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THE CONDITION OF THE URBAN WAGE EARNING CLASS IN AUSTRALIA IN THE 1880's

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PRECIS

The Preface briefly discusses definitions of cities and social classes. The wage earners to be examined in the thesis, their significance in Australian history and the period covered are outlined.

Part I deals with the background to the period and the composition of the urban wage earning class.

Chapter I places the study in perspective by examining the importance of the 1880's, city life at that time and the economic background for each colony.

Chapter 2 sets out to establish the numbers and composition of the urban wage earning class in each colony; to determine the growth of manufacturing industry and the various types of employment in each of the capital cities. Appendix I is a discussion of the statistical sources. Appendix II is a detailed

study of Melbourne industry during the 1880's.

Part II covers working conditions, legislation affecting these, and hours of work.

Chapter I includes such aspects of working conditions as buildings, ventilation, space, lighting, amenities, dangerous machinery and industrial accidents. Appendix III tabulates industrial accidents for a sample period.

Chapter 2 deals with outwork as a special type of urban employment of the time, and its relationship to factory production.

Chapter 3 deals with industrial legislation in Australia before 1890. This is principally concerned with Victoria, where the greatest advances were made. A detailed account of the legislation and of numerous abortive bills is used to illustrate the political activities of organised urban workers and the conditions in which they operated.

Chapter 4 on hours of work sketches the comparative position in Britain and the United States of America from the early nineteenth century. The material on Australia is basically an account of the extension of the eight hour day between 1855 and 1890. This is

traced for each colony, principally for Melbourne and Sydney, in detail for the 1880's. The chapter also covers shop hours and the early closing movement and holidays. Appendix IV tabulates the spread of the eight hour day in Melbourne and Sydney, 1879-81.

Part III is concerned with wages and employment.

Chapter I deals with methods of wage payment, time and piece rates, conditions of payment, additions to and deductions from wages.

Chapter 2 is an examination of money wage rates in each colony, particularly for selected urban occupations. Trends during the 1880's and for the previous thirty years are discussed, with comparisons between colonies and occupations. Various retail price indices are used to determine real wages. The detailed tables are set out in Appendix V.

Chapter 3 collects evidence on the nature and extent of urban unemployment during the 1880's.

Chapter 4 examines the conditions under which juvenile labour was employed at the time and the effectiveness of the forms of apprenticeship for training purposes.

Part IV consists of one chapter dealing with living conditions. It examines the distribution of

population in the Australian cities of the 1880's; the materials of construction, types of dwellings, home ownership and city facilities. Appendix VI analyses the records of a Melbourne building society in connection with these questions.

Part V deals with the legal position, organisations and outlook of urban wage earners, concentrating on those aspects which flow from the previous analysis.

Chapter I examines the position of wage earners under Master and Servant and Trade Union Acts.

Chapter 2 completes the picture of the conditions of life of urban wage earners with an examination of welfare services. Some features of the organisations, principally trade unions, and outlook of urban wage earners are then discussed. Appendix VII sets out particulars of Sydney trade unions in 1891.

ABBREVIATIONS

Builder and Contractor	The Australasian Builder and Contractors' News.

CENSUSES

Vic. Census, 1881.	Census of Victoria, 1881
Vic. Census, 1881, Report.	Census of Victoria, 1881. General Report.
Vic. Census, 1891.	Census of Victoria, 1891.
Vic. Census, 1891, Report.	General Report on the Census of Victoria, 1891.
N.S.W. Census, 1881.	New South Wales Census of 1881.
N.S.W. Census, 1881, Report.	New South Wales Census of 1881, Report.
N.S.W. Census, 1891	Results of a Census of New South Wales... 5th April, 1891.
N.S.W. Census, 1891, Report	General Report on the Eleventh Census of New South Wales.
S.A. Census, 1881.	South Australia. Census of 1881.
S.A. Census, 1891.	South Australia. Census of 1891.
Q'land Census, 1881.	Sixth Census of the Colony of Queensland... 1881.
Q'land Census, 1886.	Seventh Census of the Colony of Queensland... 1886.
Q'land Census, 1891.	Census of Queensland, 1891.
Q'land Census, 1891, Report.	Census of Queensland, 1891, Report.
Tas. Census, 1881.	Census of the Colony of Tasmania, 1881.
Tas. Census, 1891.	Statistics of Tasmania for 1891.
W.A. Census, 1891.	Census of Western Australia, April, 1891.
Coghlan, T. A. Seven Colonies of Australasia.	A Statistical Account of the Seven Colonies of Australasia.

Coghlan, T. A. Australia and New Zealand.	A Statistical Account of Australia and New Zealand.
History of Capital and Labour	The History of Capital and Labour in all Lands, etc.
J. & P.	Journals and Papers.
Legis. Ass.	Legislative Assembly.
N.S.W. Census and Industrial Returns Act.	Reports under the New South Wales Census and Industrial Returns Act of 1891.
N.S.W. Strikes Comm.	Report of the Royal Commission on Strikes, Sydney, 1891.
P.D.	Parliamentary Debates.
P.P.	Parliamentary Papers.
Q'land Factories Comm.	Report with Minutes of Evidence taken Before the Royal Commission...(on)... Shops, Factories and Workshops. Queensland V. & P. of Legis. Ass., 1891, Vol. II, C.A.36.
S.A. Factories Comm.	Report of the Shops and Factories Commission, together with Minutes of Proceedings, Evidence and Appendices. South Australian P.P., 1892, Vol. II, No. 39.
S.M.H.	Sydney Morning Herald.
V. & P.	Votes and Proceedings.
Vic. Tariff Comm.	Tariff - Report of the Royal Commission, with Appendices and Minutes of Evidence. Vic. P.P., 1883, 2nd Session, Vol. 4 No. 50.

Vic. Shops Comm., Second Progress Report.	Royal Commission on Employes in Shops. Report and Minutes of Evidence (Questions 1 to 3035). Vic. P.P., 1883, 2nd Session, Vol. 2, No. 16 and 16A.
Vic. Shops Comm., Factories Report.	Royal Commission on Employes in Shops. Report on the Operation of the Victorian Factory Act of 1874, and Minutes of Evidence (Questions 3036 to 6211). Vic. P.P., 1884, Vol. 2, No. 18.
Vic. Shops Comm., Final Report.	Royal Commission on Employes in Shops. Courts of Conciliation, etc., with Minutes of Evidence, Appendix, etc. (Questions 6212 to 7299). Vic. P.P. 1884, Vol. 3, No. 39.
Vic. Factory Inspector's Report.	Report of the Chief Inspector of Factories, Workrooms and Shops, for the year ending 31st December -
	1886, Vic.P.P. 1887, Vol.3, No. 80.
	1887, Vic.P.P. 1888, Vol.2, No. 39.
	1888, Vic.P.P. 1889, Vol. 2, No. 30.
	1889, Vic.P.P. 1890, Vol. 2, No. 22.
	1890, Vic.P.P. 1891, Vol. 3, No. 18.
	1891, Vic.P.P. 1892-3 Vol. 3, No. 54

(Note: The apostrophe has been omitted before eighties, nineties, etc. when used as abbreviations for 1880's, 1890's, etc.)

PREFACE.

A comprehensive study of the condition of the urban wage earning class in Australia in the 1880's would provide a very wide and diffuse subject. It would, indeed, be nothing less than a detailed survey of workplace, home, leisure, interests, attitudes, of the economic, political and social life, of a numerous and scattered class. While this may be attempted by the contemporary investigator for a small number of subjects, or less intensively for a larger group, in an historical study the ephemeral evidence of everyday life is not available, and the records from which some of it might be reconstructed are unsatisfactory or limited.

Though a complete picture of the daily life of urban wage earners in Australia at this time cannot be pieced together, the utility of a more restricted enquiry is not thereby lessened. Such a study is necessarily selective, but the limitation of the field permits the concentration of attention on such aspects as provide a coherent and significant account.

In an attempt to do this the thesis will, in Part I, outline the economic background to the 1880's and specify the section of the population with which the thesis is concerned, namely the urban wage earners in general, and certain groups of these wage earners in particular. Part II is concerned with working conditions - the circumstances of the working lives of urban

wage earners in the factory, shop or other workplace, legislation affecting these, and hours of labour. Part III deals with wages, including methods of payment, rates and earnings, with prices as they affected real wages and with unemployment. Part IV treats of living conditions, primarily housing. Finally, the organisations of workers, mainly trade unions, are examined, and some brief attention is paid to other social institutions to the extent to which they affected conditions of life; from this an attempt is made to sum up working class attitudes.

Working conditions, wages, living conditions, organisations and attitudes, together provide a theme which does not set out to be a complete social history, which scarcely touches manners or morals, for example, but which does describe how urban workers earned their living, what that living was, and some of the effects on them of this position.

A limitation must be made with regard to urban centres, for the area of the study is primarily the capital cities. To some extent this is arbitrary. But the distinctive development of urbanisation in Australia has been towards a high concentration of population in the capitals. If the criteria of numbers and density of population together with occupational diversification are taken as the criteria of a city,(1) there were few urban

(1) "City" is a term frequently used, seldom defined. This is sensible enough, for the urban features under discussion are generally obvious. Officially, towns and cities are usually defined on the basis of population. For the purposes of the social sciences most writers use the criteria of numbers, density of population and diversity of occupations. Applications of these test

centres at this time, apart from the capital cities, worthy of study. Between 1881 and 1891 Melbourne was the largest city, its population growing from 282,947 to 490,902, its proportion of the population of Victoria from 32 per cent. to 43 per cent. Sydney contained 224,211 persons in 1881, 29 per cent. of the population of New South Wales, and 383,386 in 1891, 34 per cent. of the New South Wales population. Adelaide's population rose from 103,864 to 133,252, as a percentage of the South Australian total from 36 to 42 per cent. The population of Brisbane increased rapidly from 31,109 to 101,564, the latter being 26 per cent. of the colonial total. The population of Hobart was 21,118 in 1881 and 33,450 in 1891; of Perth, 5,822 in 1881 and 8,447 in 1891. Neither Hobart nor Perth contained a quarter of the population of its colony. Apart from the capitals there were seven urban centres, five of them in Victoria and New South Wales, whose populations ranged from 52,000 to 16,000. Some of them find a place from time to time in the thesis as they become

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(1) cont.
is more useful than fixing any arbitrary dividing line for towns and cities; the joint criteria draw attention to important differences between cities.

For a discussion of the criteria of a city see:-

Walter F. Willcox, "A Redefinition of 'City' in Terms of Density of Population", in "The Urban Community", ed. by E.W. Burgess, Chicago, 1926.

S.A. Queen and L.F. Thomas, "The City", New York, 1939, Ch.I.

S. Riemer, "The Modern City", New York, 1952.

S.A. Queen and R.B. Carpenter, "The American City", New York, 1953, Ch. 2.

Griffith Taylor, "Urban Geography", London, 1949, pp. 174 ff.

N.P. GIST and L.A. HALBERT, "Urban Society," New York, 1959 Third edition, Chapter 1.

important in relation to particular aspects of the study.(1)

Melbourne and Sydney dominated Australian urban life; following them, but much smaller, came Adelaide and Brisbane, which latter had grown in ten years from a large town to an important city.(2) Hobart and Perth were in a different category.

The growth of the Australian capital cities reflected a growing diversity of occupations. Their original administrative and commercial functions were supplemented by the development of manufacturing industry, which took place mainly in the capitals.(3) It is with the wage earners in these newer industries that this thesis is particularly concerned. They were especially concentrated in Melbourne and Sydney. The locale of the study, then, is primarily Melbourne and Sydney, to a less extent Adelaide and Brisbane, with other cities mentioned only to the extent of their influence on general urban life.

In delimiting the personnel of the study, an objective test is applied to distinguish wage earners. This test is that

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(1) T.A. Coghlan, "The Seven Colonies of Australasia", 1892, p. 352. The capital cities and their populations are discussed in more detail in Part IV.

(2) In the words of a contemporary observer, "In regarding urban Australia one instinctively puts the capitals in two groups - Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide and Brisbane in one; and Perth and Hobart in the other." Gilbert Parker, "Round the Compass in Australia", n.d., Melb. c.1892, p.98.

(3) As C.M.H. Clark, "Select Documents in Australian History 1851-1900", Sydney, 1955, p.659, says of the second half of the nineteenth century, ".....the capital cities were gradually changing in function and appearance. Before 1850, apart from government, their main function was to provide services for the pastoral hinterland....They were the entrepot depots between the areas of production and the markets of Great Britain. By 1900, with the possible exception of Hobart and Perth, they were also industrial towns."

of source of income, wage earners receiving their income in the form of wages paid by other individuals or combinations of individuals. Members of a society may be classified on many bases, as, for example, by their occupations, by their associates, or, in the manner fashionable amongst some sociologists, by such subjective criteria as their attitudes or their self-evaluation of their position within the society. Such methods of division may illuminate particular aspects of the life of a group, but the test of source of income is still a basic preliminary.(1) It is in this way that it is used in this thesis.

The great differences within the wage earning class are obvious. In taking them into account the subject matter of the thesis is further limited. The wage earners with whom this thesis is concerned were engaged in community services, transport and storage, construction and building, the processing of raw materials and manufacture proper. But the thesis does not set

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(1) A.M. Carr-Saunders and D. Caradog Jones, "A Survey of the Social Structure of England and Wales", London, 1927, in the course of a very thorough examination of social structure arrive at this conclusion. "We found reason to believe that the occupation which a man follows is of more immediate importance to him that the industry in which he is engaged. Industrial status is of still greater importance. It makes all the difference to a man following the occupation of agriculture whether he is an employer, say a large farmer employing many labourers; an independent worker, say a small holder working his holding by himself; or an employee, say a labourer working for wages." (p.61) Their example is chosen from agriculture, where this consideration of industrial status is often regarded as being of less importance than mere participation in rural life.

Various concepts of class are discussed by Richard Centers, "The Psychology of Social Classes", Princeton, 1949, Chapter II, who shows that the importance of the criterion used in this thesis is generally acknowledged by sociologists.

out to deal with professional or managerial employees, with technicians, nor those engaged in education, government or finance. Clerks are neglected because of their small numbers and special position. Shop assistants are included, for they occupied a central place in some of the social questions of the day. Seamen are not ~~entirely~~ TAKEN AS urban workers, though port workers are, and there was a close connection between the two groups. Domestic servants are treated only incidentally. Naturally there are many borderline cases, and in consideration of many questions bodies of wage earners outside the scope of this study, such as bushworkers and miners, had an impact upon urban workers which cannot be neglected.

What is the justification for studying these groups of wage earners? In the balance sheet of the time these sections of the population were not negligible, even when all eyes were on the number of sheep and the price of wool. More important, they represented the growing trend, those sections of the community which were to play an ever larger part in Australian life, and whose early history has often been neglected. The historian may be doubtful of his foresight, but at least he has hindsight. The bushman and the shearer were to be displaced from their leading position in the Australian working class by the city dweller and the factory worker. This thesis attempts to describe, at a stage of their development, those elements of the Australian working class which were to become increasingly important with the growth of the Australian economy.

The period covered by the thesis is roughly the decade of the eighteen-eighties. This provides a fairly definite and natural end point. The advent of the severe depression of the early nineties brought to a close the epoch of prosperity which had provided the background to Australian life for many years previously. The nineteenth century as Australia's era of expansion ended in 1891. The Maritime Strike of late 1890, and the subsequent formation of political labour parties was a turning point in trade union and political organisation and attitudes of the working class. For these reasons a new period in the study of the urban wage earning class in Australia begins from about 1891.

The beginning of the period is less definite. No such sudden transformation marks the beginning of the eighties. As will be seen, this decade carried on those economic influences which had been growing for many years. It would be necessary to go back to the gold rushes, or at least to the establishment of a settled post gold rush economy and society, for the previous turning point in Australian history. Nevertheless, the eighties are in many respects the culmination of an epoch, the crowning point of thirty years of rapid progress, revealing in their maturity those trends which had been shaping Australian life since the mid-century. Recovery from the minor depression of 1879-80 was followed by unparalleled prosperity and living standards. For many purposes the census year 1881, which can be compared to that of 1891, provides a convenient starting point. The tremendous expansion of the cities during this

decade gives it a special significance in the history of Australian urban life.

At the same time many new trends which become prominent in Australian life later had their roots in the eighties. The importance of the period in Australian history is discussed in the following chapter.

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PART I - INTRODUCTION.

CHAPTER 1.

BACKGROUND.

The eighteen nineties have for long been regarded as one of the decisive turning points in Australian history. Recent scholarship has to some extent qualified the earlier interpretations by underlining the fact that much previously attributed to the nineties belongs more properly to the years immediately before 1890 or after 1900. These qualifications do not detract from the importance of the social upheaval of 1890-4, the formation of the Labor Party, the extension of political democracy or the flowering of a native literature. Rather they emphasise the importance of a deeper knowledge of the political, economic and social history of the years immediately preceding the dramatic events which impressed themselves on earlier historians.

Recent work on the structure of trade unionism and the outlook of unionists during the eighteen eighties has made the events of 1890-2 more comprehensible than they were before. Likewise detailed studies of the evolution of political parties in New South Wales and Victoria from the mid-eighties contribute to an understanding of the novel political departures in those

same years. The roots of many Australian developments at the end of the nineteenth century are firmly planted in the eighties. While the writers and painters of this time have received some of the attention which is their due, the carpenters, blacksmiths, shop assistants, labourers and people of a thousand and one other callings, whose lives were the life of the city, appear in the history of the time only as trade unionists, voters, readers, or parts of a process. This thesis is based on the belief that the conditions under which they passed their lives have an important bearing on their actions and therefore the events to which historians have devoted their attention.

The physical environment of the city dweller of the eighties was far removed from pioneering days. At the hub of the city imposing multi-storeyed stone or brick warehouses, banks, offices and shops packed the streets. The port and the railway terminals were still the source of wealth, but supplemented now by the growing factories. The paved roads were busy with traffic as far as the main suburban shopping centres; beyond that, unmade, they wended their way through miles of new suburbs where the detached cottages, cramped though they might be on their narrow frontages, stood proudly forth as the Australian standard for the common man. Along the streets rode the double-decker tram car, steam or cable drawn, a wondrous new invention by which the city dweller kept the enlarged metropolis within his scope. The suburban railways, like streams piercing the old confines, carried the cities' flood

into the former countryside. With domestic gas and water, now sewerage and electricity, the Australian cities felt they held their own with any in the world.

The busy cities went their own way, clinging to the Pacific seaboard, receiving their tribute from the inland with scarcely more than a backward glance. Urban Australia saw itself as standing on its own feet, the interior its appendage, not its reason for being. City eyes were seldom lifted from the foreground when it contained so much that was new, exciting and comforting. When the bushman came to town his moleskins, wide brimmed hat, tieless shirt and inevitable pipe marked him off from the bustling crowds around. The wealthy squatter might preserve a closer contact, keep his town residence, come up for the sittings of the Legislative Council or the race meetings; the city address of many other pastoralists was care of the finance company and they came to town to discuss the mortgage or receive their instructions. The small selector entered the city only when rare good fortune provided him the means or the final blow of fate drove him there despairing.

The Australian cities of the eighties had their own developed life which can be abstracted for study. Its keynote was growth and its catch cry progress. Half the city or more might have been built in ten years; so much was new that a couple of decades past was ancient history. No one could believe that the expansion might come to an end; rather it

seemed to be rising to greater heights. The shoddy and meretricious jostled with the solid, and the shabby survived because there had been no time to remove it. Ostentation ran unchecked, undiscerned amidst the natural pride in the new.

The society of the cities, especially Melbourne and Sydney, was a complex one, based on a great diversity of occupations and ways of life. At the top was still the vice-regal group with the visiting English aristocrat and the squatter of inherited wealth. The colonial politicians, merchants, bankers, the versatile entrepreneurs, the ubiquitous lawyers and the doctors set the bourgeois pattern, privately considering themselves no whit inferior to the titled and idle. Now they were joined by the manufacturer who had served his time at his trade and won to wealth by hard work and thrift; he might have little time for the pomp of society except to please a socially ambitious wife or launch a marriageable daughter. All these groups presented a respectable appearance and a sober mien to the public. The men wore their dark three piece suits, their special silk top hats or everyday bowlers, their old fashioned beards or substantial moustaches; the women in their voluminous skirts and ornate hats followed the dictates of second hand British fashion through bunched drapes, the bustle and all the variations which vied with each other in the amount of material used. They set the standard for the shopkeeper, the minor official, the schoolteacher, the salaried employee in office or bank who kept up the same appearance on a smaller income.

Scarcely inferior in their own estimate to the petty ~~tradesman~~ SHOPKEEPER or official, with whom they often lived side by side, were the skilled craftsmen, such as building or metal workers, proud of the eight hour day and high wages which gave them an opportunity to play an active role as citizens. Confident in the strength of their unions, they knew their position, considered it an honourable one, and did not fear it could be jeopardised. More numerous but less prominent were the unskilled and semi-skilled workers in manufacturing, construction and transport. They lacked the privileges of the groups above them, but earned good wages, ate their three full meals, clothed and housed themselves adequately, and were confident that they could obtain their share in the general prosperity and progress. There were few workmen who did not possess a black coat and bowler hat for Sunday wear. Finally, cities the size of Melbourne and Sydney contained their slums, their destitute and broken men, vagabonds and criminals. Only some classes of city dwellers are dealt with in the thesis; but it is necessary to remember that they had their being in a complex society.

The Australian capital cities of the eighties had much in common and some marked differences. Melbourne was the ~~focus of attention;~~ MOST IMPORTANT; in population and influence it had left Sydney far behind. Here the "go ahead colonial pace" found its greatest expression. To visiting Englishmen Australian cities seemed almost American, with Melbourne the New York and Sydney

the Boston of the colonies. Adelaide, solid and slow growing, already known as the city of churches, stood somewhat aside from the main current of Australian city life in the eighties. Hobart was in a backwater, dreaming of past glories on a smaller stage. Brisbane, a lusty youth fed by a vast new province, raced from ramshackle town to important city with an air of the frontier still about it.

The urban wage earners lived in cities which were sufficiently large and diversified to encompass all the features of city life under modern ~~capitalism~~ CONDITIONS, while retaining their own special characteristics, Australian and local. The study of the urban wage earners is not the study of an isolated group, nor of a single homogeneous group, but of a living segment of society tied by a thousand threads to the life around, material and mental.

The dominant material facts were of growth and prosperity, though the thesis will modify this impression in some details. Concomitantly, the dominant attitudes, on the surface, were of confidence and satisfied orthodoxy. Politics were quiescent, or echoed to empty vehemence claiming the importance of principle for the manoeuvres of expediency. Yet, quietly, political changes were taking place which were to bear fruit under the impact of the crisis of the nineties. The co-incidence of interest between employer and employee was a dictum accepted by all. Yet force of circumstances was moulding capital and labour to prepare for battles greater and more

bitter than any they had known. In religion "a sort of worldly Presbyterianism" ruled complacently through the Anglican and non-conformist churches, overlaying a sincerity which was to provide one impetus to social reform; while the Catholic quarter of the population carried on their own religious life and the force of its conviction was to influence many social movements in the future. Though all paid lip service to religion, education had been mainly secularised; and that Australian tradition which thought no more of the parson in the pulpit than when he dispensed floggings from the magistrate's bench survived indifferent to respectable opinion. The real influence of religion on Australian life is a question obscure by its nature, little examined, and one which this thesis can hardly touch upon.

The respectable had its converse in the bohemian and the larrikin. Larrikins and their donahs danced, drank, fought and made love on their Sunday holiday at Chowder Bay and elsewhere, while officialdom and respectability argued whether the opening of public libraries on the Sabbath was immoral. It was the sons of bourgeois families who after the theatre supped at midnight in continental restaurants. Some found their way to the artists' camps at Heidelberg, Mosman and elsewhere on the outskirts of Melbourne and Sydney, OUTDOOR Antipodean garrets from which emerged the greatest change in Australian painting. Others joined that hard living, hard reading crew who found in secularism, republicanism and vague socialism antidotes to

Victorian complacency and greed. Their bible was the Bulletin, the success of which journal testifies to the existence of an audience for its ideas. This joined with the intellectual ferment of the working class, which was even more novel in its forms. Though the official of the craft union might be a lay preacher on Sundays, it was the challenging ideas of Henry George, Gronlund, Bellamy and such which fought their way into the minds of bush and city workers. The tenuous strands of thought, the religious, intellectual and cultural influences in Australian history still require much investigation. But certainly the eighties was no static decade. New currents of opinion were flowing and were at the end of the decade to find expression in profoundly important political changes. The men who made these changes were the young men of the eighties, for in that decade when the orthodox had been so long and so successfully established the gulf between youth and age was most marked.

All the questions raised by the teeming life of the cities will not be covered in this thesis. Around the periphery subjects emerge which deserve to be studied in their own right but which are only incidental to the conditions of the urban wage earners. Thus the comparison between the Australian colonies and nineteenth century United States, the similarities and vital differences, comes to mind. So too does the effect upon Australian life of the country's growth to nationhood in the late Victorian age, which made the Australian city its virtually unalloyed product. The origins of the differences

between the cities, their progress and changing relationships, would need to be considered in any account of the emergence of a common nationhood. Especially intriguing is the intellectual imprimt left on Melbourne by its period of dominance, an imprint which still lives long after its obvious causes have disappeared. The study of the relationship of classes in colonial society, and their interaction upon each other, would add much to our knowledge of the period. The outlook of groups other than the urban wage earners, their conservatism and liberalism, their orthodoxy and originality, their ties with Britain and their local patriotism, would form an important part of the social history of the time. In this thesis, however, they appear only insofar as they affect wage earners.

The basis of this vigorous city life must first be sought in economic conditions. It was the economic expansion of the Australian colonies which brought population and wealth and brought these particularly to the cities.

In considering the economic background to the eighteen eighties the gold discoveries of the mid-century provide the substantial point of departure. Australia was a capitalist economy, of a special type, before the gold rushes, but the impact of these hastened and in some respects changed the course of development. The gold rushes immediately led to a great increase in population and wealth; although the old-established pastoral industry soon reasserted itself as the basis of

Australia's economy, the new trends introduced or accelerated by the discovery of gold continued to grow in importance.

By about 1860 the decline in alluvial gold production had brought to an end the period of easily won wealth, of heady excitement and frantic rushes to new fields, of floods of migrants and of almost over-night transformation of the economy. The problem confronting the colonies was the employment of the resources of capital and labour now released from gold mining. The period from about 1860 to 1872 was one of transition, marked by a fall in the general inflationary pressure, by instability in the adaption to the new conditions, but also by the laying of significant foundations in the building of railways, in coal mining and in industrial activity.

Recovery from the depression of 1870-2 was followed by rapid expansion during the seventies. Indices of railway mileage opened, number of industrial establishments, wages and prices rose quickly. Rates of increase slowed down in the late seventies to the minor depression of 1879-81. The high rate of development was resumed from about 1881, with figures for import of capital, coal output, brick production, farm and craft wages rising rapidly. For most economic indicators the rate of increase diminished in the second half of the eighties, accompanied by the emergence of marked differences between the colonies after the depression of 1886.

For Australia as a whole, in the thirty years before 1890, we can distinguish the "readjustment" period of the

sixties, the fifteen odd years of substantial prosperity from the early seventies, and the beginnings of a down turn in the last years of the eighties.(1)

For twenty years from 1870 recessions ~~had been~~ WERE of short duration and not of great severity; even during the sixties there had been no major and prolonged Australia-wide depression. The economy moved forward under the impetus of an overall expansion which was sometimes retarded, sometimes accelerated, always uneven, but never seriously thrown back. The fluctuations had some immediate effects, and the differences between the colonies were so considerable that the general picture must be supplemented by a separate account for each colony; but for most of the seventies and most of the eighties the background was one of prosperity.

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(1) T.A. Coghlan, "Labour and Industry in Australia", Vol. II, p. 869, describes the years 1862-73 as, "in one view, a pause between two periods of rapid development;" and adds, "From 1861 to 1872 the colonies were battling with the difficulties of their position; from 1872 onwards, it may be said, they were in a measure able to enjoy the advantages which the position ensured them." (ibid, p.871).

R.C. Wilson, "Economic Cycles in Australia and New Zealand", Economic Record, Vol. 6, May, 1930, plots economic fluctuations in Australia from the early seventies by means of an index reflecting particularly Melbourne and Sydney financial and commercial activity. This emphasises the acuteness of the depression of 1886 and the continuation of the boom in 1889, 1890 and even 1891.

N.G. Butlin, in an unpublished paper (S.S.51) delivered at the Australian National University in 1952, has compiled series showing quinquennial rates of growth of many economic indicators from 1860 to 1900.

The first prerequisite of this prosperity was the increasing British demand for wool, which Australia met by raising its sheep population from twenty four millions in 1861 to one hundred and twenty five millions in 1891, aided by the flow of capital from abroad into labour-saving pastoral investment, particularly fencing.(1)

The influx of British capital was the most obvious support of Australian prosperity. In 1871 total British investment in all of Australasia was about £73 million; between 1871 and 1880 the six Australian colonies received an additional £46 million in the form of government and local government borrowing, private investment and immigrants's capital; and in the ten years 1881-90 a further £172 millions.(2) During the seventies New South Wales, Queensland and Victoria, in that order, were the greatest recipients of British capital, and over half the total was on government account. This position continued for the first half of the eighties, though private capital raising now outdistanced public in Queensland. In the second half of the eighties more than fifty per cent of the overseas investment went to Victoria, about two-thirds of it in the hands

(1) Fencing and the paddocking of sheep instead of shepherding had begun under the stimulus of the labour shortage at the time of the gold rushes. Its widespread adoption, however, came later. By 1891 nearly all sheep in N.S.W. and the southern colonies were paddocked, though the practice was not so prevalent in the wide areas and new lands of Queensland. Though the saving in costs was great the capital outlay was considerable. See T.A. Coghlan, "Sheep and Wool in New South Wales, etc.," Sydney, 1893.

(2) T.A. Coghlan, "The Seven Colonies of Australasia", 1901-2, pp. 75 ff.

of private borrowers. Thus boom conditions continued in that colony right to the end of the eighties.

Most of the private capital went into either the pastoral industry or urban building. Thus Melbourne, Sydney, Adelaide and Brisbane all had their building booms during the seventies and eighties, often repeated booms or a long continued one. Not only was Australia's population growing, but its urban concentration was increasing very rapidly, making the eighties a period of great importance in the history of Australian cities. Great numbers of urban wage earners were employed in the building industry, the cycle of which was rising in Victoria from 1880 to 1889, and in New South Wales from the mid-seventies to the mid-eighties.(1)

Public capital, mainly borrowed, may have accounted for about half total new investment in Victoria and New South Wales during the eighties.(2) The active role of the colonial governments in economic life was thus reinforced. Since their investment was not so responsive to immediate profit considerations it had an anti-cyclical effect. Railway building dominated government spending during the seventies and eighties; with perhaps two-thirds of railway construction outlay accounted for by on-site expenditure, a major consequence was to maintain the

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(1) A.R. Hall, unpublished paper (S.S.64) "Building Cycles in Australia and Great Britain 1860-1939", delivered at Australian National University, 1952.

(2) N.G. Butlin, "Public Enterprise in Australian Economic Development, 1860-90", in Explorations in Entrepreneurial History, Havard, Vol.II,No3,p.144, considers public funds may have provided more than half of total investment.

demand for labour.(1)

A necessary condition for the influx of British capital was that Australia offered a profitable field of investment. Mineral discoveries, technological advances in agriculture and communications as well as the pastoral industry, played their part here.(2) In external relationships exchange rates were constant and the price level of imports was falling faster than the price level of exports until the change for the worse from 1888.(3) The influx of British capital was partly an effect, as well as a cause, of Australia's prosperity. Similarly, it is an inadequate explanation of Australia's involvement in the world wide depression of the nineties to treat this as a retribution for the extravagance of the preceding period, undoubted though this was.(4)

To wage earners the sixties were years of somewhat painful readjustment to reduced circumstances after the golden era of the fifties. From the early seventies, however, they shared fully in the general prosperity. The two decades

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(1) Ibid, p. 152.

(2) Notable mineral discoveries were the Palmer Goldfield, 1873; gold at Mt. Morgan, 1882; silver at Broken Hill,1883; silver lead at Mt.Zeehan, 1885; copper at Mt. Lyell,1886.
In agriculture Smith's stump jump plough of 1876 was further developed during the eighties; McKay's combined stripper harvester was invented in 1884. Shearing machines became fairly common during the eighties.
In addition to the railways, telegraphic and telephonic communications were extended.

(3) On price level of imports and exports see T.A. Coghlan "The Seven Colonies of Australasia", 1901-2, pp.376-7, and "Labour and Industry in Australia", Vol.III, p.1609.

