mention Watson's participation in the election campaign. Australian Labour Leader Page 149.

(35) S.M.H. 7 September 1907.

(36) Colin A. Hughes and B.D. Graham Australian Government and Politics 1890-1964 Pages 436-9.

(37) Why did Carruthers retire after his Government had just been re-elected? At the time, the reason given was a breakdown in health. S.M.H. 1 October 1907. Twelve months later, Carruthers told O'Sullivan that he was "much better in health" and was again feeling that it was "good to live". J.H. Carruthers to E.W. O'Sullivan 14 September 1908 E.W. O'Sullivan Papers M.L. Uncat MS Set 239 Item 2. However, Carruthers later entered the Legislative Council where he remained until 1931. He became Vice-President of the Executive Council in the Fuller Ministeries of 1921 and 1922-5. The possibility is that Carruthers was pushed out of the Premiership. One other suggestion is intriguing. In 1907 the New South Wales Governor Rawson requested the Governor-General Northcote that Carruthers be granted the K.C.M.G. as a bait to retire from state politics. See La Nauze Alfred Deakin Volume 2 Page 488 and f.n. Carruthers was knighted in 1908.

but his latest campaign had had a significant effect on federal political opinion, especially in Labour circles. The Labour representatives McDonald (Kennedy Q) and Foster (New England N.S.W.) deprecated Carruthers' attempt to drag the capital site dispute into state politics.⁽³⁸⁾ As at the end of 1905, many members reacted by losing any sympathy which they may have had with the claims of the New South Wales Government.

Moves Towards a Settlement

Despite Carruthers' provocation, the outlook for a settlement was not so bleak as would appear. While the new Premier Wade had been involved as Attorney-General in the legal aspects of this dispute, he was not as firmly committed as Carruthers had been. It also seemed that Deakin who had just returned exhausted from the strenuous Imperial conference, was probably tired of the interminable dispute with New South Wales. Carruthers' departure from the scene induced a frank confession from the Prime Minister for he privately admitted to Wade that the state Government was "quite right of course" to get the site "where you wish or as near it as possible". Deakin asserted that the delay in settlement had been the fault of New South Wales' representatives who thought it "best served their purpose"

(38) C.P.D. Volume XXXVII Pages 1869 and 1878.

to postpone a vote on the change of site.⁽³⁹⁾

This was the view of the private rather than the political Deakin. The Prime Minister may have believed that the New South Wales Government was within its rights in attempting to change the site but his Ministry was now too firmly committed to Dalgety to initiate such a move. As regards Deakin's charge against the New South Wales members, some had only supported delay so that they could secure enough support to eliminate Dalgety, but the federal Government had never shown itself over-anxious to institute further steps on this topic.

For his part, Wade officially reminded Deakin that the capital site issue had been prominent in the recent state election. The new Premier asked for an assurance that the matter would be finalised that session. Deakin gave repeated promises that once Parliament had considered the Tariff, attention would be turned to the Capital Site Bill which had been introduced in the previous July.⁽⁴⁰⁾

(39) Alfred Deakin to C.G. Wade 25 October 1907 Deakin Papers MS1540/4919. It was Bavin's opinion that Wade had represented the "greater part of the honesty" of the Carruthers' Government. T.R. Bavin to Alfred Deakin no date Deakin Papers MS1540/528-9. Wright also believes that Wade's succession as Premier paved the way for settlement op.cit Page 152.

(40) Premier N.S.W. to P.M. 31 October 1907.
P.M. to Premier N.S.W. 9 November and 13 and 17
December 1907. C.P.P. 1907-8 Volume II Pages 213 and
217-8.

Deakin carried out his promise by announcing at the beginning of 1908 that the Government would soon move the second reading of the Seat of Government Bill.⁽⁴¹⁾ The 'battle' of the sites now began again in earnest. Already New South Wales engineers had made further reports on the water supply and building materials available in the Canberra district.⁽⁴²⁾ Webster (Gwydir N.S.W.) helped to organise a trip to the Tooma site which had again come under consideration. A number of members found Tooma very attractive. Sir John Quick (Bendigo), the influential and respected constitutional lawyer who was now sitting with the Corner group, said that Tooma had "exceeded his most sanguine expectations" and would be the capital site if the choice was made on its "merits".⁽⁴⁶⁾

An interesting situation was now emerging. The existence of the Corner party was having a special effect on this question. Some of the Victorian members who had been newly elected in 1906, were not committed by former support to any site. Some of these were seeking an end to the protracted discussion on this issue. At the opening of the second session of the Parliament, Fairbairn (Fawkner Vic.) had suggested that a referendum be held to discover

(41) C.P.D. Volume XLIV Page 8930.

(42) Various reports in C.P.P. 1907-8 Volume II Pages 203-4 and 207-11.

(43) Argus 31 March 1908. Press opinion believed that Quick's views could sway others.

Age 1 April 1908 (1L) Argus 1 April 1908

Courier 6 April 1908.

if the electorate would approve the Parliament sitting in Sydney after 1909. W.H. Irvine (Grampians, Vic.) the former Victorian Premier, supported this proposal as "a means by which we might get over a great many difficulties".⁽⁴⁴⁾ This remedy not only avoided any costly outlay on a capital, but gave consideration to the demands and interests of Sydney.

New South Wales opinion was rather unreceptive to this plan. Reid had rejected it as a solution.⁽⁴⁵⁾ On the other hand, Reid was again anxious to give assurances of his own financial caution in this matter for he claimed that any Government which proposed "profligate expenditure" on the construction of the capital deserved "to be ejected from office".⁽⁴⁶⁾

If the only solution to this dilemma was the selection of another site, then the support for Tooma by members like Quick was significant. As Forrest had told Carruthers, to change the site from Dalgety to Tooma would not suit New South Wales at all. Most Queenslanders were also opposed to Tooma. Senator Chataway said that not only was Tooma as inaccessible as Dalgety, but it was so close to Victoria that it could not be selected if even the "semblance of faith" was to be kept with New South Wales.⁽⁴⁷⁾ The main relevancy of Tooma was that for some Victorians, support for this site provided a means to reconcile

(44) C.P.D. Volume XXXVI (second part) Pages 108, 226-7.

(45) Ibid Pages 306-7.

(46) S.M.H. 6 March 1908.

(47) West Australian 3 April 1908.

parochial and other interests. Ostensibly, it seemed that they were supporting a site which was favourable to their own State, so it did not appear that they were submitting to pressure from the opponents of Dalgety. Actually, they were helping to switch support away from Dalgety. By this process, it was hoped that Dalgety would be eliminated and another site - probably Canberra - substituted as the capital.⁽⁴⁸⁾ The Age perceived this strategy and warned that if "one or two Victorians in the Opposition" voted "consistently" for Dalgety, then the "intriguing" would be defeated.⁽⁴⁹⁾

Premier Wade also foresaw the possibilities and inquired of Deakin whether an offer of a site by the New South Wales Parliament would be "acceptable" or "helpful" to the federal Parliament in its deliberations.⁽⁵⁰⁾ Writing now as Prime Minister in contrast to his earlier correspondence, Deakin replied that his Ministry faced difficulties from "speaking as a Government" because the parties in the House were divided on this topic. Further, he could not advise Wade without knowledge of the "nature or conditions

(48) See D.T. 6 April 1908 and Argus 6 April 1908.

(49) Age 3 April 1908.

(50) Premier N.S.W. to P.M. 25 February 1908.

C.P.P. Session 1907-8 Volume II Page 221.

See also Wright op. cit. Page 143.

of the offer".⁽⁵¹⁾ Despite this rebuff, Watson privately informed Wade that the selection of Canberra was almost certain provided that the New South Wales Government could guarantee that sufficient federal territory would be granted.⁽⁵²⁾ This proviso was intended to suit most Labour members who had no sympathy with Victorian interests but who wanted a sufficiently large federal area and were prepared to substitute another site for Dalgety so long as their demands on area could be met. So, by prearrangement with Watson, Reid and Fuller (Illawarra N.S.W.), Wade told the New South Wales Legislative Assembly that if Canberra was chosen, then his Government would deal "liberally" with the Commonwealth.⁽⁵³⁾

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- (51) P.M. to Premier N.S.W. 3 March 1908 Ibid. Correspondence ensued on this point but without any further progress being made. Premier N.S.W. to P.M. 6 and 17 March 1909 and P.M. to Premier N.S.W. 9 and 20 March 1909 Ibid Pages 222-3. Wade was rather upset by the Prime Minister's reply. He told Sir William McMillan that Deakin was being very unhelpful. C.G. Wade to Sir William McMillan 28 March 1908 N.S.W.A.O. Premier's Department, Federal Capital Site 1907-15, 4/6258.
- (52) J.C. Watson to C.G. Wade 19 March 1908 N.S.W.A.O. Premier's Department, Federal Capital Site 1907-15, 4/6258.
- (53) N.S.W.P.D. (2nd series) Volume XXIX Page 696. See also C.P.D. Volume XLV Pages 9766-7. Both Reid and Watson wanted more definite statements on the questions of area and access to the sea for a port at Jervis Bay, but Wade refused to make any further statement. G.H. Reid to C.G. Wade 7 April 1908 and J.C. Watson to C.G. Wade 9 April 1908. C.G. Wade to J.C. Watson 11 April 1908 N.S.W.A.O. Premier's Department, Federal Capital Site 1907-15, 4/6258.

Undoubtedly Wade's conciliatory attitude which was in marked contrast to Carruthers often violent outbursts, helped those who were working to secure the success of the Canberra site. Wade confessed to Dugald Thomson that he wanted to protect New South Wales' rights without offending the "susceptibilities" of the federal Parliament. ⁽⁵⁴⁾

Yet any move to alter the choice of site could only be really successful if all the New South Wales representatives were also generally unanimous on a new site. Prompted by Watson, Lyne called a caucus meeting of the New South Wales delegation in the House. The aim of the meeting was to secure a "block vote" in the event of Dalgety being "struck out" of the Seat of Government Bill. Most New South Wales members and a couple of Senators attended. ⁽⁵⁵⁾ No block vote was arranged for a first ballot but it

(54) C.G. Wade to Dugald Thomson 31 March 1908 N.S.W.A.O. Premier's Department, Federal Capital Site 1907-15, 4/6258. n.f.n.

(55) Age 9 April 1908. The Age said that only Ewing remained away. The Argus claimed that the absentees were Ewing (Richmond) and Wilks (Dalley); the Labour members Hall (Werriwa), Hughes (West Sydney), Spence (Gwydir), Thomson (Barrier) and Wilkins (Newcastle); and the Senators Gould, Miller, Pulsford and Walker 9 April 1908.

Hughes later said that he believed that he was the only absentee. He had arranged to pair with Bamford (Herbert Q) in any ballot.

S.M.H. 9 April 1908.

seemed that on a second ballot, New South Wales members would be almost unanimous for Canberra. ⁽⁵⁶⁾

Thus after a week of heavy manoeuvring, the situation came to a head when Deakin finally moved the second reading of the Seat of Government Bill on 8 April. The Ministry's case was put by Home Affairs Minister Groom who maintained that it was necessary to establish a capital city to satisfy the Australian people that the Parliament was not being "subjected to Victorian influences". On the other hand, the site should be at such a distance from Sydney so as to escape that city's domination. Although members of the Ministry had a "free hand", Groom appealed to members to support him in reaffirming the choice of Dalgety. ⁽⁵⁷⁾

Reid again based his argument upon the 1899 Premiers' Memorandum. The Opposition leader claimed that it was on the basis of this agreement that New South Wales had decided to federate. The "spirit" of the 1899 agreement required that the site be established as close to the 100 mile limit as possible, and in this and in other respects, Canberra was a suitable site. Reid ended his speech by reassuring the House that while New South Wales expected that a settlement should be reached, he himself would not support any extravagant proposals in the actual creation of the capital. ⁽⁵⁸⁾ The

(56) Argus 9 April 1908.

(57) C.P.D. Volume XLV Pages 10321-9. Groom had been ill. He arrived in the House after the debate had begun and so had been unable to move the second reading of the Bill.

(58) Ibid Pages 10311-20.

other main spokesman for the Opposition Bruce Smith pointed out that if members again decided upon Dalgety, then it would cost over £1 million simply to establish railway communication to the site. (59)

On the Labour side of the House, even though Watson had retired as leader of the party in the previous October, he was still very anxious to reach a settlement of the capital site issue. Watson maintained that while the federal Parliament was not bound by the 1899 Memorandum, the Treasurer Forrest was open to blame for failing to honour his signature to that agreement as Premier of Western Australia in 1899. He had no "sympathy" with certain charges made against the Commonwealth, but he did maintain that the federal capital "grievance" prejudiced many people in New South Wales against Federation. Watson concluded by extolling the merits of Canberra and urging the House to select that site. (60) The speech provoked some hostile press comment. The Bulletin which had become a firm advocate of Dalgety, described Watson as a "wildly reckless and fairly unreliable" barracker for Canberra, who viewed the issues involved from a purely "State viewpoint". (61) The Age doubted whether the former Labour leader had ever before made himself the "mouthpiece of such a tissue of anti-national parish pump absurdities". (62)

(59) Ibid Page. 10353.

(60) Ibid Pages 10335-48.

(61) Bulletin 16 April 1908.

(62) Age 9 April 1908.

On 9 April, after one day of debate, Deakin moved an amendment repealing the orders of the day to enable further discussion and a vote to be taken on the Seat of Government Bill. It was expected that an amendment would be moved to delete Dalgety from the Bill and if that was successful, a further ballot of sites would ensue. But such expectations were soon upset.

As 9 April was nominated as grievance day for private members, a Labour representative Webster (Gwydir N.S.W.) protested that he wished to move a resolution to debate the appointment of a Royal Commission to inquire into the administration of the Posts and Telegraphs Department. The leaders of all parties had apparently known and approved of Deakin's amendment,⁽⁶³⁾ but Reid claimed that as Webster's motion dealt with the conduct of the Government, the Prime Minister would have to accept such a request. Under protest that he had already reached agreement with Reid and Fisher to proceed with the Seat of Government Bill, Deakin withdrew his amendment.⁽⁶⁴⁾ The Government was severely criticised during the ensuing debate on Webster's motion and was defeated on the vote when the Opposition were joined by the Corner and seven Labour members.⁽⁶⁵⁾ Deakin took the vote as a no-confidence motion and the House adjourned.

(63) Age 9 April 1908.

(64) C.P.D. Volume XLV Pages 10401-6.

(65) The Labour representatives were Batchelor (Boothby S.A.), Brown (Calare N.S.W.), Carr (Macquarie N.S.W.), Frazer (Kalgoorlie W.A.), Hutchinson (Hindmarsh S.A.), Poynton (Grey S.A.) and Webster. Ibid Page 10460.

A week of uncertainty followed. It was even rumoured that Lyne would head a new Ministry composed of Labour elements.⁽⁶⁶⁾ The speculation ended when Deakin decided to remain in office. The importance of this political 'crisis', as far as this study is concerned, is that both the Government and Opposition charged each other with bad faith over the question of the Seat of Government Bill.

Deakin said that he was unable to understand how Reid and Cook who had been pressing for the final selection of the capital, could have been "in the forefront of the fray" demanding that Webster's motion take precedence.⁽⁶⁷⁾ When the House re-assembled a week later, Reid's deputy Joseph Cook declared that on the day in question, he had prepared a solution to the dilemma of reconciling Deakin's amendment and Webster's motion and that he was about to propose it when the Prime Minister withdrew his amendment.⁽⁶⁸⁾ The Daily Telegraph maintained that Deakin's whole purpose had been to effectively postpone selection of another site:-

"to the delight of the Government's Victorian bosses the whole domestic squabble is to be visited on the wicked Mother State ... It is difficult to see how Mr. Deakin could have arranged an ending to his resignation comedy more satisfactory to the people whom he staged it for".⁽⁶⁹⁾

(66) See S.M.H. 10-15 April 1905 and La Nauze Alfred Deakin Volume 2 Pages 433-4. La Nauze makes no comment on the relationship of the capital site Bill to the 'crisis'.

(67) S.M.H. 11 April 1908.

(68) C.P.D. Volume XLV Page 10473-4.

(69) D.T. 16 April 1908 (1L).

A harsh charge but hardly just. As noted, Deakin had already informed the other parties that he intended to proceed with the Seat of Government Bill on 9 April. There seemed little reason for the Government further postponing a decision. On the other hand, the Government may have been aware of Webster's proposal and may have deliberately attempted to avoid discussion on the administration of the Post Office in order to avoid censure.

What then of the Opposition? Why had Reid chosen to support a proposal which delayed a decision on the site? Perhaps Cook was honest in claiming that he had envisaged a solution to the dilemma of reconciling Deakin's and Webster's resolutions but his leader may have had other aims. One M.H.R. claimed that Reid had seen a chance to use the "Ishmaels" of the Labour party to embarrass the Government and so he "threw over the Federal Capital in a thrice".⁽⁷⁰⁾ Lyne said that New South Wales representatives could have earlier defeated Dalgety but they had "indulged in political speeches".⁽⁷¹⁾

But was the outcome of the vote on the capital site as certain as Lyne suggested? Some reports had speculated that the vote would be very close and that even if Dalgety was eliminated from the

(70) Age 10 April 1908. The Age itself claimed that the settlement of the Bill was "less than a sucked orange" as compared to the chance of "delivering even a small blow at the Government" 13 April 1908.

(71) Argus 21 April 1908.

Bill, there would not be enough support for any other site.⁽⁷²⁾ Austin Chapman claimed that the opponents of Dalgety did not have the "numbers" to defeat that site.⁽⁷³⁾ These suppositions were later borne out by an anonymous New South Wales M.H.R. who explained that no further action had been taken on the selection of a site because "if Dalgety had been reaffirmed, it would have been all over with the chances of Canberra". A canvass of the House had shown that Dalgety had a majority of one vote. Thus, "the strings were pulled and the Bill was shelved".⁽⁷⁴⁾

So it would seem that most of the responsibility for the failure to take further steps on the capital must lie with Reid. The Opposition had seen an opportunity to embarrass the Government over the conduct of postal administration at a time when the Ministry could have triumphed and succeeded in having the choice of Dalgety reaffirmed. The solution was to defer a decision on the capital site and attack the Government in another sphere.

Finally, what of the position of Webster - the Labour representative who had played a central part in this affair - had he in any way conspired with the Opposition? Another Labour member Paynton (Grey S.A.) denied any such collusion or even any intention to take parliamentary business out of the hands of the Government.⁽⁷⁵⁾ Certainly

(72) See Age 9 April 1908 also Argus 11 April 1908 and Courier 11 April 1908.

(73) Herald 20 April 1908.

(74) Australian Star 23 June 1908.

(75) Age 13 April 1908.

Webster had been a constant critic of postal administration and had been urging for some months that a select committee of inquiry or a Royal Commission be set up to make investigations.⁽⁷⁶⁾

But he was also a chief sponsor of the site of Tooma. Like the Opposition, Webster may have had twin complimentary motives for his move. He wanted a debate on his proposal but he may have also desired more time to canvass votes for Tooma.

It is also interesting to note that according to Hutchinson (Hindmarsh S.A.), Webster had moved his motion with the knowledge of his leader Fisher.⁽⁷⁷⁾ If so, though he voted with the Government on 9 April, Fisher made no protest against the 'tactics' of the Opposition.

The Final Ballot - The Selection of Yass-Canberra

Despite the political machinations in April, it seemed certain that the Government would try to reach finality on the capital site. James Edmonds, editor of the Bulletin which had been waging an active campaign in favour of Dalgety for over twelve months, was concerned at the failure to reach a decision in April and he urged Deakin to proceed with a Bill as quickly as possible before his magazine's crusade ran stale.⁽⁷⁸⁾ During February - April 1908, every

(76) C.P.D. Volume XLII Pages 7548, 9477.

(77) Age 13 April 1908.

(78) James Edmonds to Alfred Deakin 16 April 1908 Deakin Papers MS1540/1464-5. R. Archer (Capricornia Q) claimed that Edmonds was interested in his vote and had put pressure on him to support Dalgety C.P.D. Volume XLVII Page 429.

issue of the Bulletin had contained articles on the capital site, including photos of the magnificent Snowy River and the **Cotter** "creek". A staff cameraman had even caught rheumatism from standing in the cold Snowy. Editorials argued that the Monaro area provided an opportunity to acquire a large and expansive territory for the Australian people. The campaign had died down for a few months but it revived during September to November.

In August, the Prime Minister announced that a Seat of Government Bill would be one of the first measures to be introduced in the new session.⁽⁷⁹⁾ The Government would generally stand by the choice of Dalgety, although Lyne would still be a notable exception. Even if he could not secure the capital for his own electorate, Lyne was determined to do all he could to prevent Chapman from doing so. On the other hand, Chapman confidently told his constituents that Dalgety would remain the capital.⁽⁸⁰⁾

For the Reid Opposition, the question now had wider implications. During the parliamentary recess, the Sydney press had criticised Reid's inept leadership, his frequent absences from Parliament and failure to safeguard the rights of his State.⁽⁸¹⁾ It was certain that the Reid Opposition would play a more active role in the forthcoming session. One political correspondent wrote that the party would not "oppose" but claim a "part" and a "lot" in

(79) S.M.H. 8 August 1908.

(80) Delegate Argus 11 September 1908.

(81) See D.T. 19 June 1908 (1L)
and S.M.H. 17-18 September 1908.

the "measures coming forward".⁽⁸²⁾ The successful settlement of the capital site would be a prominent part of that programme.

But the Opposition could only play an effective role if it came to an understanding with those on the corner benches. Once Parliament re-assembled, Reid appealed to the Corner for a union of all the Opposition. The Age maintained that Reid's motive was to gain enough support to make Parliament "bow to the Sydney veto" and alter its choice of the capital site.⁽⁸³⁾ Although the capital site question was of importance per se, an agreement on this issue would also be a test of whether elements in both the Reid party and the Corner could subordinate parochial and other interests to those of more common concern.

As a result, this matter occupied some prominence in ensuing correspondence between Reid and Forrest on the subject of fusion. Forrest was committed to Dalgety by his written and spoken preference for that site, but he apparently promised to vote for the Canberra area if Dalgety was "knocked out" in a ballot.⁽⁸⁴⁾ Other members of the Corner, who had been elected in 1906, were not compromised by previous decisions or statements. The most prominent of these was W.H. Irvine who, as has been noted, had already demonstrated his willingness to reach a settlement. Irvine was considered a potential leader of a combined Opposition,⁽⁸⁵⁾ and this was an opportunity to enhance his prospects. One political

(82) Advertiser 22 September 1908.

(83) Age 21 September 1908 (1L).

(84) Punch (Melbourne) 15 October 1908.

(85) See Australian Star 10 October 1908.

commentator remarked that;

"Henry of Navarre said that Paris was surely worth a mass, and Mr. Irvine following illustrious example agrees that a good understanding with the direct Opposition is surely worth several Canberras." (86)

Some of his colleagues agreed with Irvine. In the final ballot for the capital site, seven of the Corner - Irvine, J.T. Brown (Indi Vic), H. Irvine (Grampians Vic), Livingston (Barker S.A.), Palmer (Echuca Vic), Quick (Bendigo Vic) and Wilson (Corongamite Vic) would join with the Reid Opposition to vote against the Government.

While some of the non-Labour components in the Parliament had reached some common understanding on the capital site, in contrast, the Labour party was very much divided on the best course to adopt. In July during the Parliamentary recess, the Fourth Federal Labour Party Conference resolved that "the question of the Federal Capital Site should be settled at an early date". (87) This was in line with general Labour attitude on this topic since Federation and was in accord with the formulated party platform on the 1906 election. Still, some Labour circles believed that there were more

(86) "Ithurriel" in Argus 3 October 1908.

(87) Official Report of the Fourth Labour Conference Trades Hall, Brisbane 6 July 1908 Page 40. On the strength of this resolution J.H. Catts said, "The Labour Party is emphatic ... that the Federal Capital should be established as soon as possible". Australian Star 28 September 1908.

important issues which required attention. There was the question of the financing of the old age pension scheme and Bamford (Herbert Q) said that he would prefer to see any expenditure involved in the building of a capital "obviated to defence".⁽⁸⁸⁾ However, the question of the cost of construction of the capital was another matter to be faced once the site had been settled. Most Labour members believed that it was generally in their party's interests to remove this topic from discussion in the Parliament. The main points of dispute in the party were on the questions of the best site and of the method of settlement.

Mainly due to the influence of Watson, it seemed that most of the Labour representation from New South Wales and a few from Queensland would combine with the Opposition to try to remove Dalgety as the site. Some of these were as provincial as their non-Labour colleagues. Hughes reminded the House that a "compact" had been made and New South Wales expected the Parliament to abide by it.⁽⁸⁹⁾ Others felt rather compromised by their apparent support for the stand of the New South Wales Government and they expressed their hostility. Catts (Cook) said that New South Wales members had had a "good deal to put up with" because of the attitude of the Sydney press and "prominent" Sydney politicians.⁽⁹⁰⁾

(88) C.P.D. Volume XLVII Page 425.

(89) Ibid Pages 281-3.

(90) Ibid Page 405. Despite this outburst, Catts later recorded in his notebook that the Sydney Mail had presented the names and photographs of the 40 M.P.'s who voted for Yass-Canberra. Catts Papers A.N.L. 658/1/100.

A significant section of Labour members outrightly opposed a change of site. For some, the Reid party's sponsorship of the Canberra site was a good enough reason to vote for Dalgety. Others like Catts had been provoked by the attitude and acts of the New South Wales Government. Hugh Mahon (Coolgardie W.A.) who in 1904 had voted against Dalgety by casting his ballot for the Western District sites, now objected to the "offensive dictation" of Sydney politicians.⁽⁹¹⁾ Although Wade had promised that his Government would now be prepared to consider the request for a large federal area, some Labour members remained suspicious of the Canberra site. Hutchinson (Hindmarsh S.A.) opposed any site where the Commonwealth could be "hemmed" in and left to the "mercy" of the likes of Wade and Carruthers,⁽⁹²⁾ while the Bulletin claimed that the Canberra supporters were speculators who wanted a small area in order to enhance the value of the land.⁽⁹³⁾

Like their non-Labour counterparts, some Labour members also had their own personal preferences on this topic. King O'Malley, who had moved the first resolution on the capital site in July 1901, apparently wished to remain in the comforts of Melbourne rather than move into the wilderness. O'Malley now believed that the scheme to establish a capital was premature.⁽⁹⁴⁾

(91) Ibid Page 370.

(92) Ibid Page 307.

(93) Bulletin 24 September 1908.

(94) D. Catts King O'Malley Sydney (Publicity Press Pty. Ltd.) 1938 Page 179. Despite this, O'Malley later took much of the credit for the early foundation of Canberra.

Labour leader Fisher remained above much of the dissension but he was more on the side of the Dalgety supporters. He appealed to a Sydney audience to take a "national view" of the issue and asked them to rely on the Parliament to choose the "best" site.⁽⁹⁵⁾

The complexity of the political situation meant that the possible outcome of any further capital site vote was still very much uncertain. Within a week of the opening of the new session, the Ministry once more introduced a Seat of Government Bill which was designed to ascertain the establishment of the federal capital at Dalgety. As Minister for Home Affairs, Groom was the chief spokesman for the Government. In the 1903 and 1904 ballots, Groom had given his vote to the Western District sites in accord with the interests of Queensland. Whatever his personal and parochial preferences, Groom's position in the Deakin Ministry now made it incumbent upon him to reaffirm the choice of Dalgety. The Minister recounted the history of this topic since 1899 including the dispute between the Commonwealth and New South Wales Governments. The Opposition were to again base their case upon the Premiers' Memorandum of 1899 as proof that the choice of Dalgety was not in accord with the 'spirit' of the Constitution, but Groom contended that the founding fathers intended to place the capital where it could not be "dominated" by the influence of any of the state capitals. Groom made it clear that the Government would stand by

(95) D.T. 10 September 1908.

Watson also spoke at the meeting but did not refer to the capital site.

Dalgety and appealed to the House to give a "truly national" vote.⁽⁹⁶⁾

Reid replied by nominating Canberra as a "suitable" site which was both in accordance with the phrase "reasonable distance" from Sydney as contained in the Premiers' Memorandum of 1899, and "agreeable" to the people of New South Wales. As regards the question of the area of the federal territory, Reid hoped that the Ministry would show a "friendly disposition" towards the New South Wales Government. He saw neither any provision in the Constitution nor any necessity for a federal port but Jervis Bay would be suitable. In conclusion, Reid urged that whatever site was chosen, the Government should take immediate practical steps to establish the capital.⁽⁹⁷⁾

As expected, the ensuing debate was marked by a division of opinion along general party lines, but parochialism was not dormant. Sampson (Wimmera Vic) claimed that Sydney people were attempting to "limit" the choice of a site by asking the Parliament to accept the view "prescribed" by Sydney.⁽⁹⁸⁾ Wilks (Dalley N.S.W.) asserted the "right" of the New South Wales Parliament to refuse Dalgety as a "just" settlement and inferred that many Victorians were supporting the Dalgety site either to capture the trade of the area or to delay a move from Melbourne.⁽⁹⁹⁾

(96) C.P.D. Volume XLVII Pages 268-75. For a consideration of Groom's views since 1905, see also E. Groom (ed) Nation Building in Australia; The Life and Work of Sir Littleton Ernest Groom Sydney (Angus and Robertson) 1941 Pages 45-50.

(97) Ibid Pages 373-81.

(98) Ibid Page 314.

(99) Ibid Pages 398-404.

These clashes disturbed some of the representatives from the smaller States. Hedges (Freemantle W.A.) said that the differences between Sydney and Melbourne had been "poured forth" during the debate,⁽¹⁰⁰⁾ Foxton (Brisbane Q) regretted the "squabbles, dissensions and jealousies" between the two largest States which had so "overlaid" the question.⁽¹⁰¹⁾

Even at this late stage, local constituent interests were also significant. Foster (New England N.S.W.) spoke of the beauties of Armidale, although this site had not the slightest chance of being selected.⁽¹⁰²⁾ It was Chapman who remained the supreme champion of the 'parish pump'. His former chief adversaries had retired from the field. Sydney Smith had been defeated in the 1906 election, Tom Brown was silent while Lyne was content to state that if Dalgety was selected as the site, he would retire from politics rather than ever live there.⁽¹⁰³⁾ But although the site of Canberra was also in his electorate, Chapman was still firm in his support for his favourite son. Drawing upon all his literary and dramatic resources, Chapman conjured up a vision of a future Dalgety capital:-

"A city unique in its beauty and utility with broad avenues intersecting its regular squares, with frequent reservations of grass, flowers and fountains, with its trees and

(100) Ibid Page 489.

(101) Ibid Page 309.

(102) Ibid Pages 298-302. On 21 September, the Glenn Innes Council had met and decided to promote New England as a site. S.M.H. 22 September 1908.