(4) See, for example, E.O.G. Shann, "The Boom of 1890 - And Now", Sydney, 1927.

following were marked by the preservation, in general, of full employment, by fairly constant domestic prices and by rising money and real wages. Short lived and local unemployment there certainly was on occasion and something more than this in 1879-80 and 1886, but these occurrences did not seriously interrupt the rising standard of living or the expectation of its continuance. The demand for labour from public investment, particularly railway building, has been mentioned. This was taking place in a full employment economy, with capital and much of consumption goods expenditure directed abroad where prices were falling, with basic foodstuffs plentiful and cheap, resulting in an inflationary pressure on one factor of production - labour. Australia's distance from the sources of immigration prevented the supply of labour rising as fast as the supply of capital. With the cost of living more or less constant real wages rose, and the reduction of hours became the chief concern of labour. The conditions were also favourable to the growth of a trade union movement whose day to day struggles were mostly successful, especially during the eighties.

While the conception of a sustained boom between 1860 and 1890 requires modification, there is no doubt that for wage earners there were about twenty years of these conditions, rising to a climax in the eighties, which profoundly affected

their outlook.[1] Either looking back over twenty years, or comparing their situation with the conditions they knew in Britain, Australian wage earners could not fail to congratulate themselves on having attained a standard of living that the world might well envy.

Changes were also taking place in the structure of the economy and types of employment as secondary and tertiary industries became more important. An examination of the national output of New South Wales for 1891 shows five industry groups approximately equal sources of output - pastoral production, factory production, building and construction, distribution and other services (professional and personal); they were closely followed by agriculture and dairying, government and mining. About thirty per cent of occupied persons were employed in primary industries, about thirty per cent in secondary and about forty per cent in tertiary; in 1861 the figures had been fifty per cent, twenty per cent and thirty per cent respectively. Such figures are not available for other colonies, but the position in Victoria may be assumed to be similar. In the pastoral industry and mining, productivity per worker was high. Despite the Selection

(1) N.G. Butlin, "Explorations in Entrepreneurial History", Op.cit., p.154, queries this conception of a sustained boom. Fitzpatrick repeatedly refers to this long continued prosperity, for example, "The Australian People", pp.36-7, 182, 215-6; "A Short History of the Australian Labour Movement", pp. 13, 65-6; "British Empire in Australia", pp.193, 219-20. footnote to p.284 of 1941 Edition. The main qualifications, which Fitzpatrick notes in his more detailed accounts, are the limiting of the period of prosperity to the years after the sixties, and the existence of some fluctuations even after that date. The conclusions which Fitzpatrick draws, mainly as to the effect upon outlook, are not seriously affected by these qualifications.

Acts the number of persons engaged in agriculture decreased during the eighties. The period of economic expansion had increased the proportion of the population employed in manufacturing, factory and non-factory, in building and construction, distribution and transport, which were the main occupations of urban wage earners.(1)

During the thirty years under review the isolation of the Australian colonies was greatly reduced. Telegraphic communication with the rest of the world had been established in 1872; in 1883 Melbourne and Sydney were connected by rail, and a year later by telephone; the New South Wales and Queensland rail systems met in 1888. As a result the economic development of the colonies became more inter-dependent, with capital, goods and population able to flow more easily to the most favourable area. But since resources are not wholly mobile, and since the policy of governments played a large part in economic life, there were still considerable variations between colonies which require to be noted.(2)

The gold rushes had precipitated Victoria into a leading position in population, wealth and financial organisation.

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(1) N.G. Butlin, unpublished paper (S.S. 54), delivered at A.N.U. 1952, based upon the article by H.W. Arndt and N.G. Butlin, "Economic Record", June, 1950, entitled "The National Output, Income and Expenditure of New South Wales, 1891", which is a revision of Coghlan's estimate. The figures are important in that they refer to one of the two chief colonies at the end of the long period of expansion.

(2) The subsequent account of conditions in each colony is based on T.A. Coghlan, "Labour and Industry in Australia", Vol. III, Chapter VI.

This was CONSOLIDATED by the colony's wonderful development up to 1890. In the early seventies Victoria was enjoying good seasons and plentiful employment; trade unions grew in numbers and STRENGTH OF organisation, around the Trades Hall Committee. There was some unemployment in the mid-seventies despite the impact of large scale public works. In 1878 and 1879 conditions were sufficiently bad for relief works to be opened in Melbourne, but recovery was rapid during 1880. Widespread building commenced in Melbourne and the boom gained momentum until 1885. The recession of 1886 temporarily brought building to a halt and relief works were opened in the city in the following year, but by 1888 recovery was complete and Victoria went on to enjoy the very climax of prosperity, now that it was the main repository of British investment. The collapse of the most speculative land and building companies from the end of 1889 shook the financial edifice and some unemployment appeared, to be further accentuated in 1891 with a reduction in government expenditure. In 1892 and 1893 Victoria was plunged into the deepest depression accompanied by the failure of major banks, mass unemployment and wholesale emigration of population. During the eighties, however, the height of the boom was concentrated in Victoria and its phenomenal progress set the pace for all Australia.

In New South Wales the difficulties that marked the sixties did not finally disappear until the middle seventies. The general prosperity which followed was brought to a halt by

the slump of 1879-80 but recovery was speedy to a peak in 1883. There was some decline in economic conditions during 1884 and 1885, with considerable depression in 1886-7. The revival in 1888 was not so spectacular as in Victoria and this doubtful state of affairs continued during 1889, worsening during the second half of 1890 and again in 1891, which was a year of widespread unemployment and falling wages, to be followed by the full impact of the depression in 1892 and subsequent years. In New South Wales the second half of the eighties was not marked by any spectacular boom.

During the sixties and seventies Queensland was a new colony dependent mainly on the pastoral industry, without much city population. In its extraordinarily rapid development during the seventies there was sometimes a pool of unemployed migrants, but only for short periods. From the early eighties the real construction of the city of Brisbane began, accompanied by a strong demand for rural labour. The excessive stream of government assisted migrants which this encouraged led to some unemployment by 1883, continuing until the end of 1887. During 1888 and 1889 general prosperity and an unsatisfied demand for labour again prevailed. But trade and employment did not recover after the Maritime Strike of 1890, and continued to slip back until there was real destitution in Brisbane and the countryside during 1892. Until the nineties there was always in the background to these fluctuations, the rise of Queensland from a sparsely settled pioneering area to a major colony.

The old-established and relatively stable agricultural economy of South Australia prospered, with a brief setback through adverse climatic conditions in 1876 and again in 1879-80. City building and large scale public works had already become important, and they helped the revival from the end of 1881. By the end of 1884, something like the later Victorian speculative boom and collapse had already been enacted in miniature. Conditions grew worse until 1886, when there was an acute financial crisis with the collapse of the Commercial Bank of South Australia. The fairly slow recovery was aided by the opening of the Broken Hill mines, and South Australia was not seriously affected by the depression until 1892 and 1893. South Australia was to some extent an exception among the major colonies in that its depression of the early eighties kept it out of the major boom and, for a few years, the major collapse.

Tasmania had long been a backwater economically. In the seventies and eighties mineral discoveries and the usual "vigorous policy of public works" raised production and wages, though the latter still lagged behind the mainland. This position was not seriously disturbed until 1891, and it was a couple of years later before Tasmania felt the full effect of the depression. Western Australia scarcely enters into a study of urban conditions, owing to its isolation and small city population. By the eighties its labour force was free; public works and building provided their boom, but after their DECLINE

the stagnation of the late eighties was dissipated only by the gold discoveries, especially from 1892, which finally brought the West into the Australian picture.

Thus the course of economic development during the eighties was not identical for all the colonies. The greatest advances occurred in Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland. Queensland was still at an earlier stage of development than the other colonies. Victoria and New South Wales were most important in urban development, and Melbourne and Sydney advanced their relative positions during the decade.

The actors upon this stage, the Australian people, were increasing rapidly in numbers, and the proportion of city dwellers amongst them even more rapidly. The population of Australia rose from 2,252,617 in 1881 to 3,174,392 in 1891.(1) In the Australian population of 1891 two-thirds were Australian born and over eighty per cent of the balance were immigrants from the United Kingdom (then including all Ireland). The biggest foreign groups, some fifty thousand Germans and forty thousand Chinese, were tiny in proportion to the whole. Of the million resident in 1891 but born outside Australia, 376,570 had arrived in the ~~last~~ previous ten years.(2)

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(1) T.A. Coghlan, "The Seven Colonies of Australasia", 1894, p.56 and p. 72. There are some slight discrepancies in published Australian population figures of the time depending on the extent to which aborigines were included.

(2) Ibid, p.59.

The two main population groups of native born and those born in Britain were not identical in age composition. In 1891 over one-third of the total Australian population were under the age of fifteen years.(1) Nearly all of these would be native born, despite a little family migration, so that in the breadwinners' age groups British migrants undoubtedly were more important than the gross population figures indicate.(2) They were probably even more important amongst the urban population for the strangeness and hardships of outback life made it particularly the province of the native born or long acclimatised; while the British migrants of this period, mainly city bred, preferred to stay in the cities, especially if they were workers skilled in urban crafts.(3)

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(1) T.A. Coghlan, "The Seven Colonies of Australasia", 1892, p. 341 and p. 343.

(2) If all the children under fifteen years had been native born, then British migrants would have comprised forty one per cent of the balance of the population.

(3) Numerical evidence is unavailable. Coghlan, "Labour and Industry in Australia", Vol.III, p.1209, observes of immigrants to New South Wales in the years 1873-93..."the British immigrants preferred, as a rule, to remain in Sydney, and this fact has a not unimportant bearing upon the labour movements of the period." Complaints by governments and employers that migrants were reluctant to hie themselves off to the country were perennial. Except during the gold rushes British migrants had always tended to become acclimatised in the towns, leaving the outback to the native born and the experienced settler. In 1849 it was noted that..."they (immigrants) have, as before observed, a great indisposition to go into the interior, and prefer remaining in Sydney...Dr. Thompson, in giving evidence before a select committee of the legislative council, in 1843, stated that 'there is a great disinclination on the part of such persons to go into the interior...'" J.P. Townsend, "Rambles and Observations in New South Wales", London, 1849, pp.236-7. By the eighties the growth of the cities gave the migrants more scope for their preference.
ROBERT CALDWELL, "THE GOLDEN ERA OF VICTORIA," LONDON, 1856, REFERS TO THE SAME ATTITUDE IN MELBOURNE.

Though the people were predominantly Australian born, many of them were first generation Australians. To the Australian population of 403,889 in 1851 there was added in the years of the gold rush era a further 568,511 newcomers; immigration continued on a reduced scale but in the forty years 1851-91, 1,321,107 migrants arrived.(1)

The British element in the Australian population was thus important numerically. It was to Britain that Australian urban workers looked for example and comparison with their own lot: but more often comparison than example, for the brash young democracy of the United States also provided the latter. Nevertheless the Australian people were not merely transplanted British. From the earliest times distinctive Australian characteristics of behaviour, perhaps even physical characteristics, had been produced in the crucible of the new natural and social environment.(2) The newcomers had their effect on Australia, but more markedly it affected them, absorbing them into the national type. Australian nationalism had become articulate by the mid-century and grew powerfully in the upsurge of the eighties.

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(1) T.A. Coghlan, "The Seven Colonies of Australasia", 1894, p.59; and 1901-2, p. 530.

(2) See, for example, P. Cunningham, "Two Years in New South Wales", London, 1827, Vol. II, letter XXI; "Settlers and Convicts", by an Emigrant Mechanic, 1847; "Australia and the East", by John Hood, 1843; Vance Palmer, "Legend of the Nineties", 1954, Chapter 2; R.B. Ward, "Collectivist Notions of a Nomad Tribe", Historical Studies, May, 1955.

The Australian population of the eighties was British by origin, often recent origin, but national - to some extent still a colonial rather than an Australian nationalism - in outlook. Ties with Britain were close but the Australian people thought of themselves and acted as Australians.

The Australian population had acquired a great degree of stability as between colonies. In 1891 persons residing in a colony but born in other Australian colonies were fewest in South Australia, where they amounted to about three per cent of the population, and most numerous in Queensland, where they comprised about seven per cent of the population.(1) These figures are very small for a period when considerable mobility of labour is often vaguely supposed to have existed. Of course, the overseas born who, as seen, comprised a large proportion of the population, may well have moved more in their efforts to establish themselves in a new country. Since many bush workers did habitually move from colony to colony, the small totals show that very few city workers did so; movement between city and country within a colony is another question.

This homogeneous and national Australian population had governed itself since the fifties.(2) The methods of government rapidly became those of what was, for the period, an advanced democracy. The bases of democracy in the form of

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(1) T.A. Coghlan, "The Seven Colonies of Australasia", 1894. p. 72. Coghlan's table on p. 73 includes New Zealand born.

(2) This account of political development refers to the eastern colonies. Western Australia did not reach a similar position until after 1890.

manhood suffrage and vote by ballot were established within a few years of the granting of substantial self government. Struggles continued for further machinery of popular government, such as short parliaments, abolition of plural voting, payment of members and restriction of the powers of unrepresentative Upper Houses. The important point was that the Australian working class, especially the urban section, was able to make its voice heard, for it constituted a large part of the electorate. The organisation of a large scale, disciplined political party depending on working class support comes after the eighties; but during the eighties urban workers had considerable political influence, naturally most marked in Melbourne and Sydney.

Finally, the Australian population was both articulate and literate. Interest in public questions and combination to improve conditions had a long tradition; they were even more widespread by 1891 when literacy was practically universal in the cities.(1) The urban working class of the eighties was no passive mass, but an active element in national life, national itself in outlook despite its ties with Britain, fairly stably settled, with its organisations and considerable political importance.

... ...

(1) The percentage of persons aged fifteen years and over in 1891 who could read varied from 89 per cent in Western Australia to 98 per cent in Victoria; of persons who could write, from 86 per cent in Western Australia to 96 per cent in Victoria. H.H. Hayter, "General Report on the Census of Victoria", V.P.P., 1893, Vol. 2, No. 9, p.118. Literacy figures would be lowest in remote areas not fully covered by public schools. Hence city workers may be taken as being almost universally literate.

CHAPTER 2.

URBAN WAGE EARNERS.

Urban wage earners form part of the whole wage earning population; before examining them in detail it is first necessary to set them in their context by surveying the larger group.

By 1891 the bulk of the Australian population were wage earners. No comprehensive figures exist before that date, and even for 1891 they are not complete. The most reliable classification into grades of occupation for 1891 is set out in the following table :-(1)

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(1) For a discussion of grades of occupation and other statistics of the period see Appendix I. Table 1 has been compiled from the figures given by G.H. Knibbs, Commonwealth Statistician, in the Census of the Commonwealth of Australia, 1911, Vol.I, Statistician's Report, pp.370 ff. Information on occupational status was not collected before 1891 except in N.S.W. and Tasmania; it was not collected in Queensland in 1891 and Knibbs, op.cit. p.370, considers it to have been defective in Western Australia for that year. T.A. Coghlan, "The Seven Colonies of Australasia", 1894, pp. 247-8, considers that grades other than employee and employer were imperfectly tabulated in all colonies except N.S.W. and Tasmania in 1891. With this reservation Coghlan, op.cit., p.248, produced figures for Victoria, N.S.W., South Australia, Tasmania and Western Australia, showing the number of employers, persons engaged on their own account and other workers. H.H. Hayter, in Census of Victoria, 1891, Report, p.242, gives the number of employers, workers on their own account, those receiving salary or wages, and the unemployed, in Victoria, N.S.W., Tasmania and Western Australia, the South Australian returns not then being available. The most notable difference between Coghlan and

Table 1 - Grades of Occupation. Australia. 1891.

	Vic.	N.S.W.	S.A.	Tas.
Employers	43,085	56,232	17,488	5,538
Workers on own account	74,993	63,805	13,037	9,498
Assisting but not receiving wages or salary	26,686	16,504	8,950	5,943
Wages or salary earners	319,550	301,308	84,020	37,996
Unemployed	21,793	22,393	3,416	1,746
TOTAL:	486,087	460,242	126,911	60,715

(1) continued

Hayter is Hayter's larger number of workers on their own account shown for Victoria. Local pride may have inflated this category, the members of which, as shown in Part II, Chapter 2 of this thesis, on Outwork, are difficult to enumerate.

Apart from this the two contemporary sets of figures are in general agreement. Table 1 cited in the text is a later revision of the original returns distinguishing further sub-divisions in occupational status. Knibbs' group of dependents and others not gainfully employed (op.cit., p.358) has been omitted from Table 1. The category, "Assisting but not receiving wages or salary" comprises unpaid workers. Most of these were members of the breadwinner's family ~~working~~ usually working, ~~for example~~, on farms. Some of the unpaid workers in manufacturing; the phenomenon of unpaid workers there is discussed in the chapter on Apprenticeship and Juvenile labour in Part III.

The numbers in each group expressed as a percentage of total breadwinners, are as follows :-

Table 2 - Percentage of Gainfully Occupied in Each Occupational Class, Australia, 1891.

	Vic. %	N.S.W. %	S.A. %	Tas. %
Employers of labour	8.9	12.2	13.8	9.1
Working on own account	15.4	13.9	10.3	15.6
Assisting but not receiving Wages	5.5	3.6	7.0	9.8
Wage or Salary earners	65.7	65.4	66.2	62.6
Unemployed	4.5	4.9	2.7	2.9
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Despite slight doubts as to the exact number of persons in each class for each colony, the broad outlines of this division of the population are unmistakeable.(1) The fact that all the colonies show a surprising degree of uniformity in this distribution of the working population indicates that it applied to both rural and urban industries. Despite differences in types of industry and economic development the overall picture of grades of occupation is strikingly similar for all colonies.

(1) The tentative figures for Western Australia given by Coghlan and Hayter, op.cit., conform to the Australian pattern as shown in Table 2; as it happens, they very closely resemble the distribution shown for New South Wales.

Taking Australia as a whole, in 1891 about one in ten of breadwinners were employers of labour; not many more were independent workers, which includes many farmers, while two-thirds of all breadwinners were wage or salary earners. Thus by 1891 the great majority of Australia's working population were wage earners of one kind or another. The exact course of this development before 1891 cannot be traced, but certainly the situation was not a novel one. Speaking of the Victorian diggers in the seven years from 1858 to 1865, Fitzpatrick comments that - "Probably a proletariat was never created so quickly, or out of human material so unmalleable, as in Victoria in those few years."(1) Even the diggers were not habitual independent producers; the great bulk of them were immigrant or local wage workers rendered independent of employers for a few years by the chance of easily won gold. The native Australian population, bond or free, had always been employees in this land of the big man's frontier. Neither gold nor free selection had shaped Australia to a land of small independent producers despite the dreams and struggles of past years. The wage earners of the eighties had long been so, in Australia or abroad. The structure of industry was to change greatly but this basic feature of the preponderance of wage earners was well established before the end of the nineteenth century. Between 1891 and 1947 the proportion of wage earners to total breadwinners rose

(1) Brian Fitzpatrick, "The Australian People", 1946, p.56.

only from seventy per cent to eighty per cent.[1]

The Australian working population was predominantly, but not solely, male. In the major division of wage and salary earners, females comprised twenty three per cent of this group in Victoria, eighteen per cent in New South Wales, twenty three per cent in South Australia and twenty one per cent in Tasmania. Over twenty per cent of the workers on their own account in Victoria and New South Wales were women; in these colonies the small group of ~~those assisting but not receiving wages or salary~~ unpaid workers[2] included a high proportion of females.

In the metropolitan areas the proportion of females to males was higher[3] than for the colonies as a whole, as employment opportunities for women were greatest. Hence it is certain that between one in four and one in five of urban wage earners in 1891 were women. However, domestic service probably accounted for

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(1) Commonwealth Year Book, No.39, 1953, p.549.

(2) The percentages have been calculated from the Census of the Commonwealth of Australia, 1911, Vol.I, Statistician's Report, pp.370 ff. Amongst female breadwinners even higher proportion were wage earners then amongst breadwinners as a whole.

An important group of the self employed in the cities, mainly women, is examined in Part II, Chapter 2, "Outwork". Many of the females assisting but not receiving wages were unpaid learners, discussed in Part III, Chapter 4, "Juvenile Labour and Apprenticeship".

(3) In all colonies males outnumbered females. In 1881 and 1891 the populations of Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane and Perth were almost equally divided between males and females; in Adelaide and Hobart by 1891 females were slightly more numerous than males. See N.S.W. Census of 1891, Report, p.135; and Vic. Census of 1891, pp. 33-4 and p.44.

half of them; Australian womenfolk in the eighties were not entirely confined to the home, but many of them were working in someone else's home. In other fields of employment their significance lay in their concentration in the clothing industry and to a much less extent in light packing and processing work. The use of cheap female labour had been one of the bases of the industrial revolution in Britain. In Australia it was not in the production of textiles (much of which was imported) but in the manufacture of clothing that a whole industry depended on female labour. Women's labour in this industry was not a key to economic development, as had been the case with British textiles.

At the same time only a small proportion of the total female population was gainfully employed. In 1891 it ranged from some fifteen per cent in Western Australia to twenty one per cent in Victoria. Throughout the twenty years from 1871 to 1891 the proportion of females working in Victoria was slightly greater than in New South Wales. In these years female employment increased substantially in both colonies, but little more than the increase in female population.(1) The concern about women's working conditions, which became a public

(1) For the proportion of female breadwinners to female population in the various colonies in 1891, see Census of Victoria, 1891, Report, p.237; for the Victorian figures 1871-91, ibid, p.219; for the New South Wales figures, 1871-91, N.S.W. Census of 1891, Report, p.279 for the number of female breadwinners and p.129 for the total female population.

question during the eighties, was not due to an extension of female employment, but to a new reaction to an existing state of affairs. In both 1881 and 1891 about one woman in five of all age groups in Victoria and about one in six in New South Wales was a breadwinner; naturally the female breadwinners comprised a higher proportion of the females of working age, at a time when some forty per cent of females were under fifteen years of age.(1) For most women their job was not a lifetime occupation, but lasted only until they married. This was one reason why women's wages could be very low and why the woman who had to support herself permanently was an object of sympathy, even if this did not lead to effective action.to alleviate her position.

The Australian population of the eighties was a youthful one. Thus breadwinners who were minors accounted for over one sixth of all breadwinners in 1891, and therefore some higher proportion of wage and salary earners.(2) The special conditions of juvenile employment are discussed in Part III, Chapter 4. Here it is only necessary to note that the wage earning class included a large youthful element, though widespread child labour no longer existed in the cities after the enactment of compulsory education. Even though the whole population was ageing, in 1891 only some twenty per cent were more than forty five years of age.(3)

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(1) T.A. Coghlan, "The Seven Colonies of Australasia", 1893, p.343.
(2) Calculated from Census of Victoria, 1891, Report, p.238.
(3) Census of the Commonwealth of Australia, 1911, Vol. I, Statistician's Report, p.105.

The urban wage earners with whom this thesis is concerned formed part of this larger body of wage earners.

In carrying the analysis further it is a sound principle for the social as well as the economic historian to look first at his subject matter "in terms of number, weight or measure", as Petty put it. Such bare bones do not make a living picture but in default of a skeleton the too, too yielding flesh may slip into the unrestrained shapes of fantasy. The numbers of urban wage earners, the industries in which they were employed, their occupations in those industries, the size and type of the establishments where they worked, provide an essential field of reference for an explanation of the wage earners' working conditions, living conditions and outlook. This is the framework which gives coherence, unity and meaning to the detail of urban wage earners' lives.

Even if the historian could have the framing of the statistics the complexity of the material would render difficult his task of giving a statistical account of the economic basis of the life of such a numerous and diverse class. As explained in Appendix I, the Australian statistics of the period were not constructed to answer such questions. At best they can reveal some important fundamental facts, suggest or dispose of hypotheses.

The Census of 1891 made a considerable advance in the classification of Australian breadwinners.(1) All colonies

(1) See Appendix I.

except New South Wales had adopted a uniform classification in 1881, but this, basedón the criterion of the product handled, did not distinguish between producers and distributors. "Thus those who sold boots and shoes, clothes or millinery, but did not manufacture any such articles, were classed with shoemakers, tailors, dressmakers, and others who did so under the head of 'dealers and workers in dress.'" (1) In the improved 1891 Census returns breadwinners were listed in the classes of professional, domestic, commercial, industrial and primary producers with an indefinite class. This was a division of breadwinners by the type of industry in which they worked, and therefore serves to distinguish the main outlines of Australian industry at the time.

The professional class embraced persons engaged in government (not elsewhere included), religion, health, education and the professions generally. This group scarcely enters into a study of urban wage earners. The domestic class included persons engaged in providing board and accommodation and personal attendance. In these industries domestic service is of some interest as an alternative to other female employment; while hotel and restaurant employees need to be considered in some connections. In the commercial class shop assistants and associated occupations comprise a large body of wage earners. This industry group also includes the operation of rail, road and marine transport and postal

(1) H.H. Hayter, Vic. Census, 1891, Report, p.191.

services, in which were employed considerable numbers of urban wage earners.

The industrial (1) class is the main one relevant to the thesis subject. Here are included those employed in the usual manufacturing industries, together with building and construction.

The industries in the fifth class, agricultural, pastoral and mining, are non-metropolitan, except for some quarrying.

For Australia as a whole, in 1891, the number of

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(1) In census classifications OCCUPATION is determined by the nature of the work performed - e.g. carpenter, steward, stoker, surgeon. An INDUSTRY is any single branch of productive activity, trade or service - e.g. building, accommodation, shipping, medicine. It follows that each industry will include a large number of occupations, and that most occupations can be performed in more than one industry. (Definitions from "Classifications of Industries and Occupations", Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics, June, 1945). The terms were not always used strictly in nineteenth century statistics, but the meaning can always be distinguished.

"Industrial" is also used in the common sense of manufacturing, or secondary industry generally. The context is sufficient to distinguish this usage from the statistical one.

bread winners engaged in each industry group was as follows :- (1)

TABLE 3 - BREADWINNERS BY INDUSTRIAL GROUPS, AUSTRALIA, 1891:

Class	Vic.	N.S.W.	Sth. Aust.	Queens-land	Tas.	West. Aust.	Australia.
Profes-sional	29722	31491	7266	10476	3785	1452	84192
Domestic	58549	55867	14242	20386	7264	2686	158994
Commercial	98828	86629	26209	31290	10155	5027	258138
Industrial	167541	140451	37680	47183	15854	6386	415095
Primary	128957	147026	40119	67992	23496	8746	416336
Indef-inite	18357	10423	1578	935	447	229	31969
Total Bread-winners	501954	471887	127094	178262	61001	24526	1364724

The table shows that in numbers employed the industrial group vied for first place with the primary. Almost one-third of total breadwinners were employed in each of these categories. The commercial class with somewhat less than twenty per cent of the breadwinners was the next largest.

The professional, domestic and industrial classes comprised urban type occupations; together they accounted for more than half of Australia's breadwinners in 1891. Any conception that the typical Australian of this period laboured in the bush would be incorrect. Naturally all breadwinners

(1) T.A. Coghlan, "The Seven Colonies of Australasia", 1894, p. 266. The differences between the colonial totals shown in this Table and those shown in Table 1, p. 34, are due to the allocation of those occupations who were not described, as such, inmates of religious and charitable institutions and persons of independent means.

of these classes were not working in cities, let alone capital cities, but the majority of them were. The table shows the concentration of three-quarters of the industrial class in Victoria and New South Wales, the two colonies whose capitals dominate the urban scene of the time.

The three main statistical questions which need to be asked at this stage are : (1) How many breadwinners, more specifically wage earners, were employed in manufacturing, processing, transport and building, in each of the capital cities? (2) Within these broad classifications, in what particular industries were they working? (3) What was the size of the industrial units in which they were employed? For each of these questions we are also concerned with any changes which took place during the eighties.

To answer these questions the broad divisions of "industrial" and "commercial" need to be broken down into their components, and the urban part of these abstracted for each colony. The information is not available to do this accurately, even for 1891; if it were, many problems of classification would still remain. The colonial returns of manufactures and the censuses are the most important sources. These returns, which all included factory and non-factory production, were defective in that they had been formulated for the conditions of earlier periods, were unsatisfactory in their definitions and unreliable in their collection.(1) The field is

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(1) See Appendix I.

a difficult one where examination of many figures still leads to only tentative conclusions. Nevertheless these conclusions have their value, as landmarks on an uncharted coast, though all of what lies between them cannot be explored.

In the remainder of this chapter the questions of the absolute numbers of urban wage earners, the industries in which they were employed, and the size of the industrial units where they worked, will be examined for each colony. Victoria and Melbourne are most important, and for them the most information is available. The general and theoretical questions which arise are discussed in connection with Melbourne and Victoria, and the other colonies are treated in less detail.

The Victorian annual returns of manufacturing employment are summarised in Table 1 of Appendix II. According to them the number of male employees was 32,143 in 1881 and 49,402 in 1891; of female employees, 6,554 in 1881 and 8,773 in 1891. The growth in numbers had been interrupted by the depression of 1886-7 and turned back again in 1891. The total of 58,000 employees for 1891 certainly included many engaged in minor rural and domestic activities which did not constitute manufacture proper. On the other hand, an unknown number of factories may have been inadequately returned or omitted.

After 1885 another account of Victorian manufacturing exists in the returns under the Factories Act (See Part II, Chapter 2, for an account of the Act and its administration).

The returns (See Appendix II, Table 2), are not comprehensive, though they do cover most manufacturing workplaces employing six or more hands. If only for this reason, the Factory Inspector lists a smaller number of establishments and total workers than the Statistical Registers. The smaller total of employees is due to the fewer male workers shown, since the Factory Inspector shows a much greater number of female workers than does the Statistical Register. Female employees came under special provisions of the Factories Act, so that their enumeration was seriously attempted for the first time, with the results showing that the Statistical Registers had considerably underestimated female employment in the past. For example, the Statistical Register figures of female workers for 1886 and 1891 are 7,755 and 8,773 respectively; the Factory Inspector's 11,027 and 12,604.

The Factory Inspector's figure of 34,000 male factory workers in 1891 is a better measure of manufacturing employment than the Statistical Register figure of 49,000. The Factory Inspector's total for 1891 of some 47,000 male and female employees working in factories in Victoria may be accepted as a reasonable guide, with the proviso that many were employed in workshops which scarcely merited the title of factory.

All the foregoing refers to Victoria as a whole. The Statistical Register can be fairly satisfactorily divided into metropolitan and non-metropolitan totals (See Appendix II,

Table 3). In both 1881 and 1891 less than half the manufacturing establishments were metropolitan but they accounted for two-thirds of total employees. Female factory employment was particularly concentrated in Melbourne. The Statistical Register figures, for what they are worth, show some 25,000 employees in manufactories in Melbourne in 1881 and some 40,000 in 1891.

The Royal Commission on the Tariff, which sat from November, 1881 to May, 1883, gives an extensive though not a complete description of Melbourne industry (See Appendix II, Table 4). The Melbourne witnesses whom it called represented firms employing some 9,700 males and 2,700 females, but all that can be said is that these constituted an unknown fraction of Melbourne manufacturing employment.

The most valuable record, though it is only for the end of the period, is that given by the Census of 1891 (See Appendix II, Table 5). From the detailed tables the number of breadwinners employed in various industry groups in Melbourne can be abstracted. Table 5 of Appendix II shows the main types of employment carried on in workshops or factories in Melbourne, taken from the industrial class of the Census returns. Many minor occupations have been excluded, but the figures are authentic within their limits. The table gives a total of 37,000 males and 15,000 females working in metropolitan industries, as well as the 14,000 males in imperfectly defined industries. Thus they support the Factory Inspector's

figures, allowing that they are more extensive than these, though not completely comprehensive.

The Census is also valuable in that it distinguishes the important building industry, employing 14,300 males in Melbourne, with another 2,500 engaged in road, railway and similar construction, and 1,700 in quarrying. In 1891 neither building nor public works was at its peak. Both had been very prominent from the early eighties, though they had certainly expanded greatly in the second half of the decade. The mere numbers are sufficient to indicate one reason for the significant role played by building workers in the trade union affairs of the eighties, without considering the special position which many building workers occupied by virtue of their skill and long established organisation.

Another useful Census subdivision is that showing transport workers. In Melbourne in 1891 there were 16,700 male breadwinners engaged in railway, tramway, road and sea traffic. Tramway and road traffic, particularly carrying, was most important; sea traffic employed rather more than the railways. In road traffic there were independent cab proprietors and carriers; all groups include clerical and technical as well as manual workers, but the latter would certainly predominate.