(103) Ibid Page 393.

parks, substantial business houses and sightly dwellings, its schools, universities, galleries and museums, its monuments and public buildings, its noble rivers, and picturesque landscape, its rugged mountains and fertile plains, with Kosciusko in the distance piercing the sky and lifting itself like a heavenly dome. These and many other advantages, will offer a panorama and a more inspiring contemplation than can possibly be afforded by any other city in the world. Our Federation will live and grow, and with that growth we shall have a Capital expanding with every turn of the prodigious wheel of which it will be the axle."⁽¹⁰⁴⁾

It was a magnificent effort and at least one member, W.G. Spence (Darling N.S.W.), said that he had now been convinced to support Dalgety,⁽¹⁰⁵⁾ but Chapman was exhausted. He had not been in good health for months and he collapsed the next day. Chapman was now absent from the House for the rest of the session and although he was paired in the ballot for sites, certain sections believed that his absence greatly contributed to the defeat of Dalgety.⁽¹⁰⁶⁾ However, although Chapman was a very able whip, it would have been unlikely that he could have secured enough support to preserve Dalgety as the capital. The tide of political events was running too

(104) Ibid Pages 390-1.

(105) Moruya Times 30 September 1908. Spence had voted for the Western District sites in 1903-4 but he was now to give his vote to Dalgety.

(106) Argus 9 October 1908 (1L).

much against him.

While most members realised the necessity to reach a final decision on the site, there was still a certain amount of uncertainty and hesitancy about the financial implications. The West Australian, believing that Melbourne was exercising an undue influence on Federation, called for an immediate settlement⁽¹⁰⁷⁾ but press opinion in some of the other States opposed the "unnecessary" expense involved in the establishment of the capital at that stage.⁽¹⁰⁸⁾ Reflecting these views, one member, Livingston (Barker S.A.), said that he was "dead against" a "bush capital".⁽¹⁰⁹⁾

Under these circumstances, Bruce Smith (Parkes N.S.W.) realised that at least some of the smaller States' representatives in the Reid Opposition and some of the Victorians in the Corner would welcome an opportunity to reconcile both party and provincial interests. Thus, Smith proposed that the selection of the site should be postponed until 1921 and that in the interim, the Constitution should be amended to allow the seat of government to remain in Melbourne until 1910 and thence to be transferred to Sydney until 1921.⁽¹¹⁰⁾ Palmer (Echuca Vic) who sat in the Corner, seconded the proposal and other members of the Corner party expressed support.⁽¹¹¹⁾

(107) West Australian 17 September (1L) and 30 November (1L) 1908.

(108) Advertiser 6 October 1908 (1L) and Mercury 10 October 1908 (1L).

(109) C.P.D. Volume XLVII Page 474.

(110) Ibid Page 465.

(111) Ibid Pages 469, 477-8, 555-6 and 567.

But the solution was damned by interests in both New South Wales and Victoria. Although the Age still favoured delay, its editorial opinion asserted that Smith's proposal would only grant Sydney the seat of government as a "further sop" in addition to giving New South Wales the "ultimate possession" of the capital.⁽¹¹²⁾ In response to Smith's suggestion, Crouch (Corio Vic) gave notice of an amendment which would defer selection of the site but would also determine that the capital should remain temporarily in Melbourne. The Sydney press foresaw such threats and warned that the only positive result of Smith's proposal would be delay in moving the capital from Melbourne, whilst any attempt to amend the Constitution could mean a decision unfavourable to New South Wales. The Opposition Whip Kelly argued along the same lines.⁽¹¹³⁾ Realising that his plan was unacceptable to New South Wales opinion, Smith withdrew his amendment.⁽¹¹⁴⁾

After this tactical move, the debate proceeded, although a vote on the second reading of the bill was delayed a few days due to the connivance of Lyne,⁽¹¹⁵⁾ who even if he could no longer ensure the selection of a site in his electorate, was determined to defeat Dalgety. The next move came from one of the Corner members -

(112) Age 1 October 1908 (2L). The Age had earlier spoken of a postponement for 10 or 20 years as the "best way out of the difficulty" 24 September 1908 (1L).

(113) S.M.H. 29 September 1908 (2L) and D.T. 29 September 1908 (2L) and Australian Star 28 September 1908.

(114) C.P.D. Volume XLVII Page 589.

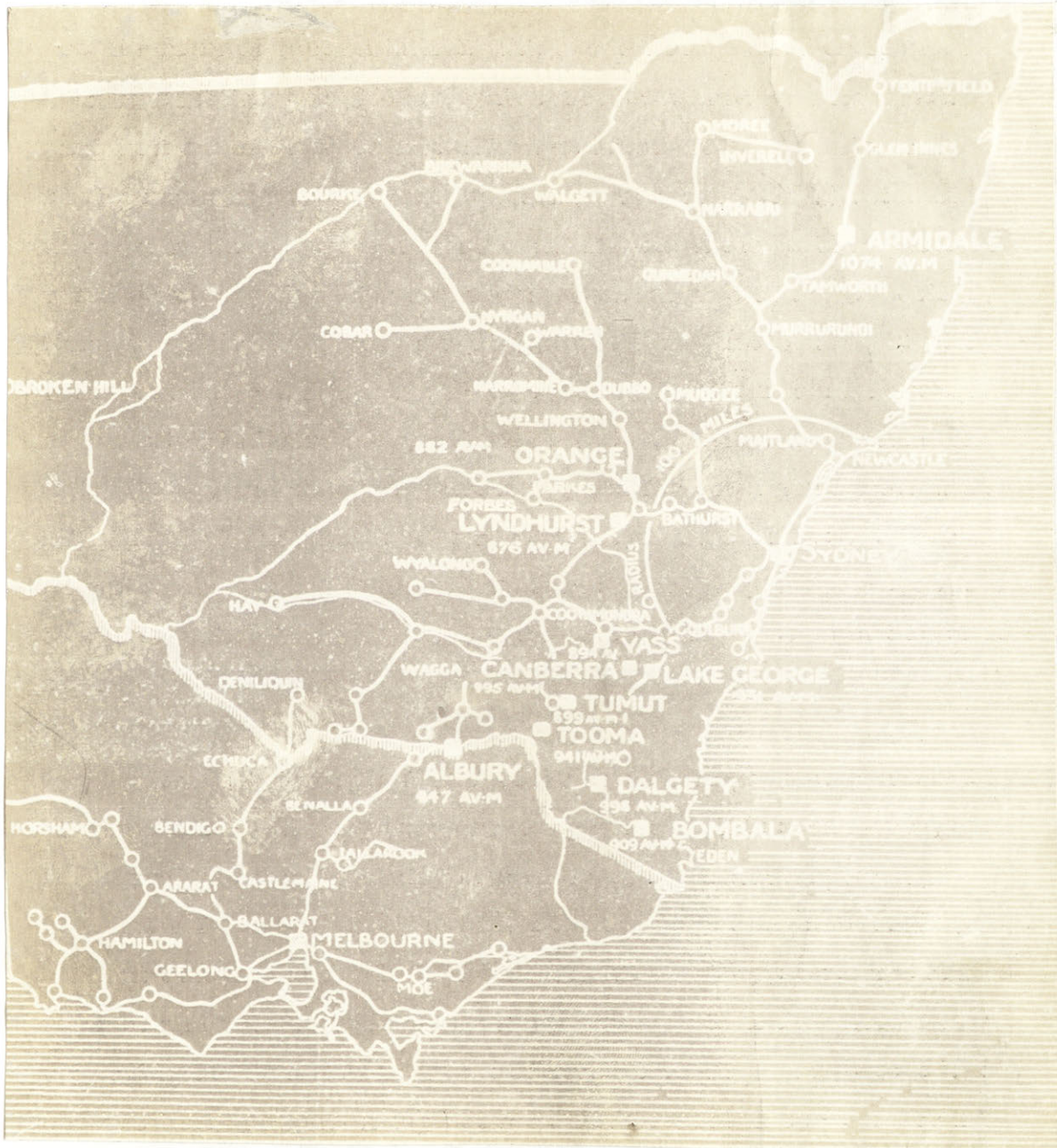
(115) Sporting and Dramatic 8 October 1908.

Hans Irvine (the cousin of W.H. Irvine) who moved an amendment to the second reading of the Bill, which required a further ballot of sites to be taken before the Parliament reached a final decision. The vote on this amendment revealed the trend which was to be more prominent in the actual ballot. Although a large number of members were absent from the House, pairs had been arranged for most. The party nature of the vote was clearly shown. All the Ministerial supporters except Lyne and Chanter (Riverina N.S.W.) voted or were paired against the amendment, whilst all the Reid Opposition voted or were paired for the amendment. Three of the Opposition Corner - Fairbairn (Fawkner Vic), Hans Irvine and Knox (Kooyong) - voted and one - W.H. Irvine - was paired for the amendment. As regards the Labour party, all the New South Wales delegation except Catts (Cook) and Thomas (Barrier) voted for the amendment, whilst all of the Labour representatives from the other States voted or were paired against it. The amendment was carried by twenty-six votes to nineteen,⁽¹¹⁶⁾ thereby re-opening the whole question of the capital site.

It was not long before further steps were taken. On 2 October, eleven sites - Dalgety, Canberra, Lyndhurst, Yass-Canberra, Canberra, Tooma, Tumut, Lake George, Bombala and Orange - were nominated for a ballot. The ballot took place on 8 October. It was significant that unlike the 1903-4 ballots, all members except Chapman were present and voted. This was an indication that all the parties were regarding the decision as a test of strength. From the outset it was obvious that the contest lay between Dalgety and Yass-Canberra.⁽¹¹⁷⁾

(116) C.P.D. Volume XLVII Pages 663-675.

(117) Details of the ballot appear in Appendix I.



The Sites in the House of Representatives Ballot

(See diagram following.) Reid later revealed that the large area of Yass-Canberra had been nominated because it had not been possible to gain enough support for any other site.⁽¹¹⁸⁾ E.S. Carr (Macquarie N.S.W.) told his constituents that while Lyndhurst still had a "solid majority" of twenty-five in the House, this was not a sufficient number to ensure that site's selection. Other representatives who also opposed Dalgety, would not vote for Lyndhurst but would support Yass-Canberra.⁽¹¹⁹⁾ The Argus political columnist explained that the Yass-Canberra area included sites which were accessible by railway and this induced certain Victorians to support this selection as a means to gain some place "near the main railway line between Sydney and Melbourne".⁽¹²⁰⁾ This was basically the enlarged Yass area recommended by Oliver in 1900 as being the most readily accessible of the sites that he had reported on.

However in the first few ballots, support for the various sites was more widespread than in 1903 and 1904. Only the West Australians voted in block in all ballots for Dalgety. Some members would not

(118) Argus 9 October 1908.

(119) D.T. 19 October 1908. It is uncertain who initiated this move for a combined Yass-Canberra area. Possibly Dugald Thomson. Argus 9 October 1908. It has also been attributed to Watson. Lionel Wigmore The Long View Melbourne (F.W. Cheshire) 1963 Page 44. Pearce claimed that Watson and Chapman arranged a compromise. From Carpenter to Cabinet Page 61. This is obviously wrong. Pearce's account of the selection of Yass-Canberra is confused and chronologically inaccurate.

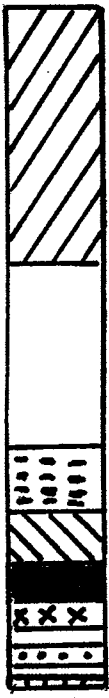
(120) "Ithuriel" in Argus 10 October 1908.

commit themselves to either of the favoured sites until the latter ballots. A number of the New South Wales and Queensland delegation still preferred sites like Lyndhurst which were closer to Sydney, or those further north than Canberra. One marked feature in the ballot was the fluctuating prospects of each site. Once other sites had been eliminated, many members still preferred to support the Tooma site rather than Dalgety or Yass-Canberra. After the eighth and penultimate ballot, Tooma was eliminated. Eight of the fourteen Tooma supporters in the eighth ballot then voted for Yass-Canberra, so ensuring that site's victory over Dalgety by 39 votes to 33. Of these eight, five - Lyne and Chanter (Ministerial supporters) and Carr, Foster and Webster (Labour members) - were New South Welshmen and three - Brown, Palmer and Quick - were Victorian members of the Corner. This Victorian group had basically supported Tooma as a means to reconcile parochial and party interests. Only in the last ballot did they allow the latter motive to predominate.

W.H. Irvine, Hans Irvine and J.G. Wilson who were also Victorian members of the Corner, had voted for Yass-Canberra from the outset. Yass-Canberra would not have been selected without the support of these six Victorians. The angry Age declared that they had thrown in their "lot" with the "little Australia party" which lived to "barrack" for Sydney.⁽¹²¹⁾ It was significant that none of these Victorians were members for Melbourne electorates while

(121) Age 12 October 1908 (1L). Fairbairn, also a member of the Corner, had switched from Dalgety to Yass-Canberra in the second ballot but had then switched back to Dalgety. He may have made a mistake in marking his ballot paper.

1st



Dalgety - 27

Yass-Canberra
19

Armidale - 7

Lyndhurst - 6

Tooma - 4

Tumut - 3

Albury - 2

Orange - 2

Bombala - 1

Canberra - 1

2nd



Dalgety - 26

Yass-Canberra
22

Lyndhurst - 8

Armidale - 5

Tumut - 4

Tooma - 3

Bombala - 1

Canberra - 1

3rd



Dalgety - 28

Yass-Canberra
23

Lyndhurst - 7

Armidale - 5

Tooma - 5

Tumut - 3

Canberra - 1

Dalgety - 28

Yass-Canberra
21

Tooma - 7

Lyndhurst - 8

Armidale - 5

Tumut - 2

Canberra - 1

Dalgety - 27

Yass-Canberra
22

Tooma - 9

Lyndhurst - 8

Armidale - 5

Tumut - 2

Dalgety - 27

Yass-Canberra
22

Tooma - 9

Lyndhurst - 8

Armidale - 5

Dalgety - 24

Yass-Canberra
24

Tooma - 13

Lyndhurst - 8

Yass-Canberra
31

Dalgety - 27

Tooma - 14

Yass-Canberra
39

Dalgety - 33

three - Fairbairn (Fawkner), Knox (Kooyong) and Wynne (Balaclava) - of the four other Victorian Corner members represented constituencies in the southern city or its environs.

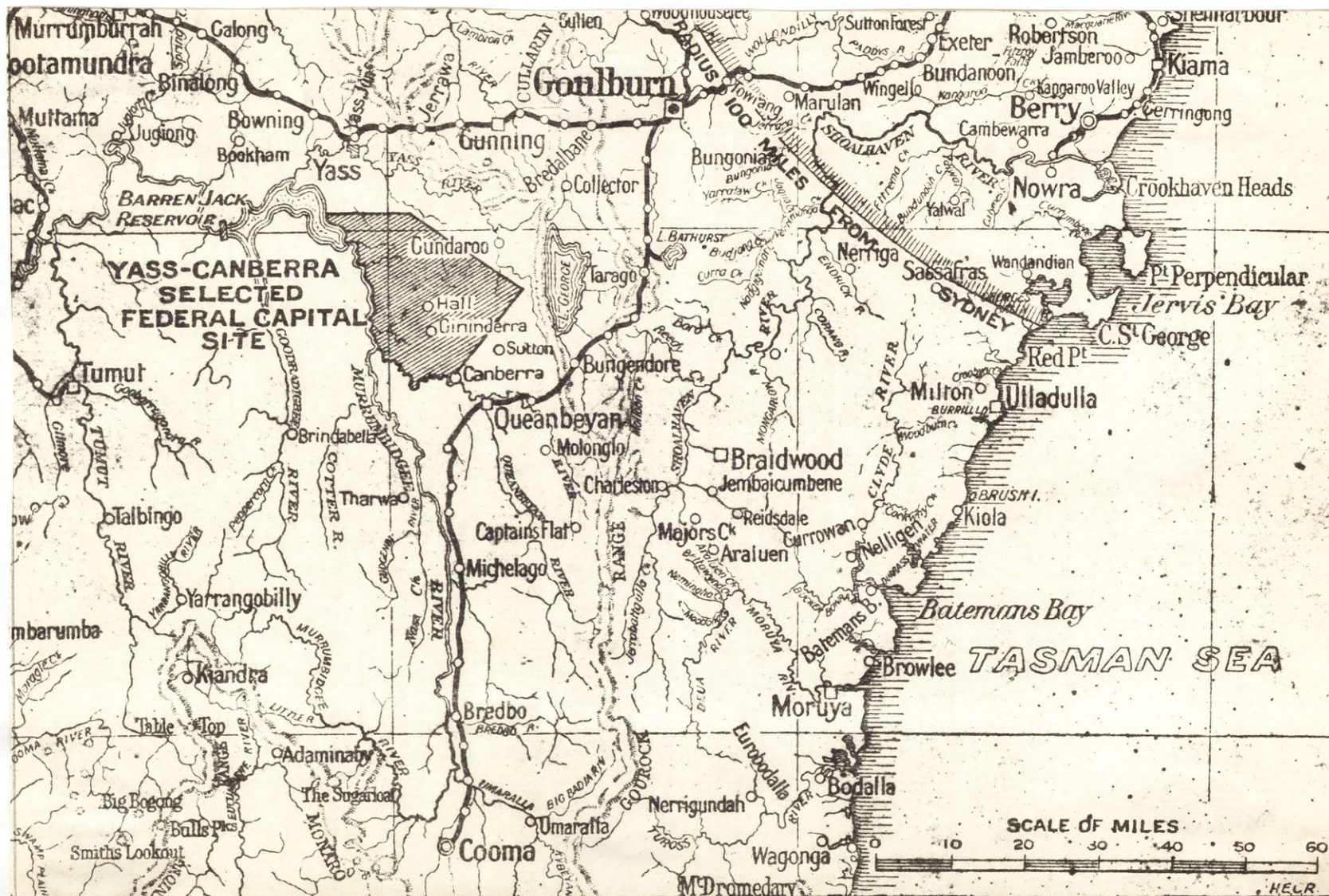
These Victorians were mainly motivated by considerations in the general sphere of federal politics. As noted, their support for Yass-Canberra was part of a general understanding with Reid's party. Of the six, W.H. Irvine would have seemed to have gained most. The Age reminded its readers that Irvine represented a Gippsland constituency which would have benefited from a Dalgety capital,⁽¹²²⁾ but this seemed to worry him little. Four days after the ballot, speaking before a Sydney audience on the "spirit of federal union", Irvine referred to the capital site ballot and declared that if the Australian people were to attempt to make Federation more than a "nominal" union and to "weld" the States into a "real homogeneous nation", then they should keep the Australian Constitution not merely in the "letter" but in the "spirit".⁽¹²³⁾

Unfortunately for Irvine, he was not rewarded for his services. A few days after this Sydney speech, one political commentator thought that if it ever came to a contest between Forrest and Irvine for the leadership of the entire Opposition, then the latter would win hands down.⁽¹²⁴⁾ Events were to prove otherwise. When 'Fusion' finally came in June 1909, it was Forrest as leader of the Corner group who held the 'whip' hand.

(122) Age 9 October and 12 October (1L) 1908.

(123) S.M.H. 13 October 1908.

(124) Punch (Melbourne) 15 October 1908.



The Yass-Canberra Site

Although Irvine was "admired and desired" by Cook, Forrest refused to consider him for a post in the new 'Fusion' Cabinet. The West Australian believed that the ex-Victorian Premier had toadied too much to the Reid-Cook Opposition.⁽¹²⁵⁾ It was not until Cook's Administration of 1913 that Irvine entered the Cabinet in the portfolio of Attorney-General.

In New South Wales the selection of Yass-Canberra was hailed with jubilation. The Sydney Morning Herald greeted it as the "first real step towards union".⁽¹²⁶⁾ Premier Wade said that the choice complied with the "spirit" of the Constitution and he was confident that the House's act would improve Commonwealth-State relations. State Labour leader McGowen believed that the decision would engender a "truer Federal spirit" in New South Wales and make it more difficult for "interested politicians" to raise the "small question of State rights".⁽¹²⁷⁾

(125) J. La Nauze Alfred Deakin Volume 2 Pages 570-1 and f.n. Hume Cook also told Deakin that Irvine "must be excluded at all costs" because his actions as Premier in the Victorian railway strike of 1903 would alienate too many Government supporters. Hume Cook to Alfred Deakin 22 May 1909 Deakin Papers MS1540/1296.

(126) S.M.H. 9 October 1908 (1L). The Sydney Mail produced photos of the forty representatives who voted for Yass-Canberra, and praised them for having given a "stunning blow to petty provincialism" and for raising the "tone of Australian Parliamentary institutions" 28 October 1908.

(127) S.M.H. 9 October 1908. The state Treasurer and former Premier Waddell and the deputy leader of the Labour party Holman declared that they supported the choice although they both would have preferred Lyndhurst as the site. S.M.H. 9 October 1908.

Despite the success of Yass-Canberra in the House ballot, the battle was not yet over for the Senate still had to express its opinion and the upper house had always favoured the Southern Monaro area. On the other hand, the composition and structure of the Senate had altered rather radically since 1903-4. The chamber was now aligned along more formal party lines and there was a fairly even balance between the supporters of Reid and the Labour party. The Leader of the Opposition in the Senate Symon officially declared his support for Yass-Canberra⁽¹²⁸⁾ and it seemed that his party would vote solidly with him but the possible outcome was still unclear.

Reid urged Wade to adopt a conciliatory note in order to aid the prospects of Yass-Canberra. He reminded the Premier that the Senate would be influenced by a "liberal attitude" on the part of the New South Wales Government.⁽¹²⁹⁾ Wade responded and in accord with his statements in the previous April, declared that his Government would approve the granting of access from the seat of government to a port at Jervis Bay. Regarding area, New South Wales would not insist on the "bare terms" of the Constitution being "strictly interpreted".⁽¹³⁰⁾

This conciliatory attitude undoubtedly increased the chances of the Senate reaffirming the House's decision. The votes of the

(128) S.M.H. 20 October 1908.

(129) S.M.H. 12 October 1908.

The Sydney press also urged a similar course.

S.M.H. 12 October 1908 D.T. 13 October 1908 (1L).

(130) S.M.H. 13 October 1908.

Victorian Senators Fraser and McColl were uncertain and the Age expressed concern lest the selection of Yass-Canberra would again be due to the "unaccountable tactics" of Victorian representatives. (131) McColl had visited Sydney with Irvine after the ballot in the House. There, he said that while he reserved judgment "he had never been and did not think he would ever be a supporter of Dalgety". (132)

But the Government had not given up the fight. There were rumours that Tooma would be nominated against Yass-Canberra. (133) It should be also noted that most Labour Senators were more hostile towards the selection of Yass-Canberra than their colleagues in the House. Indeed the radicals in the party were centred more in the upper chamber. Despite their membership of the States' house, most Labour Senators scorned the cry of 'States rights' by arguing that the selection of the capital should be settled in accord with the national interest. This produced a certain amount of dissension in Labour's ranks. Senator Givens (Queensland) said that as representative of a Sydney constituency, even Watson had become "infected" with "Sydney microbe". (134) A charge which was superficial and unjust but indicative of the feeling which was being generated over this topic.

(131) Age 12 October 1908.

(132) D.T. 13 October 1908.

There was a report that McColl was to visit Tumut but he failed to arrive. S.M.H. 27 October 1908. His support for Tumut was to be a crucial factor in the Senate vote.

(133) D.T. 26 October 1908.

(134) C.P.D. Volume XLVIII Page 1591.

On 28 October, Senator Best introduced a motion for an exhaustive ballot of sites. While declaring that it was not a Government measure, Best made it clear that he and his two Ministerial supporters intended to vote for Dalgety.⁽¹³⁵⁾ The following debate was marked by a division of opinion between the Opposition and Labour Senators but like the discussion in the House, provincial interests were still significant. Senator Gray (New South Wales) said that the people of his State had not received the "justice" and "fair play" to which they were entitled.⁽¹³⁶⁾ The Tasmanian Senators Macfarlane and Dobson maintained that the financial position of the Commonwealth could not allow a capital to be built at that stage. As in the 1903-4 debates, Dobson proposed that a decision on a site be deferred and that in the meantime Sydney should become the capital.⁽¹³⁷⁾

Despite this parochialism, there was some feeling that it was necessary to settle this dispute as soon as possible. Senator Sayers (Queensland) said:-

"If no other reason than that it is desirable to put an end to the ill-feeling which exists between the two largest States of the Commonwealth, I maintain that we should endeavour to meet the people of New South Wales in a perfectly reasonable spirit."⁽¹³⁸⁾

(135) C.P.D. Volume XLVIII Pages 1557-64.

(136) Ibid Page 1992.

(137) Ibid Pages 2006-12.

(138) Ibid Page 1922.

Thus, not only Dobson and Macfarlane but also the other Opposition Senators Clemons and Mulcahy of Tasmania, Symon of South Australia and Fraser of Victoria, all of whom had voted for Bombala and Dalgety in 1903-4, now supported Yass-Canberra.

Most Labour Senators would not heed such suggestions. Senator de Largie (Western Australia), wary of the outcome of the vote, promised the "Sydney influence" which he believed had dominated the Parliament for seven or eight years, that if he was re-elected, the question would be re-opened "again and again" until a "satisfactory settlement" was reached.⁽¹³⁹⁾ Like many of his fellow party-members, Senator Stewart (Queensland) claimed that while it was necessary for the Commonwealth to acquire an extensive federal territory, the promoters of Yass-Canberra wanted the area restricted in size in order to give the land "boodler" a chance to make a huge profit.⁽¹⁴⁰⁾

The only Labour Senator to support Yass-Canberra was Russell of South Australia who being a farmer, favoured the Yass district because it was a better agricultural area than Dalgety. Russell also claimed that some Senators were opposing Yass-Canberra as a means to delay a decision on the site, and he resented the intrusion of party politics into this affair.⁽¹⁴¹⁾ Russell's independent stand invoked the displeasure of Story (South Australia) who said that his

(139) Ibid Page 1899.

(140) Ibid Page 1762.

(141) Ibid Pages 1900-7. See also Age 12 October 1900 and G.F. Pearce From Carpenter to Cabinet Page 61.

fellow state and party colleague had been "misguided enough" to "associate" himself with those who were influenced by the Sydney press. ⁽¹⁴²⁾

As the Senate contained three Ministerial supporters and fifteen Labour members, it was obvious that the outcome of the ballot was going to be very close. Senator Cameron (Tasmania) who generally supported the Government but whose views on this matter were uncertain, was absent during the first few days of the debate. His vote was regarded as vital. Like his fellow Tasmanians, Cameron's preference was for the postponement of a settlement, ⁽¹⁴³⁾ but after a conference with Deakin he decided to support Yass-Canberra. ⁽¹⁴⁴⁾ This seemed to sway the odds in favour of that site, although the Sydney Morning Herald warned that since all sorts of manoeuvring was going on, the most constant vigilance was required. ⁽¹⁴⁵⁾

This last point was soon aptly demonstrated. On 6 November, the ballot took place. Six sites - Armidale, Dalgety, Dalgety-Tooma, Lyndhurst, Tumut and Yass-Canberra - were nominated. On the first ballot there was a tie of eighteen votes each for Yass-Canberra and Tumut. This surprising result was later explained by a federal politician. The Senate contained eighteen supporters of Yass-Canberra whilst the sponsors of Dalgety could only muster sixteen

(142) Ibid Page 1993.

(143) Mercury 4 November 1908.

(144) S.M.H. 5 November 1908.

(145) S.M.H. 6 November 1908.

votes. The Labour Senator McGregor (South Australia) preferred Tooma but would vote for Tumut which was the site nominated by McColl (Victoria). So, all of the Dalgety supporters decided to cast their ballot for Tumut. The rationale behind this strategy was that a deadlock would be created and the issue would remain unresolved, so giving the Dalgety site another life.⁽¹⁴⁶⁾

After a certain amount of wrangling over the procedure to be followed, the President of the Senate Gould of New South Wales ordered a second ballot between Yass-Canberra and Tumut. McColl now changed sides and voted for Yass-Canberra. The outraged Age described his act as a "flagrant case of ratting".⁽¹⁴⁷⁾ But McColl had tried to reconcile the interests of his State and his party. During the debate he had said that while he preferred delay, such a course would only serve Victorian interests and the Parliament was "morally bound" to try to reach a settlement within a "reasonable time" from the inception of Federation.⁽¹⁴⁸⁾ McColl later revealed that he had viewed both Yass-Canberra and Dalgety and considered the former superior. He had supported Tumut to "give it a show" because he had heard it was an "excellent" site, and it was much nearer to Victoria than Yass-Canberra. When he realised that the Government and Labour party had supported Tumut "simply to cause a disagreement" and to subsequently bring in Dalgety, he had voted for Yass-Canberra

(146) S.M.H. 10 November 1908.

Details of the vote appear in Appendix I.

(147) Age 7 November 1908.

(148) C.P.D. Volume XLVIII Page 1668.

to ensure a settlement.⁽¹⁴⁹⁾ It was under these dramatic circumstances that the Senate agreed with the House's choice of area for the Australian capital.

The 1908 Seat of Government Bill

On 6 November, the same day on which the Senate chose Yass-Canberra in its ballot, Fisher announced in the House that the Labour party could no longer support the Deakin Ministry. On 10 November, the Government was defeated on a motion of confidence and within a week a new Labour Ministry was commissioned and assumed office.⁽¹⁵⁰⁾

One of the queries then raised was what would be the attitude of the new Government towards the selection of Yass-Canberra? Most

(149) Argus 9 November 1908.

W. Farmer Whyte claimed that Austin Chapman influenced McColl to change his vote. William Morris Hughes Sydney (Angus and Robertson) 1957 Page 116.

This is very unlikely for Chapman was still ill and, anyhow, two months later he was still confident that Dalgety would be the capital. Bega Budget 9 January 1908. Whyte obviously makes this assumption because Canberra was also in Chapman's electorate. In latter years Chapman fought hard to secure the construction of the capital at Canberra.

(150) Fitzhardinge wrongly states that Deakin was left in power until a Bill fixing Canberra as the capital site was passed. William Morris Hughes Volume I Page 175.

of the Fisher Cabinet had been supporters of Dalgety. Senator Nield (New South Wales) pointed out that the votes of the members of the new Labour Ministry had been five to one against Yass-Canberra and so it was "more than useless" to imagine that the Cabinet would make any "enthusiastic attempt" to deal "speedily and satisfactorily" with the question.⁽¹⁵¹⁾ The Bulletin chortled that the "Yass-Canberra fraud" was now "perfectly and wholly dead" as it was a "direct challenge" which Labour could be expected to take up and defeat.⁽¹⁵²⁾

The Ministry soon silenced such speculations. On 25 November, in presenting the Labour programme to the House, Fisher announced that despite differences in the Cabinet over the suitability of Yass-Canberra, it had been decided to press on with capital site legislation.⁽¹⁵³⁾ The Ministry realised that before it could tackle more national questions like defence, it was necessary to remove this irritating subject from federal politics.

On 26 November, the new Minister for Home Affairs Hugh Mahon who had been one of the most hostile critics of the New South Wales Government, introduced a Bill situating the seat of government within the Yass-Canberra area and providing also for an area of federal territory of 900 square miles and access to the sea at Jervis Bay.⁽¹⁵⁴⁾ A week later, in moving the second reading of the Bill, Mahon urged the House to proceed expeditiously with the measure in order to pass

(151) D.T. 20 November 1908. H.G. Turner claimed that the "new Ministry favouring the decision arrived at, brought down a Bill to give effect to it". The First Decade of the Commonwealth Page 190.