It is particularly difficult to determine a total of shop assistants. In the three main distributive divisions of the 1891 Census shown in Table 5 of Appendix II

25,000 male and 3,450 females were occupied in wholesale and retail trading. Neither the two branches nor the number of wage earners can be separated for Melbourne but, as shown in the discussion of Table 7 of Appendix II, there were at least 23,000 employees in wholesaling and retailing in Melbourne in 1891, the majority of them shop assistants.

Thus from the foregoing Census figures, a brief and rough summary of the number of breadwinners engaged in the main types of urban employment in Melbourne in 1891 can be compiled as follows :-

Various manufacturing and processing industries, excluding some minor ones, - 37,000 males, 15,000 females, and 14,000 males in industries imperfectly defined.

Building, construction and quarrying, - 19,500 males.

Transport, - 16,600 males.

Wholesale and retail trading, - at least 23,000, nearly all males, wage earners.

Once more it should be emphasised that these figures are not exhaustive. They are only a guide, but the best guide possible in the circumstances. As they stand they account for considerably more than half of all Melbourne breadwinners.

Leaving aside the traders, at least 88,000 breadwinners (without 14,000 imperfectly defined) worked in manufacture, processing, building and construction or transport

in Melbourne in 1891. How many of these were wage earners? The overall proportion for Victoria of seventy per cent (See Table 2 of this Chapter) can certainly be taken as a very conservative one for those industries. Allowing for imperfectly defined, for omissions from the figures quoted, and adding the distributive employees, we can think in terms of one hundred thousand wage earners in Melbourne in these groups in 1891. The number of wage earners, particularly shop assistants and storemen, amongst the trading group, can only be estimated, but if it had to be, then twenty thousand would not overstate it.

It is not worthwhile to try to push the question further, since the lack of information and the complexity of the subject precludes an accurate determination. As the figures stand they are sufficient to demonstrate the size of the body of wage earners with whom this thesis is concerned. It was already the major body of urban breadwinners, historically emergent though it was as yet. A similar picture will be disclosed for Sydney, and a less developed one for the other capitals.

The next question to be answered is that of the industries in which these wage earners were employed. This refers particularly to those hitherto grouped as manufacturing and processing industries.

The particular industries in which Melbourne breadwinners were employed can be listed for 1891 from the Census

returns (See Appendix II, Table 5). Dress manufacture, which included bootmaking, is by far the largest single industry with about 22,000 engaged; it is marked by the preponderance of women workers and the high proportion of juveniles. In manufacture, metal working, represented by that entry, the machinery and carriage building groups, employed only half as many people as dress manufacture. House and shop fittings was the next largest industry. Then follow food and drink; books and publications; furniture; stone, clay, earthenware and glass; and the processing of vegetable matters, animal matters and leather.

Building was the second largest single industry. The house and shop fittings; furniture; stone, clay, earthenware and glass manufactures already mentioned supplied its needs. Construction works were also of some importance in the metropolitan area. The building industry, despite its fluctuations, had always been a large employer of labour in the expanding Australian cities. The eighties saw the greatest of building booms, though the development of other urban industries diminished the relative importance of building.

In the transport group tramway and road traffic accounted for more than half of the breadwinners, rail and sea traffic fairly equally for the remainder. Transport had always been a major industry in the entrepot cities. By the eighties the important development was the growth of rail transport, with the State as the single employer. At the same

time city passenger traffic by tramways and omnibuses grew greatly.

The picture of Melbourne industry in 1891 which emerges is one where retail and wholesale distribution, building and construction and transport were prominent. In manufacture proper wearing apparel was the biggest industry, easily outranking all metal working. Building equipment and accessories were the next largest industrial group; then came the production of food and drink and a variety of light industries supplying everyday consumption goods or processing agricultural and pastoral products.

This being the position in 1891, the question arises as to what changes had taken place in the preceding ten years. As explained the 1881 Census is not arranged in similar industry groups. Hence a comparison on this basis is not possible. Hayter made a comparison by reducing the 1891 returns to the old 1881 classification. Little of value can be derived from these figures other than the fact that the number of persons engaged in commerce, trade, and manufacture, almost doubled during the ten years.(1)

The Shops and Factories Commission of 1882-3 collected evidence incidentally on some industries for these years (See Appendix II). Since its purpose was to examine particular aspect of working conditions, its tabulation of industries was neither systematic nor comprehensive. Most

(1) Census of Victoria, Report, 1891, p.213.

attention was given to clothing and hat manufacture, tailoring, bootmaking, printing, coachbuilding and cordial manufacture - in the main industries employing women and children, but also mainly industries which were large employers of labour at the end of the decade.

The Tariff Commission of 1881-3 examined the position of most Melbourne industries. Its grouping shows the same general pattern as that of 1891, though the total employment in particular industries cannot be compared. The inquiry was exhaustive enough for all manufacturing industries of any importance to be represented.

Thus during the ten years 1881-91 there had been no important change in the prevalent types of Melbourne industries. There had been expansion in the numbers employed, but the pattern of distribution, building, transport and light manufactures, especially clothing, had not altered.

The third question in the statistical examination of urban employment concerns the size of industrial units. It makes a great deal of difference in many ways whether a pair of trousers is the product of a single worker in a back room, or of many hundreds of workers in a factory. This circumstance affects not the trousers, but the worker. At all levels of industrial organisation size of industrial units is a fundamental consideration in the conditions and the outlook of wage earners. Hence after determining the number of wage earners and the industries in which they are

employed, we must ascertain the size of the firms in those industries. A thousand men may be employed in a hundred factories of ten men each or in ten of one hundred men each. The numerical total is the same, but the structure of industry which it represents is greatly different. The size of the industrial units determines how easily ownership may be acquired, the firm's individual importance in the market for its products, what proportion of workers may hope to become owners, what number of workers labour side by side with common problems and interests, at what distance the employer confronts them with his own interests.

Naturally the growth of industry is from small to large scale units and Australian industry of the eighties was characterised by small scale units. Such terms are, however, only relative, generally relative to later developments. It is necessary to try to arrive at some factual conclusions.

For Victoria as a whole the Statistical Register figures of manufactories show that during the ten years from 1881 to 1891, while the number of hands employed increased by slightly more than fifty per cent, the number of establishments increased by only twenty seven per cent. Hence the average number of hands per establishment rose from fifteen in 1881 to about eighteen in 1891. This was accompanied by a doubling of the power output in those factories using steam or gas power. The twenty per cent increase in the hands employed per firm was substantial but not sensational.

In both 1881 and 1891 Melbourne manufactories were on a larger scale than for Victoria as a whole. In 1881 metropolitan establishments averaged twenty four hands each; in 1891 twenty seven hands each - an increase, but not a very great one. In 1881 they used about one-third of the steam and gas power produced in the colony; in 1891 more than half.

An average of twenty seven employees per firm is more than might be expected at a time when manufacturing is assumed to be in its infancy. Furthermore, included in this average and decreasing it, are all the minor workshops which appeared in the Statistical Register totals. We need to measure not only the average, but the dispersion of the series. Otherwise, the big factory, new, growing, influential in conditions and workers' attitudes, is obscured by the myriad small workshops which may be less important in so many respects. To find this information we have to turn to a detailed examination of industrial structure.

A rather cursory inquiry conducted as part of the Census of 1881 revealed only fifteen firms employing more than one hundred hands. The industries in which these fifteen firms were engaged were: machines and tools, one; drinks and stimulants, one; metals, one; houses and buildings, two; dress, four; vegetable matters (probably timber and wood merchants), five; mining, one. The total number of employees concerned was 3,017.(1)

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(1) Census of Victoria, 1881, Report, pp. 137-8.

The Shops and Factories Commission of 1882-3 tabulated some incidental information on size of units, mainly in printing, coachbuilding, bootmaking, clothing, hat, cordial manufactures, and tailoring. In this restricted field only a few, in the clothing and boot trades, showed enterprises with more than one hundred employees; alongside them existed many small businesses, a pattern which was to remain typical during the decade.

The concurrent Royal Commission on the Tariff gives a much more complete description of Melbourne industry. Of the two hundred factories described over forty employed one hundred or more hands, a few of the largest the largest few five hundred hands. This showed a very rapid development since 1881.

The largest factories were in the important clothing industry, most of their employees being women. Clothing and boots and shoes were typically produced by some quite large factories and by a multitude of small workshops. The industry was at the one time the stronghold of outwork and the petty master, where the onerous conditions of women and children roused the demand for social reform; at the same time a single clothing factory could employ five hundred workers. Much the same conditions applied in boot manufacture. The structure of these industries is discussed in more detail in Part II, Chapter 2. Here it is sufficient to note that the large factory and the small workshop existed side by side; the former was the new development, the growing

trend. An average size of industrial units is not meaningful here.(1)

In metal manufactures, foundries, iron rolling mills, general engineering and the manufacture of agricultural implements were on a large scale, coachbuilding less so. At the same time there existed many small engineering works, such as blacksmiths, specialised manufactures and light metal works. In this basic industry some of the small metal works used the technique of an earlier period to compete with larger firms. Others such as the blacksmiths' shops provided that "on the spot" local service which was not amenable to organisation in larger units. Still others fulfilled parts of the needs of larger scale industry itself. In a period when vertical integration of processes was little developed the large factory relied on many smaller ones for the supply of particular parts and for special processes which were not suitable to mechanisation.

Woollen mills were relatively large units, as they always had been, from the nature of their machinery. There were only a few large furniture shops, sawmills and timber yards. Saddlery was a small scale trade; so, with some exceptions, were glassware, earthenware, musical instruments

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(1) J.H. Clapham, "An Economic History of Modern Britain", Cambridge, 1952, p.119, shows that a similar situation existed in Britain until almost this period. For 1871 in Britain tailoring and clothing factories averaged 133 hands; all workshops in the same industry 5.4 hands; boot and shoe factories averaged 125 hands, all workshops 6.5 hands.

and jewellery. The same applied to stationery, printing and brewing. Tobacco factories, using machinery, were substantial; cigar works, employing only hand workers, were small. A few miscellaneous industries, such as the making of biscuits, candles and soap, were conducted in large factories.

Thus as early as 1883 the hundred man - or woman - factory was no rarity in Melbourne. Factories employing up to five hundred hands existed in clothing manufacture, alongside many small workshops. Generally it was the nature of the processes which called into being the large scale factory - power driven machinery made it profitable to bring the workers together. During the eighties there was a great development of power driven machinery, from sewing machines driven by gas engines to steam hammers. Even where power could be little used, as in packing, an expanding market encouraged division of labour and concentration of the work force.

This did not mean the disappearance of small scale units. In the long run, as the typical form of production, large scale and small scale units, wherever the definition be placed, cannot both prevail. But at any given point of time the large unit may call into being as well as eliminate small ones. Further, as during the eighties, an expanding market may increase the numbers of both, temporarily obscuring the trend.

The value of the evidence before the Tariff Commission is that it shows the size of individual firms in the

eighties. Thus it provides a detailed picture of the structure of much of Melbourne industry. This supplements an overall account of the size of industrial units, which is available for 1889. In that year, at the height of Victoria's boom, a Return to the order of the Legislative Assembly, dissected the Statistical Register figures of manufactories by number of hands employed. (See Appendix II, Table 6).

This table, for the whole of Victoria, shows thirty one factories employing over 200 persons, sixty one employing between 100 and 200 persons. These ninety factories accounted for 18,119 employees, roughly one-third of the factory labour force. About half of all factory employees worked in establishments of fifty or more hands, and this is not for Melbourne only, but for the whole of Victoria. Establishments of such size constitute substantial factories, and they dominated industrial employment.

At the other end of the scale factories employing less than six hands numbered 1,294, or over one-third of the total number of factories, but they employed only 4,467 hands out of a total of 56,271. Such petty workshops had a precarious life. During 1889 245 factories were removed from the Factory Inspector's Register, a few by amalgamation, many by insolvency or reduction of the number of hands below six. The closed factories had employed only 2,906 hands. In the same year 335 new factories opened. In 1890 140, employing 1,387 persons, closed and 228, employing 1,781 persons opened.

A similar story is repeated for 1891.[1] Some workshops had a life of less than a year. Most of the casualties came from the ranks of the small clothing, dressmaking, millinery and furniture works. Behind the growing total of factories lies the instability of the small workshop. Prominent though these were, particularly as the target of social reformers, they could not compete successfully with the large factory.

This increase in the number of large factories between 1881 and 1891 is outstanding. It was a movement which began apace in the first years of the eighties, as soon as the recession of 1879-80 had lifted. This development was more significant than the gradual increase in the average number of hands employed. It was made possible by the growth of population and general prosperity. It explains much of the labour history of urban workers in the eighties, especially of the previously unorganised clothing and boot workers.

Building was, as it always had been, a small man's occupation where sub-contracting blurred the line between master and worker. Only on a major works, these generally public works, did a large body of employees labour side by side; even then they would often not confront the same immediate employer.

Transport was marked by the rise of the railways - one system, one employer, under the State. The tramway and

(1) Vic. Factory Inspector's Report for 1889, p. 8; for 1890, p. 7; for 1891, pp. 7-8.

omnibus companies were generally city wide; the cab driver was usually a working proprietor or lessee. On the water-front employees were fairly numerous and the labour engaged on a casual basis, but usually in fairly large groups.

To sum up, we can think of at least one hundred thousand urban wage earners in Melbourne in 1891, the result of steady growth in numbers over the decade. They worked in the manufacture of wearing apparel, light metal goods, building equipment, food and drink, everyday consumption goods, and in processing agricultural and pastoral products, as well as building and transport. There had been a very rapid increase in the number of firms employing fifty, a hundred or more hands, so that establishments of this size now dominated many fields of employment. The workshop was giving way to the factory.

The elucidation of the numbers of urban wage earners and the industrial structure wherein they worked has been attempted in detail for Melbourne. This is necessary because of the importance of that city and because of the extensive information available about it. The examination of urban employment in the other capitals can be, indeed through paucity of sources, must be, conducted more briefly. The pattern revealed for Melbourne serves as a guide, bearing in mind the differences in development in each case.

Sydney, in population and economic structure, most nearly approached Melbourne. Here reference to the

Melbourne picture can most usefully fill gaps in information.

New South Wales was the largest centre in Australia of the infant manufacturing industries until the sixties. By 1871 Victoria had taken first position. During the early eighties manufacturing was growing more rapidly in New South Wales than in Victoria, but this trend was reversed again in the second half of the eighties.(1)

The following table shows manufacturing employment in New South Wales and Sydney during the ten years 1881-2 to 1891-2.(2)

TABLE 4 - MANUFACTORIES AND WORKS - NUMBER OF ESTABLISHMENTS AND HANDS EMPLOYED.

New South Wales and Metropolitan District 1881-2 to 1890-1.

Year	Metropolitan District				New South Wales			
	No. of Establish-ments.	No. of hands employed			No. of Establish-ments.	No. of hands employed		
		Male	Female	Total		Male	Female	Total.
1881-2	985	15626	2182	17808	2961	28819	2372	31191
1882-3	1011	16998	1856	18854	3158	31824	2065	33889
1883-4	1039	17753	1900	19653	3224	32350	2384	34734
1884-5	1126	19855	2173	22028	3419	36390	2404	38794
1885-6	1169	20101	3179	23282	3541	38255	3420	41677
1886-7	1386	22026	2874	24900	3541	40160	3367	43527
1887-8	1346	21110	3089	24199	3349	39365	3686	43051
1888-9	1324	22334	3551	25885	3106	41299	4265	45564
1889-90	1143	21509	3490	24999	2926	40725	4264	44989
1890-1	1124	24342	3716	28058	2583	41582	4553	46135

(1) T.A. Coghlan, "Labour and Industry in Australia", pp.1199 ff.

(2) N.S.W. Statistical Register for 1892, p.454. The figures have the same kind of limitations as those for Victoria. The manufactories and works comprise all establishments using power or employing five or more hands, with some exceptions. The Table includes much more than manufacturing proper. The number of employees is the average for the year, including working proprietors, managers and clerks. There was no power to compel returns, so if the employer did not provide information the collector filled it in as best possible. The year is the twelve months ending 31 March. A changeover to the calendar year in 1891 meant that no figures were collected for the nine months April to December, 1891. The Metropolitan district included all Sydney suburbs but not Parramatta.

Table 4 shows that between 1881-2 and 1890-1 the number of hands employed in manufactories and works in New South Wales increased by almost fifty per cent. The total of ~~50,638~~ 46,135 was still less than the Victorian total (cf. Appendix II, Table 1). In the recession of 1886-7 New South Wales figures approached those of Victoria, but the Victorian recovery of the late eighties took that colony well to the lead again by 1891.(1)

Although female employment doubled over the decade, the total in 1891 was still only about half that of Victoria. Female employment remained concentrated in the metropolitan area, but Sydney did not show the same development of the clothing industry, based on female labour, as did Melbourne.

In the Census of 1891 employment in the main divisions of the industrial class within the metropolis was as follows:-(2)

Table 5 - Employment in Sydney in the Industrial Class, Census of 1891.

Art and Mechanic Productions	..	11,807
Textiles, Dress and fibrous materials		13,789
Food, Drink and Stimulants	..	4,344
Animal and Vegetable Substances	..	2,324
Minerals and Metals	..	6,816
Undefined Industrial Pursuits	..	6,769
		45,849

(1) The relative advance of New South Wales manufacturing from 1883 to 1887 is shown in the Return comparing the two colonies for these years, N.S.W. V.& P. of Legis. Ass., 1888-9, Vol. 3, p.1295.

(2) N.S.W. Census, 1891, p. 663.

This is less than three-quarters of the comparable Melbourne figures (see Page 49), a difference which is not wholly accounted for by Sydney's smaller population. At least the usual seventy per cent of these breadwinners would have been wage earners.

In 1891 building and construction employed 16,153 breadwinners in Sydney and transport 13,091, figures which on a population basis are similar to those for Melbourne.(1) In transport, as well as the railway, tramway, omnibus workers and carters, there were about 2,000 seamen and 1,600 wharf labourers.(2)

It is impossible to distinguish employees in retail shops but probably Sydney had almost as many as Melbourne's 23,000 wage earners engaged in wholesaling and retailing. As an indication, the categories of drapers, butchers and grocers, taken from the multiplicity of commercial occupations given, each included about two thousand persons in the metropolis.(3)

While there were about one hundred thousand Melbourne wage earners engaged in manufacture, processing, building and construction, transport and retailing in 1891, sixty to seventy thousand would be a good approximation for Sydney. This total represented a considerable increase since 1881.

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(1) N.S.W. Census, 1891, p. 663.
(2) Ibid, p. 683.
(3) Ibid, pp. 676-7.

In 1891 the types of industries in which these were employed did not differ greatly from those of Melbourne.

The manufacturing industries which employed most hands in New South Wales in 1891 were as follows :-(1)

TABLE 6 - EMPLOYMENT IN NEW SOUTH WALES MANUFACTURING INDUSTRIES, 1891.

Clothing (including boots)	9,921	hands
Food and Drink	9,101	"
Metal working	6,090	"
Government Railway Workshops	4,146	"
Vehicle Building and Repair	1,486	"
Ship Building and Repair	978	"
Wood working	5,955	"
Furniture	1,192	"
Paper, stationery, printing	4,176	"
Bricks, pottery, glass	2,514	"
Skins and leather	2,297	"

Thus the largest industry group was that of all metal working and engineering including government railway workshops. The metal industries of New South Wales had had a chequered career, depending greatly on short term government contracts. Despite this they were better developed than in Victoria, probably because of their early basis in shipbuilding and repairing.(2) Clothing and food and drink were next largest industries, in the typical Colonial pattern. The other prominent industries produced consumption goods, building materials, or processed local raw materials. This

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(1) H.R. Edwards, "Employment in the New South Wales Manufacturing Industries, 1877 to 1938-9", Economic Record, Vol. 26, Dec. 1950, p.270, arranges the Statistical Register figures of manufacturing employment into industrial groups. His figures, which include some adjustments to the Statistical Register figures, are used here.

(2) Charles Lyne, "The Industries of New South Wales", 1892, suggests this explanation.

industrial structure resembles that of Victoria with the differences in emphasis noted. Over the ten years the relative importance of these industries in New South Wales had not changed much. Wood working and paper, stationery and printing had at least doubled; bricks and pottery had declined after the building boom of the early eighties; government railway workshops had increased rapidly at the end of the eighties; employment in other major manufacturing groups had moved with the total.

Information about industry in Sydney is available for the year 1892, though not for the immediately preceding years. The year 1892 was one of growing depression, but the structure of industry disclosed is worth while examining. This is set out in Table 7:-(1)

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(1) Compiled from N.S.W. Statistical Register for 1892, Table 4, pp. 436 ff.

TABLE 7 - MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY IN THE METROPOLITAN AREA, NEW SOUTH WALES, 1892.

Industrial Class	Industry	No. of Establishments.	No. of Hands Employed.	Average No. of hands per Establishment.
Treating Pastoral Raw Material	Tanneries	21	296	14
	Wool washing	6	320	53
Food and Drink	Aerated Waters	29	456	16
	Bread & Biscuits	65	879	14
	Breweries	7	450	64
	Confectionery	12	394	33
	Ice & Refrigeration	4	236	59
	Sugar refining	1	372	372
Clothing and Textiles	Boots & Shoes	40	2006	50
	Clothing	71	2228	31
	Woollen cloth	1	67	67
	Dressmaking & Millinery	54	1550	29
Building Materials	Bricks	29	880	30
	Joinery	38	624	16
	Sawmills	26	1023	39
Metals and Machinery	Engineering	37	920	25
	Iron Works & Foundries	22	439	20
	Plumbing & Galv. Iron	46	566	12
	Railway Carriage Works	3	1853	618
	Wire Works	5	269	54
Ship Building and Repairs	Docks	4	370	93
	Shipbuilding	8	872	109
Furniture, etc.	Furniture	45	821	18
Paper, Printing etc.	Printing	66	3157	48
Vehicles, Harness, etc.	Coaches & Waggons	57	988	17
Light, Fuel	Gas	4	1063	266
Miscellaneous	Rope	3	113	38
	Tobacco	5	509	102

This table shows that the description given of New South Wales industry applies to that of Sydney. The importance of clothing, boots and shoes, printing and the food and drink products is obvious even compared to the total of the engineering industries.

From Table 7 some idea of the size of industrial units can be gained. The Statistical Register figures for the whole of New South Wales (Table 4) show that over the years 1881-2 to 1890-1 the number of New South Wales establishments declined, while the average of hands per establishment rose from less than eleven to eighteen. This decline in the number of establishments took place in the second half of the decade while the number of employees was still increasing; it reflected the disappearance with worsened economic conditions of many small businesses. The metropolitan proportion of manufacturing employment - about sixty per cent, somewhat less than in Victoria - altered little over the period. Metropolitan establishments were on a larger scale than for the colony as a whole, averaging eighteen hands in 1881-2 and twenty five in 1890-1, almost the same as Melbourne.

In examining the size of firms from Table 7 it should be remembered that clothing manufacture, as in Melbourne, was divided between a few large factories producing ready made clothing, and many small workshops.(1) Something the same

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(1) See N.S.W. V.& P. of Legis. Ass. 1891-2, Vol. 7, pp.1079ff. Reports under the Census and Industrial Returns Act, Report No. 1, p.2; No. 2, p.9; No. 3, p.14.

applied to boot manufacture, where the largest factory employed about three hundred hands.(1) Printing was divided between a few large newspaper and jobbing offices and many small firms.(2) Industries where there were only a few establishments, but the number of workers per establishment large, included wood working, breweries, ice works, a sugar refinery, a woollen mill, railway carriage works, wire works, docks, shipbuilding, gas works and tobacco factories. The engineering, processing and storage industries kept up the average number of hands in Sydney factories, for the industries producing goods of everyday consumption were not as well developed there as in Melbourne. In building the 698 persons returned as builders or building contractors indicates the dispersion of the work force amongst small masters.(3)

The number of urban wage earners with whom this thesis is concerned was much less in Sydney than in Melbourne - probably sixty or seventy thousand compared to one hundred thousand. The types of industry in Sydney were similar to those of Melbourne - production of consumption goods and processing of raw materials, building and construction, transport and trading. But Sydney was better developed in metal working, less so in clothing manufacture. The average size of industrial units was almost as great as that of Melbourne by 1891. In Sydney the average was maintained by the railway

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(1) Ibid, Report No. 8, p. 3.
(2) N.G. Butlin, "Collective Bargaining in the Sydney Printing Industry, 1880-1900", Economic Record, Vol.23, Dec.1947, p. 207.
(3) N.S.W. Census, 1891, p.693.

workshops and engineering generally. The overall figures for Sydney show a very great increase in average number of hands per firm over the years 1881 to 1891. In Sydney, probably even more than in Melbourne, the large factory assumed a dominating position during the eighties.

The South Australian statistics of manufactories and works are subject to the usual vagaries of definition, including, for example, quartz crushing in the Northern Territory, wire making, bark mills and laundries.(1) The colonial figures are as follows :-

TABLE 8 - WORKS, MANUFACTORIES IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA, 1876 and 1881-1891.

Year Ending 31 Mar.	No. of Establishments	Using Gas or Steam Power	Power Output in H.P.	Hands Employed. Male	Female	Total
1876	397	144	1445	5553	760	6313
1881	787	256	2634	8896	1086	9982
1882	741	266	2519	9050	1249	10299
1883	786	320	2845	9833	1736	11569
1884	701	296	2994	9171	1458	10629
1885	646	286	2856	7952	1350	9302
1886-7-8	Information not collected.					
1889	668	343	3973	9587	1842	11429
1890	Information not collected.					
1891	870	383	4801	10614	1950	12564

(1) Compiled from Part III, Production, in the annual Statistical Register of South Australia, bound in Vol. 1 of S.A.P.P. each year.
No figures were collected between the 1876 census and 1881. The information was not collected in 1886-7-8 when South Australia suffered an acute depression and financial crisis. (See Part I, Ch. 1) The missing figures would probably show a further decrease from 1885. Apparently the reason for non-collection in 1890 was the forthcoming census of 1891. The establishments not using gas or steam power mostly used manual power, with a few wind, water or horse driven.

The Table shows that manufacturing, so-called, in South Australia, had increased rapidly between 1876 and 1881; while from the mid-eighties it declined. Not until 1891 were the previous peaks surpassed. Meanwhile, the number and proportion of establishments using gas or steam power and the total power output had increased considerably. During the eighties total employment had increased at a slower rate than the total number of establishments, so that the average size of establishments decreased from sixteen to fourteen hands. Female employment was still very small.

South Australia's boom was over by the mid-eighties. The colonial total of breadwinners increased little between 1881 and 1891, while the number of breadwinners in the industrial classification of the census actually decreased slightly.(1) Female employment had risen rapidly although the numbers were still small. The total of 12,564 males and females employed in 1891 is a small one compared to that for Victoria or New South Wales.

In the South Australian census of 1891 only colonial totals of employment are given; Adelaide figures cannot be separated. South Australia'a boom was over by the mid-eighties so the colony does not show the usual progress between 1881 and 1891. Over this period the total number of breadwinners increased only from 111,991 to 123,362; the number of breadwinners in the industrial classification of the census

(1) S.A. Census of 1891, Part IX, Occupations of the People, p. 569, S.A.P.P., 1894, Vol. 2, No. 74.

actually decreased slightly. (1)

Figures for employment by industries in Adelaide are not available for 1891 or earlier years. Individual urban type occupations can be selected from the census of 1881 and 1891 and compared. These are totals for the whole colony. (2) The main groups of occupations are as follows :-

TABLE 9 - EMPLOYMENT IN SELECTED OCCUPATIONS, SOUTH AUSTRALIA, 1881 AND 1891.

Occupation	1881.	1891.
Tailors and clothing workers	3,811 (incl. 3,407 females)	5,510 (incl. 5,501 females)
Engineers, metal workers, blacksmiths, etc.	3,172	4,452
Building tradesmen and builders' labourers	6,165	4,326
Navvies	3,626	1,620
Undefined labourers	8,759	9,843
Boot, shoe makers	1,520	1,861
Rail, tram, omnibus workers	1,125	2,035
Millers, bakers, brewers	1,444	1,173
Tanners, saddlers etc.	1,072	854
Printers, bookbinders	812	659
Carriage builders, wheelwrights	661	821

(1) S.A. Census of 1891, Part IX, Occupations of the People, p.569. S.AP. P., 1894, Vol. 2, No. 74.

(2) Ibid, pp.574 ff. The table has been compiled by grouping kindred occupations so far as these could be ascertained from the Census classifications.

Clothing manufacture, with bootmaking, was thus the largest secondary industry in South Australia; after it came metal working and building, which had declined since 1881. Transport workers had grown in numbers with the railway system. Flour milling had always been prominent in South Australia; so had tanning. Adelaide, as an old established urban centre showed a similar pattern of industries to that of Melbourne but with the treating of primary products still bulking very large. The workers in the occupations of Table 9, only a selection though a large one, total 33,000; in 1891 there were an additional 13,400 breadwinners engaged in trade.(1) These figures are for the whole colony, of the population of which Adelaide contained forty two per cent and probably not many of the undefined labourers above, and are for all breadwinners, not merely wage earners. There may, therefore, have been about twenty thousand urban workers in Adelaide who fell within the scope of this thesis. The firms for which they worked were small, averaging, from Table 8, thirteen hands in 1881 and only fourteen in 1891 - the figure had been sixteen in 1876. Certainly, as will be seen in examining working conditions, Adelaide had some large clothing and boot factories, tanneries and mills, but the small workshop was much more prominent than in Melbourne or Sydney. All told, during the eighties Adelaide as a centre of urban employment had declined in importance compared to Melbourne, Sydney or Brisbane.

(1) Ibid, p.569.

Manufacturing in Queensland developed much later than in New South Wales or Victoria. Coghlan estimates that in 1860 there were less than 5,000 persons employed in manufacturing in the northern colony, and in 1871 5,520.(1) Queensland statistics during the eighties were still designed to show the information of importance to a rural economy. The annual statistics give the number of mills, manufactories and works by police districts each year, but do not give the number of employees in them, except for soap and candle making, tanneries and brickyards, all of them small industries. The mere number of establishments is practically useless. Since the Queensland censuses of 1881 and 1886 did not generally distinguish makers from dealers, they throw little light on manufacturing employment.

The census of 1891 provides some information through its occupational classifications. A difficulty arises in the case of Brisbane in that the population of 101,554 persons in Greater Brisbane, within a ten mile radius of the centre of the city, was split up between various census districts, some of which also included rural areas. Census figures for Greater Brisbane cannot be determined, so that the census district of Brisbane must be used, and this, with a population of 56,075 comprised little more than half the total population of city and suburbs.(2) The employment in various occupations

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(1) T.A. Coghlan, "Labour and Industry in Australia", pp.1199 ff.

(2) Q'land Census of 1891, p.X, p.XII and p.60. V.P. of Q'land Legis. Ass. 1892, Vol. 3.

given below refers only to this smaller census district of Brisbane.

The number of breadwinners employed in main relevant occupations in this urban area in 1891 were as follows :-(1)

TABLE 10 - EMPLOYMENT IN SELECTED OCCUPATIONS IN THE BRISBANE CENSUS DISTRICT, 1891.

Occupational Group.		Breadwinners Engaged.
Clothing and dressmaking	about	1,800
Boot manufacture	"	730
Metal working	"	600
Engineers, stokers	"	360
Shipbuilding	"	100
Printing, bookbinding	"	300
Baking, biscuit making	"	220
Furniture making	"	200
Saddlery, harness making	"	160
Building and repairs	"	1,800
Construction works	"	230
Rail, road and sea transport	"	2,300
Labourers, undefined	"	1,300

Transport and building and construction were thus relatively very important in Brisbane. The only substantial industrial employment was in clothing and boot manufacture and metal working. The number of employees was few, though

(1) Ibid, pp.198 ff. The figures can be given only approximately because they are compiled by adding together various occupations which appear to be related.

certainly the figures refer to only about half of the population of Greater Brisbane. Despite the great growth of Brisbane between 1881 and 1891, in the latter year commerce still was more important than manufacturing and the miscellaneous urban industries were conducted on a small scale. The importance of Queensland in trade union affairs of the late eighties, for example, derived from the organisations of the bush workers, though their headquarters were in Brisbane and influenced trade unions there.

In Tasmania statistics of manufacturing were not kept, reflecting its small importance in the community; nor is the 1881 Census of any use. The 1891 Census in the colony was not tabulated in such detail as in larger colonies. In its Industrial classification it shows 2,803 persons (including 1,127 females) working in textiles, dress and fibrous materials; 1,488 males in metals and minerals (not mining); 5,166 males in construction and repair of buildings, roads, railways, dock, earthworks, etc.; and 3,390 industrial workers imperfectly defined. Of the whole Industrial class thirty seven per cent were resident in Hobart, thirty seven per cent in Launceston and the remainder in rural districts.(1) Each city therefore contained rather less than 5,000 breadwinners in these categories, with building and construction probably the largest source of employment.