(152) Bulletin 19 November 1908.

(153) C.P.D. Volume XLVIII Page 2207.

(154) Ibid Page 2346.

it before the end of the session, and thus remove a source of friction with New South Wales. Mahon pointed out that for the first time in the history of this question the Cabinet was unanimous; the capital site issue had become an official Government matter. Despite the desire to reach a settlement with New South Wales, Mahon promised that the Bill would not weaken the Parliament's "rights" in regard to the selection of the site. (155)

A mild debate followed and the Bill encountered only scant opposition. G. H. Wise (Gippsland) moved an amendment designed to retain Dalgety as the capital until the territory in the Yass-Canberra area had been granted or acquired. Significantly, Deakin opposed this move. While the former Prime Minister believed that the "supremacy" of Dalgety as a site was "unchallenged", he suggested that such a step as Wise suggested would be unwise and unnecessary: if no suitable site could be found in the Yass-Canberra area, then the claims of Dalgety could again be brought forward. The amendment was negatived without a division. The House rejected a further amendment which provided for the Commonwealth's possession of both the access to and the federal port itself at Jervis Bay. It was noticeable that unlike 1903-4, when members were more insistent on the rights of the federal Parliament, most of the House now realised that there should be as few barriers as possible placed in the way of settlement. The Bill was passed without amendment. (156)

(155) Ibid Pages 2525-7.

(156) Ibid Pages 2527-60.

The Ministry's proposals did not receive such an easy passage in the Senate. Many Labour Senators were still bitterly opposed to the selection of the Yass-Canberra area and they were determined to do all they could to block the Bill. Senator Stewart (Queensland) expressed disgust with the federal representatives who had "abased themselves in the dust" and allowed New South Wales to "tread" upon them.⁽¹⁵⁷⁾ Stewart's state and Labour colleague Givens hoped that members would not ask the Parliament to be continually 'kow-towing' to the "States right crowd" in New South Wales.⁽¹⁵⁸⁾

The main approbation was reserved for the Labour leaders. Senator Henderson (Western Australia) claimed that the Ministry had forgotten the "principles which they had championed".⁽¹⁵⁹⁾ Senator Findley (Victoria) asserted that he would not support even a Labour Government in sponsoring a Bill which was "inimical" to the "interest of the people of Australia".⁽¹⁶⁰⁾

Perhaps this revolt was part of a general lack of sympathy with Ministerial measures by Labour backbenchers at this time. On matters other than those of the official platform, some Labour backbenchers may have wished to have shown their independence.⁽¹⁶¹⁾ As far as this study is concerned, the significance is that they should have considered the capital site issue of such importance as to have opposed their party leaders so adamantly. Whereas the Ministry

(157) Ibid Page 2808.

(158) Ibid Page 2799.

(159) Ibid Page 2703.

(160) Ibid Page 2812.

(161) See Advertiser 30 November 1908.

believed that it was necessary to settle this matter before approaching other issues, some of their supporters maintained that the settlement itself was a surrender to parochialism and other devious influences. Senator Stewart said that "strings" were being pulled from Sydney "all the time".⁽¹⁶²⁾ Senator Story even claimed that the "whole agitation" for Yass-Canberra emanated from "land-speculators".⁽¹⁶³⁾ There seems little substance for such claims but it demonstrates the manner in which these Senators viewed the question.

These Labour Senators made futile attempts to block the Bill by the introduction of numerous amendments, including one to insert "Tooma-Dalgety" instead of "Yass-Canberra" into the Bill. All were defeated and the Government finally passed the Bill by relying on the votes of the Opposition.⁽¹⁶⁴⁾

Thus for the second time, a Labour Government had initiated and passed a Seat of Government Bill, but it seemed that the future of this measure would be more secure. The Ministry received damnation and praise from unexpected sources for while the Bulletin considered that the Labour administration was "curiously accommodating" and "tory" in "instincts", the Sydney Morning Herald "heartily endorsed" the Government's attitude, and the Daily Telegraph praised its "fair

(162) C.P.D. Volume XLVIII Page 2715.

(163) Ibid Page 2708. Senator Millen replied that the statement was "childish" and that Story was "merely fishing". Ibid

(164) Ibid Pages 2700-25, 2799-2826.

A copy of the Bill appears in Appendix II.

and honourable" spirit.⁽¹⁶⁵⁾ The Age remained silent.

Epilogue - The Choice of Canberra

Although the Parliament had nominated the general area, the actual site still had to be chosen. The federal Government secured the services of C.R. Scrivener, the New South Wales Government Surveyor, who had earlier reported so favourably on the Southern Monaro area and the Dalgety site in particular. Home Affairs Minister Mahon stated in his instructions to Scrivener, that the "primary essentials" of the federal territory were: - the possession of a site or sites with the necessary topographical characteristics for a capital, which Mahon described as a commanding position with extensive views and distinctive features lending itself to beautification and expansion; a catchment area for water supply; the provision for a perfect sanitation system; and accessibility to both Sydney and Melbourne.⁽¹⁶⁶⁾ An Advisory Board was also set up consisting of the Secretary for Home Affairs, the Director-General of Public Works in New South Wales, the New South Wales Government Architect and Scrivener.⁽¹⁶⁷⁾

(165) Bulletin 3 December 1908.

S.M.H. 3 December 1908 (1L).

D.T. 3 December 1908 (1L).

(166) Minister for Home Affairs to C.R. Scrivener 21 December 1908

C.P.P. 1909 Volume II Page 513.

(167) P.M. to Premier N.S.W. 13 February 1909.

Premier N.S.W. to P.M. 22 February 1909. Ibid Page 514.

During the early months of 1909, Scrivener carried out extensive surveys of the Yass-Canberra district but he did not enthuse over the area in his first report. He found the Cotter River as the only suitable source of water supply but even it was disappointing as a source of power. Canberra while by "no means ideal", was the best site examined: it was "prominently situated" and yet "sheltered", and provided opportunities to store water for "ornamental purposes" at a "reasonable cost". Scrivener proposed that the catchment areas of both the Molongolo and Queanbeyan Rivers should be the limits of the territory, and he noted that a railway would have to be constructed from Yass to Queanbeyan. ⁽¹⁶⁸⁾

The Advisory Board concurred in Scrivener's observations but remarked that more necessary information was required on not only the actual site, but also on sources of water and power supply, sewerage disposal and the possible railway to Jervis Bay. ⁽¹⁶⁹⁾ In his second report, Scrivener, who had earlier favoured the Monaro district because he had admired its Snowy River, drew serious doubts about the Cotter River as a "satisfactory source" both on the grounds of heavy construction costs and its insufficiency for a combined water and power supply. Scrivener also pointed out the difficulty

(168) Mr. District Surveyor Scrivener to Minister for Home Affairs 25 February 1909 Ibid Pages 514-8.

It can be seen by the comment on "ornamental purposes" that Scrivener envisaged the possibility of a lake.

(169) Advisory Board to Minister for Home Affairs 8 March 1909 Ibid Pages 520-1.

of constructing a railway from Canberra to Jervis Bay.⁽¹⁷⁰⁾ This provoked an angry retort from Premier Wade who questioned Scrivener's qualifications on the issues of water conservation, sewerage and railway construction, and drew attention to reports by New South Wales Engineers which contradicted Scrivener's conclusions.⁽¹⁷¹⁾

However, the developments in federal politics at this very moment was to affect consideration of this question. In his policy speech at Gympie on 30 March, Fisher had promised that his administration would proceed with the construction of the capital as soon as the "proper place" had been determined,⁽¹⁷²⁾ but the 'Fusion' of the non-Labour parties ended the Labour Government's life on the day after the Parliament re-convened for its third and final session. There were some surprises in the new Deakin Ministry. One unexpected appointment was that of G.W. Fuller who

(170) Surveyor Scrivener to Minister for Home Affairs 26 May 1909 Ibid Pages 523-7.

(171) Premier N.S.W. to P.M. 4 June 1909 Ibid Pages 545-7. See also S.M.H. 1 June 1909.

Hugh Mahon who was now a private member again, referred to Wade's statement in the press by describing it as "a gross perversion of facts - an impertinent attempt to browbeat an officer of the highest standing".

C.P.D. Volume XLIX Pages 259-60.

A report by E.M. de Burgh on the Cotter River appears in C.P.P. 1909 Volume II Pages 530-1.

(172) S.M.H. 31 March 1909.

was apparently nominated by Cook after Dugald Thomson had declined to serve because of private reasons and Deakin had rejected the candidature of the ultra-conservative Bruce Smith.⁽¹⁷³⁾ As far as this study is concerned, the importance of Fuller's accession to office is that he was member for the electorate of Illawarra which was in close proximity to the Canberra site. Fuller had earlier played a minor role to Reid and Watson in canvassing votes for Canberra. As he now became Minister for Home Affairs, it was certain that a final settlement of the capital site would be pressed forward by him with the utmost haste.

Fuller lost little time. It would seem that under his influence the Advisory Board partly revised Scrivener's report. The Board accepted Scrivener's recommendation of the Canberra city site as a rectangular area with the eastern and western boundaries of the northern end resting on the slopes of Mount Ainslie and Black Mountain, but unlike Scrivener, the Board regarded the Cotter as a "source of perennially clear and pure water" which through a pumping scheme would be a sufficient source of water and power supply for a population up to 50,000. Jervis Bay was nominated as a port which would meet the

(173) La Nauze Alfred Deakin Volume 2 Page 570.

See also S.M.H. 3 June 1909.

and D.T. 3 June 1909.

Fuller's popularity in the House was aptly demonstrated for while the Labour benches greeted the announcement of most of the Ministry with "grim silence", his appointment was "cheered". Argus 3 June 1909.

requirements of the Commonwealth. Finally, as regards the extent of territory, the Board proposed an area which was slightly in excess of the 1,000 square miles which had originally been nominated by the Minister. (174)

It was obvious that even if the Canberra site and its surrounding area were partly deficient in some respects, the question was now too close to settlement to be deferred by such considerations. The entire history of this topic had shown that political concern had always prevailed over an impartial estimate of a site's assets and it was no different at this late stage.

On 20 July, Deakin forwarded papers and plans of the proposed federal territory to Wade. The Prime Minister requested that the New South Wales Parliament should now pass an Act of Surrender. (175) However, Wade was still worried lest New South Wales should grant the territory and the Commonwealth would decide not to situate the capital there. The Premier requested that the federal Parliament should first determine by "metes and bounds" the precise locality of the territory within which the seat of government would be located. Further correspondence ensued upon this point. (176)

(174) Report of Advisory Board 16 June 1909.

C.P.P. 1909 Volume II Pages 538-40.

(175) P.M. to Premier N.S.W. 20 July 1909 Ibid Page 553.

(176) Premier N.S.W. to P.M. 5 August Ibid Pages 554-5.

P.M. to Premier N.S.W. 17 August 1909 Premier N.S.W. to P.M. 28 August 1909 Ibid Pages 561-2.

Some New South Wales interests were concerned at the delay in instituting further steps. W.M. Hughes warned Wade that the circumstances under which the federal Parliament had agreed to the Yass-Canberra area were "almost unique", and the "factors" which made for that selection could disappear at any moment. Hughes pointed out that the present Parliament had no control over its successor.⁽¹⁷⁷⁾ Finally, a conference was convened in Melbourne between Wade and his Attorney-General Wood and the Commonwealth representatives Fuller and Glynn.⁽¹⁷⁸⁾ The outcome of this discussion was that Wade became satisfied of the sincerity of the federal Government's intentions to locate the capital at Canberra.

On 16 September, Premier Wade introduced resolutions into the state Parliament indicating the intention of the New South Wales authorities to surrender territory to the Commonwealth. Wade proposed that instead of the Advisory Board's recommendation of 1,000 square miles, the federal area should be restricted to 800 square miles; this would be done by eliminating the Queanbeyan district and substituting the catchment area of the Gudgenby, Noas and Paddy Rivers. The Commonwealth would also be granted "control" over the catchment area of the Queanbeyan and Molongolo Rivers. Two square miles of land were allocated at Jervis Bay and the Commonwealth was granted the right to link the port by rail from Canberra.⁽¹⁷⁹⁾

(177) C.P.D. Volume LI Page 2683.

See also S.M.H. 2 (1L) and 6 (1L) September 1909.

(178) S.M.H. 6-7 September 1909.

(179) N.S.W.P.D. (second series) Volume XXXIV Pages 2075-94.

The Labour leader McGowen concurred in the decision to eliminate Queanbeyan from the federal territory but he believed that in other respects the state Parliament should adhere closely to the Advisory Board's recommendations in order to avoid further difficulties in settling the site.⁽¹⁸⁰⁾ However, the Assembly passed Wade's resolutions without amendment.⁽¹⁸¹⁾

It seemed for a while that the state Parliament had again raised an obstacle to settlement but the matter was resolved by a further conference between the Premier and Fuller.⁽¹⁸²⁾ As a result, the Board agreed to the smaller area proposal on the grounds that the Commonwealth would have "water rights" over the catchment areas of the Queanbeyan and Molongolo Rivers.⁽¹⁸³⁾ One further point needed modification. The Seat of Government Act of 1908 had stipulated an area of 900 square miles. To prevent amendment to this Act, Wade made a further offer of 100 square miles.⁽¹⁸⁴⁾

(180) Ibid Pages 2094-2100.

Wright notes that the Queanbeyan area contained a high amount of freehold land. Also, the population of Queanbeyan town was a further asset to New South Wales under the terms of the 1909 financial agreement. D. Wright op.cit Page 148 and f.n. 4.

(181) Ibid Page 2118.

(182) S.M.H. 27 September 1909.

(183) Report of Advisory Board to Minister for Home Affairs 22 September 1909. C.P.P. 1909 Volume II Pages 572-4.

(184) Premier N.S.W. to P.M. 28 September 1909 Ibid Page 575.

The matter was now ready for its final stages in the Commonwealth Parliament. On 7th October, Millen introduced a Seat of Government Acceptance Bill into the Senate. The ensuing debate showed that many Senators were now disinterested in this topic. Questions concerned with water supply and "rights" over the catchment areas disturbed some but general feeling on this subject was summed up by Senator Sayers of Queensland - "We are tired of it".⁽¹⁸⁵⁾

It was the group of Labour Senators who again provided most of the opposition to the measure. The creation of the 'Fusion' Government seemed to have further fired their antagonism towards Canberra. Senator Stewart (Queensland) called the Canberra area a "barren, droughty land".⁽¹⁸⁶⁾ All of the Labour Senators voted against the second reading of the Bill, with the exception of Russell (South Australia) who maintained as previously that the Canberra district was good agricultural land.⁽¹⁸⁷⁾ During the committee stages of the debate, Labour amendments varying from a proposal to insert Dalgety into the Bill to the triviality that the Commonwealth should have the right to obtain "water" as well as "ballast" in constructing a railway to Jervis Bay were put forward as obstructions but all were defeated and the Bill passed unscathed.⁽¹⁸⁸⁾

(185) C.P.D. Volume LII Page 4702.

(186) Ibid Page 4705.

(187) Ibid Pages 4705-7.

(188) C.P.D. Volume LII Pages 4812-8 and Volume LIII Pages 4900-9 and 5004-28.