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(1) Tasmanian Census of 1891, Tas. J.& P. of Parl., Vol.XXVI, 1892, No. 124, Statistics of Tasmania, Part III, Population, Occupations of the People, pp. 96-7.

A few industries are so listed for 1891 as to show the number of establishments and the number of hands employed.(1) Of these the urban type ones are as follows :-

TABLE 11 - MANUFACTORIES, WORKS, ETC., TASMANIA, 1891.

44 Brickyards and potteries employing 216 hands.

19 Tanneries and fellmongeries employing 152 hands.

8 Jam factories, all in Hobart, employing 141 hands including 33 females.

5 Soap and candle works, in Hobart and Launceston, employing 77 hands.

11 Breweries employing 122 hands.

35 Flour mills employing 114 hands.

3 Woollen mills employing 68 hands.

19 Engineering establishments, excluding railway workshops, employing 297 hands.

Although this list does not take account of all urban industries it is obvious that urban employment in Hobart and Launceston was primarily commercial rather than manufacturing. The beginnings of industry scarcely existed.

In Western Australia in 1891 there were 6,380 breadwinners in the Industrial class of occupations, 2,462 of them in Perth and Fremantle.(2) The number of urban wage earners engaged in manufacture was negligible.(3) The usual light industries did exist by that time but on a very small scale.(4)

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(1) Ibid, Part VII, Production, p.336 ff.
(2) Western Australian Census of 1891, p.76.
(3) Ibid, p. 168.
(4) Alfred J. Calvert, "Western Australia Its History and Progress", London 1894.

Thus the examination of the number of urban wage earners in Australia reveals the dominating position of Melbourne and Sydney. A very high proportion of the inhabitants of these major cities were wage earners. In all the cities distribution, building and transport were important fields of urban employment. Melbourne and Sydney, especially the former, had in addition extensive manufacturing industries. Such industries produced wearing apparel, metal products, food and drink and various other types of consumption good s. They also processed primary products. The manufacturing industries were more advanced in Melbourne and Sydney, clothing especially in Melbourne and engineering in Sydney. In the other capitals these industries were much less important, even allowing for smaller populations. Over the decade urban employment in Melbourne and Sydney had increased greatly. In Adelaide it had been static, while Brisbane had advanced rapidly but only to the embryonic industrial stage.

Some of the urban wage earners of Melbourne and Sydney still worked in the small workshops which had been typical of colonial industry. Many, however, now worked in factories of fifty or a hundred hands. The change from small to relatively large scale industrial units proceeded very rapidly during the eighties, although in Brisbane and Adelaide this process is notso noticeable. In Melbourne and Sydney the changing structure of industry had profound effects on the

organisation and outlook of wage earners and therefore on the part they played in the community as a whole. These ten years are the period of transition from the colonial to the modern in urban Australia.

PART II - WORKING CONDITIONS.

CHAPTER 1.

WORKPLACES.

From each of the multifarious activities of a social being can be derived a description of part of his life. The same person may be observed from many, indeed an infinity of viewpoints. The rounded whole can be built up only by impressing on top of each other the many single, two dimensional studies of one aspect of the subject's life. In any account much is left out, and clarity of exposition and analysis necessitates selectivity and emphasis in the remainder. But this should not cause the historian to overlook the fact that all these separate studies are inter-related, depend upon each other in the most intimate and complex way; for each, despite that it may and must be abstracted separately, still centres in a social being, whose whole life is an entity.

In the same way, in a study of a social group such as the urban working class, there are various points of vantage from which the subjects may be surveyed, but the study must start from and constantly revert to the real life lived

by the group. Analysis has begun even before description is attempted, in the choice of those aspects which are deemed significant. The urban worker may be considered simply as a wage earner. From this standpoint, his wages, the goods they will buy, his periods of employment and unemployment are relevant. He may be considered as a householder with the infinite problems of domestic life. He may be considered as a social being, in his artistic, cultural and leisure activities. Or again, his political role may be emphasised. In fact he may be examined at the point of any of his numerous social relations.

Of these various aspects of the wage earner's life, the study of the worker as a worker, in his workplace, occupies the central position. It is not only that the greater part of his active life is spent in labour. From this labour arises his relations with his employer, with his fellow workers, and the wages which he takes into the market to satisfy his wants. The imprint of the workplace remains upon him in his domestic life; he bears it to the furthermost suburb where he dwells as an outwardly undifferentiated citizen.

The preceding chapter has examined the structure of employment, not only to establish numbers, but because this is the reference point for the study of the wage earner's life. This Part will deal with the whole subject of working conditions. Here we have firstly the actual conditions

in the workplace, which are the subject matter of Chapter 1. Chapter 2 examined the special position of outwork, a form of urban industry existing side by side with the factory at that time. This completes the picture of the structure of industry and provides the essential background for the understanding of Industrial Legislation, which is the subject of Chapter 3, tracing the regulation of working conditions by law. There remains one other aspect of working conditions, that is, the duration of labour, dealing with hours and holidays, which is examined in Chapter 4.

In studies of the life of wage earners, it is generally true to say that working conditions have not been so prominent as wages, living conditions, trade unions and political activities. These latter are external manifestations which invite study and for which the materials are more or less to hand. Evidence on working conditions is more scanty. Personal testimony on how it feels to operate a machine is less likely to be committed to print than personal testimony of political or religious feelings, or of living conditions or participation in organisations.

Even to the worker himself conditions in the workplace may not be as important as the wages which his labour there enables him to carry home. Nevertheless these conditions are the constant background to his life, though he may feel that his life really begins only when he quits the workplace. Petty though the details may be, they are the perm-

anent accompaniment of his working hours; therefore they, and the attitudes they engender, may affect him more than he realises.

The main sources of information on working conditions, in Australia as in Britain, are various official inquiries and reports. These have their limitations. They are arbitrary in their scope and frequency, determined by special circumstances. They deal with measurable quantities rather than such imponderables as the mental atmosphere of the workplace. But they have the great merit of providing a mass of first hand evidence from all kinds of witnesses.

It was only during the decade of the nineties that factory legislation became widespread and systematised in Australia. Hence for the 1880's in Australia there is not available anything comparable to the detailed factual reports which British Factory Inspectors had been producing for fifty years. Victoria is an exception, and an important one, but even here it is only from 1886 that regular reports are available. Special inquiries were held, particularly at the end of the decade, and these are valuable, though they must be considered in their political context. The social historian has ample reason to be grateful for the nineteenth century Australian custom of setting up Select Committees or Royal Commissions to investigate problems, particularly awkward and unwanted ones, which forced themselves on the government of the day. They provide the Australian counterpart of the

British Commissions and Committees which inquired into the Poor Law, the employment of women and children, factories, mines and many particular industries during the nineteenth century. Though their reports might be dictated by expediency and their recommendations ignored, the voluminous evidence they heard provides a rich mine of the raw material of social history.

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The conditions of the workplace are determined originally by the type of industry. In outdoor occupations and the small building jobs which were so numerous during the eighties, in transport or on the wharves, questions of shelter, light, space and ventilation either do not arise or else no special provision is made for them until a late stage in the development of organised labour. This chapter is mainly concerned with factories, manufacturing workrooms and shops. Here Australian industry first began with the working proprietor whose facilities, good or bad, were those of the household. As the number of employees increased special facilities had to be provided. This was a slow process until buildings were being erected incorporating such facilities. During the eighties urban industry had expanded very rapidly, but usually in makeshift premises. In these any improvements were costly, some impossible. It was the development of industry which raised the question of conditions in the workplace, its

recency which directed attention to the need for regulation and the establishment of minimum standards. In this the line was sharply drawn between the "good" employer, usually a large one, whose capital outlay had included the desired facilities, and the "bad" employer, usually a small one who refused or was unable, to provide them.

The conditions of the workplace with which we are concerned are the buildings themselves, and their suitability for their purposes; ventilation, or the supply of fresh air to the workers; the space per worker, or the degree of overcrowding; lighting, natural or artificial; sanitation, principally closets; and amenities such as change rooms and lunch rooms. These aspects of working conditions cannot be considered entirely separately but they provide a useful guide to the examination of the subject.

Victoria is the most important colony in the study of workplace conditions because of the development of industry there and because it was the scene of the first Australian legal regulation of workplace conditions.

In Melbourne in the early eighties many factories and shops were overcrowded, ill-ventilated, insufficiently lighted and devoid of lavatory accommodation.(1) This particularly applied to small factories.(2) When an inquiry into working conditions was held employees complained particularly of

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(1) Vic. Shops Comm., Second Progress Report, p. X.
(2) Ibid, p. XIII.

leaking roofs, overcrowding and poor ventilation, complaints which were often substantiated by official inspection.(1) Clothing, boot and tobacco factories, bakehouses and printing offices were singled out as inferior in facilities.

A particular cause of complaint by employees was the lack of privies, or their inadequate provision, especially separate ones for males and females. The worst deficiencies were in smaller workrooms and those which had increased the original size of their workplace. Melbourne had just changed from the cesspit to the pan sanitary system, but cesspits had not disappeared from the whole of the metropolitan area.

These deficiencies in factory conditions existed despite some legislation on the subject. Under the 1873 Victorian Act local Boards of Health were empowered to inspect factories and to enforce regulations with regard to their space, warmth, ventilation, cleanliness and sanitation. The regulations had been drawn up by the Central Board of Health and promulgated by the government. They prescribed 500 cubic feet of space for each employee - a generous allowance; some means of warming workrooms; certain fixed ventilation openings; washrooms; and one privy or closet for each twenty employees, those for males and females to be separate.(2) In the hands of the local Boards of Health, offshoots of the

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(1) Vic. Shops Comm., Factories Report, Q. 3285 ff; 3915 ff; 4024 ff; 4415 ff; 4449 ff; 4628 ff; 5061; 5140; 5171; 5468; 5748; 5774.

(2) Vic. Shops Comm., Second Progress Report, p.15.

local government bodies, these regulations remained a dead letter.

The only attempt made to enforce the 1873 Act was in the City of Melbourne, that area controlled by the Melbourne Corporation, as distinct from the suburban municipalities. The Inspector of the City Board of Health stated that he had served over three hundred notices to employers to comply with the Regulations, mainly since 1879, when of over three hundred factories and workrooms in Melbourne only thirteen conformed to the law.(1) He considered that an improvement had taken place in the provision of space, ventilation and sanitary facilities since the passage of the 1873 Act. This, however, did not apply to workrooms employing less than ten hands and therefore outside the scope of the law.(2) He summed up the general opinion when he said: "I find that the larger the factory, the better the provision for the employees."(3)

Apart from the 1873 Factory Act, all new buildings in Melbourne had to be approved by the Corporation. The inspection was not strict. On the death of the Melbourne Building Surveyor in 1882 the Age, pressing for reform, strongly urged the appointment of a qualified architect, to be paid out of building application fees, so that he would

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(1) Ibid, Q. 384; Vic. Shops Comm., Factories Report, Q.5943.
(2) Vic. Shops Comm., Factories Report, Q.3707 ff. Other officials of Health Boards agreed with this opinion - Ibid, Q.5085 ff; 5299 ff; 5452 ff; 5813 ff; 5879 ff.
(3) Vic. Shops Comm., Second Progress Report, Q. 363.

have an incentive to examine all new buildings. The newspaper alleged laxity and hinted at corruption in the past, resulting in the evasion of building regulations.(1)

Thus while the 1873 Act had resulted in the erection in Melbourne of a number of suitable large factory buildings, improvement to existing buildings had been slow and the small workroom, exempt from or ignoring the law, provided very poor workplace conditions. In the Melbourne factories and workrooms of the early eighties space, ventilation, lighting, sanitation and the buildings themselves were often deficient by any standard of comfort or health.(2)

A new factor was introduced in Victoria with the passage of the 1885 Factory Act. A legal minimum of workplace conditions was laid down in much greater detail and an inspectorate was established to supervise the law. Workplace conditions in the colony were now definitely under more control than elsewhere in Australia. At the same time the reports of the Chief Inspector of Factories provide an annual description of conditions for the rest of the decade.

The 1885 Act attacked overcrowding by increasing the space per worker to 500 cubic feet in workshops with ceilings or slate roofs and 640 cubic feet in workshops without

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(1) Age, 14 March, 1882.

(2) Nor did the government always set the best example as an employer, since complaints were made about the unsuitable nature of the Exhibition Building where the Government Printing Office was housed (Age, 1 Aug., 1882), and the central telegraph office was described as a fire trap, overcrowded and rendered offensive by the proximity of closets - "a disgrace to the colony". (Age, 8 May, 1883).

ceilings or with iron roofs, allowances much greater than those required by British factory legislation. To prosecute for overcrowding required the local Board of Health to certify that such overcrowding was injurious to the health of the employees. Since many local Councils thought the minimum space prescribed inordinate - the Chief Inspector considered it excessive - they refused to co-operate and the law was not enforced.(1)

With respect to sanitary facilities, the Chief Inspector at first considered that the law was generally complied with; separate closets for males and females were insisted on.(2) But many old buildings lacking these facilities had been converted into workshops without the approval of the Central Board of Health; and the Chief Inspector suggested some relaxation of the requirements for small workshops. Even new buildings did not always allow for the possibility of females as well as males being employed.(3) The Factory Inspector soon revised his first optimistic opinion to admit that sanitary conditions in factories were not as satisfactory as they should be. All he could say was that "Every effort is made to have the spirit, if not the strict letter, of the law, complied with."(4) The difficulties were

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(1) Vic. Factory Inspector's Report for 1891, p.7.
(2) Ibid, for 1886, p.5.
(3) Ibid, for 1887, pp. 8-9.
(4) Ibid, for 1888, p.6.

partly due to the lack of a sewerage system for the whole city. In some municipalities pans were emptied by the Council only if the service were paid for; hence defective sanitary conditions could exist unnoticed. The Chief Inspector continued to repeat that no great improvement could be effected without underground sewerage for the whole of Melbourne. The division of authority between Factory Inspector and local Health Inspector was also a handicap. Generally factories built for the owner's use were of good standard. By 1891 the Chief Inspector was able to report considerable improvement, with all the newly registered factories of the previous year complying with the regulations, and fifty four of the old factories in existence before March, 1886, and therefore exempt from these provisions of the Act, having carried out required improvements in sanitation and ventilation.(1)

With ventilation the same difficulty arose about factories existing before 1886 - "An employer occupying what is nothing more than a shanty, when the Act became law, can remain in it without any interference."(2) One result was that employers were reluctant to leave old premises, while the strict enforcement of the law for small workshops would virtually mean shutting them up, and this was never seriously contemplated.(3)

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(1) Ibid, for 1889, pp.6-7; for 1890, p.5; for 1891, p.6.
(2) Ibid, for 1886, p.5.
(3) Ibid.

The Victorian law of 1885, with respect to workplaces, could not be said to have been strictly enforced. No prosecutions under these sections of the Act were launched between 1886 and 1891. The Chief Inspector's Reports show that the officials were very conscious of the difficulties of enforcement, and urged the relaxation of what they regarded as onerous provisions while not enforcing them in practice. Nevertheless, it is certain that there was a general all-round improvement in factory buildings as a result of this subject becoming a matter of legislation. It is not likely that blatant abuses were condoned; the powers of supervision and serving of notices to carry out improvements were used as far as the resources of the inspectorate and the authority of the Act permitted. Small workshops always had the worst facilities; and the smallest did not come within the scope of the Act at all. The improvement in Melbourne factories was gradual; but in the six years to 1891 it was probably substantial. The Chief Factory Inspector's claim that by the end of 1891 the majority of employees worked in factories which had been built or altered to the regulations of the Central Board of Health was probably justified.(1)

The position in Victoria during the eighties is significant because it was the first attempt to regulate working conditions in the factories which had grown up unchecked, often very recently. Any improvement was an expense to the employer. Provision of lighting and ventilation was not

(1) Ibid, for 1891. p.7.

possible, but could be costly, and was not strictly enforced. Building and structural alterations to them such as the provision of privies were really expensive items. The governments of the eighties were not disposed to force employers out of business; hence buildings were not condemned and existing factories were specifically permitted to continue in operation. There was a shortage of premises, rents and building costs were high. The legislation of 1873 had been virtually ineffective. The main result of the 1885 Act was to set a standard for new buildings and gradually to improve the old ones. By the end of the decade this had had an effect. However, the small workshop, the very smallest of which were outside the scope of the Act, presented the great difficulty. The owners of these lacked capital and were reluctant to spend it on facilities. The factory specially built for its purpose would comply with the law, for its efficient operation demanded the provision of facilities up to the legal standard. Such factories were gradually becoming more common, and employed many workers, but a multitude of small workrooms existed alongside them.

In New South Wales no legislative control of working conditions existed until 1896, so that the kind of improvements effected in Victoria did not take place. In 1876 a Committee of the Legislative Assembly on the Employment of Children examined a number of workshops in Sydney and found

instances of overcrowding and inadequate ventilation in tobacco and woollen factories, while many buildings were unsatisfactory.(1) The Committee's recommendation for control of factory buildings was not followed.

In 1891 T.A. Coghlan investigated various industries, mainly in Sydney. Over sixty workplaces used for the manufacture of men's clothing were examined. About a third of these Coghlan considered to be inferior with regard to cubic space, floor space, ventilation, light and sanitary arrangements - though he does not specify his standards. In workshops attached to retail establishments the conditions were worse than in the separate factories. Only one factory had been built for its purpose, all the rest being adapted premises, principally in the upper storeys of retail stores. No fire escapes or provision for extinguishing fires existed. In some cases closets were shared by male and female workers, and, "as the law stands, it is impossible to compel owners or occupiers of premises unprovided with suitable conveniences to remedy the defect." The worst equipped were small workplaces, - a loft without a ceiling, an outdoor passage roofed in, or sheds in backyards.(1)(2).

In dressmaking carried on in conjunction with large retail shops the buildings were more satisfactory, except for some defective sanitary arrangements and the general lack of

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(1) N.S.W. V. & P. of Legis. Ass. 1891-2, Vol. 7, pp. 1079ff, Reports under the Census and Industrial Returns Act. Report No. 1, p.2.

(1) N.S.W. V & P. of Legis. Ass., 1876-7, Vol 5, pp. 861 ff.

a lunch or restroom. Workrooms of smaller retail shops provided very poor facilities, being small, insufficiently lighted, badly ventilated, untidy and dirty, and lacking separate privies for men and women. Many other dressmaking establishments were good private dwelling houses.(1) Millinery was principally a small scale occupation, but those units big enough to be inspected showed better conditions.(2) Similarly the manufacture of miscellaneous items of clothing and house linen at least in the case of the larger establishments,(3) was usually carried out in spacious, well-ventilated workrooms. Four of the five woollen mills in operation were converted flour mills, not well adapted to their present use.(4) The laundry business of Sydney was shared between a few large, specially designed buildings, lacking only changing rooms and sometimes decent closets; and many small makeshift places where the main disability was inadequate drainage.(5) Metropolitan tobacco factories, which averaged one hundred hands each, were built for the purpose with ample light, space and ventilation, separate workrooms and privies for females; a few lacked separate dressing rooms and lunch rooms.(6) Factory production in the boot industry was on a fairly large scale; of the sixty factories in 1891 employing nearly three thousand hands, about twelve were of recent construction, providing admirable working conditions. "In other cases the factory

(1) Ibid, Report No.2, p.9.
(2) Ibid, Report No.3, p.14.
(3) Ibid, Report No.4, p.16.
(4) Ibid, Report No.5, p.19.
(5) Ibid, Report No.6, p.21
(6) Ibid, Report No.8, p.3.

buildings consist of wooden or iron sheds, barn-like in appearance, and more or less dilapidated and unclean, erected in the first instance without regard for convenience or sanitary consideration, and affording the very poorest accommodation. In these sheds the workers are so closely packed that it is with difficulty that they are able to avoid impeding one another; no separate workrooms or conveniences are set apart for the use of the females, and the general arrangement of the premises is not calculated to secure health or comfort, or even the maintenance of ordinary decency."(1) The workrooms of the various branches of the furniture trade, employing about fifteen hundred hands in Sydney, were usually roomy and well-lighted, lacking only proper sanitary conveniences and fire precautions.(2)

Comparing Sydney with Melbourne at the end of the eighties, the main difference was that in Melbourne the 1885 Factory Act had enforced some minimum standards, while in Sydney the worst features continued unchecked. The new specially built factory was the model; here the structure, space, lighting, ventilation and area were usually adequate, but the number of privies might not be, and lunch and change rooms were still rare. Apart from legislation, manufacturing efficiency was demanding better buildings and less inconvenient and arduous conditions for workers. Nevertheless, the specifically designed factory was not yet the rule, and

(1) Ibid, Report No. 9, p.6.
(2) Ibid, Report No.10, p.9 ff.

conditions in others could be primitive in the extreme. Similar conditions applied in the other colonies except that abuses were not so prominent because factory workers were not so numerous.

In South Australia in early 1892 a Shops and Factories Commission conducted the now familiar type of inquiry which included evidence on working conditions in Adelaide. In evidence before the Commission various allegations were made of unsatisfactory buildings, of over-crowding, of insufficient lighting, ventilation and closets. As the Commission developed into a verbal battle between the advocates and opponents of factory legislation tediously long cross examination left the facts obscure. Plans for new factory buildings had to be approved by the municipal building inspector,(1) while under the Health Act local Boards of Health were empowered to prescribe the number of privies in factories employing twenty or more hands and to prohibit conditions dangerous to health.(2) Little had been done under these powers, or could have been done by the couple of inspectors with a multitude of other duties. Since the inspectors responsible adopted an uncooperative and defensive attitude, little factual information emerged from these usually fruitful official sources.

Inspections by members of the Commission disclosed

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(1) S.A. Factories Comm., Q.9447.

(2) Ibid, Q.1831, Appendix K and evidence of T. Farrell, Chief Inspector of the Central Board of Health, p.297 ff.

some unsatisfactory conditions;[1] the Adelaide Town Clerk replied to allegations of over-crowding by detailing the suitability of the accommodation provided in the factories concerned.[2] The position seems to be that Adelaide did not display the abuses of larger and more rapidly growing urban centres; the relatively small scale industry of the city was often conducted in rough and ready premises, but at least there were some safe-guards through inspection, and what was a major question elsewhere remained a minor one there.

In Brisbane in 1891 the Queensland Shops, Factories and Workshops Commission heard evidence on working conditions and inspected a large number of workplaces. It was disclosed that under the existing law, the Health Act of 1884, plans for most buildings did not have to be submitted to municipal authorities before erection; powers of local bodies were virtually confined to the outer walls or frameworks of buildings; and that owing to vagueness and lack of powers of enforcement the Act was ineffective on such matters as ventilation and sanitation.[3] Hence it is not surprising that employee witnesses before the Commission complained of instances of inadequate ventilation and defective sanitary facilities.[4]

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(1) Ibid, p. 206 ff.
(2) Ibid, Appendix F.
(3) Q'land Factories Comm. Evidence of R. Lee Bryce, Brisbane Corporation Inspector, p.88 ff; and C.B. Perry, Inspector for the Municipality of South Brisbane, p.162 ff.
(4) Ibid, Q.4649 ff; 5013, 5016, 6083, 6281, 11426.

The inspections undertaken at the direction of the Commission revealed many cases of unsatisfactory working conditions.(1) Many buildings were unsuited for their purposes; ventilation and lighting were often inadequate; overcrowding of workers was fairly common, large boot factories being noticeable offenders, perhaps due to the recent movement of outworkers into the factories. With few exceptions there were insufficient closets - in one case none at all; sometimes separate closets for males and females were not provided. Brisbane's sanitary system of earth closets created difficulties in any case. Fire precautions were practically nil. Change rooms for the use of females were rare; so were lunchrooms,(2) but most places provided hot water or facilities for making tea. Since the Brisbane water supply (from Enoggera) was universally agreed to be unpalatable and probably injurious to health,(3) employees frequently complained where this was the only source of drinking water; sometimes it was filtered, or rain water tanks kept.

Many small clothing workshops and bakeries exhibited particularly bad conditions; some larger ones were no better. Brisbane workplaces were often ramshackle adapted buildings, poorly lit and ventilated, often overcrowded in a city which had increased its population threefold in ten years, handicapped by deficient city water and sanitary facilities.

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(1) Ibid, Appendix A.
(2) In addition to Appendix A, for lack of lunch rooms see Q. 2443, 437, 1608, 2117, 3640, 4610, 5098, 5439, 6055, 6757, 8031, 9505, 10159, 11805, 14611, 12218, 13081, 13408, 14417; for provision of lunch rooms Q. 950, 1260, 3279, 2331, 4357, 7016, 10830. (3) Ibid, Q.11635.

A minority were specially built and well equipped, strikingly different from the filthy and neglected workplace "not fit for human occupation".(1) This reflected the fact that there was no effective legal minimum standard.

Working conditions in shops are not so likely to be defective as working conditions in factories, for the customer as well as the employee enters the shop. The Royal Commissions mentioned, being concerned with shop hours, collected some information on shop conditions, but this question did not bulk so large as factory conditions. Most shops of the period were small, except for city and a few suburban emporiums; complaints about shop working conditions generally referred to the smaller shops.

Before the Victorian Shops and Factories Commission health officials and employees testified that many shops failed to provide an adequate number of closets, while some provided none at all.(2) Gas lighting during the day was common in the storeroom and warehouse sections, though not in the retail part of shops.(3) Almost all shops were open for some time in the evening. Doctors considered that excessively long hours under gaslight had an injurious effect on employees' health.(4)

Growing out of the agitation about shop employees'

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(1) Ibid. A few are so described by the Corporation Inspector in Appendix A.
(2) Vic. Shops Comm., Second Progress Report, Q.357, 624, 776, 785, 1414 ff.
(3) Ibid, Q.624.
(4) Ibid, Q.791, 1346, 1396.

hours, there had been some concern expressed publicly for the provision of seating accommodation, especially for female shop assistants. The Commission listed particulars of over one hundred and twenty Melbourne shops, the great majority of which claimed to provide seats, at least for female employees.(1) To what extent these could be used in practice remains doubtful. Employee representatives were emphatic that shop assistants were given very little opportunity to sit down during their working hours;(2) what they wanted was shorter hours - "Give us the short hours and we can do without seats".(3)

In Queensland in 1891 the provision of seats for shop assistants was mentioned - there were virtually none.(4) But this was not a major demand of employees.

The practice of butchers living in the shop where they worked was apparently fairly common in Brisbane. The accommodation provided was declared by most employees to be poor - sparsely furnished, overcrowded, often above stables, meat smoking or rendering down rooms.(5) Restaurant cooks(6) and hotel employees(7) had similar complaints. Living quarters in such premises were not liable to inspection under the Health Act.(8)

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(1) Ibid, Appendix A.
(2) Ibid, Q. 26, 119, 224, 502.
(3) Ibid, Q. 502.
(4) Q'land Factory Comm. Q. 884, 1008, 1162, 1442, 1621, 2131, 2327, 3363, 3700, 4321, 6641.
(5) Ibid, Q. 4509 ff, 7654 ff, 8762 ff.
(6) Ibid, Q. 7751.
(7) Ibid, Q. 8716.
(8) Ibid, Q. 3584.

In Adelaide some complaints were made about working conditions, attics and basements and artificial lights,[1] and some employees mentioned the general lack of seats in shops.[2] In Adelaide also there was some living-in for butchers[3] but not for other shop assistants.[4]

Working conditions in shops were much better than in factories. Where employees lived in, their accommodation was often very poor, but the English custom of shop assistants living in had never been common in Australia and had disappeared by the eighties except for domestic type occupations and some butchers. In shops, as in factories, amenities in the form of lunch, rest and change rooms were rare.

Another aspect of working conditions is the physical danger involved in any particular type of labour. This may arise from disease or accident. Here we are not concerned with diseases, about which little information is available for nineteenth century Australia. The chemical industry with its mercury, phosphorus, lead and similar poisoning scarcely existed in Australia. Silicosis and pulmonary diseases certainly existed amongst miners, but they are outside the scope of this thesis. Many conditions may injure the worker's health - long hours, darkness, dampness, stagnant air, changes of temperature and all the other aspects of working conditions,

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(1) S.A. Factories Comm., Q.2123 ff; 8423 ff.
(2) Ibid, Q. 1789, 2816.
(3) Ibid, Q.283 ff; 3339 ff; 8477 ff.
(4) Ibid, Q.2035.

but these can only be noted as they are observed.

As contrasted to industrial diseases, industrial accidents are easily measurable, provided the information is available. They are an accompaniment of working conditions which deserves examination. Statistics of industrial accidents provide the measure of workplace dangers. These dangers may be countered by protective devices and techniques, which will be dealt with first under the general head of dangerous machinery. When accidents have occurred the question of what recompense shall be given, and by whom, forms the subject of workers' compensation, known in the nineteenth century as employers' liability.

What might be described as the natural hazards of manual labour in outdoor occupations have existed as long as mankind and have obviously diminished as man's mastery over implements of production has increased and he has no longer been forced to rely on his physical strength alone to wrest a living from nature, animate or inanimate. At the same time the very tools which have extended his dominion over nature have imposed on their users labour of specialised kinds which may themselves be arduous or dangerous. This applies to the navvy or the farmer as well as the factory worker, but there are differences of degree. To the navvy, the wharf lumper or the builder, industrial dangers are still primarily of the natural kind - falls and falling objects, being hit or crushed by materials, or wounded by his own

hand tools. To the factory worker, however, the main danger is the presence of moving machinery which operates independently of him, which he approaches to perform certain processes, but which continues irrespective of him, often in close proximity, with a variety of movements in a number of places. As contrasted to hand tools, the mechanical nature of power driven machinery means that the workers' movements must be adapted to it and not vice versa.

Protection from dangerous machinery was not very important in the labour agitation of the day. More information is available about it in Melbourne than elsewhere. The organised skilled unions raised it only as a minor issue in their demands for factory legislation.(1) In Melbourne in July, 1883, a committee from the Trades Hall placed a number of proposals before the Shops and Factories Commission, including one that all moving machinery should be fenced and that all industrial accidents should be notified to the Factory Inspector. The Commissioners accepted this recommendation and it was included in the 1885 Factory Act.(2) Witnesses before the Commission pointed out that municipal inspectors had no power to enforce guards around machinery, even though accidents were repeatedly caused by the machinery.(3) The boot

(1) See, for example, Secretary of Melb. Typographical Association in letter to Age, 19 Aug., 1880; union deputation to Vic. Chief Secretary urging introduction of British type Factory Act, Age, 18 Feb., 1882; Report of Second Intercolonial Trade Union Congress, 1884.
(2) Vic. Shops Comm., Factories Report, p.XI and p.XV.
(3) Ibid, Q. 3736; 3917; 6147.

employer who posted a notice warning employees that if they touched machinery in motion he would not be responsible was taking more trouble than he need have done; he felt aggrieved when a boy lost the top of his thumb in a press despite having been knocked down two or three times previously by the employer for not keeping out of the way.(1)

The Chief Inspector of Factories in his first Report under the 1885 Act considered that the law had effected manifest improvements in safety precautions, hindered though it was by the indifference of employees as well as employers. The habit of workmen wearing aprons near machinery was dangerous; overalls and jumpers were recommended.(2) In his Report for 1887 the Chief Inspector gave much space to devices for guarding machinery, drawing upon British publications. Flywheels, shafts, cogwheels, moving beams, cranks and circular saws were considered the most dangerous. The report detailed satisfactory guards for all these, but had to admit that they were not generally adopted in the Colony, though "by degrees more and more care is being taken in the guarding and fencing of all machinery".(3) In his Report for 1888 the Chief Inspector expressed disappointment at his failure to win public support for protection from machinery. Many employers were indifferent and feared the expense of guards. With the passage of the Employers' Liability Act of 1886 employers were

(1) Ibid, Q.5056.
(2) Vic. Factory Inspector's Report for 1886, pp. 4-5.
(3) Ibid for 1887, pp. 5-8.

liable for accidents under certain conditions, so they often took out insurance against all risks, sometimes deducting premiums from workers' wages, and were not interested in the prevention of accidents.(1) The following year the Chief Inspector was more sanguine, as a court case had clarified his powers of insisting on guards; inspectors and employers were becoming better acquainted with danger points and protective methods. But both employers and workmen often declined to use guards, although some employers, doubting the sufficiency of their accident insurance, had withdrawn from insurance schemes and concentrated on accident prevention. The danger from brickmaking presses was specifically mentioned.(2) While the Chief Inspector could report for 1890 that "Each year the protection to machinery is carefully attended to and by degrees there is less opposition to using the various guards suggested", he also had to admit that some provisions of the Act were not strictly enforced and adequate guards were far from being universally adopted.(3) Some opposition or apathy was still being encountered during 1891, when a factory owner was successfully prosecuted for failing to place a guard over a cogwheel. Normally orders by the inspectors had been complied with. The danger from lifts, which had resulted in a number of serious accidents, was particularly noted, but lacking power to make regulations to deal with lifts

(1) Ibid, for 1888, pp. 3-4.
(2) Ibid, for 1889, pp. 3-4.
(3) Ibid, for 1890, p. 3.

little could be done.[1] A Lifts Regulation Bill was introduced into the Victorian Assembly in 1891, reflecting concern over this new workplace danger.