The effect of 'Fusion' was more clearly seen in the debate in the House. Sampson (Wimmera Vic), a former Deakinite Liberal who twelve months earlier had resented Sydney's domination in this question, now claimed that the matter had been "sufficiently thrashed out" to enable the House to come to a "speedy decision".⁽¹⁸⁹⁾ On the other hand, D. Storrer (Bass Tas.), also a former member of the Protectionists but one who opposed 'Fusion',⁽¹⁹⁰⁾ protested that Canberra was not the "best" site and the issue should not be settled by "party politics".⁽¹⁹¹⁾ Most members of the late Fisher Cabinet were prepared to accept this measure as a means to remove the subject from discussion but some of the Labour backbenchers again saw the matter from a different standpoint. Maloney (Melbourne Ports) said that "Sydney men" wanted to "dominate Australia".⁽¹⁹²⁾ Ironically, most of the principal figures of earlier discussion were absent. Chapman was still ill, Lyne and Reid were not present in the House during the debate and Watson was in South Africa.

J. Coon (Batman Vic) made one final attempt to delay a decision by moving an amendment to the Bill providing for a referendum on the capital site.⁽¹⁹³⁾ W. Hughes replied by proposing that the site should

(189) C.P.D. Volume LIII Page 5189. See above Page.

(190) La Nauze Alfred Deakin Volume 2 Pages 563 and 601.
Age 26-7 May 1909.

(191) C.P.D. Volume LIII Page 5200.

(192) C.P.D. Volume LIV Page 6398.

(193) C.P.D. Volume LIII Page 5201.

be within "any part of New South Wales" and suggested that it would be "fair, cheap and accessible" if the site were located in Sydney.⁽¹⁹⁴⁾ This latter amendment was later ruled out of order and the House also rejected Coon's proposal.⁽¹⁹⁵⁾ A few other amendments were moved, including a proposition on behalf of S. Mauger (Maribyrnong Vic) who wanted to initiate prohibition in the federal territory. As regards this last proposal, Fuller promised that the Government would do all it could to prevent further licences being issued but the Bill was passed unamended.⁽¹⁹⁶⁾

This effectively ended debate in the federal Parliament. The New South Wales Legislature finalised the matter by passing a Bill surrendering the proposed federal territory to the Commonwealth.⁽¹⁹⁷⁾

(194) Ibid Pages 5209-10.

(195) C.P.D. Volume LIV Pages 6386-6417.

Interestingly, Hugh Mahon (Coolgardie W.A.) and J.H. Catts (Cook N.S.W.) both Labour members, claimed that the electorate could not give an "informed" decision on this question.

Ibid Pages 5188 and 6414.

(196) Ibid Pages 6463-78.

Mauger was prominent in the Temperance Movement. The Women's Christian Temperance Union had passed a resolution urging the federal Government to constitute the federal territory as a "no licence centre and so make it the model city of Australia". S.M.H. 2 October 1909.

(197) N.S.W.P.D. (second series) Volume XXXV Pages 3164-88 and Volume XXXVI Pages 3974-7.

There was some slight delay in the issue of the necessary proclamations by the federal Government⁽¹⁹⁸⁾ but the federal territory finally passed into the hands of the Commonwealth on 1 January 1911.

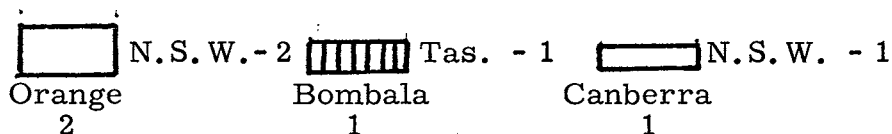
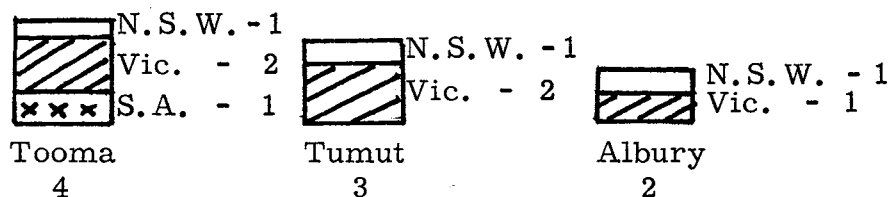
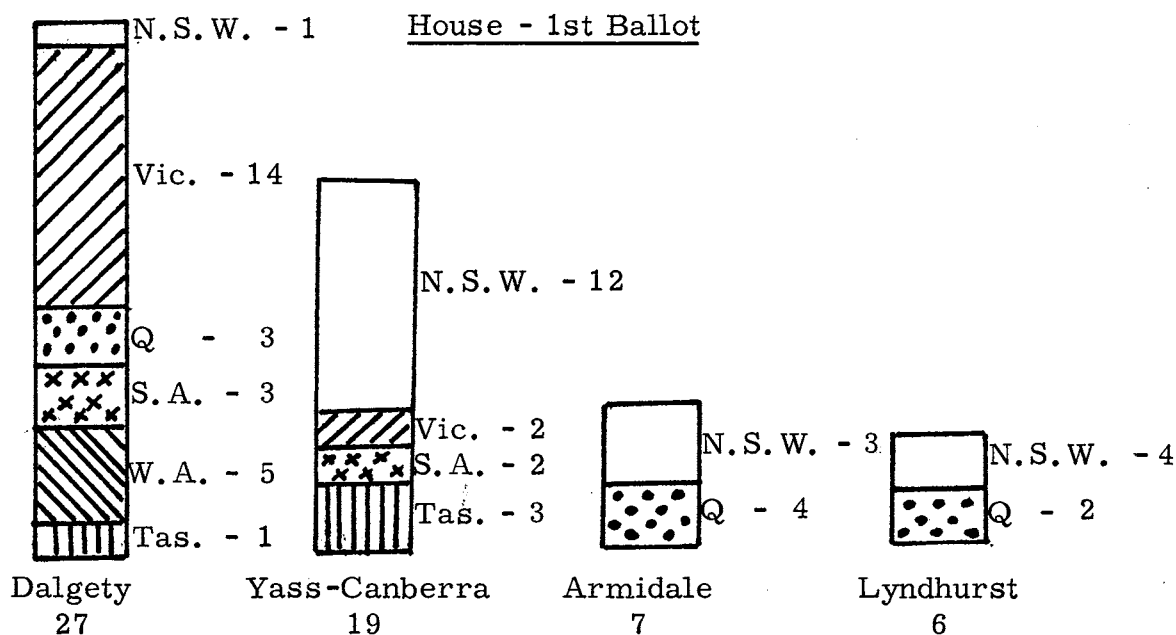
Conclusion

The success of the Parliament in finally coming to a definite decision on the capital site had been due to a number of separate but interwoven factors. Of most importance were the developments in the structure and relations of the federal political parties, especially on the non-Labour side. Certainly the rights and interests of the various States were still significant for some members but they were much subordinated in contrast to the first three years or even the first six years of Federation. Reid was more concerned to secure a triumph over the Deakin Ministry than to ensure that the rights of New South Wales were strictly guarded. The political 'fracas' in April 1908 had partly demonstrated this point. The issue had also become a means of negotiating a political deal for co-operation between Reid's party and the Corner group against the Government. On the other hand, because the Reid Opposition had decided to support the selection of the Canberra site, many Labour members became hardened in their determination to preserve Dalgety as the capital. The Labour objections to Canberra, as evidenced even in the minor 'revolt' against the Fisher Ministry, were based more on enmity towards the non-Labour groups than on an objective appreciation of that site's assets.

(198) D. Wright op.cit Pages 149-50.

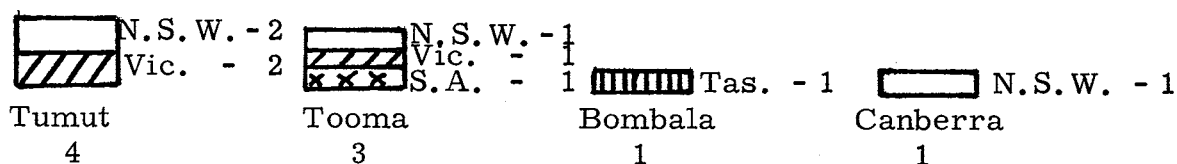
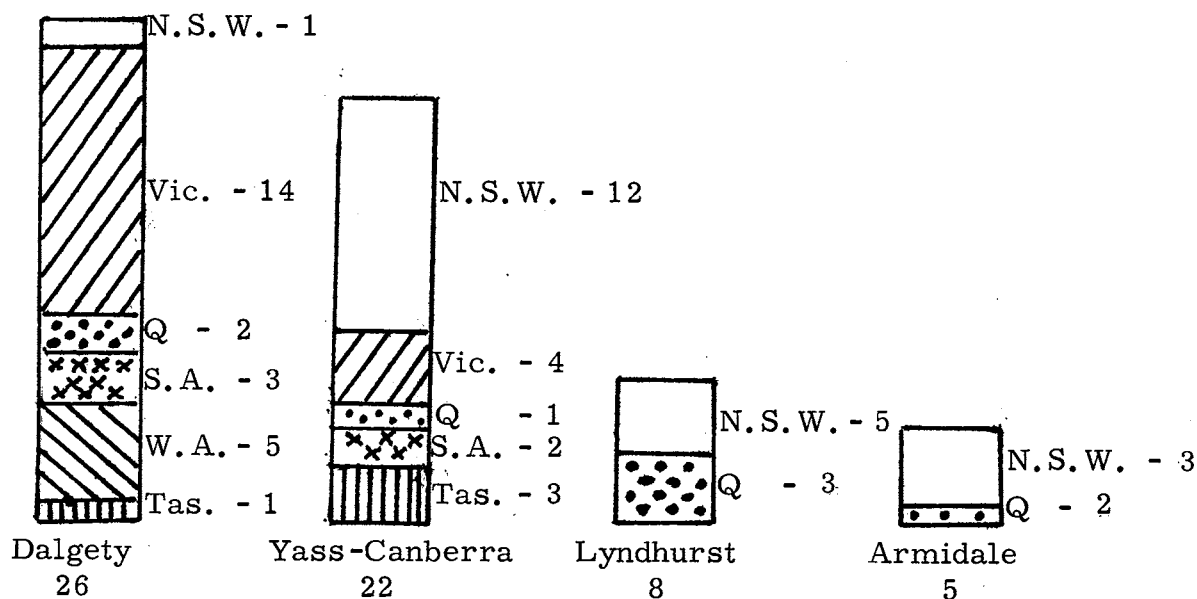
The efforts of certain individuals had also been notable. J.C. Watson had continued his leading role as a negotiator and despite attacks on his character, he was able to gather sufficient supporters from amongst the ranks of the Labour party to help defeat Dalgety. Wade's accession as Premier in New South Wales also aided these moves toward settlement. Whereas Carruthers' behaviour, as in the 1907 state election, had often blocked and hindered fruitful discussion, Wade was prepared to work with Watson and others in their attempts to achieve a final result. Many federal representatives were tired of an interminable debate which had dragged on for over seven years. Wade's attitude convinced some that there would be little to lose and much to gain in accepting the premise that the choice of the site would have to be changed.

Yet it should be noted that the selection of the Yass-Canberra district in October 1908 was a compromise solution. While the area was neither as inaccessible or as close to the Victorian border as Dalgety, it was not as near Sydney as that city's interests would have preferred. The New South Wales Government was also prepared to make concessions on the questions of the extent of the federal territory and of a port. Once the general area had been decided upon, the nomination of Canberra as the actual site was decided upon more by expert opinion than by the decisions of politicians. When it seemed that difficulties could have arisen in the final stages of this subject, the determination of the Commonwealth and New South Wales Governments to finally settle the issue had soon expedited the matter.

House and Senate Ballots

Comments: Lake George received no votes. W.H. Irvine (Grampians Vic) was paired with Chapman.

Note that there was at least one New South Wales vote for every site except Bombala. On the other hand, all the West Australians voted for Dalgety. Both these trends continued in the following ballots.

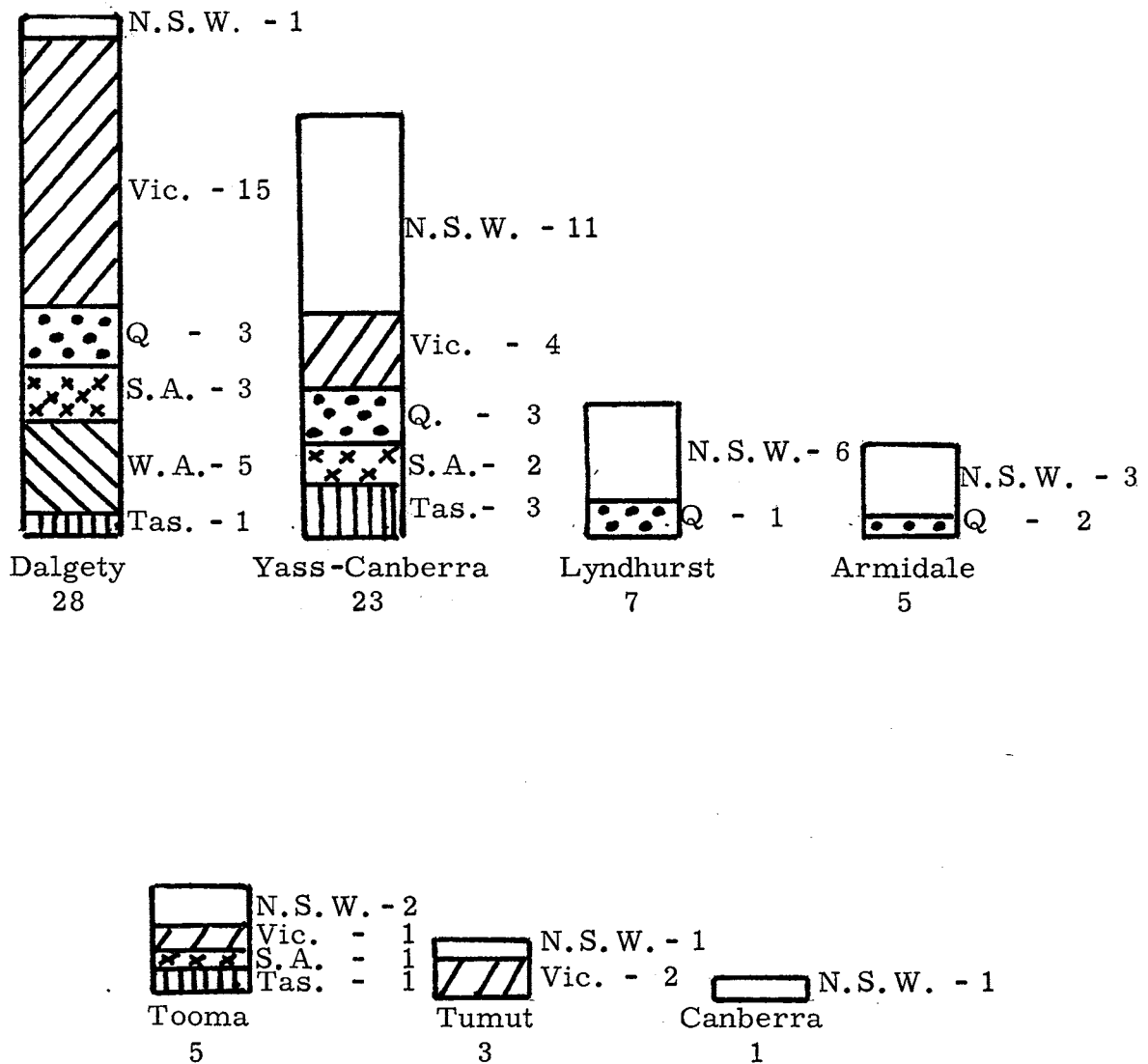
2nd Ballot

Comments: Lake George had been eliminated. Albury and Orange received no votes. Of the Albury supporters, T. Brown (Indi Vic) now voted for Yass-Canberra, while Chanter (Riverina N.S.W.) now voted for Tumut.

Of the Orange supporters, both T. Brown (Canobolas N.S.W.) and Thomas (Barrier N.S.W.) now voted for Lyndhurst.

There was also a certain amount of switching of votes. Of most importance, Knox (Kooyong Vic) who had voted for Tooma, now supported Dalgety.

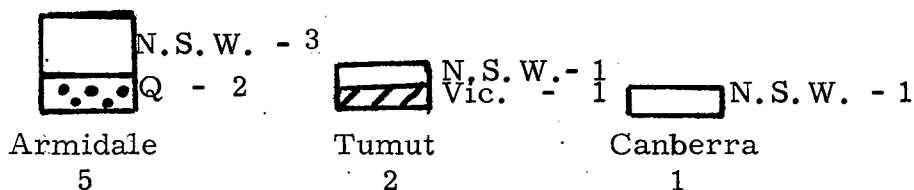
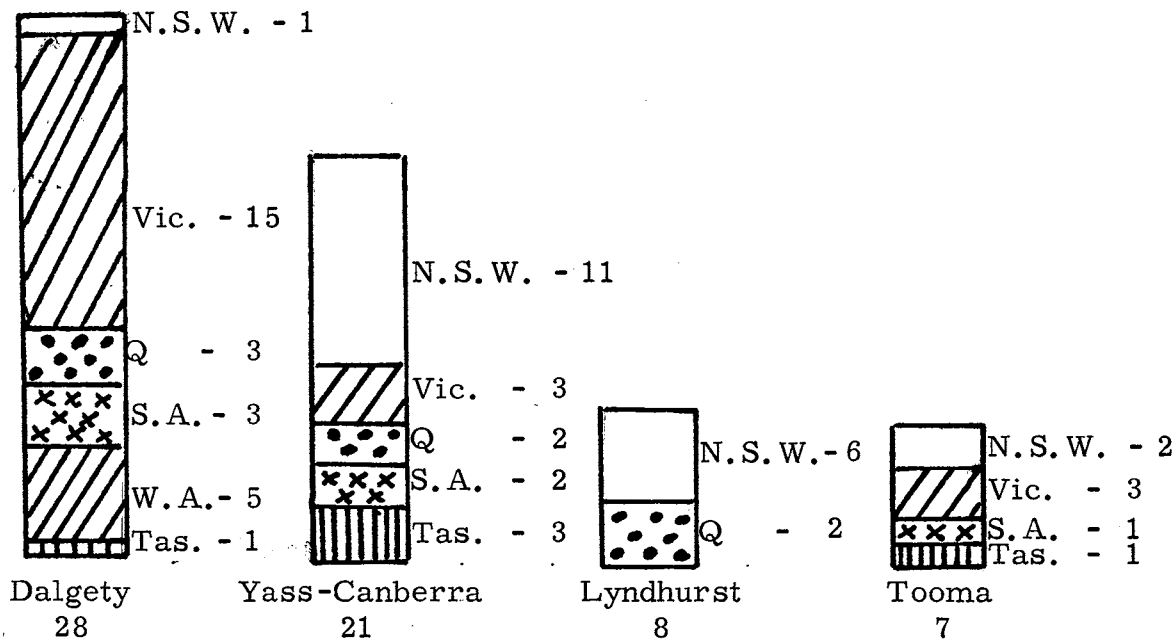
Both Groom, the Minister in charge of the Ballot, and W.H. Irvine did not sign their ballot papers. Watson was paired with Chapman.

3rd Ballot

Comments: Albury and Orange had been eliminated. Bombala received no votes.

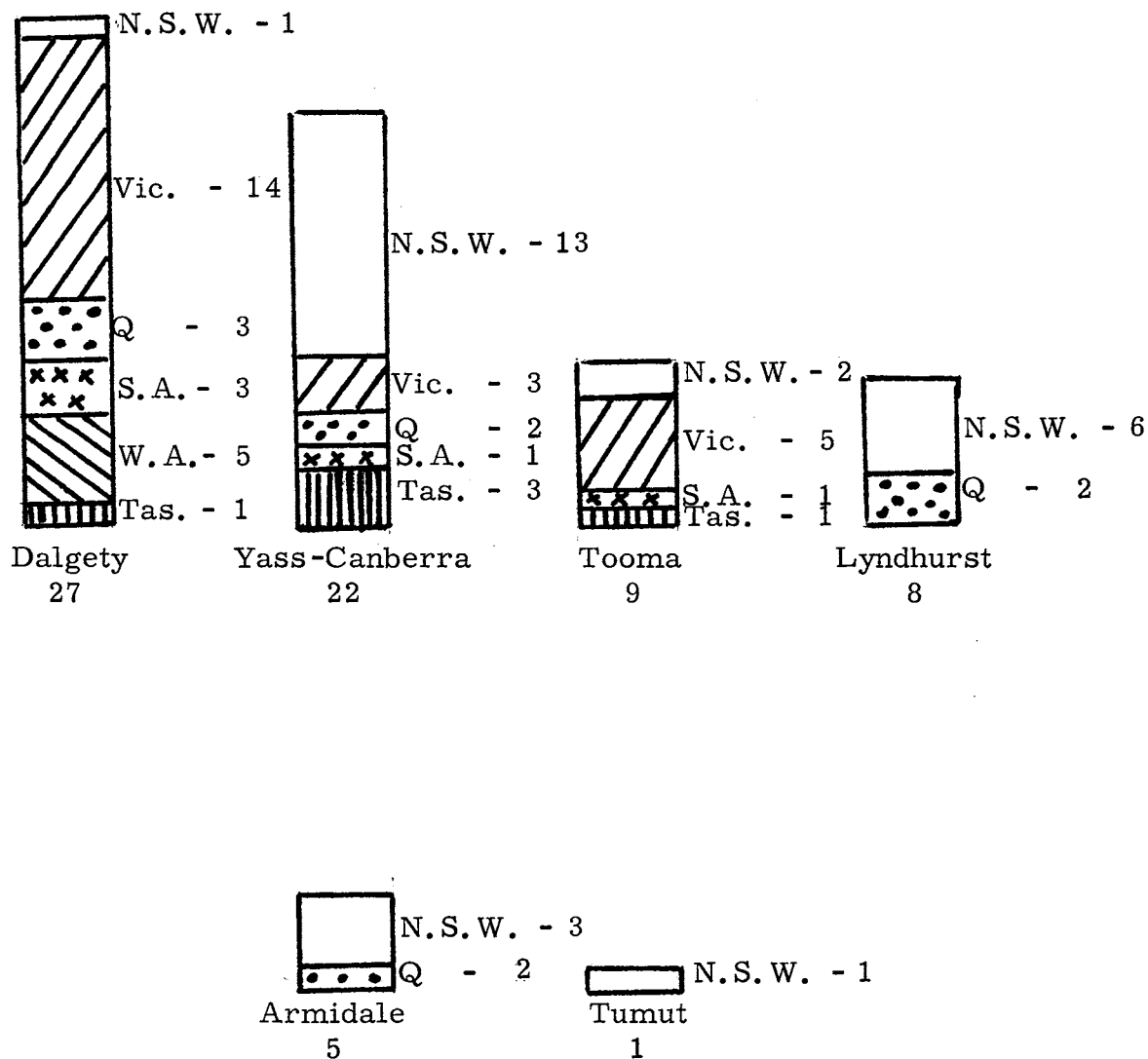
O'Malley (Darwin Tas.) who had supported Bombala, now voted for Tooma. In his first vote, W.H. Irvine voted for Yass-Canberra.

Watson was again paired with Chapman.

4th Ballot

Comments: Bombala had been eliminated. Tilley Brown (Indi Vic) switched from Yass-Canberra to Tooma and Palmer (Echuca Vic) switched from Tumut to Tooma.

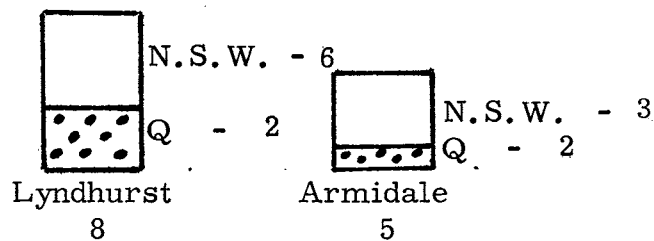
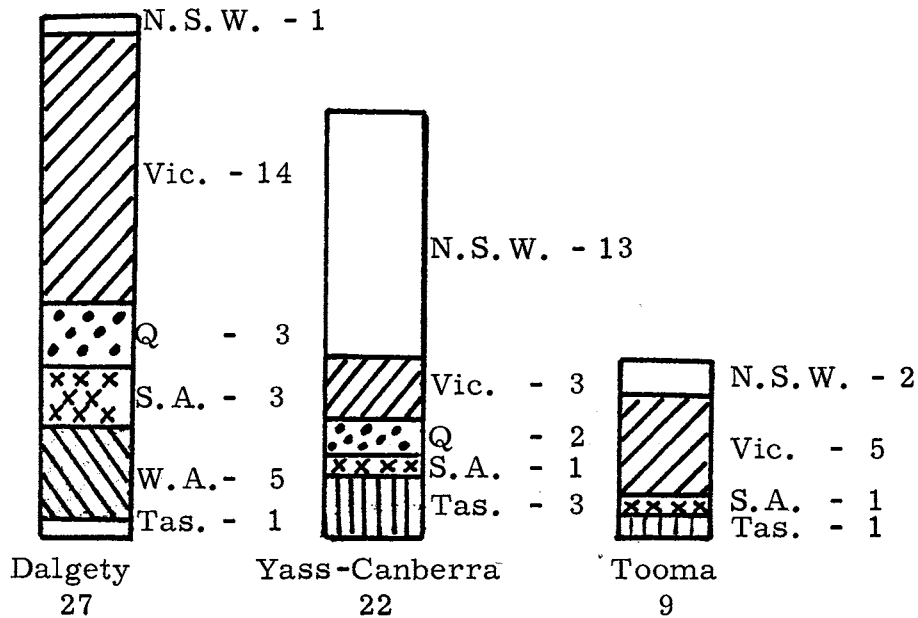
Watson was again paired with Chapman.

5th Ballot

Comments: Canberra had been eliminated. Willis (Robertson N.S.W.) who had supported Canberra, now voted for Yass-Canberra.

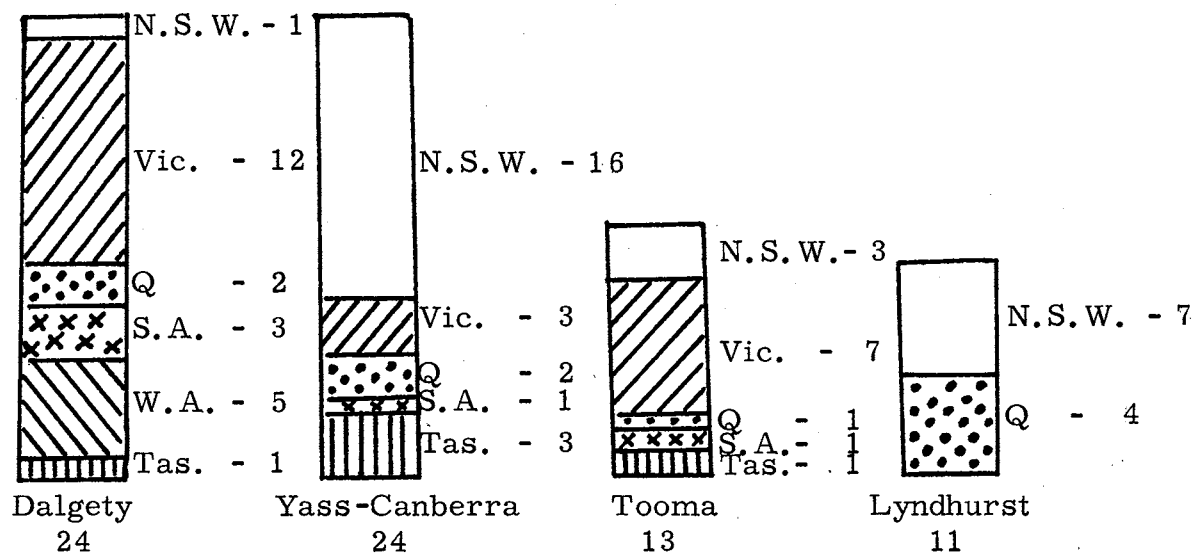
Tooma continued to attract further votes - both Knox (Kooyong Vic) who had supported Dalgety, and Quick (Bendigo Vic) who had supported Tumut, now voted for Tooma.

Livingston (Barker S.A.) was paired with Chapman.

6th Ballot

Comments: Tumut had been eliminated. Lyne (Hume N.S.W.) who had supported Tumut, now voted for Tooma. Webster (Gwydir N.S.W.) did not sign his ballot paper but he had supported Tooma.

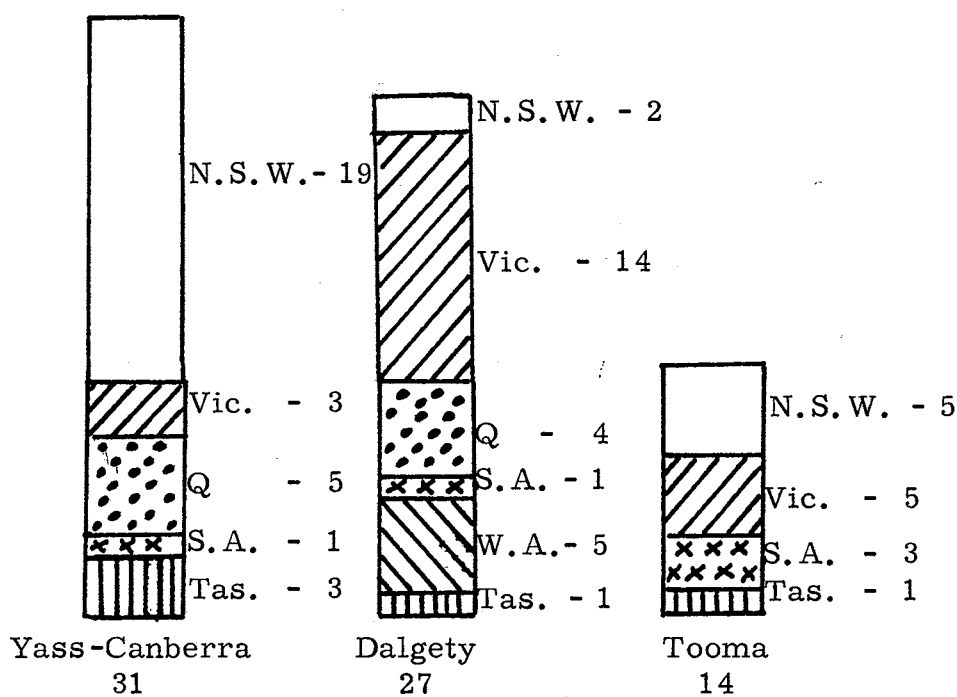
Livingston was again paired with Chapman.

7th Ballot

Comments: Armidale had been eliminated. Of the Armidale supporters, Foster (New England N.S.W.), McDonald (Kennedy Q), Page (Maranoa Q) and Wilks (Dalley N.S.W.) voted for Lyndhurst, while Thomson (Cowper N.S.W.) voted for Yass-Canberra.