In Victoria up to 1891 some progress had been made in protection from dangerous machinery. The inspection was functioning and the requisite technical information was available. A few prosecutions had been launched, but generally persuasion backed by orders was relied upon. Progress had been tentative, but it is probable that the most open dangers had been corrected; and the administrative machinery had been established for the future.

The only other colony where safeguarding of dangerous machinery was attempted by law was Tasmania. There, under the Inspection of Machinery Act, 1884, the Inspector of Machinery each year instructed a few workshops in Hobart and Launceston to institute safety precautions for machinery.[2] The Inspector of Machinery was far too overworked to examine all machinery regularly, but in seven years to 1891 he had covered Hobart and Launceston fairly thoroughly and had not hesitated to use his powers of persuasion and compulsion to have machinery guarded.

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(1) Ibid, for 1891, p. 3.

(2) Reports of Inspector of Machinery, Tas. J.P. of Parl., Vol. VIII, 1886, No. 35; Vol. XI, 1887, No. 30; Vol. XIV, 1888-9, No. 27; Vol. XV, 1888-9, No. 154; Vol. XX, 1890, No. 37; Vol. XXIII, 1891, No. 35; Vol. XXVI, 1892, No. 38.

There is no account of machinery dangers other than in Victoria and Tasmania, only occasional references to accidents or the possibility of accidents.(1)

Information about industrial accidents in nineteenth century Australia is extremely scanty;(2) only in Victoria and Tasmania were they officially recorded for part of the eighties. The Tasmanian record is very brief and the Victorian one subject to many limitations in its interpretation.

Under Section 42 of the 1885 Act in Victoria employers were required to report industrial accidents causing loss of life, or caused by power driven machinery, hot or molten liquids or explosions, and preventing the employee returning to work within forty eight hours. This section was not complied with during 1886; 60 accidents were reported during 1887; 101 during 1888; 112 during 1889; 94 during 1890; and 93 during 1891.(3) Assuming that reporting was not yet complete during 1887, some diminution in industrial accidents took place after 1889. There was one fatal accident reported in 1887; 5 in 1888; 4 in 1889; 6 in 1890; and 5 in 1891. Each year almost all the accident victims were males, and a

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(1) For example, Q'land Factories Comm., Q. 4614, 5111 - boot factories; 11353 - rope works; 12603 - furniture manufacture. S.A. Factories Comm., Q. 13098 - flour mill; 13395 - harness making; 11443 - boot factories; 10862 - timber mill.

(2) Forty years later the position had scarcely improved in some States. See Commonwealth Year Book No.18, 1925, pp. 522 ff. for a discussion of the subject.

(3) Vic. Factory Inspector's Reports.

third or more of them under twenty years of age. For the last three years the ages of juniors sustaining accidents were given, showing each year a few boys aged thirteen, fourteen or fifteen as victims and sometimes as fatalities. The incidence of accidents was certainly much higher amongst juniors than adults in proportion to the numbers of each employed. It is difficult to assess the seriousness of the accidents reported, though loss of fingers was common, and amputations and fractures fairly frequent.

Accidents were not reported by industries, though this particular was generally given in the case of fatalities. Hence it is unfortunately not possible to determine the most dangerous industries. The number of casualties amongst boys and youths suggests those industries employing juvenile labour must have had an uneviable accident rate. The emphasis of the Inspector's Reports and the large number of finger and arm injuries indicates presses, cutting machines, cogs and belting as the most dangerous mechanisms; while fatal accidents often derived from engine mechanism, heavy shafting and, in the last few years, lifts.

When the Chief Inspector comes to allocating blame for the accidents he does observe in his Report for 1888 that better protective devices would have averted some. Thereafter he firmly maintains each year that about half of them were due to the carelessness or wilful disobedience of employees, and that the remainder were unavoidable accidents pure and

simple. The qualification, "with the existing level of preventive measures" must be added to this opinion, for at the same time the Chief Inspector was deploring the reluctance of employers to instal safety devices. While employees, and even boys of thirteen, are working beside dangerous machinery, human negligence will make accidents unavoidable. The extent to which the element of danger is consciously removed is a variable factor; unless this is considered opinions on the allocation of blame are pointless.

In Tasmania the following accidents were reported as due to machinery :- 1885, nine, including one fatal; 1886, four, including two fatal; 1887, two; 1888, three; 1889, thirteen, including one fatal; 1890 six; 1891, three.(1) Most of them were in Hobart, a few in Launceston. In his Report for 1890 the Inspector of Machinery mentions that three of the six accidents occurred to boys under fourteen years of age. On several occasions he remarks that other accidents caused by machinery had been reported in the press, but he had not been able to investigate them. The Tasmanian record throws little light on industrial accidents.

Even the Victorian listing of industrial accidents is not comprehensive, as it does not cover all urban wage earners, for example, building and construction workers and waterside workers. Since accidents are not given by industries

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(1) Reports of the Tasmanian Inspector of Machinery.

or occupations comparisons of these are not possible.

An alternative approach (1) would be to take all accidents and distinguish those caused at work; but obviously all the information would not be available for the eighteen eighties. As it happens, however, some of it is available. In view of the paucity of other sources, it has been considered worthwhile to make a survey of Melbourne hospital admissions known to have been caused by industrial accidents for five years prior to the passage of the 1885 Factory Act, when Melbourne conditions in this respect were more typical of other urban centres. This is set out in Appendix III, with an account of how the information has been compiled.

So many qualifications are attached to the Table in Appendix III that it cannot be used to provide anything more than some very tentative suggestions. Within these limits, however, it is clear that for the various types of injury reported, outdoor manual labour produced more casualties than factories proper. The waterfront was the most dangerous large field of employment. Building and the railways were responsible for many accidents. Nearly all the

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(1) A further method would be the use of census returns. The Victorian Census of 1891 gives the occupations of persons disabled by accident at the time of the census; but this includes all accidents, not only industrial ones. (Vic. Census 1891, Report, p. 148 ff.) Hence the figures are of little use. Similarly Hayter has to admit that his attempt after the 1881 Census to compare the mortality rate of different occupations is subject to many serious qualifications (See Presidential Address of H.H. Hayter, Reports of A.N.Z.A.A.S., Vol. I, 1888, p. 423).

fatal accidents came from these fields together with brick-works and quarrying. Butchers and saddlers, from the nature of their tools, suffered some accidents. In other industries such as breweries, stores and gasworks falls and shifting of bulky materials were the main sources of danger. Accidents brought about by working in conjunction with high speed and complicated machinery are not very numerous, reflecting the fact that much machinery was not common. Similarly the absence of any reported accidents to female workers shows that light industry was not so dangerous as heavy industry, though the former may well have produced its quota of minor injuries. It was not the machinery of the factory but outdoor labour which produced the main hazard to urban workers' safety in the 1880's.

While an occupational break-up is not possible an indication of the types of occupations most affected can be obtained. Obviously unskilled and semi-skilled workers were most exposed to danger. Amongst the skilled occupations there are a few building tradesmen, train drivers, engineers, butchers, printers and saddlers; but most of the accidents were sustained by wharf labourers, seamen, builders' labourers, railway employees, general labourers, and workers in brickyards, quarries, sawmills, breweries and stores, who were relatively unskilled. Of the organised skilled unionists only the building tradesmen, who were especially affected by scaffolding precautions, and to a less extent the engin-

eers and printers, had a direct concern in methods of industrial safety. It was a problem particularly affecting the new types of industrial workers and this partly accounts for the lack of political action around it.

The prevalence of accidents amongst unskilled occupations is also shown by the high proportion of youths and mere boys who were involved. Machinery takes it toll of juvenile labour and it was in factories employing large numbers of young workers that most of these accidents took place.

One special type of industrial hazard had much publicity during the eighties. This was the danger from boiler explosions. By the eighteen eighties the steam boiler was the common source of mechanical power from the farm, where it was used to drive a chaffcutter, to large factories. The devastating effects of boiler explosions, the danger to all workmen - and others - in the vicinity, the fact that mechanical inspection and competent supervision could virtually eliminate explosions, combined to make this subject one which was strongly pressed. Precedents existed in the various Shipping and Mining Acts, in which specialised fields the principle of State regulated mechanical standards had long been accepted in Britain and the colonies. Every Intercolonial Trade Union Congress from 1879 onwards had put forward the demand for a Land Boilers Inspection Bill.

Boiler explosions were spectacular, but how fre-

quent they were is hard to say.[1] At least the agitation about them led to some degree of legislative control in Victoria and Tasmania. The Victorian Factory Act of 1885 required that for factory or workroom boilers the person in charge should hold a certificate of competency granted by the Board of Examiners under the Mines Act. As such certificates were issued only to persons who had had certain experience in mines and with mining machinery, this section remained unworkable[2] until in December, 1887, an amendment to the Factory Act (No. 961 of 1887) was passed which provided for the Board of Examiners of engine drivers to examine or issue certificates of competency to persons with twelve months experience in their job. By the end of 1888 the Board of Examiners had issued 349 first class and 287 second class certificates of service (experience), and 30 first class and 47 second class certificates of competency (examination), so that many engines were under the control of certificated men, though this was not strictly enforced for the small engines used by butchers,

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(1) In Victoria in the early eighties the Age newspaper reported boiler explosions at Werribee, 2 March, 1881, causing a fatality; at Sandhurst (Bendigo), 10 July, 1881; at a Richmond tannery, 22 Nov., 1884, where the jury at the coroner's inquest found the boiler to have been inferior and recommended the inspection of boilers and the licensing of attendants. The question was argued before the S.A. Factories Comm. of 1892, especially in the evidence of H.Dalziel, Secretary of the Boilermakers' Society, p. 67 ff.

(2) Vic. Factory Inspector's Report for 1886, p. 9.

wood and chaff cutters, etc.[1] The irregularity of examinations and the requirement of twelve months previous service even for persons trained as fitters or machinists were handicaps in administering the Act. The Chief Inspector recommended that the issue of service certificates be stopped and only certificates of competency issued. Certificates of service out numbered certificates of competency by at least eight to one.[2] A large number of persons were prepared to make a statutory declaration that they had been engaged as engine drivers for twelve months prior to 1st March, 1886, and so were exempt from obtaining certificates;[3] these people numbered more than 600 in 1891 and the regulations of the Act did not apply to them, so that they come under no supervision.[4]

In Tasmania the Inspector of Machinery examined boilers and steam engines; he issued notices to repair boilers and condemned those beyond repair. By 1888 most boilers in Hobart had been inspected and attention was concentrated on Launceston. Some difficulties were encountered in prosecutions. The Inspector issued certificates to engine drivers although the lethargy of the government had left the legal position unsatisfactory.[5] The Inspectors in Victoria and Tasmania do not report any accidents due to boiler explosions in the years 1885-91; but some may have occurred and not been

(1) Vic. Factory Inspector's Report for 1888.
(2) Ibid, for 1889, p.6.
(3) Ibid, for 1890, p.5.
(4) Ibid, for 1891, p.6.
(5) Reports of the Tasmanian Inspector of Machinery, 1885-91.

specified.

Despite this legislation and the concern expressed in other colonies, technical experts did not consider safety precautions for boilers adequate by the end of the 1880's. An engineer reading a paper to A.N.Z.A.A.S., in 1890 strongly condemned the perfunctory safety devices mounted on steam boilers, referring to the colonies in general. He stated that many safety valves were unreliable in use and not suited to the pattern of the boiler, its setting or the fuel used. Better systems were available, including electric alarms, and both pressure and water warning dials should be used.(1)

In this minor field of safety precautions, as in many others, the precedents of the specialised mining and shipping industries were used to justify legislative control. This legislative control was more easily applied to equipment than to persons.(2)

With regard to compensation for injuries suffered at work, during the mid-eighties Employers' Liability Acts were passed in New South Wales, South Australia, Victoria and Queensland. These acts were all similar. The provided that workmen could sue for injuries, or their dependants for

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(1) Paper read by A.O. Sachse in Reports of A.N.Z.A.A.S., Vol. 2, 1890, p.737.

(2) Even in 1954 in New South Wales it was not necessary for a person to hold a certificate of competency before taking charge of factory engines. New South Wales was the only State without such legislation, apart from mining laws. (See letter from an enquirer, Sydney Morning Herald, 12 April, 1954.

death, suffered at work and caused by defective equipment due to the negligence of the employer of his servants; by negligence of superintendence, negligence of a person properly giving orders, compliance with the defective or improper orders of the employer or his delegated authority. There were time limits within which the action had to be launched, and maximum compensation was usually limited to three years earnings but from the workman's point of view these Acts were a great advance on his previous position. These Acts are discussed further in the chapter on industrial legislation.

Thus during the eighties there had been some uneven improvement in workplace conditions. The question is one which arises with the growth of factory production and factory production was only establishing itself in Australia at this time. It was most developed in Victoria and this combined with the strength of political radicalism there to make that colony the pioneer in legislative control of working conditions. But, legislation or not, the efficient operation of large scale industry demanded certain standards in working conditions, so that in Victoria as elsewhere the cleavage was between the badly equipped small factory and the better equipped large one. Industrial accidents, which took their greatest toll of the young and the unskilled, were scarcely checked in any colony, although advances were made in fixing the employer's liability for accidents due to his negligence. The conditions in the Australian urban work-

places of the eighties were those of a young industrial community, with the effects of laisser faire alleviated by the beginnings of regulation.

All this deals with the conditions under which employees worked. The question of how hard employees worked, the intensity of their labour, is an important and interesting one, but there is just no evidence about it. At any time it is very difficult to determine. Subjective testimony is quite unreliable.(1) A priori, the increased use of machinery and the rationalisation of factory processes during the decade would have tended to increase intensity of work; but a more important immediate determinant is the state of the labour market, and with the fairly general shortage of labour during the eighties, it is not likely that intensity of work would have increased.

If we were to accompany a Melbourne worker to his place of employment before the passing of the 1885 Factory Act, we would find the factory, a former warehouse, situated in a back lane. It was buil t in the 1850's, of bluestone, two storeys high and has since had another added in timber. One of the small windows on the second floor has been enlarged. From it projects a winch for hauling up

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(1) See, for example, N.S.W. Strikes Comm., where a coal lumper (Q.451) and a wharf labourers' union official (Q. 669, 1033) complain of increased intensity of work, while a managing stevedore complains of the opposite. (Q.1270).

materials. Beside the one-room office drays go in and out to the narrow loading dock. From a corrugated iron shed adjoining the back wall comes the steady beat of the steam engine. It competes with the grinding from the machine shop and the hammering from the packing room. The belts from the engine run to the second floor, roughly boxed at floor level. The driving shafts to each machine are covered but at the machine itself shafts and cogs are open to leave more of the limited space available. Lighting is not helped by the dinginess of the whitewashed walls; away from the windows the gas lights are burning. In summer time the atmosphere is stuffy and hot from the engine, but in winter the windows suffice for ventilation. If the day is fine our worker will take his lunch on the stack of timber in the yard. If it is wet or cold he will remain in the workroom. His employer, who not many years ago himself took a hand at a machine realises the inadequacy of the premises and hopes that he will soon be able to move to a factory of his own design in the suburbs.

CHAPTER 2.

OUTWORK.

One special type of employment of urban wage earners in Australia in the 1880's requires separate examination. This was the system of persons working in their own homes or elsewhere outside the factory or warehouse, producing goods for an employer or merchant. This category also includes persons employed in small workrooms by an immediate employer who was sub-contractor to another. This system was at the time variously described as outwork, domestic work, home work or sweating.

The term "outwork" will be used here to describe all such work carried on away from the employer's place of business, or in workrooms provided by a sub-contracting employer.(1) Designations such as "domestic work" or "home

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(1) Following, for example, J.H. Clapham, "An Economic History of Modern Britain", Bk III, p. 92, p. 118, p. 130 ff, who uses this term to describe the same type of industrial organisation in Britain in the second half of the nineteenth century.

work" do not strictly cover all cases. The decisive objection to them is that in economic history the domestic or putting-out system occupies a definite place as a forerunner of the factory system, while in Australia in the eighties we encounter not the identical phenomenon, but one fundamentally different from it, an adjunct of the factory system. The expression "sweating", much used at the time, was a controversial one, applied loosely, needing definition in itself, though a useful meaning can be given to sweating as one type of outwork.(1)

The basic questions to be answered about outwork concern its role in the Australian economy of the eighties

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(1) "Sweating" and associated forms of the word were used freely in contemporary discussions of social conditions, with an implication of opprobrium, but without any clear definition of the term. The history of the word as given in the Oxford English Dictionary is interesting. One original sense of the verb was to work hard, toil, labour or drudge. By 1843 in Britain "sweating" was used to describe the practice of doing piece work overtime; of exacting hard work from employees for low wages, especially under a middleman by sub-contract. This sums up the implications of the term forty years later in Australia. It may have derived part of this sense from the slang meaning of to "fleece", "rob", or "bleed", which was current by the mid-century. Kingsley in "Alton Locke", Carlyle, Booth and Mayhew are mentioned as using the term, especially with reference to the clothing trade, where poorly paid outwork with its accompanying evils was most prominent. A British Select Committee of the House of Lords on the Sweating System was appointed in the late eighties; but agitation on the subject antedated this. The Australian use of the term and much of the feeling about it may be taken as deriving from British conditions. In 1873 "sweating" was being used to describe conditions of exploitation of labour generally (Ballarat Courier, 28 May, 1873); by about 1880 when factory legislation was mooted, the term was being used to refer to outwork at home, or in small workshops, generally for sub-contracting middlemen, most common in the clothing trade. (See e.g. Age, 20 June, 1879).

and its significance for urban wage earners. The subject is one which has scarcely been touched on by historians; the material is complicated and confused. To reduce it to order the facts can be best marshalled at first by reference to the scale of the outwork.

Using this criterion three types of outwork can be distinguished :-

(1) Employees working in a factory and taking home from it work which they continued after factory hours. This is really an extension of working hours under special conditions. The prerequisites are processes of production some of which at least can be carried on away from the factory, and piece rates of wages.

(2) Employees working wholly at home, fulfilling orders for factories or warehouses. The prerequisites are the same.

(3) Individuals as in (2) who become sub-contractors and themselves employ labour, in a household or a small workroom, so that this group shades off into small factories proper.

All three kinds of outwork were most commonly found in the clothing and boot trades, where the processes of manufacture were best adapted to this kind of production.

As to the prevalence of outwork in the early eighties, evidence is incomplete and coloured. It was in Victoria that it attracted most attention. An examination of Austral-

ian outwork needs to begin with Melbourne, where the practice and the discussion of it were most important.

Witnesses before the Victorian Tariff Commission in 1882-3 refer to about half a dozen clothing manufacturers who employ outside workers, in one case comprising about half the total employees of the firm. There are a few references to full time outworkers in saddlery, furniture making, and jewellery manufacture. Tremwith, representing the Bootmakers' Union, declared that some men worked at home and employed six to eight boys.(1) In all except the last instance, these would probably fall within the second category of outwork distinguished above. The Tariff Commission did not specifically ask for information on outwork; these items were volunteered incidentally.(2)

The concurrent Shops and Factories Commission was anxious to find information about outwork, which it described generally as sweating. The Commissioners persistently sought to uncover evidence of this, so that their record contains many more references to it.(3)

The first type of outwork, where piece-workers took home work from the factory, was common in the clothing trade. Factories making ready made clothing employed mainly female

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(1) Vic. Tariff Comm., Q. 2737 ff; 3383 ff; 3452 ff; 3513 ff; 3621 ff; 15722 ff; 37464 ff; 38171 ff; 42434 ff; 11943 ff.
(2) Ibid, Questionnaire, p. CI.
(3) On the background to the Shops and Factories Commission, see Chapter 3 of this Part.

workers, almost all on piece rates. There was a considerable division of labour, firstly by the type of garment - trousers, coat, shirt, etc., - and secondly by the processes - cutting out, machining, handsewing, button-holing, pressing, etc. Only a few of these processes, such as cutting out and pressing, were typically most profitably done by concentration in the factory. The individual sewing machine was common, and could be bought on time payment, but few manufacturers had found it profitable to instal power driven machines.(1) Concentration of processes in the factory may have advantages but is not essential until the processes are dependent on the factory for motive power. Employees were on piece rates, with varying degrees of factory discipline, sometimes being per-

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(1) Vic. Tariff Comm., Q. 2551 ff; 2696 ff; 3040 ff. The difficulty was to find a suitable motive power for the light high speed machines, for the usual steam engines were not well adapted to this purpose. The introduction of the gas engine helped overcome the difficulty. In Melbourne in the early eighties one large firm was using power driven machines, as the following evidence of the foreman engineer of Beath, Schiess & Co. before the Tariff Commission shows :-
Q. 30038. "Have you yet adopted driving the sewing machines by machinery? They are driving three factories now, two at Collingwood and one in the lane.
Q. 30039. Does it work well? It works successfully.
Q. 30040. Do you use steam or water? We are using Crossley's gas engine..."
According to Clapham, op.cit., p. 92 ff., the sewing machine, an American invention, was first used in Britain in the Leeds clothing trade in the late 1850's. It was several decades before many were power driven, but by the beginning of the eighties this was the case with the leading firms in Britain. Cutting and pressing were more easily carried out by machinery, thereby becoming factory occupations at an earlier period.

mitted to come and go as they pleased. Wages were low, so that the practice of taking work home was usual in the clothing trade.(1) In piece work factories, experienced hands often themselves employed juniors or apprentices to work beside them; the junior was paid, if at all, by her senior. Hence, when work was taken home pressure was sometimes put on the so-called apprentice to work after hours on this as well.(2) In other cases workers employed in the factory during the day would take work home and separately employ others, generally young girls, to work with them.(3) From this it was an easy step to outwork of the third type.

The second type of outwork also was common in the clothing trade. The examples given before the Tariff Commission were of this type. Numerous other cases were mentioned in the evidence of the Shops Commission, where persons were wholly employed outside the factory.(4)

Individual outwork was sometimes not distinct from the third type, where the outworker is also an employer. Family labour might be used.(5) The strongest complaints, however, were directed against the middlemen, generally working proprietors, who took contract work from factories, or warehouses, and employed a small number of hands in a private

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(1) Vic. Shops Comm., Factories Report, Q.3369 ff; 4449 ff; 4478 ff; 4573 ff; 4628 ff; 5255 ff; 5299 ff; 5348ff; Vic Shops Comm., Final Report Q. 6923 ff; 6940 ff.
(2) Vic Shops Comm., Factories Report, Q. 4299.
(3) Ibid, Q. 6038 ff.
(4) Ibid, Q. 4372 ff; 4478 ff; 4500 ff; 6010 ff; 6112 ff.
(5) Ibid, Q. 3390 ff; 3707 ff; Vic Shops Comm., Final Report, Q. 6413 ff.

residence or a makeshift workshop. There is no doubt that this class of outwork was prevalent in clothing manufacture.(1)

In the manufacture of boots the two main stages of production were the putting up and the finishing. Putting up consisted of cutting the soles and uppers and fastening them together in the form of the boot. This was factory work, sub-divided into a number of processes, for which machinery was used. Finishing - the trimming of the edges and sole, and all the further work to the completed boot - was done "on the last", by hand; it too might be sub-divided into a number of processes, but power-driven machinery was not used in the early eighties. Hence finishing was often - in nine cases out of ten, according to W.A. Trenwith - done outside the factory.(2) It appears that the second type of outwork, where the employee worked entirely outside the factory, was the usual one for finishers in the boot trade.(3) The finisher would collect the half-made products and bring them back to the factory, generally each day. He might not do all the finishing processes, but only some of them. Naturally this

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(1) Vic. Shops Comm., Factories Report, Q. 4478 ff; 4612 ff; Vic. Shops Comm., Final Report, Q. 6386 ff; 6420 ff; 6457 ff; 6521 ff; 6613 ff; 6804 ff.

(2) Vic. Shops Comm., Factories Report, Q. 5709 ff.

(3) Ibid, Q. 5032 ff; 5709 ff; 5765 ff; Vic. Shops Comm., Final Report, Q. 6257 ff; 6948 ff.

system led to the outworker employing others, especially unskilled workers or juveniles, so that outwork of the third type was also common in bootmaking.(1)

With regard to the extent of outwork as a whole, the Inspector of Factories under the 1873 Act for the City of Melbourne thought that half the clothing trade in Melbourne was thus conducted.(2) Other municipal and public health officials agreed that the practice was widespread, in the clothing and boot trades.(3) This was the emphatic view of union officials and some manufacturers concerned.(4)

It was the third type of outwork which was generally referred to as "sweating" though the term was often used indiscriminately to describe all types. Although the activities of the Victorian Royal Commission of 1882-4 antedated the major British agitation over sweating in the East End clothing trade in 1884, the subject had been raised in Britain during the previous twenty years. So far as the term can be given a precise meaning, it can be used to describe organised outwork, done at low rates of pay, for long hours, in unsuitable premises, for sub-contractors. This undoubtedly did exist though it may have been exaggerated. Coghlan, distinguishing

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(1) Vic. Shops Comm., Factories Report, Q. 5213 ff; 5709 ff; Vic. Shops Comm., Final Report, Q. 6237 ff; 6957 ff.
(2) Vic Shops Comm., Factories Report, Q. 3707 ff.
(3) Ibid, Q. 5085 ff; 5213 ff; 5255 ff; 5299 ff; 5348 ff; 5813 ff; 5917 ff.
(4) Vic. Shops Comm., Final Report, p. 140.

sweating from homework, comments that "there is nothing in the evidence taken by (the Victorian Shops Commission) to show that sweating, as a system, existed in Melbourne..."[1] This is rather too sweeping, though the contemporary outpourings are not necessarily to be taken at face value, reflecting as they did the echo of British feeling and the pious horror of a fashionable indignation over a minor evil. Coghlan himself, as will be seen later, found much outwork and some sweating in his investigation of Sydney industry in 1891.

There is no doubt that outwork of all three types was a well established practice, especially in the clothing trade. It is referred to as an existing alternative to factory employment in the discussion about the Workrooms and Factories Act of 1873.[2] In 1879 a correspondent in the "Age" was complaining about low wages paid by sweaters.[3] The extraordinary attention and sympathy attracted by the Tailoresses' Strike beginning in December, 1882, brought the question into the open. The tailoresses attacked outwork as one of the causes of their low wages, and much liberal opinion, including that of some manufacturers, agreed with them on this.[4] The "Age" called for prohibition of outwork.[5] During the strike a group of sixteen sub-contracting middlemen, who

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(1) T.A. Coghlan, "Labour and Industry in Australia", Vol. IV, p. 2088.
(2) See Chapter 3 of this Part.
(3) Age, 20 June, 1879.
(4) Age, 20 Dec., 1882; 14 Dec., 1882, 15 Dec., 1882.
(5) Age, 5 Jan., 1883.

employed two hundred to three hundred hands, approached the Tailoresses' Union saying that they wished to join it and press for higher outwork rates.(1) The strikers did not consider that outwork could be prohibited; in fact a special log of prices for outwork was agreed to, though the practice was not favoured by the Union.(2) Witnesses before the Shops Commission were generally of the opinion that outwork had tended to increase as a result of the strike winning higher rates, which could to some extent be policed, for inside work.(3)

It was in these circumstances that the reforming Shops and Factories Commission strongly attacked outwork in its Report.(4) "The system appears to have originated in some of the employees being allowed to bring work home with them, after the factory closes for the day. A woman may have daughters who assist her.... In time she employs apprentices, who receive no wages for the first six months, and often for a much longer period. Contracts are accepted by the sweaters at lower rates than that prescribed by the log, and, where the work is super-abundant, sub-contractors are engaged at a still lower rate, until many persons are unable to earn more than a bare subsistence, even though they labour fourteen and sixteen hours a day. In the boot trade also sweating is

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(1) Age, 9 Jan., 1883.
(2) Age, 6 March and 13 March, 1883.
(3) For example, Vic. Shops Comm., Final Report, Q.6596, 6740.
(4) Vic. Shops Comm., Factories Report, p.XI.

carried on extensively... The sweating system in connection with the tailoring business bids fair to place the entire trade in the hands of females, who can, of course, work for lower wages than men. The latter are now confimed to the finer and better class of work, but they are becoming gradually supplanted in the trade by females...."

The Commissioners' estimate of the extent of the outwork was no doubt exaggerated, as was that of many witnesses, who spoke in very general terms. They were particularly concerned with the poor working conditions in small workshops, which they identified with "sweating". Since the number of clothing factories in Victoria had increased from sixty three to eighty seven between the year ending March, 1881, and the year ending March, 1884, there may well have been an increase in the number of small manufacturers.(1) But we have no reliable information on the amount of outwork.

The Victorian Bootmakers' Strike of 1884-5 Coghlan describes as "essentially a strike against home work."(2) It was settled by an agreement limiting outwork to one-sixth of each class of finishers and putters-up employed by any manufacturer, until 31st December, 1885; and thereafter to persons who for family, personal or physical reasons would be at a disadvantage working in a factory, permits for such outwork to be issued by a board consisting of representatives of the union and manufacturers with an independent chairman. Outwork issued to each individual was to be restricted to an

(1) Victorian Statistical Register 1883, p.301.
(2) T.A. Coghlan, "Labour and Industry in Australia", Vol.IV, p. 2089.

amount sufficient to provide a normal weekly wage for one person.[1] Thus the Bootmakers' Union had won, at least in words, virtual abolition of outwork of the third type, and limitations on outwork of the second type, with a special safeguard to prevent it developing into type three.[2]

With the passing of the 1885 Factories Act, provision was made for the Chief Inspector of Factories to deal with outwork in his annual report. Since he had no power to enforce the disclosure of this information, and employers did not provide it, no comprehensive account could be given.[3] In his first report the Chief Inspector notes that "there are an immense number of workrooms"[4] employing less than six persons and that "there are a very large number of females who work regularly or occasionally for the clothing factories at their own homes upon piecework".[5] The following year the Chief Inspector pointed out that owing to the Act being restricted to places employing six or more persons, much "sweating" was outside its scope.[6] The report for 1888 referred to the agitation over sweating then going on in Britain, and ventured the opinion that the system did not exist in Victoria,

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(1) "The History of Capital and Labour," 1888, p.164.
(2) The number of boot factories in Victoria increased from 71 to 105 between 1879 and 1881; after a decline in 1882 and 1883 the total reached 107 in 1884 (Vic. Stat. Register, 1883, p.301). The increase was no doubt aided by a big increase in the protective tariff in 1879. (See R.E.Cameron, "The Victorian Boot and Shoe Industry", Economic Record, Vol. XIII, June, 1937.
(3) Report for 1886, p.3.
(4) Ibid, p.5.
(5) Ibid, p.7.
(6) Report for 1887, p.3.

although there were outworkers, especially married women or widows with families who could not leave home; but the general prosperity and demand for labour set a limit to exploitation through outwork.(1) Next year the Chief Inspector had hoped to provide more information on the subject, but was frustrated because "there is so much reticence displayed". He briefly mentioned types of people who could not accept factory employment, and concluded that the prohibition of outwork would be a hardship to many.(2)

In April, 1890, a public meeting of tailoring trade workmen condemned sweating and decided to wait on eleven sweating employers to ask them to cease the practice.(3) The renewed public agitation over sweating led to the Chief Inspector of Factories being instructed to carry out a special investigation of the subject.(4) The enquiry occupied the Factory Inspector's staff for several weeks; over three hundred cases of outworkers were investigated. Many difficulties were encountered in trying to find accurate information, since no powers of compulsion were available. Advantage was taken of the help of the Tailors' Union, the Tailoresses' Union and Church charitable organisations. In one hundred and seventy seven cases, one hundred and forty four of them in Melbourne, information was listed which the Chief Inspector considered generally accurate. Most of the outworkers were females,

(1) Report for 1888, p.9.
(2) Report for 1889, pp. 11-12.
(3) Age, 24 April, 1890.
(4) Report of the Chief Inspector of Factories on the "Sweating System" in connection with the Clothing Trade in the Colony of Victoria, Vic.P.P., 1890, Vol. 3, No. 138.

the majority of them dependent on the work for their livelihood and in many cases unable to leave their homes to work in a factory. Some worked only for pocket money.

The report deals principally with the clothing trade. Here two branches are distinguished - order work, made for an individual customer, and the ready-made or slop work. Order work required skilled tailors, mostly men. Taking work home and employing a few assistants at home were not unknown in the order trade; the tailors complained that it reduced prices.

Ready-made clothing was produced in factories, as distinct from order shops. Cutters and pressers were usually males, but the bulk of the making was done by females. Nearly all factories gave out some work. Outside workers employing others generally worked themselves; they quoted low prices by working their employees harder. Individual outworkers might earn reasonable wages on skilled work, but many of the processes let out were unskilled such as button-holing, sewing on buttons, fixing pockets, etc., and for these wages were very low. As a result, outworkers laboured long hours for a bare subsistence.

Dealing with outwork in other industries, the report notes that in the boot trade the bulk of the finishers were outworkers, showing that the agreement of 1885 had not been successful in abolishing the practice. Shirt making was the worst paid of all outwork. Underclothing, canvas bags and slippers were also produced by outworkers. The

Chief Inspector felt that outwork could not be prohibited without hardship to many, but urged that it should be brought under a greater degree of supervision.

Owing to the difficulties encountered the report cannot be regarded as a comprehensive account of outwork, even in the clothing trade; there were certainly many more than one hundred and seventy seven cases in Melbourne at the time. About half the clothing cases were individuals; in the others from one to four persons might be working together, often members of the same family. Few of the boot outworkers employed others. The quantitative limitations of the survey are shown by the small number of boot employees listed, compared to the statement that the bulk of finishers were outworkers.

Little evidence can be found on outwork in New South Wales until the end of the eighties, for that colony lacked both the commissions of enquiry and the factory inspectors' reports of Victoria. The New South Wales Statistical Registers for 1889 and 1890 note that in clothing manufacture over seven hundred hands, almost all females, were engaged on outside piece work for larger factories; they amounted to more than one-third of the employees in the industry.(1) The 1892 Statistical Register shows the number of hands employed outside the factory for each industry,(2) but Coghlan states elsewhere that "those included under this heading are chiefly

(1) N.S.W. Statistical Register, 1889, p.412; 1890, p.515.
(2) N.S.W. Statistical Register, 1892, pp.432 ff.

carters and others engaged in delivery, and persons employed on wages preparing material to be made up in factories".(1) That these persons were not principally outworkers in the sense in which the term is used in this thesis is shown by their large numbers in production of butter, cheese, flour, raw sugar, and in sawmilling. Only about two hundred outworkers are given in clothing manufacture and about thirty in bootmaking;(2) they are nearly all in the metropolitan area. This was certainly less than the total of outworkers in these occupations.

In Sydney in 1891 clothing union officials complained of sweating, outwork of the third type, where women and girls were employed in small workshops by sub-contractors, especially, in their opinion, Jews.(3) This was stated to have increased in the last two or three years.(4) The efforts of the unions to stop the practice had been unavailing.(5) Outwork of the first type also existed, with girls employed in clothing factories taking extra work home.(6)

During 1891 Coghlan, as Government Statistician, conducted an enquiry into New South Wales industries under the Census and Industrial Returns Act of 1891. This showed outwork to be a long standing feature of the structure of some industries, especially clothing manufacture. "The method of

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(1) "Wealth and Progress of New South Wales", 1892, p.889.
(2) N.S.W. Statistical Register, 1892, p.439.
(3) N.S.W. Strikes Comm., Q. 10336, 10366.
(4) Ibid, Q. 10461.
(5) Ibid, Q.10367, 10383.
(6) Ibid, Q.11211.

carrying on the tailoring trade in Sydney," he said, meaning the manufacture of men's clothing, "presents some striking peculiarities. The factory system has not yet assumed large dimensions, by far the greater portion of the work being done by 'outside' or home-workers, who form a much more numerous class than the 'indoor' or factory hands."(1) The observation applied to "slop" (ready made), government contract and order (made to measure) work. The outwork was of all three types: girls on piece work often took home extra work; there was a large class of individual outworkers dealing with factories; and many others assisting home-workers or working for sub-contractors.(2) Apparently the third class was the most numerous, for Coghlan found that "it is the custom for the factories to deal with only a small number of the outside hands";(3) while"in the homes of the persons responsible to the factories small companies of tailoresses, ranging in number from two to twelve or more, work together, either on co-operative principles or on weekly wages, or as apprentices to the chief workers. In most instances the chief worker is a woman, and the work done is taken on sub-contract."(4)

Coghlan was concerned to show allegations of sweating had not been substantiated, and there were no abuses to

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(1) N.S.W. V.& P. of Parl., 1891-2, Vol. 7, Census and Industrial Returns Act of 1891, p. 1079 ff. Report No.1, p. 2.
(2) Ibid, Report No. 1, p.5.
(3) Ibid.
(4) Ibid, p.6.

compare to the conditions of London and elsewhere.[1] He takes sweating to mean sub-letting of contracts at rates so low that homeworkers have to toil extremely long hours for a scanty livelihood. Hence his opinion on sweating is concerned with questions of hours, wages and independence of outworkers; it does not question the existence of outwork.

In the manufacture of underclothing, children's clothing, miscellaneous wearing apparel and house linen, there were also many outworkers, mainly of the individual or family type.[2]

Although no accurate figures are available for the number of outworkers in clothing manufacture in Sydney, Coghlan's statement that many more than half of those engaged in the main branch were outworkers is an indication that the seven hundred odd recorded in 1889 and 1890 was not a complete enumeration.

In boot manufacture in Sydney it appears that in 1891 there was some outwork of all three types. According to a former union official, some factory workers took work home; many finishers worked at home, and some outworkers employed boy or family labour. Small factories particularly gave out

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(1) On the other hand, people who were looking for abuses turned naturally to the worst features of outwork. William Lane, "The Workingman's Paradise", first published 1892, has Nelly take Ned and the reader, to meet an individual clothing machinist outworker in Sydney. She is a married woman with three children, working desperately for a subsistence. He uses her to depict the worst in low wages, long hours and dependence on a ruthless employer. 1948 edition, p.22.

(2) Report No. 4, p.17. This does not refer to dressmaking; naturally many dressmakers were working in their own homes.

home work.[1] In Sydney, as in Melbourne, it was only the finishing processes which were done by outwork.[2] However, of sixty boot factories in 1891, only about a dozen used outworkers, and the practice was not considered sufficiently common to merit special attention by Coghlan.[3]

In clothing manufacture in Adelaide in 1892 there was some outwork of the second type, given out by factories or smaller workshops.[4] There was also some outwork of the third type, though it is almost impossible to separate such establishments from other small workshops.[5] Despite the strong emotions aroused by allegations of sweating there, it is doubtful whether there was extensive outwork in the small clothing industry of South Australia.

Adelaide had had its boot factories for many years, and here the usual outwork in finishing existed until the mid eighties. When in October, 1885, the Adelaide Bootmakers' Union struck against a reduction of wages, Tremwith was called from Melbourne to conduct the strike, and under his direction a reduction of wages was accepted on condition that all work was done in factories.[6] A Board was set up on the same lines as in Melbourne to issue permits for outwork, but these were

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(1) N.S.W. Strikes Comm., Q.10196-7; 10191; 10288; 10238; 10262; 10311.
(2) Ibid, Q.10289.
(3) Reports under the Census and Industrial Returns Act. Report No. 9, p.7. Louis Stone, in "Jonah", writing of the turn of the century, has his hero contemplate taking work as an outdoor finisher for a boot factory, so the practice had not entirely disappeared. (p.66, 1945 edition).
(4) S.A. Factories Comm. Evidence of W.J.Hendry, Manager of G.& R.Wills clothing and shirt manufactory; and of Mrs. Rogers; Mrs. Larsen.
(5) Ibid. Evidence of Mrs. Rogers; Mrs. Milne; Mrs. Larsen.
(6) Ibid, Q.10985, 11164.

few in number.[1] Union officials in 1892 were confident that very little outwork existed in the main branches of boot-making.[2]

It was only from the mid-eighties that the treadle sewing machine had become common in Brisbane, resulting in the displacement of male tailors by female machinists.[3] Ocasionally girls working in factories would take home extra work at rush periods.[4] There were some individual full time outworkers.[5] The third type of outwork also existed in Brisbane at the end of the decade, with workshops employing up to a dozen hands,[6] but this was apparently not very common.

Until 1890 outwork was usual in the boot trade in Brisbane; the finishers taking their work home in six dozen lots usually had to keep a horse and dray for this purpose.[7] During 1890 the Bootmakers' Union struck on the demand that outwork be replaced by factory work. They were successful, though some manufacturers claimed difficulty in providing the new factory facilities, so that a little outwork of the individual type continued.[8] Thus in early 1891, though the Brisbane boot industry did not use as much machinery as in Sydney, outwork was rare.[9]

The small workroom, the domestic workroom and the

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(1) Ibid, Q.10990, 11000, 1280 ff, 11057; evidence of Dowie, p. 105.
(2) Ibid, Q.11497.
(3) Q'land Factories Comm., Q.8110, 8130, 8159.
(4) Ibid, Q.6174.
(5) Ibid, Q.10060 ff, 13348.
(6) Ibid, Q.8168, 8178, 8200.
(7) Ibid, Q.6095.
(8) Ibid, Q.6093 ff, 6362.
(9) Ibid, Q.11769, 11809.

self employed producer certainly existed in the smaller urban centres outside the four capitals discussed. Most manufacturing production, such as it was, was carried out in this manner. But the examination of outwork has shown that it, as a system, was dependent upon the factory or warehouse for its organisation. This nineteenth century outwork was the adjunct of the factory and so was most important in those urban centres where the factory was most firmly established.

The foregoing account has been concerned with the extent and scale of outwork. It is seen that outwork was an important element, perhaps even the largest element, in clothing manufacture. In bootmaking it had been the usual method for finishing processes but by the end of the eighties it was being replaced by the factory, partly as a result of strike action by boot workers. Of the three types of outwork the first was really an extension of working hours on piece rates, constantly recurring when conditions were suitable, but not esentially a separate method of production. The second, individual outwork, was organised through the factory or warehouse but utilised an alternative workplace; of its nature it tended to develop into the third type, and this in turn to the factory again, but on a smaller scale, on a lower level of capital, machinery and facilities. Hence there was a two-way traffic between outwork and factory production, a relationship not of exclusion and rivalry, but of interaction and dependence. To examine further the role which outwork played in production, it is necessary to proceed from the scale of outwork to its

nature and relationship to factory industry.

Fully independent petty producers own their instruments of production, raw materials and do their own marketing. Such small scale industry existed to some extent in the Australian cities of the eighties but it did not constitute outwork. In a form of the domestic system of handicrafts observed in Britain from the fifteenth century the merchant owns the raw material, hence the product, and organises the distribution of the material and the marketing of the product, which the worker has produced in his own home. Outwork in Australia in the eighties had these characteristics in that the factory or warehouse provided the raw material, requisitioned the production and marketed the product. The instruments of production were owned by the outworker, but they were of small value - the bootmaker's tools, the seamstress's needle or even the time payment sewing machine. However, while the domestic system had historically been the typical organisation of some industries, outwork in Australia arose as an adjunct of the factory, an extension of factory production and subordinate to it, carrying on certain processes for the factory. The outwork system was not operated by independent producers who marketed their product, for they fulfilled specific orders for the factory or warehouse. In Britain a similar arrangement survived the coming of the factory, often to a late period

and a surprising extent;[1] even here its nature was changed, for now it was only an outside branch of the factory.

Thus the outworker was not a rival of the factory owner; he, or she, was a rival of the factory worker, and this was clearly perceived by the trade unions who led the agitation against outwork. It was also realised by the working sub-contractors who sought agreement with the Tailoresses' Union in the Victorian Strike of 1882-3 to secure higher piece rates from the factory owners and the merchants.

In Australia it was not a case of factory industry establishing itself against an older domestic system, nor against the self-sufficiency of peasant handicrafts. Local factory industry had to compete with imported factory products; certainly tailoring and bootmaking had previously been carried on in small shops or the workmen's homes,[2] but not on a scale to rival the ready made British article. When Australian factories arose they were supplemented by the outwork which

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(1) J.H. Clapham, "An Economic History of Modern Britain", Bk. III, p. 92 ff, p.119, pp. 123-133, refers to the prevalence of outwork in clothing and boot manufacture in Britain during the eighties, though factory machinery had dispensed with it to a greater extent than in Australia. Clapham also names a variety of light industries where some outwork existed as an appendage of the factory.
M. Dobb, "Studies in the Development of Capitalism", described nail making, gun making, jewellery, brass founding, saddlery and harness making as putting out trades in Britain in the eighteen sixties and seventies, despite their highly subdivided processes of production. (p.264).

(2) T.A. Coghlan, "Labour and Industry in Australia", Vol. III, p. 1202.

arose with them. For example, the introduction of the sewing machine in the sixties had resulted in the industrial employment of women;[1] but the erection of a sufficient number of factories lagged behind the needs of a rapidly expanding market. Chapter 1 of this Part describes the large number of makeshift factories of the eighties. "Under existing circumstances," Coghlan observed of clothing manufacture in Sydney in 1891, "piecework [permitting outwork] is a necessity here, because the room available in factories is not equal to the accommodation of one-third of the hands employed."[2] The factories continued to increase - "a few years ago there were no factories" in Sydney for the making of miscellaneous articles of clothing.[3] The great division of labour in garment making, already referred to, was used to employ a rapidly trained labour force in outwork. The raw materials and the intermediate products themselves came from large scale industry. Outwork often filled in the interstices of factory production by carrying out particular processes. It was also a reserve of productive powers for the rapid expansion of output such as occurred during the eighties, or a dispensable section in any contraction of output.

Machinery which remains in the nature of a hand tool does not require concentration of work in a factory, though

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(1) Ibid.
(2) Census and Industrial Returns Act, Report No. 1, p.7.
(3) Ibid, Report No. 4, p.18.

this may have advantages. The key change is the development of mechanical power, for power driven machinery must be used at one place. Obviously there would be difficulties in adapting the sewing machine to steam power owing to the machinery's lightness, rapid deterioration and controlled movements. When these were overcome the factory virtually supplanted outwork, but not in clothing manufacture during the eighties. One reason, however, for the partial abolition of outwork in bootmaking was the introduction of power driven machinery for finishing processes, which had occurred in Britain (1) and was taking place in Australia by the end of the eighties. (2)

The relationship of outwork to factory production needs to be seen in conjunction with other means by which the emerging factory system established itself. Another stage is shown in the case of the Adelaide shirt factory, employing twenty girls, which was leased by tender, the contract being at so much per dozen shirts with the factory owner supplying the premises and power. (3) In other cases piece workers had a deduction made from their wages for the cost of power and rent of working premises. (4) In the chapter on juvenile employment (Part III, Ch. 3) other aspects of intermediate steps

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(1) "It was not until the last quarter of the century that boot and shoe production, with the introduction from America of the Blake sewer and other automatic machinery such as the closing-machine, shifted from the putting out or manufactory system to a factory basis." M.Dobb, op.cit., p.265, speaking of Britain.

(2) N.S.W. Strikes Comm., Q.10294; The Vic. Factory Inspector's Report for 1888, p.8, refers to the erection of new boot factories using sewing machines operated by gas power.

(3) S.A. Factories Comm., p.119 and 121, D.& W.Murray's shirt factory.

(4) Ibid, Q.8561, 8581 ff.

between independent outwork and full factory owner-worker relationships are discussed. Nor was the labour force automatically available for factory production. There was probably much truth in the frequent suggestions that many young women were reluctant to enter factories, as lowering their status and placing them in undesirable company. Certainly the female workers who were needed in clothing manufacture did not yet have, in Australia, a tradition of factory employment. Male workers would often accept a worsening of wages and conditions for independence, even if it proved illusory. There always appears to have been a labour supply for outwork, even in the prosperous eighties.

Outwork had many advantages for the employer, always provided that the processes were such as could be carried on equally well away from the factory, and that payment by the piece was applicable. He did not have to provide factory accommodation or equipment when these were scarce and costly in Australia; he did not have to engage the total labour force nor adjust it to demand for the product when only a limited trained labour force existed; he was not responsible for factory organisation or discipline at a time when technicians skilled in the one and workers accustomed to the other were scarce; he evaded such industrial laws as existed, dealing with buildings, health requirements and the employer's liability for accidents caused by his negligence. These conditions were of great benefit to the small manufacturer establishing himself and short of working capital and often to the larger

firm which had laid out all its resources in rapid expansion. Australian manufacturing at this time still needed outwork.

These remained substantial advantages to the employer until technological advances made it more profitable to bring all workers into the factory. This process, which is a constant one, was taking place in Australia during the eighties. Thus the proportion of employees engaged as outworkers certainly decreased during the eighties, and even the absolute numbers may have done so. Outwork does not disappear suddenly for the factory system gradually sheds it as the need for it passes. In clothing manufacture, because of the type of machinery and the female labour force, outwork remained profitable longer than in other industries.(1)

How does outwork affect the employee? It draws upon cheap child and family labour, the desperate and the helpless, the lumpen proletariat of intermittent workers, those who have only one foot in the permanent wage earning class as

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(1) Outwork in clothing manufacture never entirely disappears, for the single sewing machine is still suitable for some processes and there is always available some labour which will accept low rates on the outside work because it cannot, or does not wish to, enter a factory. Thus the conditions and arguments of the heyday of outwork are reflected in miniature to the present day. For example, reports in a Sydney newspaper of 1955 show the special reporter, the union officer, the public official, the manufacturer and the outworker acting their familiar roles (Sydney Morning Herald, 7 June, 1955 and 31 August, 1955; Sun-Herald, 26 June, 1955 and 3 July, 1955). The differences are two - now outwork is negligible, and breaches of the extensive regulations governing it lead quickly to the Industrial Court.

they supplement family incomes or toil furiously to raise themselves from wage earners to independence. During the eighties outwork engaged wide circles of "normal" wage earners beyond these, but the special groups always lowered the bargaining strength of the whole, as did the isolation of outworkers from each other and the irregularity of their employment. Between the worker and his ultimate employer intruded a succession of parasites taking their percentage from the group under them. Such petty middlemen are prone to resort to deceits, counterfeits and swindles which are possible in an undeveloped market but are unsuitable to the firm contracts of large businesses. Sub-contracting of all kinds was fought as an evil by nineteenth century workers, and outwork provided good grounds for the abuses of sub-contracting to flourish.

Outwork was therefore marked by low wages, long hours and unsuitable working conditions. This is turn dragged down the conditions of comparable factory workers. At the same time it gave inside and outside workers a common interest in improving conditions.

Thus the strength of union opposition to outwork was natural. The struggle against outwork was the factor which brought into being the bootmakers' unions, largest of the new semi-skilled factory workers' unions. It also produced the first mass trade unions of women which burst upon a surprised Australia in the eighties. The tailoresses were not yet strong enough to maintain their organisation. The

bootmakers' unions, aided by technical developments in the industry, were able to strike effective blows against the outwork system.

The occupations affected by outwork were those of the new semi-skilled factory workers, perhaps best described as skilled process workers. The older unions drawn from the building, engineering and specialist trades gave them help and encouragement in their struggle against outwork. While it was an all important matter to the one it was only an occasion of brotherly aid to the other. Here was one basis for the cleavage between the old craft union and the new union of less skilled urban workers. It was such conditions which made Trenwith, of the Bootmakers' Union, the leader of the militant wing of the Melbourne unions, concurrently with his busy search for a parliamentary career as a member of the Liberal party.

Thus the trade union movement fought strongly against outwork, calling unhesitatingly for the powerful weapon of legislation. This was a field where nineteenth century humanitarianism, the liberal conscience, political radicalism, popular sentimentality and trade union demands found common ground. The conditions under which outwork was performed were one of the great agitational questions in the discussion of industrial legislation in the last quarter of the nineteenth century in Australia. An appreciation of the nature of outwork is necessary to an understanding of the attempts at and the results of industrial legislation.

In this respect outwork as a public question attracted attention out of proportion to its real importance. The most powerful theme in early Australian industrial legislation was the protection by the State of helpless, weak or signally exploited groups. The female outworkers, widows, mothers of families or young girls, were obviously such a group. The constantly recurring argument about the minimum number of workers to constitute a factory in every Factory Bill hinged around the extent to which outwork should be brought under legislative control. Despite the agitation it was not until the 1896 Factory Act in Victoria, soon followed by similar measures in New South Wales, Queensland and South Australia, that outwork was effectively controlled. The reason was that such control for outside piece workers required a regulation of wages and this was too great an innovation for colonial legislators until the new political atmosphere of the later nineties.

By this time outwork was less important that it had been. Even during the eighties manufacturers were divided in their opinion as to its necessity. The young industries were soon able to throw away this support which had helped them take their first steps.

CHAPTER 3.

INDUSTRIAL LEGISLATION.

Any study of working class life must take into account the legal framework within which that class at that time and place exists; this would apply even if such laws did not seem to affect directly conditions of life, for they undoubtedly would do so indirectly. The law of property, for example, is basic. This legal framework need not be described at length for Australia in the eighteen eighties, since it is common to Australia and Britain after the industrial revolution; only the differences from the present day need be noted.

Within the legal structure of a society particular laws specifically deal with conditions of life of wage earners and other classes. This body of law, which can be described as social legislation, includes all enactments dealing with conditions of work, wages, organisation of workers and welfare generally, extending into fields such as public health

and education. Some of these are discussed in other parts of this thesis, others are scarcely touched, since the thesis does not set out to be a history of a society nor a complete social history of portion of a society.

A part of social legislation, which might be described as industrial legislation, consists of laws regulating conditions in the workplace and circumstances arising out of this. With some of these this chapter is concerned. While the industrial legislation has its impact on the life of wage earners, the laws do not emerge of their own accord, but are the product of social forces, so that the influence of wage earners upon legislation has to be examined as well as the effect of legislation upon wage earners.

In the twenty years from the eighteen nineties Australian social legislation advanced very rapidly to be held up as a model to the rest of the world.(1) Attention was particularly attracted by novel features in arbitration and minimum wage laws.(2) Although Australia's reputation as a social laboratory was acquired during these years there did exist before 1890 a considerable amount of social legislation, the product of a democratic political environment and an economic environment which favoured State intervention.

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(1) The classic account of the main part of this legislation is given by W.P. Reeves, "State Experiments in Australia and New Zealand", 1902.
(2) See for example, S. & B. Webb, Introduction to 1902 Edition of "Industrial Democracy".

Of this, industrial legislation represented only a small part - acts dealing with factories, mines, shopping, employers' liability, payment of wages, employer-employee relationships and status of trade unions - with unsuccessful attempts at legislation on other subjects such as hours of work. Limitation of hours is dealt with in Chapter 4 of this Part; payment of wages in Part III; trade unions and relationship of master and servant in Part V. This chapter is confined to factory legislation, employers' liability and some minor questions. Of these, factory legislation is most important.

In the field of industrial legislation, as in many others, Victoria was the leading colony from the gold rushes to 1890. The two Victorian factory acts of 1873 and 1885 were pioneer measures in Australia. In Victoria there was the clearest alignment of political forces and the greatest working class political influence. Hence events in this colony best illuminate the politics of industrial legislation. Victorian conditions furnish the most informative case study of the Australian liberalism of the second half of the nineteenth century, a liberalism so strong there that its displacement by labour politics after 1890 lagged and the centre of gravity of working class politics moved to Queensland and New South Wales.

For these reasons this chapter will examine in detail the Victorian factory legislation and its political background and then more briefly other industrial legislation of the

eighties.

Victorian politics from the time of the gold rushes were marked by a division into two contending groups with sharp conflicts between them. Despite the personal influence of individuals and changing party allegiances certain basic policies can be discerned. The democratic and egalitarian sentiments continuing from the gold fields days made Victoria a model of advanced democracy.(1) The demand for political rights, for the unlocking of the land and for protection of local industries came from the farmers and selectors, the manufacturers and workers and the miners. This party was personified in David Syme whose opposition to laisser faire doctrines made him an advocate of State intervention in the form of social legislation.(2) The conservative interest was represented by the squatters, merchants, bankers, top civil servants and shopkeepers who believed the less government the better and rallied under the slogan of "Liberty of the subject".

These political divisions appeared in the Legislative Assembly, and later and to a much less extent, in the

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(1) On this background to Victorian and Australian politics during the second half of the nineteenth century see R.A. Gollan, "Radicalism and Socialism in Eastern Australia 1850-1910" (Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, London, 1950), especially Part I, Chapters 2 and 3. On the political effects of the gold fields agitation, see R.D. Walshe, "The Significance of Eureka in Australian History", Historical Studies, Eureka Centenary Supplement, December, 1954.

(2) On the political alignment and Syme's role, see Walter Murdoch, "Alfred Deakin", London, 1923, especially p. 52, and J.A. La Nauze, "Political Economy in Australia", Melbourne, 1949, p. 134.

Legislative Council. But, for most of the seventies and eighties, the Assembly favoured the liberal cause and the Council with a high property qualification for members and a restricted franchise invariably represented conservative opinion.(1) Hence party divisions typically took the form of a cleavage between the two Houses, the question of their respective powers being a major issue in every crisis.

This was the political context in which factory legislation was considered. The subject, however, was a minor one; it neither made nor broke governments though it tended to align political forces in the typical way.

The 1873 Factory Act was neither far reaching in its provisions nor effective in its application. Nevertheless it merits close study, which it has not received, as the pioneer measure. It epitomizes much of nineteenth century Australian feeling about factory legislation. Until the late eighties it was the model, with improvements, for the many attempts, unsuccessful except one, to pass factory legislation in other colonies.

The Act originated in Ballarat, a circumstance to occasion some surprise, but illustrative of the nature of factory legislation at the time. In that city of some forty

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(1) The role of the Legislative Council as a bulwark of conservativism for almost one hundred years is traced by G. Serle, "The Victorian Legislative Council, 1856-1950", Historical Studies, Vol. 6, No.22, May, 1954.

thousand inhabitants gold mining was now supplemented by engineering and light industry including clothing manufacture.(1) It was in connection with the conditions of female employees in clothing workshops that the agitation arose. The employees concerned, currently referred to as "sewing girls", worked for firms which, though some of them were on a fairly large scale, combined ready made clothing manufacture with a retail shop and order dressmaking, millinery and tailoring.(2) Victoria'a young clothing industry produced the first factory legislation.

A newspaper campaign contributed substantially to the passing of the Act. In April 1873 the Ballarat Courier, which was the main daily paper and a liberal and protectionist organ, apparently inspired by an anonymous letter, took up the case of the sewing girls, declaring that they worked long hours in unhealthy workrooms for a miserable wage. Already the paper called for legislative action if public opinion alone could not remedy these abuses. The lead given editorally by the Courier produced a stream of letters in support

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(1) W.B. Withers, "History of Ballarat", Revised edition, Ballarat 1888, Chap. VIII.

(2) It is not possible to ascertain the number of employees involved. According to the Statistical Register for 1873 (p.337) there were 3,861 females employed in factories throughout the colony, three-quarters of them working in clothing manufacture; but only 183 female factory workers of all kinds are given for Ballarat. Apart from the unreliability of these figures (see Appendix II) many of the establishments in Ballarat were mainly shops. Newspaper reports refer to the firm particularly concerned as employing 273 hands in all its departments and to 200-300 sewing girls in Ballarat.

detailing hardships and proposing a variety of remedies.[1] The Star, the freetrade opponent of the Courier, eventually entered the field, admitting the deplorable conditions but describing them as an evil effect of the pernicious system of protection under which the clothing factory had been established.[2]

In Melbourne the sewing girls attracted little attention. All the metropolitan papers reported Ballarat news, but the question was not presented as one which might be important in Melbourne. The Daily Telegraph gave it some space, cautiously supporting legislation, but feared this would be evaded by an increase in outwork at home.[3] The Argus reported the Ballarat stories at length and printed a long account from its own correspondent detailing the deplorable conditions of female employees. Editorially it did not favour legislation beyond that dealing with ventilation and overcrowding in workrooms.[4] The Age was concerned to play down the harrowing descriptions because they were presented by its opponents as a slur on the protectionist policy.[5] In all the Melbourne papers, however, correspondents vigorously condemned the conditions exposed, pointed to further examples and supported legislative action.[6] There was no clear cut alignment

(1) Ballarat Courier, 10 April to early May, 1873.
(2) Ballarat Star, 29 April, 5 May, 7 May, 10 May, 1873.
(3) Daily Telegraph, 8 May, 9 May, 1873.
(4) Argus, 12 May, 23 May, 1873.
(5) Age, 30 April, 10 May, 1873.
(6) One large firm of Melbourne clothing manufacturers went so far as to publish a pamphlet describing the excellent conditions of their employees and inviting inspection. A partner of the firm was prominent in urging factory legislation six years later. Age, 11 June, ?

on the issue because it remained a minor one in Melbourne but it was a major local question in Ballarat.

The popular campaign was conducted by the Ballarat Early Closing Association.(1) The Ballarat newspapers and their correspondents had criticised the Early Closing Association for not helping the sewing girls after having recently won improvements in their own hours. The Early Closing Association replied that it had been formed for a special purpose and that sewing girls were outside its province.(2) Early in May the Early Closing Association changed front and took the matter up vigorously. That body decided to ask W.C. Smith, a local member of the Legislative Assembly, to meet a deputation "on the subject of introducing a Bill in the next session to limit the hours of labour of all sewing women employed in workrooms throughout the colony".(3) The Early Closing Associations in Melbourne and other towns were urged to do the same with their local members; it was decided to issue a petition and to circularise all clergymen,

(1) Early Closing Associations were the form of the shop assistants' trade unions, originating in the special grievance of shop assistants over their long hours. Although primarily employee associations in membership they had the support of some shopkeepers who desired to eliminate by agreement competition through long hours. They also had much public support. They first appeared in the late 1850's, almost as early as the eight hours movement, and became widespread.
(2) Star, 29 April, 1873.
(3) Star, 1 May, 1873.

bankers, employers in the soft goods trade and leading men of the district. The Association pledged itself to devote the whole of its energies to this subject.

In brief the first Australian campaign for factory legislation arose around the conditions of particularly defenceless female workers, many of them juveniles. It was directed by an embryonic union of males who had close associations with these women workers. It drew strength from the democratic reforming tradition of the goldfields and appealed widely for support on humanitarian grounds.

The two most active members of the Early Closing Association were employed by the firm whose treatment of the sewing girls had first provoked the agitation. The firm now dismissed these two men, an act which aroused further indignation.[1] Indicative of the strength of local feeling, the two ex-employees were given a testimonial and presentation in recognition of their efforts on behalf of the sewing girls and were able to start a drapery shop with the support of some backers.[2] Reports, probably incomplete, show that the Ballarat Early Closing Association received the support of other Early Closing Associations and at least some trade unions at Ballarat and Sandhurst (Bendigo).[3]

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(1) Star, 7 May, 13 May, 1873.
(2) Courier, 7 June, 1873 and Star, 22 May, 1873.
(3) Sandhurst, E.C.A., Star, 9 May; Melbourne E.C.A., Argus, 12 May; Ballarat Carpenters and Joiners, Star, 14 May; Sandhurst Eight Hours Association, Star, 20 May.

The newspaper and popular campaigns enlisted the support of a number of parliamentarians. Foremost amongst these was W.C. Smith who remained a leading political figure in Victorian factory legislation for twenty years. A major in the Volunteers, he was in the eyes of his supporters a dashing popular leader who carried on the democratic and reforming traditions of the goldfield areas. He represented Ballarat in the Assembly from 1861 to 1864 and again from 1871 to 1892, holding a number of ministerial posts and year after year topping the poll for his multi-member constituency.(1) His opponents accused him of being "a mere popularity hunter",(2) a judgment in which Deakin subsequently concurred by describing his principles as "those which he had found necessary to secure his seat for Ballarat and his place in the Cabinet".(3) The Age, not then regarding him with favour, described him as "ambitious of being considered the leader of the opposition, although his pretensions thereto are of the slenderest".(4) He was a fairly wealth man, chairman of directors of the Phoenix Foundry at Ballarat, and a shareholder in various mining companies, but maintained that this did not make him a bloated capitalist like the bankers.(5) Although at this time

(1) Withers, op.cit., Appendix A.
(2) Star, 30 April, 1873.
(3) S.M. Ingham, "Some Aspects of Victorian Liberalism, 1880-1900", M.A. thesis, Melbourne, 1949, p.23, quoting from The Deakin Papers.
(4) Age, 15 May, 1873.
(5) Age, 3 April, 1873; Star, 27 May, 1873.

he sat on the corner benches of a middle of the way government, he was later to be closely associated with Berry, Deakin and the liberal group, until he broke with Berry on his failure to obtain ministerial rank in the Service-Berry Coalition of 1883.(1) Whatever his motives, he was always a prominent advocate of democratic abd labour demands, and on this basis was able to occupy an important place in Victorian politics for twenty years. Smith was later to be the leading figure in the Royal Commission of 1882-4 which led to the 1885 Factory Act.