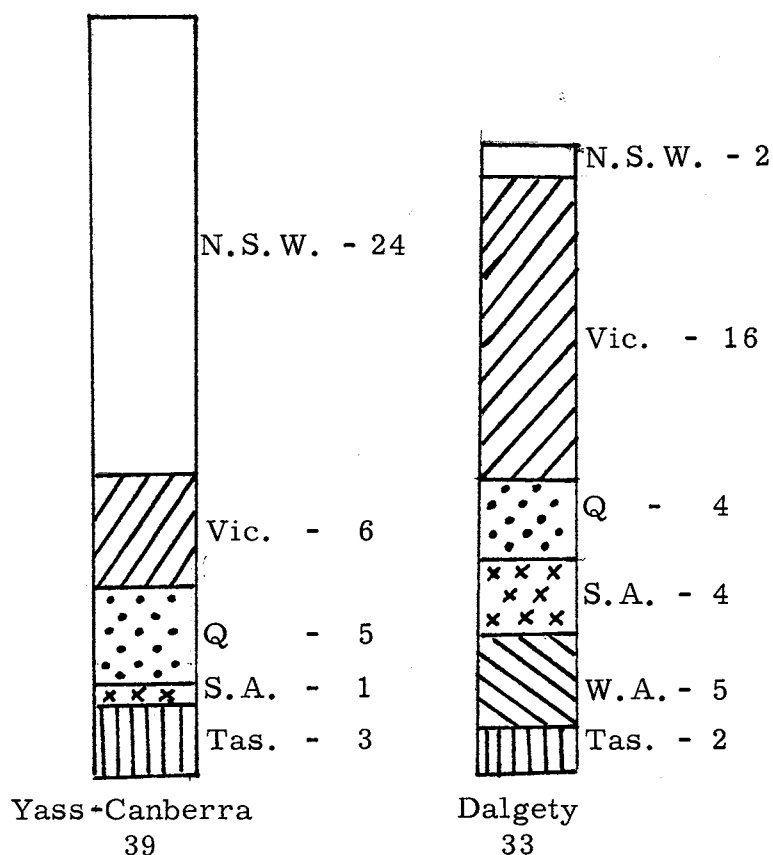
Of more importance, Bamford (Herbert Q), Matthews (Melbourne Ports) and Wynne (Balaclava Vic) switched from Dalgety to Tooma. As all again voted for Dalgety in the next ballot, this move was obviously made to ensure that Lyndhurst would be eliminated next.

Livingston was again paired with Chapman.

8th Ballot

Comments: Lyndhurst had been eliminated. Of the Lyndhurst supporters, Brown (Canobolas N.S.W.), Catts (Cook N.S.W.), Foxton (Brisbane Q), McDonald (Kennedy Q), Thomas (Barrier N.S.W.), Sinclair (Moreton Q) and Wilks (Dalley N.S.W.) now voted for Yass-Canberra, while Page (Maranoa Q) and Spence (Darling N.S.W.) voted for Dalgety and Foster (New England N.S.W.) and Carr (Macquarie N.S.W.) voted for Tooma.

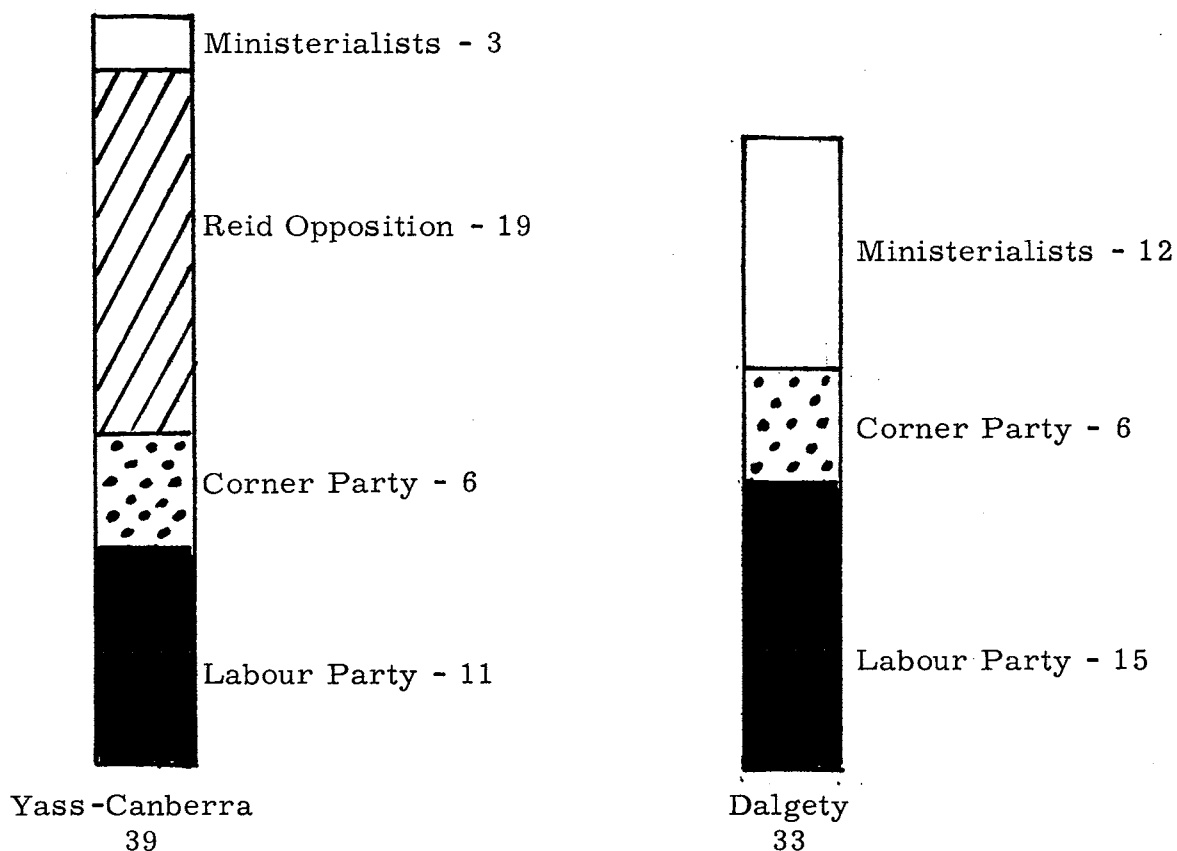
Livingston was again paired with Chapman.

9th Ballot

Comments: Tooma had been eliminated. Of the Tooma supporters, Brown (Indi Vic), Carr (Macquarie N.S.W.), Chanter (Riverina N.S.W.), Foster (New England N.S.W.), Lyne (Hume N.S.W.), Palmer (Echuca Vic), Quick (Bendigo Vic) and Webster (Gwydir N.S.W.) voted for Yass-Canberra, while Batchelor (Boothby S.A.), Knox (Kooyong Vic), O'Malley (Denison Tas.), Poynton (Grey S.A.), Roberts (Adelaide S.A.) and Tudor (Yarra Vic) voted for Dalgety.

Livingston was paired with Chapman.

An Analysis of the Party Vote in
the final ballot



Comments: The three Ministerialists who voted for Yass-Canberra were the New South Welshmen Lyne (Hume), Chanter (Riverina) and J. Thomson (Cowper).

Ten of the Labour supporters of Yass-Canberra were from New South Wales while the other was McDonald (Kennedy Q).

Senate Ballot

Yass-Canberra 18

Tumut 18

Cameron	Tasmania	Independent	Best	Victoria	Ministerialist
Chataway	Queensland	Opposition	Croft	Western Australia	Labour
Clemons	Tasmania	Opposition	de Largie	Western Australia	Labour
Dobson	Tasmania	Opposition	Findley	Victoria	Labour
Fraser	Victoria	Opposition	Givens	Queensland	Labour
Gould	New South Wales	Opposition	Guthrie	Queensland	Labour
Gray	New South Wales	Opposition	Henderson	Western Australia	Labour
Macfarlane	Tasmania	Opposition	Keating	Tasmania	Ministerialist
Millen	New South Wales	Opposition	Lynch	Western Australia	Labour
Mulcahy	Tasmania	Opposition	McColl	Victoria	Opposition
Nield	New South Wales	Opposition	McGregor	South Australia	Labour
Pulsford	New South Wales	Opposition	Needham	Western Australia	Labour
Russell	South Australia	Labour	Pearce	Western Australia	Labour
Sayers	Queensland	Opposition	Russell	Victoria	Labour
St. Ledger	Queensland	Opposition	Stewart	Queensland	Labour
Symon	South Australia	Opposition	Story	South Australia	Labour
Vardon	South Australia	Opposition	Trenwith	Victoria	Ministerialist
Walker	New South Wales	Opposition	Turley	South Australia	Labour

On the second ballot Senator McColl switched support to
Yass-Canberra.

Appendix II

No. 24 of 1908.

An Act to Determine the Seat of Government
of the Commonwealth.

[Assented to 14th December, 1908.]

BE it enacted by the King's Most Excellent Majesty, the Senate, and the House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Australia, as follows:—

Short title.

1. This Act may be cited as the *Seat of Government Act* 1908.Repeal of
1904, No. 7.2. The *Seat of Government Act* 1904 is hereby repealed.Determination
of Seat of
Government.

3. It is hereby determined that the Seat of Government of the Commonwealth shall be in the district of Yass-Canberra in the State of New South Wales.

Area of Federal
territory.

4. The territory to be granted to or acquired by the Commonwealth for the Seat of Government shall contain an area not less than nine hundred square miles, and have access to the sea.

Power of entry
for purpose of
survey.

5.—(1.) Any person thereto authorized in writing by the Minister may, for the purposes of any survey of land with a view to ascertaining the territory proper to be granted to or acquired by the Commonwealth for the Seat of Government, enter upon and remain on any lands whether Crown lands of the State of New South Wales or not, and do thereon all things for the purposes of the survey, and shall do no more damage than is necessary.

(2.) The Commonwealth shall, out of moneys appropriated for the purpose, make compensation for any damage done to the property of any person in the exercise of powers conferred by this section.

Valuation of
land within
the Federal
territory.

6. The amount of the compensation to be paid by the Commonwealth for any land to be acquired by the Commonwealth within the territory granted to or acquired by the Commonwealth for the Seat of Government shall not exceed the value of the land on the eighth day of October One thousand nine hundred and eight, and in other respects the provisions of the *Lands Acquisition Act* 1906 shall apply to the acquisition of the land.

CONCLUSIONS

Over nine years elapsed from the inauguration of the new Commonwealth before the site for the Australian capital was finally determined. There were more important fields of decision during the first decade of Federation, such as the questions of arbitration, immigration and defence, but few other topics, if any, had engaged the attention of members for so much futile debate or provoked such an amount of bad faith and recrimination as had the question of the capital site. If discussion on the Tariff dominated parliamentary proceedings for much of this period, it was the issue of the capital site which remained to haunt the federal representatives.

The early hopes for a speedy settlement had been frustrated by the federal Government's failure to introduce capital site legislation at an early date. Barton seemed content to allow Lyne and Chapman full scope to direct the investigation and examination of sites in their own interests. The deadlock between the Senate and House in 1903 was due not only to the tactics and efforts of the Victorians and other members, but also to the duel between these two Ministers, whose rivalry coloured much of the discussion, both in the Parliament and outside, for most of the period of this study but especially in the years 1901-4.

The capital site debate during the early months of the second Parliament was more directly influenced than previously by the existing relations between the three federal political parties which had reached a state of 'stalemate' after the 1903 election. Most members realised the need both to make concessions and remove this

topic from political discussion. It was generally expected that the selection of the Dalgety site in August 1904 would effectively end debate in the federal Parliament. The subsequent difficulties between the Commonwealth and New South Wales soon shattered these hopes. Undoubtedly, Carruthers' objections to Dalgety on the grounds of inaccessibility and remoteness did have some validity, especially when considered in the light of the Premiers' Memorandum of 1899. Carruthers was probably also strictly correct in insisting that New South Wales should have first been consulted on the matters of the extent of the area and a federal port. But the Premier also hindered further progress for his own ends. It seems possible that a compromise solution may have been reached much earlier if Carruthers had not proved so obstinate. J.C. Watson told his fellow parliamentarian G.B. Edwards that in December 1905 he had just "worked things up" for the selection of Lake George when Carruthers "spoilt the show".⁽¹⁾

The final phase of discussion during the period 1906-9 had seen continued efforts to reach a solution, culminating in the selection of the Yass-Canberra area in 1908. The success of these efforts was mainly due to three factors; the influence of J.C. Watson both in his own party and amongst his fellow members, the retirement of Carruthers and the succession of C.G. Wade as Premier, and of most significance, the relations between non-Labour members in the Parliament. The selection of Yass-Canberra in October 1908 was a compromise effected mainly through an understanding between Reid and

(1) J.C. Watson to G.B. Edwards 18 July 1907 G.B. Edwards Papers M.L. A 1768/154.

six Victorian non-Labour members sitting on the corner benches. The Yass-Canberra district was not as close to Sydney as such a site as Lyndhurst but it was reasonably accessible by rail and was not in the far southern portion of the State, thus removing the two principal objections held by the New South Wales Government against the Dalgety site. Once the site had been changed, the state Government was prepared to grant the Commonwealth's request for an area larger than the constitutional minimum of 100 square miles and also make provision for a federal port. The final choice of Canberra as the actual site for the capital was more the result of informed investigation than a political decision in the Parliament.

Whilst each phase of this topic had its own peculiar characteristics, there were certain themes which persisted throughout the entire period of discussion. The most predominant was the conflict between New South Wales and Victoria or, more specifically, between Sydney and Melbourne. The smaller States were not disinterested in this question but they were often forced to wait upon the sidelines while their elder and bigger 'brothers' engaged in their own gladiatorial contest. The lengthy and acrimonious parliamentary debate indicated the significance which both Sydney and Melbourne interests attached to this issue. It was significant that a solution to the problem of the capital site was only obtained when members from both the largest States were able to agree on a compromise.

The conflict between New South Wales and Victoria was carried over into the controversy between Carruthers and the Commonwealth. Carruthers' objections to Dalgety seemed strengthened

by the fact that Deakin, who was Prime Minister for much of this period, was a Victorian. Even in 1907, at a time when it seemed that there might be some hope of settlement in the dispute, the Daily Telegraph could write:

"Mr. Deakin is the head and front, the acknowledged champion, the created mouthpiece, the obedient servant of the narrowest clique of provincialists in the Commonwealth."⁽²⁾

Such a comment also reveals the tone of the constant debate which was carried on between the rival press groups in Sydney and Melbourne. Indeed, the press played a major role in maintaining and adding to the bitterness of this controversy. An examination of question time in the federal parliament during this era indicates in itself the hold which the press organs tended to exert over parliamentary proceedings. The Age's supposition that she would lose her significance once the Parliament left Melbourne and the Sydney press' belief that the newspapers in the southern city were at present exercising an improper influence in federal politics were important factors in determining editorial opinion.

If the clash between the interests of Sydney and Melbourne overshadowed most other considerations, the more localised fight between the various federal capital leagues was also important, especially during the period prior to the dispute with the New South Wales Government. The federal representatives of certain New South Wales electorates were unable to ignore the pressure exerted by these

(2) D.T. 9 April 1907 (1L).

groups. The supposed advantages which the establishment of the federal capital would bring to a particular district, were more imagined than real but this did not decrease the significance or enthusiasm of the leagues. Austin Chapman seemed to successfully conduct his electoral campaigns on the platform of securing the capital site for the Eden-Monaro area.

Finally, although one should never overstress the role of individuals in any historical situation, it does seem that certain personalities 'stand out' in this study. The astuteness of Chapman and Lyne, the irascibility of Carruthers and the plodding honesty of Watson influenced the discussion in the federal Parliament to a considerable extent. But this in itself may be more an indication of the early formative years of federal politics than an acknowledgment of these individuals' significance.

The transfer to the Commonwealth of the Australian Capital Territory at the beginning of 1911 concluded what had been a long, hard-fought and often bitter battle, yet the controversy over the question of the Australian capital was far from ended. The site may have been selected but it was another sixteen years before the federal Parliament actually met there. The history of those years must remain for another scholar to recount.

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