In forwarding the 1873 Act Smith's main support came from the radical wing of the liberal parliamentarians. When a meeting was held at Ballarat to celebrate the passing of the Act those specially singled out for thanks included J. Woods, member for Stawell, an old English Chartist who was regarded as a working class spokesman;(2) Longmore, a lifetime radical;(3) Berry, leader of the radical forces in the political crises of the seventies; Vale who had supported an eight hour bill in Parliament three years before;(4) and other goldfields members.

Messrs. Smith and Jones, another Ballarat M.L.A., had introduced their brief bill on 14th May, 1873. This bill prohibited the employment of women or children in workrooms

(1) Withers, op.cit., p. 182.
(2) Ingham, op.cit., p.113 ff.
(3) Ibid, p. 145 ff.
(4) Star, 14 May, 1873.

or factories for more than eight hours per day, to be worked between 9 a.m. and 6 p.m.; made provision for ventilation, heating and space per worker, with inspection by the local health board; and prescribed the Saturday half holiday and public holidays for female employees.(1) Speaking to it, Smith described the bill as moderate, referring to the British Factory Acts and the abuses shown to exist in the colony. It would not, he said, affect the large manufacturers of Melbourne.(2) Orr, a government member who had criticised Smith's bill as a ridiculous effort, subsequently produced his own draft, which would apply to all places employing three or more persons, register factories, prescribe the eight hour day, and prohibit employment of persons under fifteen years of age.(3) Little attempt was made to proceed with this far reaching and loosely drafted measure, which had no possibility of success. Probably there was justice in the comment of Berry that it was merely a venture to discredit the subject by bringing in a travesty of Smith's bill,(4) for so its proposals would be regarded by any practical politician of that day.

Since the government declined to act, Smith re-introduced his bill, confining it to females, deleting the provision on holidays and adding the requirement of a meal hour being allowed.(5) In Committee the limits of the day within

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(1) Vic. Legis. Ass. Bills Introduced. Session 1873.
(2) V.P.D., Vol.16, p.213.
(3) Vic. Legis. Ass. Bills Introduced, 1873.
(4) V.P.D., Vol.16, p.752.
(5) Vic. Legis. Ass. Bills Introduced, 1873.

which the hours might be worked and the compulsory meal hour were struck out.(1) With little discussion the bill passed the Assembly. In the Council there was no debate, but T.T. a'Beckett, as conservative spokesman, put forward and had accepted amendments to give the Chief Secretary power to exempt factories from the hours requirement; to apply the bill only to workplaces employing ten or more persons, and to leave the health provisions entirely in the hands of the local health boards.(2)

The proviso that the Act would apply only where ten or more persons were employed removed from its jurisdiction the typical small workroom and the outwork which was availed of by the merchants as well as manufacturers. The Chief Secretary's powers of exemption were a safeguard for large firms. The placing of the health provisions in the hands of the local boards ensured that they would not be onerous nor outside the influence of local business men.

As to how the bill came to pass the Council, Woods thought that body had blundered into doing the right thing for once.(3) The squatters, landowners, merchants and bankers who dominated the Council(4) may not have been very interested despite their concern for "liberty of the subject", in defending

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(1) V.P.D., Vol. 17, p.1704 ff.
(2) Ibid, p.2045.
(3) Star, 10 Dec., 1873.
(4) For an analysis of the membership of the Legislative Council see J. Mills, "The Composition of the Victorian Parliament, 1856-81," Historical Studies, Vol. 2, No. 5, April, 1942.

the clothing manufacturers who were their habitual opponents. In fact, on an unimportant measure, one of their number proposed the necessary restrictions - quite crippling ones as they proved - and no one else bothered to speak on the subject.

The short Act[1] as passed defined a factory or workroom as a place where not less than ten persons were engaged for hire in preparing or manufacturing articles for trade or sale; declared that females might not be employed in factories for more than eight hours per day, unless the Chief Secretary suspended this clause for any factory; and gave power to local health boards[2] to make regulations on accommodation, heating, ventilation, cleanliness and sanitary provision in factories.[3]

Thus in little more than six months Australia's first factory act had been initiated and passed.[4] In retrospect the significance of this pioneering legislation is undoubted.[5] The Victorian Royal Commission of 1882-4, devoting much attention to the ineffectiveness of this early act, proposed on the basis of ten years experience of its operation, numerous amendments with which Australian factory legislation takes its modern form. It would be a mistake, however, to exaggerate the importance of

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(1) 37 Vict. No. CCCLXVI (466 of 1873), sometimes referred to as the 1874 Act from its coming into operation on 1 Jan., 1874.

(2) A department, often more or less nominal, of the local municipal authority.

(3) The Central Board of Health did promulgate regulations and send them to local boards. Fifteenth Report of the Central Board of Health for 1873, Vic. P.P., 1874, Vol.3, No.95, p.13.

(4) T.A. Coghlan, "Labour and Industry in Australia", Vol.III, p. 1472 is in error in stating that the Bill was passed in May, 1873, the month it was first introduced. The terms he

the 1873 Act in the contemporary scene. For a couple of months in April and May, 1873 the question was a prominent one in Ballarat and to a much less extent in Melbourne.

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(4) continued:
ascribes to the Act were those of Smith's original Bill, not the Bill as amended and passed. Coghlan states that factories and workrooms could be withdrawn from the operation of the Act if the workers concerned petitioned for this. A.G.L. Shaw, "Economic Development of Australia", 1946 edition, p.100 quotes this statement by Coghlan. In fact the 1873 Act gave the Chief Secretary power to suspend operation of the hours clause as he deemed expedient - an important difference.

While most historians virtually ignore the 1873 Act, Sidney Webb, at least in 1891, errs in the other direction. This factory legislation is described in "The Eight Hours Day", by S. Webb and H. Cox, 1891, p.39, as follows:- "In 1874 a stringent Factory Act limited the hours of women in factories to eight per day, and applied most of the English factory law for their protection. This too sweeping limitation of the hours of labour of one sex only excited at first some discontent, but it gradually became accepted and enforced, and eleven years later, on the amendment of the Factory Acts, was re-enacted in an approved form, without opposition."

The authors are misinformed as to the provisions of the 1873 Act, its enforcement, and the extent of the opposition to the passage of the 1885 Act.

(5) It was the model for a similar Act in New Zealand in September, 1873 limiting the hours of female employees to eight per day. The New Zealand Act excited no attention at the time but amendments to it laid the basis of that colony's factory code. See Reeves, op.cit., Vol. 2, p.36.

Even then it was subordinated to the main political questions by its sponsor, Smith.(1) It was a local effort, a product of that remarkable goldmining corner of Victoria which had produced the Eureka Stockade and was to set in motion the new style of industrial unionism through the miners' and shearers' unions.(2)

The locality is significant, for the mining districts were the stronghold of democracy and radicalism in Victoria until the governing urban working class of Melbourne took the lead. The subject matter of the Act - some protection for a particularly exploited and defenceless group of workers - was in accord with the British tradition which dated from Peel's Act of 1802. It forced a small opening in the armour of laisser faire, but was no full scale assault on this principle. The forces which brought the Act into being were a popular campaign by trade unions, supported by liberal newspapers, acting through the radical wing of the liberal parliamentarians. The same forces, in greater or less proportion, were to be responsible for all Australian industrial legislation until the rise of a political labour party, and their influence did not vanish then. Hence the 1873 Act is not merely the first Australian factory legislation, but provides a case study of the forces behind other Australian industrial legislation during

(1) It is scarcely mentioned, for example, in a lengthy report to his constituents at the end of May. Star, 27 May, Courier, 27 May.
(2) The incident does not receive a mention in Withers, op.cit. But even as a Ballarat "first" it was not the kind of subject matter with which Withers was concerned.

the eighties.

Compared to the existing British legislation the 1873 Act was a very simple one. In Britain a body of full-time inspectors had been created in 1833. By 1847 the hours of women and young persons in many industries were restricted to ten per day; subsequent amendments established definite times within which these hours should be worked. Provision had been made for fencing dangerous machinery and collecting information. Acts of 1867 extended the field covered from cotton and allied industries to others specified and to all factories employing fifty or more hands. Quite a mass of detailed regulations existed, an apparatus for administration and report had been erected. These Acts applied only to women and children, only to certain industries and other large factories, and the hours prescribed were longer than those set for Victoria, reflecting the position of that colony as a stronghold of the relatively short working day. But in the main Australia's first factory act followed the British precedent and was defended on this ground.

It was twelve years before any further advance was made in factory legislation in Victoria. One reason was that only during the eighties did manufacturing industry expand rapidly. Another was the political turmoil which pushed aside any proposals for industrial legislation. Political democracy, the unlocking of the land and protection, though the latter two were nominally accepted by all parties, still pro-

vided the main grounds of political division. Berry's dramatic struggle with the Legislative Council reached a peak in 1878 with the refusal of funds to the government, the dismissal of senior public servants and the bringing of administration to a standstill. He was defeated at the election of 1880, but his conservative opponents survived less than a year. When in 1881 a compromise act was passed extending the franchise for the Legislative Council, the main issues had been set at rest. Hence Sir Bryan O'Loghlen was able to break with Berry and, without an election, form a ministry based on a centre coalition, leaving both Berry and the conservatives in opposition. "The blazon on the banner of the new Ministry was 'Peace, Progress and Prosperity'".(1) The O'Loghlen government survived until 1883; although it maintained only a doubtful majority the "constitutional party" came to the rescue of O'Loghlen when he was hard pressed, in order to keep out Berry. With the recovery from the recession of 1879-80 it was a period of prosperity in city and countryside; legislative inaction had succeeded political turmoil.

In the 1883 election the O'Loghlen government was defeated and the majority of the Assembly was again ranged in two parties behind Berry and Service. Under these conditions Service and Berry formed a coalition with an agreement to preserve the status quo as regards the Legislative Council

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(1) H.G. Turner, "History of Victoria", London, 1904, Vol.2, p. 217.

and protection. This arrangement was probably initiated and carried through by Syme and the Age, who certainly supported it.[1] But the Age did not cease to press the coalition government from the liberal side. The government demonstrated the new political atmosphere in circumstances of steady prosperity by its concentration on administration - the public service and railways - and development - in public works and irrigation. In 1886 both Service and Berry retired; the Gillies government continued the same alliance, which survived until 1890. The factory legislation of the eighties was the product of this coalition, cautious, comfortably ensconced in office, originally mildly liberal, then growingly conservative.

From 1874 to 1879, while the struggle on constitutional questions raged, there was no further attempt at factory legislation, for it was not a major question in politics.

In June, 1879 a philanthropic manufacturer raised the matter again when with some colleagues he waited on the acting Premier, O'Loghlen.[2] He suggested a bill which would prohibit the employment in factories of children under the age of thirteen years; limit the hours of all females and of children under sixteen to eight and a half in any day or forty

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(1) A. Pratt, "David Syme; the Father of Protection in Australia", London and Melbourne, 1908, p.174. In this eulogistic biography Pratt credits Syme with originating the proposal and forcing it on the reluctant politicians.

(2) This was Parry, a large clothing manufacturer who in 1873 had supported the factory bill of that year. Vic Shops Comm., Second Progress Report, p.58 ff. Parry's modern factory made no use of outwork. It was a model in the treatment of the employees.

eight in a week; and bring all factories under the Act thereby striking a great blow at the evils of outwork. The Inspector of Factories under the Central Board of Health agreed that amendments to the existing law were necessary. O'Loghlen expressed his concurrence, promised to place the views before Cabinet, but stated that he was waiting to hear from the Manufacturers' and Exhibitors' Association on the subject.

The Manufacturers' Association showed strong feeling against Parry's proposals, which thereupon disappeared from the scene. The Age strongly supported Parry on the grounds that the increase of manufacturing in Victoria had developed evils which required special legislation to preserve public health and protect the weak "against the greed of avaricious taskmasters, or against the evils of uncontrolled competition".(1) The Age went further than Parry, advising the government to consider extending the eight hour day to all male adults. In this the newspaper supported that had been a perennial demand of organised labour. The ethical attitude of the newspaper was that protection which it supported and the manufacturers thereby aided must justify themselves by providing decent conditions for their workers. The political attitude of this architect and spokesman of the liberal alliance was that manufacturers must make these con-

(1) Age, 16 June, 1879.

cessions to retain their working class support.

A further abortive move by humanitarians was made the following year when a large meeting in Melbourne, with the Bishop of Melbourne and several parliamentarians present, carried a motion "That in the opinion of the meeting the time had arrived to protect the interests of the industrial classes of this colony, by the introduction of a measure similar to the English Factory Act."(1) No action followed from the resolution, nor was the question similarly raised again during 1880 or 1881.

The trade unions of skilled workers were also concerned with some aspects of factory legislation. The 1879 Intercolonial Trades Union Congress had included demands for a factory act and other industrial legislation in its decisions. In August, 1880 the Secretary of the Melbourne Typographical Society wrote to the Age, appealing for a factory act to restrict boy labour (a constant grievance of skilled craftsmen such as the printers), prevent overcrowding, ensure lighting, sanitation, ventilation and the inspection of dangerous machinery.(2) The craft unions were really only concerned with workplace conditions and the competition of cheap child labour. They were not active to advance the more pressing needs of the unorganised factory workers. The printers' union had catechized candidates on these questions in the

(1) Age, 14 Sept., 1880.
(2) Age, 19 Aug., 1880.

recent elections. Eighteen months later the same union was urging legislation of this type on the Chief Secretary, with a representative of the Journeymen Tailors' Society stressing the need to control outwork, for the tailors were the skilled workers most affected by outwork. The Chief Secretary promised to introduce a factory act next session to protect the health of employees, though he had not yet reached a decision on apprenticeship provisions.(1) Nothing came of this.

Meanwhile the narrow basis of Victorian trade unionism was being extended rapidly, with the result that union agitation about industrial legislation was soon to change its tone and add to its power. Trade unionism was well established in Victoria by 1880 (see Part V). The Trades Hall Committee was steadily increasing its authority as a co-ordinating body. Some semi-skilled and unskilled workers had formed unions, a movement which was growing in the early eighties. A great upsurge in union organisation was beginning. In the last six months of 1882 and the first six months of 1883 steps were taken to form unions of bakers,(2) quarrymen,(3) some additional boot trade occupations,(4) dray men and carters,(5) coachmakers,(6)

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(1) Age, 18 Feb., 1882.
(2) Age, 4 July, 1882. Not all these attempts to form unions were permanently successful; nor were they all the first attempt in the occupation.
(3) Age, 14 Oct., 1882.
(4) Age, 17 Oct., 1882.
(5) Age, 23 Oct., 1882.
(6) Age, 18 Dec., 1882.

butchers,[1] wheelwrights and smiths,[2] wharf labourers and coal lumpers,[3] furniture trade workers,[4] male cooks,[5] hairdressers,[6] male clothing factory operatives,[7] and ironworkers.[8] In the same period wage increases or shorter hours were demanded and in most cases obtained by blacksmiths,[9] bakers,[10] compositors,[11] boilermakers,[12] farriers,[13] coachbuilders,[14] coal lumpers, yardsmen and drivers,[15] and butchers.[16] This ferment of trade unionist extended into the field of relatively unskilled workers who had not enjoyed anything approaching the eight hour day and whose conditions of work and wages were far below those won by the traditional craft unions. It was a forerunner on a smaller scale of the union spirit of the late eighties. This organisation of the relatively unskilled made the union movement the most powerful force for industrial legislation.

At the same time a different, though associated, aspect of working conditions had been coming to the fore. This was the limitation of shop hours, which already had quite a history in 1873 (see Chapter 4 of this Part). This was

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(1) Age, 4 Jan., 1883.
(2) Age, 29 Jan., 1883.
(3) Age, 15 Feb., 1883.
(4) Age, 24 Feb., 1883.
(5) Age, ibid.
(6) Age, 7 March, 1883.
(7) Age, 17 March, 1883.
(8) Age, 14 April, 1883.
(9) Age, 20 July, 1882.
(10) Age, 31 Aug., 1882 and 9 Jan., 1883.
(11) Age, 4 Oct., 1882.
(12) Age, 11 Oct., 1882.
(13) Age, 13 Jan., 1883.
(14) Age, 29 Jan., 1883.
(15) Age, 13 Feb., 1883. (16) Age, 26 Feb., 1883.

basically part of the struggle for shorter hours to which the Australian working class devoted much of its energy in the twenty years of generally full employment and rising real wages before 1890. During 1879 and 1880 the early closing movement in Melbourne had languished, but with the passing of the business recession agitation commenced again early in 1881. A Salesmen's and Assistants' Union was formed to take over from the moribund Early Closing Association. The Salesmen's Union kept up a constant succession of public meetings, letters to the newspapers, torchlight processions, deputations to shop-keepers and demonstrations at shopping centres. The net effect at the end of the year, however, was that although a large measure of agreement had been achieved on closing times, the arrangement was already breaking down. Once more "moral suasion" had been tried and failed. The demand for legislation to enforce early closing became stronger.

In September 1881 Gardiner and Deakin[1] introduced into the Assembly a bill to close shops at 6 p.m. week days and 10 p.m. Saturdays. In the debate the bill had its supporters, Smith referring to the precedent of his 1873 Act, which he feared was not being universally applied. But the extent of opposition and the reservations of many nominal

(1) Gardiner was a jeweller who represented the working class constituency of Carlton, where the Trades Hall was situated and the influence of organised labour strongest. He lived up to the requirements of his constituents, perhaps some times reluctantly (Ingham, thesis p.24). Deakin, ushered into politics by Syme and the Age, was immediately the brilliant young liberal of the period.

supporters caused Gardiner to accept the suggestion that it be referred to a Select Committee.[1] The Select Committee was appointed and in January 1882 altered to a Royal Commission (Victoria at the time abounded in Royal Commissions) "to enquire into.....the best means of regulating and shortening the hours of employees in shops and wholesale and retail trading establishments.....".[2] Its five members included Smith, Gardiner and Deakin.

The Commissioners applied themselves energetically to their task, with the Age giving publicity to their efforts and strongly urging legislation. They were soon examining witnesses from many trades as well as retail employers and employees. In June 1882 the Commissioners requested an enlargement of their powers, "to consider the relations generally of employer and employed;" the reasons given were that the original terms precluded consideration of many serious grievances and hardhips of employees in occupations outside the retail trade.[3] Smith had already asked the Premier (O'Loghlen) for extended powers, without result. In connection with this the Age had stated that if larger scope were not afforded the Commission an interim report would be presented, together with a formal request for greater powers.[4] When the government

(1) Vic. P.D., Vol. 37, p.436 ff.
(2) Vic. P.P., 1882-3, Vol. 3, No.43 (Progress Report of Commission).
(3) Ibid.
(4) Age, 24 June, 1882. In this the Age was correct, which was not surprising, for the newspaper and the Commissioners were working hand in hand.

did not respond the Age attacked them for insincerity, describing the appointment of the Commission as "merely a device to stay clamour." "The O'Loghlen Ministry are tools in the hands of the Conservatives. They will not, unless in dread of being kicked out of office, do anything to help the workingmen in their praiseworthy efforts to emancipate themselves from the state, almost of slavery, in which numbers of them are bound owing to the long and dreary hours which they are obliged to toil."(1) Smith continued to charge the government with obstruction, declaring that the Commissioners were completely crippled by the Premier's inaction.(2) The coalition government certainly did not wish its progressiveness to be too severely tested by such an enquiry. Smith, a disappointed office seeker, was able to use the demand to help place himself at the head of the discontented radical wing of the liberals.

Something of an impasse had been reached and the concurrent Royal Commissions on the Tariff and on Education overshadowed the Shops Commission in public attention.

Probably the main factor which changed the situation was the outbreak of the tailoresses' strike in early December, 1882. Girls employed on piece rates at a clothing factory struck against the cutting of rates which had been going on for over a year, made easy by the existence of lowly paid outworkers. They complained that they were reduced to the position where working

(1) Age, 29 July, 1882.
(2) Age, 7 Dec., 1882.

fourteen hours a day could not earn them a living.[1] The novelty of a women's strike, the deplorable conditions revealed, the long hours and low wages, won tremendous public sympathy. Soon there were five hundred girls on strike, a union had been formed with the help of Trades Hall officials, the Age had opened subscription lists to help the strikers and expressions of support were pouring in from all quarters. Early in the New Year the original firm involved agreed to the tailoresses' log of claims, but other employers did not, so the Tailoresses' Union, now two thousand strong, called a general strike on 15th February, 1883. By the end of the month nearly all employees were working under the new log, though the strike continued for some time in a few places. Nearly £1000 had been received in donations to strike funds, every day the Age urged their case, and every union had rallied support for them.

It was against this background that W.C. Smith and Gardiner waited on Berry, the new Chief Secretary, the O'Loghlen Ministry having been displaced by the Service-Berry coalition, and received from him the promise that the additional powers they sought for the Commission would be granted immediately. On Smith's recommendation two other liberals, J. Woods and G.W. Hall, were added to the Commission as some members were unavailable. All trade union and labour organisations in the colony were circularised inviting them to give

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(1) Age, 12 Dec., 1882. The Age gave detailed accounts of the progress of the strike.

evidence.[1] The Factories Commission was launched on its major work.

During the progress of the enquiry the Age gave it good publicity and supported proposals for legislative action to remedy abuses in hours and conditions. The Trades Hall Committee set up a special sub-committee to make recommendations for a new Factories Act. The hearing of evidence continued until October 1883 and in March 1884 the main report dealing with factory and workroom conditions was available.[2] With the report on shops we are not concerned, except to note the recommendation that the hours of employees be limited to forty eight per week, leaving the allocation of these hours to employers and employees - a compromise proposal.

For their report on the Factory Act the Commissioners heard one hundred and sixty six witnesses, inspected sixty five factory or workplaces at Geelong and Ballarat as well as Melbourne. The Minutes of Evidence fill over one hundred pages.

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(1) T.A. Coghlan, "Labour and Industry in Australia", Vol. IV, p.2087, ascribes the appointment of the Commission to enquire into the working of the 1873 Act to the exposure of bad working conditions made by the Age and the Argus during 1882. This is misleading, as the sequence of event shows, though the Age did give publicity and support to the Shops Commissioners and their demand for an extension of powers during 1882, and more strongly during 1883. Reeses' description (op.cit., p.6) is more correct - "The revelations of the Age, the complaints of the factory girls, and an agitation about the same time for early closing in shops, led to the appointment of a Royal Commission to enquire into the relations of employers and employed ...." John Hoatson, "Anti-Sweating and Factory Legislation in Victoria", Westminster Review, Oct., 1900, refers to the Age's exposure of sweating in 1880, the early closing agitation and the tailoresses' strike as influencing the Commission. It was the reaction of these events upon the particular political situation which enabled the Commission to take the form it did.

(2) Vic. P.P. 1884, Vol.2, No.18, "Report on the Operation of

The energy and reforming zeal with which they plunged into their self-imposed task cannot be doubted. They visited factories of all kinds; examined as many employees and union representatives as owners and managers; called municipal inspectors of nuisances and the medical officers of the Central Board of Health; and closely questioned truant officers on the employment of children below the school leaving age. With great diligence they pressed or led witnesses on the details of working conditions, on rates of pay, on hours, meal arrangements, the letting out of work, the sweating system, and many other points. From this evidence they compiled a report which was comprehensive and forthright. The four signatories of the final report were Messrs. Smith, Gardiner, Woods and Hall.

The Commissioners considered that "an amending Factory Act is an imperative necessity". While the 1874 Act had resulted in the erection of some suitable factory buildings, "the clause inserted in the Bill during its passage through the Legislative Council limiting the application of its provisions to places where over ten persons were employed, has served to seriously restrict the scope of its operation." The Act had been enforced by the Melbourne Corporation, but administration was very lax in the suburban municipalities, to which manufacturers tended to move their works to evade the Act. Working space was often inadequate; overcrowding

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(2) continued:
the Victorian Factory Act, 1874", referred to in this thesis as Vic. Shops Comm., Factories Report.

affected the health and morals of young female workers; sometimes separate closets for male and female employees were not provided, sometimes no closets at all.

The long list of recommendations can be summarised as follows :-

(1) All factories, irrespective of size, should be registered and inspected.

(2) Existing regulations as to space, lighting, ventilation, cleanliness of the building and sanitary accommodation should be enforced.

(3) The eight hour day - forty eight hours per week - should be introduced with exemptions for particular cases of emergency.

(4) The Act should be administered by the central government appointing inspectors.

(5) All factories should keep lists of the names, ages, hours of employment and wages of employees.

(6) Truant officers should have access to all factories. Young employees should have an age certificate and a medical certificate of fitness for the work.

(7) Plans and specifications of buildings should be approved by the Chief Inspector.

(8) Boys under thirteen years and girls under fourteen years should not be employed.

(9) The number of apprentices should not exceed one to every five adults; they should be legally indentured; the probationary, i.e. unpaid, period for apprentices should not exceed six months.

(10) Persons under sixteen years should not be permitted to work before 6 a.m. or after 6 p.m.; persons under twenty one years, before 6 a.m. or after midnight.

(11) Newspaper and other printeries should be brought under the Act.

(12) Employees should not work more than 4½ hours consecutively without a meal break; meals should be taken outside the workroom, employers providing the necessary accommodation and appliances.

(13) Employees should be protected from dangerous machinery.

(14) Only qualified persons should be in charge of steam boilers and engines.

(15) Factories should display notices showing hours of work and meal breaks.

(16) The sweating system should be prohibited and employees prevented from taking work home.

These were very far reaching recommendations, going beyond current British legislation. In essence they proposed improvements in working conditions and effective inspection; the eight hour day for all employees; restrictions on juvenile labour; the institution of a complete system of apprenticeship; and prohibition of outwork. The recommendations were strongly influenced by the Trades Hall sub-committee, especially on factory buildings, dangerous machinery, boilers and engines, apprenticeship and the sweating system.(1) The craft unions had long pressed for the limitation of the number of apprentices and the regulation of their employment. The Inspector of Factories for the Melbourne Corporation under the 1873 Act had urged registration of all workrooms and factories. The eight hour day had been sought by labour for many years (see Part II, Chapter 4).

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(1) See Vic. Shops Comm., Final Report, p.140; and Appendix to Final Report, Trades Hall Council subcommittee for discussion between the Commissioners and union representatives.

The trade union movement endorsed these proposals. The Second Intercolonial Trade Union Congress, really the first effective one, was held in Melbourne in April, 1884. Smith and Woods were invited to speak and a Parliamentary Committee of Victorians was set up to secure legislative action on matters affecting unions.(1)

The response from the Chamber of Manufactures was not so cordial. Their first reaction was to describe the report as a libel on manufacturers.(2) Subsequently they agreed to the proposals on the registration and inspection of factories and dangerous machinery; but protested strongly against the wide definition of a factory, the limitations on apprentices and overtime, the prohibition on taking work home and inquisitorial powers of inspectors. Woods, a member, was the only person to defend the whole report.(3)

The initiative now lay with the coalition government whose liberalism was becoming more lukewarm. In November, 1884 Deakin, a minister, introduced a Workrooms and Factories Law Amendment Bill.(4) He declared that the Bill was based on the recommendations of the Royal Commission and the British Consolidating Factory Acts of 1878, but

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(1) "The Second Intercolonial Trade Union Congress: an Official Report of the Debates", Melbourne 1884.
(2) Age, 1 April, 1884.
(3) Age, 8 April, 8 May, 1884.
(4) Vic. Legis. Ass. Bills Introduced, 1884.

was more comprehensive than the latter in that it included all factories, and, while it would not touch domestic work, provided for inspection to ensure that this was genuine domestic work. The 1874 Act had done much good, but now, with forty five thousand employees in factories and at least thirty thousand in shops, further measures were needed, particularly to cover small factories. On the eight hour day the government could not go further than prescribing this for all females and for males under sixteen years. The minimum age of employment was to be twelve years for boys and thirteen for girls, in each case one year less than the Commissioners had suggested. Apprenticeship provisions were considered too difficult of implementation to include in the Bill. Similarly, while the Commissioners' recommendations on sweating were laudable, complete prohibition of domestic work would be a hardship to thousands of women who could not work in factories, so it was proposed to confine the Bill to empowering inspectors to collect information on outwork for future consideration and action.(1)

Thus regulation of the hours of adult males had been abandoned; apprenticeship passed over; and action on outwork postponed. What remained was regulation of the physical conditions of the workplace and special protection

(1) Vic.P.D. Vol. 47, p.2167 ff. For the proposals on shop hours, see Chapter 4, "Hours".

for women and children, the least controversial of the recommendations.

Smith congratulated the government but regretted that sweating and apprenticeship were not dealt with.(1) Woods supported Smith and went further in declaring that sweating should be suppressed by prescribing outwork rates which would be higher than factory rates - "I know I shall be told that such a clause would be an interference with the liberty of the subject and the freedom of trade, but I am not startled by that venerable cry in the smallest degree."(2) Woods' proposal was not to be implemented until the 1896 Factory Act. There were other supporters, but the government accepted the motion that the debate be adjourned and the Bill lapsed at the end of the session.

In September 1885 the Bill was again brought forward, deleting the power of inspectors to examine domestic workplaces and collect certain types of information, and handing the fixing of shop hours to municipal authorities. Deakin declared that the Bill had been approved by the Employers' Union, the Chamber of Manufactures and the Trades Hall Council;(3) but he had to accept an amendment raising the number of employees constituting a factory from two to

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(1) Ibid, p.2175 ff.
(2) Ibid, p.2178 ff.
(3) Vic. P.D., Vol. 49, p.1467. The Chamber of Manufactures accepted the principle of the Bill (Age, 9 July, 1884) but still wished to have some clauses amended (Age, 2 Dec., 1884).

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Thus by the time the Bill left the Assembly (November 1885), a year after it had first been introduced, it had been weakened from its original form which in turn did not go as far as the Commission's Report.

The hurdle of the Legislative Council remained. After the agitation and discussion of three years an outright rejection would not have been politically practicable, if the Council had desired this. It was debated at length in committee, a number of amendments being put forward on behalf of the Employers' Union. The number of employees constituting a factory was raised from four to six; the right of inspectors to interview employees alone was removed; proprietors were not to be required to keep a record of the rates paid for outwork; a list of industries was exempted from the provisions for cleanliness of premises; some penalties were decreased and the procedure for laying and proving charges was made more difficult.(1) When the Assembly returned the Bill on the question of the definition of a factory, the Council insisted on its amendment.(2) Ten years later Deakin was to launch a bitter attack on the Council for emasculating the Bill, referring particularly

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(1) From Bills Introduced, Legis. Ass. and Legis. Council, 1885.
(2) Vic. P.D., Vol. 50, p.2458.

to this.[1]

Even as passed, the 1885 Act[2] covered as wide a field as contemporary British legislation, though not in such detail. In most respects the Victorian Act followed British legislation, but was more uniform in its application, not being the product of eighty years of piecemeal growth.

No more factory legislation proper occurs before 1890. Bills of 1888, 1889 and 1890, none of which passed, were concerned only with shop hours. The political atmosphere was not favourable to reform.

Though Victoria suffered an economic recession in 1886 it was of short duration. From 1887 until almost the end of the decade the colony enjoyed unparalleled prosperity. In this period of political stagnation social reform had little place. Even the liberal "cave" comprised more disappointed office seekers than resolute radicals. Politics became more than ever a scramble of cliques and individuals for personal advantage, presenting a scene of indescribable confusion.[3] Writing in 1890, Jenks, Professor of Law at Melbourne University, commented: "Practically speaking, there are no political parties in Victoria. There are still faint echoes of bygone battles, but they have lost their meaning....All the old questions...have been settled. For the

(1) Vic. P.D. 1896, Vol. 81, p.94 ff.
(2) 49 Vict. No. 862. Factories, Workrooms and Shops Act.
(3) S.M. Ingham, thesis, p.36 ff.

last seven years we have been content with socalled 'Coalition' Ministries, and the ardent politicians, who have demanded a return to severer times, have forgotten that it is impossible to have party government unless there are parties."(1) The old liberal alliance, through which factory legislation had been passed, was losing its force. The manufacturers of the seventies had often risen from the working or lower middle classes; their own workers accepted their leadership under the banner of tariff protection. Now the ties between manufacturer and employee were weakened, while the conflict between manufacturer and importer lessened.(2) Mining was a company industry, free selection no longer held out hopes of independence to the mass of wage workers. Already by 1890 trade unionism was taking a new, class conscious character. The liberal alliance was disintegrating, its loss of strength soon to be measured by the rise of the Labor Party.

It was not until 1890, when the boom was beginning to evaporate, that the Age again returned to the attack on sweating, an Anti-Sweating League was formed, and the Chief Inspector of Factories produced a report on the subject. This new agitation resulted in the Factory Act of 1896; but this belongs to the new period of depressed economic conditions,

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(1) E. Jenks, "The Government of Victoria (Australia)", London 1891, p.378.

(2) J. Parnaby, thesis, p.14 ff., p.50; S.M. Ingham, "Political Parties in the Victorian Legislative Assembly, 1880-1900", Historical Studies, Vol. 4, No.15, November, 1950.

embittered trade unions and a political labour party.

One new factor had been introduced into the situation in 1885 with the establishment of a corps of inspectors. As in Britain, their reports made public official material which could be used in pressing for changes.

In reviewing factory legislation in Victoria before 1890, the starting point is the growth of manufacturing, which presented the problem. This is the first reason why Victoria led the other colonies in this field. The sewing machine had brought women into clothing manufacture; light industry employing women and children was more prominent than in other colonies. Legislation was first designed for these occupations. The political atmosphere and the whole climate of opinion made State intervention in this new field a relatively easy step, as did the existence of long standing precedents in British factory legislation. The same pattern was followed - first measures to deal with female or child workers and health, progressing to regulations for all workers, on many aspects of working conditions. In Victoria this process, much later, was naturally much quicker. The basic subject matter of the 1885 Act was (1) factory buildings, the conditions of the workplace, dangerous machinery, etc.; (2) hours for women and children; (3) minimum age of employment. The first type of control was sought by all classes of labour, craft unions as well as unorganised factory workers. Such conditions were already conceded by many manufacturers,

particularly large firms; for they were necessary to the efficient operation of large scale industry. The protection of women and children brought together humanitarian and trade union feeling, as it had done in Britain, where such special classes were the first subjects of factory legislation. The regulation of hours for adult males was a much more far reaching proposal which could not be passed against the opposition of employers. Control of apprenticeship would in the circumstances of the time have been an extensive interference with the supply of labour. Action against outwork was also postponed for it could be effectively dealt with only, as it was in 1896, by regulation of wages and methods of employment. This was a new step which could not be carried during the eighties.

The 1874 (1873) Factory Act had been pressed by liberal politicians, supported by a popular movement concentrated in the goldfields towns, but it was a minor measure. In 1879 and 1880 humanitarian manufacturers, clergy and others had suggested further steps on British lines, but nothing came of this. Meanwhile the trade unions had been urging similar legislation. Their voices became more powerful with the upsurge of trade unionism in the early eighties. Hence the radical politicians who were supporting legal limitation of shop hours were able to transform their Royal Commission into a wide enquiry into working conditions, using this demand to embarrass a conservative government. But it was

the publicity attendant on the tailoresses' strike which brought together the powerful Age, the trade union movement, liberal and humanitarian opinion. Now the reformers confronted a nominally liberal government which permitted a major enquiry into working conditions. The result was a set of far reaching recommendations which basically represented working class opinion. This operated through the liberal party, and the motives of a W.C. Smith or Deakin were not fundamental.(1) The lukewarm liberal government enacted only a few of these recommendations in its 1885 Act and no further progress was made under the coalition governments of the prosperous eighties.

In other colonies neither manufacturing, the trade union movement nor liberal politics were so well developed as in Victoria. The same forces were at work, but less powerfully. Victoria is thus the model by means of which the early factory legislation and attempted legislation of the Australian colonies is most clearly demonstrated.

In one respect the political background of factory legislation in Victoria and the other Australian colonies was different from that in Britain. The part played by Tory humanitarians in British factory legislation is well known.(2)

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(1) By 1880 at least one-third of the members of the Legislative Assembly were largely dependent on working class votes. (M. Ingham, thesis, p.91.

(2) Perhaps it is some times exaggerated, for an active working class movement was always present. In the opinion of the Hammonds, Shaftesbury assumed leadership of the reforming movement partly to steer it from dangerous courses, and "after Chartism collapsed Shaftesbury did little".(J.L.and B.Hammond,

In the struggle between agricultural landlords and manufacturers over the Corn Laws it was possible for the Tories to make a bid for working class support by advocating factory legislation. In Australia we do not find the squatters and landowners who dominated the Victorian Legislative Council seizing the cudgel of social reform to belabour their manufacturing opponents; on the contrary. The pastoralists were not agricultural landlords, but big employers of wage labour themselves. They were closely connected with banks, finance and investment companies and commercial capital generally. In the strikes of the nineties the dominant group of employers were not manufacturers but pastoralists, shipping and mining companies. Their consistency in conservatism is not surprising and is seen in the whole field of social legislation.

In any case, all manufacturers were not opposed to all factory legislation. For the Age, decent conditions deserved support on moral grounds and were a price industrialists must pay for the support of the electorate and the State. Once any kind of building or health regulation was in operation there was a demand that the conditions of competition be equalised by applying it to all. Reformers repeatedly stressed that the conditions they sought to enforce by law were already freely granted by many employers, particularly

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(1) continued:
"Lord Shaftesbury", 2nd edition, 1923, p.271.).

large businesses. The good employer should be protected from the unfair competition of his greedy and unprincipled rival. This type of competition was the weapon of the petty master. Looking beyond the fluctuations of the controversy, regulation of industrial conditions, including factory legislation, is a necessary accompaniment to the growth of large scale industry. The profitable operation of heavily capitalised large scale industry requires certain standards of working conditions, limitation of hours, stability and skill in the labour force. These standards and their application could always be in dispute; but while industry grew, so would the regulation of it.

A bare recital of factory legislation leaves it standing in isolation. Unsuccessful attempts at legislation and laws on kindred subjects fill out the picture. Of the latter, Health, Mining and Shipping Acts were most prominent. In colonies where no factory acts were passed many unsuccessful attempts were made to secure them, and these can be seen in perspective in the light of the Victorian experience.

In New South Wales no factory act passed but a number of attempts on the Victorian lines were made. A Select Committee of the Legislative Assembly on the Employment of Children, after examining working conditions in Sydney, recommended in January 1877, "That the buildings and places in which children are employed should be under Governmental

inspection, in order that undue crowding, and any other conditions injurious to health or morality, may be prevented", and the control of age of employment and hours of labour of children.(1) These recommendations were similar to the provisions of the 1873 Victorian Act.

The Committee had first been appointed in December 1875, and since the government took no action, Angus Cameron,(2) who had been a member of the Committee, introduced an "Employment of Females Bill" in December 1876. This provided that hours of females should be limited to eight per day; and at least five hundred cubic feet of space be provided for each employee in a factory.(3) The Bill finally lapsed.

The next attempt at factory legislation in N.S.W. was made in 1886 when Dr. Renwick introduced a Regulation of Factories and Workshops Bill. It was modelled on the Victorian Act of 1885, though much less comprehensive. It defined a factory as any place where a female or young person was employed in manufacturing; prohibited employment under twelve years of age or under fourteen without an educational certificate; prohibited night work for persons under eighteen years

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(1) N.S.W. V.& P. of Legis. Ass., 1876-7, Vol 5, p.861, Report from the Select Committee on the Employment of Children, pp. 4-5.

(2) Cameron, a carpenter, was returned for West Sydney in 1875, as a representative of organised labour, with his election expenses and an allowance after the election paid by the Trades and Labour Council, although union financial support had ceased in April, 1876. See "History of Capital and Labour", p.47; Sutcliffe, "A History of Trade Unionism in Australia", pp.61-2.

(3) T.A. Coghlan, "Labour and Industry in Australia", Vol.III, p.2092. The Newcastle Early Closing Association petitioned in favour of Cameron's Bill(N.S.W. V& P. of Legis.Ass., 1876-7,

of age; restricted hours of females and persons under eighteen years to eight per day, and prescribed for them the Saturday half holiday, Sundays and public holidays without loss of pay; the Chief Secretary could suspend operation of the proposed Act.(1) Thus the Bill restricted itself to hours of women and juveniles, but even so it was not returned from the Legislative Council.

In 1889 E. W. O'Sullivan, M.L.A., who had long been prominent in trade union and labour movements, gave notice of his intention to introduce a Bill to restrict juvenile employment, deal with some aspects of factory buildings, collect labour statistics, prohibit outwork in cigar and tobacco manufacture, and make eight hours the legal working day.(2) This hotchpotch of union demands was only a declaration of principle for the last provision alone would prevent its passage into law and O'Sullivan took no action on his proposal.

Thus during the eighties no factory legislation passed in New South Wales despite that colony's fair degree of manufacturing development. There was an economic reason for this: although manufacturing in New South Wales, with its coal and engineering, was important, it was not in these fields but in the light industries employing women and children that

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(1) (continued from Page 193): Vol. 5, p.859).
(1) N.S.W. P.D., Session 1885-6, Vol. LXI, p.3405 ff.
(2) Builder and Contractor, 5 Oct., 1889.

the demand for factory legislation arose. There was also a political reason: although New South Wales politics during the seventies and eighties were not simply personal feuding, the liberal alliance which passed the Victorian factory legislation was much less developed in New South Wales.(1)

With the entry of a large group of Labor members into the New South Wales Legislative Assembly in 1891 further proposals for factory legislation came forward, and it was obviously only a matter of time before the Labor Party, holding the balance of power, could secure this passage into law. But consideration of these belongs to a new period. New South Wales had made no contribution to factory legislation by 1891.

In South Australia in 1880 a Factories Bill, for the improvement of factories and the health and education of women, young persons and children employed therein was introduced to Parliament but no attempt was made to enact it.

During the eighties there was no further movement in South Australia for factory legislation. Meanwhile a Trades and Labour Council had been formed in Adelaide in 1884 and unions were growing steadily in strength. In

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(1) A.W. Martin, "The Emergence of Political Parties in N.S.W. during the 1880's", unpublished paper presented at Australian National University, July, 1954, shows that during the seventies and particularly the eighties N.S.W. politics were in transition from faction to organised party, and this before the rise of the Labor Party. But such groupings were not concerned with industrial legislation.

Adelaide seamen, waterside workers and carters struck in the Maritime Strike of 1890, and on the defeat of the strike in other colonies went back to work with their forces intact. Politically the non-conformist radicalism of South Australia took a new lease of life under the leadership of the brilliant young C.C. Kingston. In 1891 a Factories and Shops Bill was introduced by the government and in the usual manner referred to a Royal Commission. Kingston, then Chief Secretary, was a member of the Commission and left a deep imprint on its proceedings by his skilful examination of witnesses and his forceful advocacy of stringent factory legislation. The majority Report of the Commission recommended legislation along the lines of the 1885 Victorian Act.(1) In South Australia, as in the other colonies, liberal parliamentarians first set in motion the moves for factory legislation.

Although nothing came of the recommendations immediately they were kept to the fore by the newly elected labour group of parliamentarians until they issued in the Act of 1894.

In Queensland secondary industries developed later than in New South Wales or Victoria, so that not until 1890 were any proposals made for factory legislation. In that year shop assistants supported by trade unions circulated a

(1) Report of the Shops and Factories Commission, etc., South Australian P.P., 1892, Vol.II, No.39, referred to in this thesis as S.A. Factories Comm.

petition to Parliament asking that a Factory Bill be introduced to regulate conditions in all factories, protect female and child labour and close shops at 6 p.m.[1] The "Worker" newspaper had called for fifty thousand signatures,[2] but even the seventeen thousand odd obtained were sufficient to persuade the government to introduce a Factories and Shops Bill in June 1890. Organised labour attacked the Bill as an imitation of the unsatisfactory 1885 Victorian Act, but not going as far as its model.[3] In the columns of the Worker William Lane was writing strongly of the long hours, low wages and degradation suffered by female workers. From August 1890 the government was led by Griffith, still in his liberal phase; as the proposed Factory Bill made no progress he appointed a Royal Commission in February 1891 to enquire into "the conditions under which work is done in Shops, Factories and Workshops", a step which was not likely to lead to any effective action. Glassey,[4] the first Labor member, was prominent in the Commission. Both majority and MINORITY

(1) Q'land V.& P. of Legis. Ass., 1890, Vol. 2, p.587.
(2) Worker, 1 May, 1890.
(3) Worker, 1 July, 1890.
(4) Thomas Glassey, who had been elected to the Legislative Assembly by the Ipswich coal miners in 1888, was an independent labour representative. He had played a large part in the moves for factory legislation. One writer, speaking of the Commission, says :- "It was so evenly composed of representatives of workers and employers that its critics expected it to fail to reach a decision. Glassey marshalled the labour witnesses, and so successfully cross-examined their opponents, that the investigation revealed many flaws in the industrial system. Consequently two of the lady members, who controlled large drapery stores, supported him, and the majority report recommended stringent legislation." (S.A.Rayner, "Thomas Glassey". Journal of the Historical Society of

Reports agreed on the need for factory legislation,(1) the former being similar to the recommendations of the Victorian Commission in 1884, the latter not going as far as the 1885 Victorian Act. The bitterness of industrial conflict ruled out any concessions to labour and no action was taken until 1896.

It was, surprisingly, in Tasmania that the agitation of the early eighties first produced a Factory Act. In October, 1883, when the Victorian Shops and Factories Commission had just finished its hearings of evidence, the Tasmanian Attorney-General introduced an Employment of Women and Children in Factories Bill. It lapsed in Committee. In October of the following year a similar proposal was introduced antedating by a month the first Victorian bill. This became Act No. 20 of 1884 in November 1884, after the Legislative Council had amended it but withdrawn the amendments in the face of the Assembly's refusal to accept them. At the same time the Inspection of Machinery Act mentioned in the Chapter on Workplaces was passed.

The Act defined a factory as any place where a woman or person under eighteen years of age was employed; prohibited the employment of children under twelve years of

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(2) continued:
Queensland (Inc.) Vol.IV, No.2, Dec. 1949.). Whatever Glassey's individual role, he was certainly very prominent at the hearings of the Commission, and the enquiry was mainly brought about by the force of organised labour.

(1) Q'land V.& P. of Legis. Ass., 1891, Vol. 2, C.A.36, p. 927, referred to in this thesis as the Q'land Factories Comm.

prescribe standards of warmth and ventilation; women working in shops were to be supplied with seating accommodation. The Act therefore dealt with hours of work of women and children and to a small extent with working conditions. It was an imitation of the 1873 Victorian Act rather than a forerunner of the 1885 Act. Its importance should not be overrated, for it apparently was not vigorously applied and in Tasmania industrial employment of women and children was very small. The proprietors of the Derwent Woollen Mills, who employed women and juveniles for ten hours a day, had been successful in having the proposed limit on hours raised from eight to ten for women.(1) At the instance of Hobart Jam manufacturers juveniles were permitted to work nine hours a day in jam factories during the four busy months of the year.(2) The shopkeeping interests had been placated by the provision that retail saleswomen might work on Saturday evenings. The Tasmanian Act was thus fairly innocuous, even though it applied to all women and children employed. Mainly it limited the hours of women and juveniles to some degree and prohibited

(1) Tas. J.& P. of Parl., 1884, Vol. III, Petitions L.C., No. 158.
(2) Ibid.

the employment of children under twelve years.

In 1891 a Women and Children Employment Amendment Bill was introduced to reduce women's hours to forty eight per week; it did not reach its second reading.(1) A similar attempt the following year made scarcely more progress.(2)

In Victoria Boiler Explosions Prevention Bills had been brought forward in 1882, 1884 and 1887, all unsuccessfully, until in December 1887 the Factories Act was amended to deal with the question. In New South Wales similar measures were proposed in 1883; in South Australia in 1879, 1889 and 1890; Tasmania had dealt with boilers in its Inspection of Machinery Act of 1884. Building workers had unsuccessfully pressed for supervision of scaffolding.(3)

As mentioned in the Chapter on Workplaces the eighties also saw the passage of legislation granting the workman compensation for certain injuries suffered in the course of his employment. Under the existing law, deriving from Britain, a workman could not recover damages from an employer for injuries caused by the negligence of a fellow

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(1) Female employees of woollen mills petitioned against the proposed reduction in hours, saying their piece rate wages would be reduced and they would have to take work home. Other female employees petitioned in favour of the bill. Tas. J.& P. of Parl., Vol. XXIII, 1891, Nos. 92, 102, 114.

(2) The 1882 Bill was introduced by the radical Col. St.Hill who was regarded as a spokesman of the trade union movement which since the 1889 Inter-Colonial Congress in Hobart had begun to make some tentative moves towards political action. On this see Papers and Proceedings of the Tasmanian Historical Research Association, Vol.3, No.2; April 1954. Article, "Some Aspects of the Origins of the Tasmanian Labour Party", by M.D. McCrae.

(3) "History of Capital and Labour", p.87.

workman; this naturally precluded remedies in the case of most accidents occurring through negligence in large workshops, and placed the employee in a worse position than a member of the public proceeding under common law. In Britain this disability was largely removed by an Act of 1880. The organised trade unions in Australia had already called for such a measure, at the Inter-Colonial Congress of 1879, for example. An Employers' Liability Act, introduced by Garrard, was first passed in New South Wales in 1882 (46 Vict. No. 6); South Australia followed in 1884 (47 and 48 Vict. No. 325); Victoria, after a number of unsuccessful attempts, in 1886 (50 Vict. No. 894) and Queensland the same year (50 Vict. No. 24). Most of the Acts were subsequently extended to miners and seamen. These laws all followed the New South Wales Act which provided that a workman could sue for injuries caused by defective equipment due to negligence of the employer or his servant; by negligence of superintendence; by negligence of a person properly giving orders; by compliance with defective or improper order of the employer or his delegated authority. In each case notice had to be given and the action commenced within a certain period; while maximum compensation was limited to three years' wages. In one important respect the Australian laws were an advance on British legislation, since contracting out of them was prohibited. The employer could deduct from damages any insurance payment for which he had provided the

premiums, or in the case of Queensland, one-third of the premiums. It should be stressed that these laws did not provide compensation for all accidents at work, but only for those due to negligence as described. Even so the Courts might further restrict the laws in their interpretation.(1) Thus until 1890 legislative action in this field had been limited, but the basis had been laid for the further extension of workman's compensation legislation.

Something has been said about the nature and significance of industrial legislation in connection with the Victorian Factory Acts. It remains to sum up the general principles which are exemplified in the Australian evidence for the period.

The subject can first be considered from the standpoint of the wage earners affected. Industrial legislation and attempts at legislation are political actions, giving a legal form to certain conditions existing in the workplace. This in itself presupposes a long development in working class outlook, from concern with individual workplace conditions to the consideration that other wage earners were similarly affected and then to the conclusion that the power of the

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(1) Builder and Contractor, 8 Oct., 1887, reports a Victorian Court case where damages were refused to a workman who suffered a fall due to the presence of an object which it was his duty to remove. Ibid, 3 Aug., 1889, reports a Melbourne Supreme Court case where a labourer was injured in a tunnelling accident; the Court held that as the defendant continued working knowing the danger of the circumstances and the risk he took, the employer was not liable.

State should be brought to bear upon the question. Such a mental development was a big step and one which ran counter to many current attitudes. The new ideas arose out of the workers' daily conditions and therefore develop they did, consciously or unconsciously. In Britain large sections of the working class had made this transition in thought even in the heyday of laisser faire. Thus it was in part transplanted to Australia with the colonists themselves. The local circumstances in Australia made acceptance of State intervention easier, not only amongst wage earners. Proposals for industrial legislation indicate a certain stage in the development of working class outlook.

Since industrial legislation is nation (or colony) wide political action it presupposes a similar extensive existence of attitudes and a degree of organisation in favour of it. The feeling was not systematised nor the organisation centralised in Australian colonies until the late eighties when the Trades Hall Committees and Councils began to play a more important role. But even in 1873 widespread working class attitudes and a number of organisations existed to bring pressure to bear upon members of parliament. A combination of local circumstances made Ballarat the focal point then, though leadership soon passed to the organised workers of the colonial capitals. The passage of industrial legisation before 1890, meagre though it was, and the many attempts to secure further legislation, show the ideological,

organisational and political development of the Australian working class. A process had taken place from the confronting of a single employer to the confronting of all employers, on behalf of all workers. To this extent the movement for industrial legislation took place on a class basis, although the consciousness of this was only gradually growing.

Political action of this restricted type on matters of immediate concern is the first type of working class political action. It paves the way for working class political action on wider issues and the formation of a separate working class political party. The latter took place in the early nineties; the speed of its success owes much to the previous schooling in agitation and organisation during the eighties.

The advantages to wage earners of legislation on industrial matters are those of uniformity, permanence and legal procedure of enforcement. At early stages in the development of industry there are great variations in conditions of all kinds from workshop to workshop. Legislation sets a minimum standard for all. Thus it places a floor under the workers' bargaining efforts - all negotiations are now conducted from a minimum which cannot be lowered, even voluntarily by employees. The general bargaining position of wage earners is accordingly improved. Secondly, legislation is permanent. At this stage of industrial development every economic fluctuation was quickly reflected in an

improvement or deterioration in wage earners' conditions. After legislation, improvements might be made, but deterioration below the minimum standard was not possible - in theory at least. Thus although the 1873 Act was largely ineffective its continued existence made it the starting point for the next step forward. The 1885 Act then became the model, in Victoria and elsewhere; the first Employers' Liability Act was quickly copied in other colonies. The legislation survived temporary setbacks, so that attempts to improve its effectiveness would be renewed when circumstances were favourable. A third advantage to the wage earner of industrial legislation is that it provides a means of legal enforcement which is not present in voluntary agreement between employee and employer. Only gradually was Court action made easy, and simple remedies for employers' breaches of the prescribed conditions brought within the scope of employees.

It was natural that demands for industrial legislation should be made by the working class. This could only be done at a certain level of ideological, organisational and political development. In itself it aided that development.

The important role of the working class in movements for industrial legislation needs to be stressed, for it is often underestimated. It was not, of course, the only force responsible.

Industrial legislation was advanced by much middle

class opinion, by humanitarians of many shades, by some manufacturers and by important parliamentary groups. To some extent these attitudes reflected the fact that the wage earners involved were becoming an important group whose interests had to be considered, not necessarily in a calculating way, but at least as a section of the community whose position could not be overlooked. To some extent even humanitarians represented a long range and detached point of view as opposed to an individual manufacturer's immediate prospect of gain, for the hardships suffered particularly by generations of women and children would be injurious to the ultimate interests of society. The arguments of the reformers drew strength from the perception that it was not essential to the progress of industry that working conditions remain at the lowest level. Only at the earliest stage does infant manufacturing need to decimate its work force to maintain a precarious position. By the eighties Australian industry was secure and expanding rapidly and confidently. Improvements in conditions, hours and wages were taking place irrespective of legislation, particularly in the prosperous eighties. Legislation put the seal on some parts of this improvement, but to a degree it was an effect as well as a cause of improved working conditions.

It is the large scale enterprise which most needs uniformity in conditions and a stable relation to its labour force. These became more important to efficient production

than the penny wise pinching and personal surveillance of the small master. For the large firm small economies are not sufficient compensation for the lowered efficiency or antagonism of the labour force. The rapid increase in size of much Australian industry during the eighties was a basis for some manufacturers supporting the industrial legislation of the period - which did not touch hours of adult males or wages of any employees. All evidence shows that conditions were best in large factories. Since the modest requirements of most proposed legislation were freely granted by some manufacturers the demand to equalise competition by compelling all to provide similar conditions had a wide appeal.

The political democracy of the Australian colonies made the parliamentarians responsive to the feeling of a wide electorate. In politics manufacturer and worker were usually allied, particularly in Victoria where manufacturing and popular participation in politics were both best developed. The liberal alliance could not ignore industrial legislation although some of its members approached the subject with ambivalent emotions.

The subjects of industrial legislation - workplace conditions, the hours of women and children, public health and safety, limited compensation for injuries - were not such as to irrevocably divide employer and employee. Such ameliorative measures could be afforded in the prosperous eighties. The clash in the strikes of the nineties came on

more fundamental questions of wages and the threatening power of unionism. Even then the representatives of capital were the pastoralists, ship owners and mine owners, not the manufacturers, who did not yet stand in the centre of the stage. The ameliorative measures could be pursued by the new Labor Party in conjunction with the previous protagonists of them.

CHAPTER 4.

HOURS OF WORK.

Extraordinarily long hours of work regardless of age or sex were a feature of the early industrial revolution, not only in the new industries, but in all sectors of the economy. Accompanying this was the movement, in Britain from early in the nineteenth century, in other countries later, for a reduction of hours. In Australia from the 1850's to 1890 the question of hours was the most persistent major concern of trade unionists and the field in which they were most convinced they led the world. They did, in fact. In Australia the hours question was epitomised in the demand for the eight hour day. At the beginning of the eighties this had been achieved in Australia by only a minority, although an important minority, and at the end of the eighties not by all, but it had always been regarded as a practicable objective of organised labour. In Britain the eight hour day was a rarity in 1890; and even in the United

States of America, where conditions make an interesting comparison with Australia, the working class could not show the same success in reducing hours.

To see Australian hours of labour in their proper perspective it is necessary to glance briefly at the position in Britain, for nineteenth century Australia was never divorced from its homeland, and at the United States, for that country also increasingly served as an example and a measuring rod for progress.

As early as 1833 in Britain, in the first great ferment of the new industrial working class, the demand for an eight hour day was put forward by Fielden and Owen. A National Regeneration Society was formed to introduce the reform and sections of the Grand National Consolidated Trades Union attempted strikes to secure it. But the movement collapsed as quickly and as completely as the G.N.C.T.U. itself.(1) Some progress was subsequently made through Factory Acts, with the Ten Hours Act of 1847 virtually limiting hours of factory operatives to sixty per week.(2) In 1859 the building tradesmen of London struck for a nine hour day, but succeeded only in gaining a reduction of a few hours on Saturdays.(3) After the 1867 Factory Acts the

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(1) John Rae, "Eight Hours for Work", London, 1894, Chapter VII. S. & B. Webb, "The History of Trade Unionism", 1950 Impression, p. 151 ff.
(2) George Howell, "Labour Legislation Labour Movements Labour Leaders", 1902. p.15.
(3) Rae, op.cit., p.80; Howell, op. cit., pp.15-16; Webbs, op. cit., p. 229 ff.

nine hour day became more common in industries employing women and children and was subsequently extended. During the late sixties and early seventies some engineering trades won the nine hour day by strike action or threat of strikes.(1) In the depressed economic conditions of the later seventies employers were able to withdraw this concession in some cases.(2) Although legal limitation of the hours of women and children had long been practised through the Factory Acts, the trade union leadership did not support proposals for a general eight hour day by legislation, regarding such political action as outside their proper field. Not until 1883 was this adopted as the nominal policy of the Trades Union Congress.(3) Writing in the early nineties, Rae can point only to some coal miners and the London building trades as enjoying the eight hour day, with examples of individual firms in various industries who had successfully introduced it.(4) Some limitation of hours had been gained by legislation in the form of Factory Acts, but in the main the successful trades had won their decreased hours by their industrial strength. These occupations were the skilled crafts of builders, engineers and coal miners. In 1889

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(1) Webbs, op. cit., p. 313 ff.
(2) Ibid, p. 346 ff.
(3) Ibid, p. 389 ff. The motion was opposed by the old craft union leaders who, as the executive officers of the Congress, took no action to implement it. (G.D.H. Cole, "A Short History of the British Working Class Movement, 1789-1927", 1927 edition, Vol. II, p.154.
(4) Rae, op. cit., Ch. II.

when London gasworkers first won the eight hour day, although not permanently in all cases, this success by the new unionism of unskilled workers brought the objective to the front for all labour organisations.(1) The eight hour day was adopted as an immediate aim by the Independent Labour Party on its formation in 1893, although widespread results did not come until after the turn of the century.(2)

In the United States of America the shorter hours agitation had a long history. The early factory conditions of the New England states were not dissimilar from those of Britain and in the more encouraging atmosphere of America some groups of wage earners were able to secure the ten hour day from about 1840 onwards; but it was far from being universal.(3) After the Civil War there was a great development of both industry and labour organisations. The demand for the eight hour day led to the formation of the first nation wide labour body, the National Labour Union in 1866. The American movement took the forms of both direct action and demands for legislation. From 1866 to 1873 there were many strikes for the eight hour day, only partially successful and most noticeably amongst the builders.

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(1) Cole, op.cit., p. 159.
(2) Ibid, p.168.
(3) Richard T. Ely, "The Labour Movement in America", New York, 1886, p.56.

Often a nine hour day was conceded until the depression after 1873 brought these attempts to an end.[1] At the same time political action was not neglected. As early as 1840 President Van Buren had established a ten hour day for Federal employees; in 1868 this was made an eight hour day and a number of state enactments for the eight hour day followed. All remained ineffective, partly because of their interpretation by the Courts.[2] Again in the mid-eighties there were large scale strikes for the eight hour day, when 1st May, 1886, was set by labour bodies as their deadline for introduction of shorter hours. Some 450,000 workers participated, but of these less than half secured shorter hours.[3] It was at this time that the argument that shorter hours would cure unemployment began to be advanced.[4] It was not uncommon for American unions to be prepared to accept a reduction in wages as the price of shorter hours, confident that the decreased labour supply would cause an eventual restoration of rates.[5]

Writing in the early nineties Rae could find some examples of the eight hour day in the United States, but

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(1) M.C. Cahill, "Shorter Hours A Study of the Movement Since the Civil War", New York, 1932. Chapter V.
(2) Ibid, p.21 ff.
(3) "History of Capital and Labour", p. 704 ff.
(4) Ibid, and article by T.V. Powderley of the Knights of Labour, Chapter XI. In Britain the Social Democratic Federation and Tom Mann were advancing the same argument at this time. (Cole, op. cit. p.157).
(5) "History of Capital and Labour", p. 704 ff., and Cahill, op. cit., p.16.

concluded that it was mainly an eleven hour country, with some workers enjoying a ten hour day and a few shorter hours.(1) Great variations in the hours of labour certainly did exist, but probably the nine hour day was more common than he indicated, especially among builders, engineering trades and machinists.(2)

To contemporary American and British authorities the widespread eight hour day in Australia was unique. Wage earners had gone further in Australia than anywhere else towards achieving the eight hour day ideal which in the fifty years before 1880 had been inscribed on the banners of such diverse labour organisations as Owen's Grand National Consolidated Trades Union, Marx's First International, the Knights of Labour and craft unions on both sides of the Atlantic.

The reasons advanced for seeking shorter hours of labour were formulated differently in the thought and language of each time and place. But it required neither Robert Owen's vision of moral uplift nor the summer sun of Victoria to persuade the wage earner that he would prefer to give less of his life to labour. The real question was his power to achieve this. In three continents the achievement of shorter hours was a reflex of the bargaining

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(1) Rae, op. cit., p.25, p.42, p. 83.
(2) Ely, op. cit., p.71; Cahill, op. cit., Chapter V.

strength of sections of workers at a particular time; and the process was often reversed when this bargaining strength diminished.

Some respite from crippling hours of labour was the first prerequisite for workers to be able to recoup their strength, develop their faculties, and even find time and energy to organise themselves. Since they saw, correctly, that a reduction in hours amounted to a decrease in the supply of labour, they were confident that it would improve their bargaining strength in all respects in the future. During the eighties, especially in America, the view that shorter hours would relieve unemployment was advanced. This argument, however, really belongs to twentieth century periods of chronic unemployment; it achieved some prominence during the depression of the nineteen thirties. In practice decreases in standard hours have been won only in times of relative shortage of labour.(1)

Nor is there any mystery about the general opposition of employers to shorter hours. Other things being equal, the worker will provide a greater profit for his employer the longer he works. This is the overall

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(1) In Australia the big advances were made during the gold rush period of the fifties; during the prosperous 1870's and 1880's; during the 1920's when the forty four hour week was generally accepted; and in the post-World War II period when the forty hour week became the recognised standard, endorsed by the Commonwealth Arbitration Court in 1947.

picture. The "other things" are important in each particular case. A decrease in the daily rate of wages can compensate the employer; so can an increased intensity of work; and when labour becomes more costly relative to capital equipment the incentive to substitute the latter is increased.

Many advocates of shorter hours on humanitarian grounds have stressed the examples of undiminished or even increased output accompanying a reduction in hours. The hours of work which will give optimum output cannot be determined accurately for any occupation. Experience shows, however, that in heavy manual labour the output from forty eight hours' work per week is, over a long period, as great as that from sixty or more hours' work per week. The same applies to many other occupations where the onset of physical or mental fatigue greatly reduces efficiency. No doubt this factor has had its influence in inducing employers to accept a reduction of hours. Always, however, most employers have felt that the optimum hours were not less than those currently prevailing, whatever these may have been. In fact output is the resultant of complex forces, not to be assessed simply in terms of physical energy expended. The efficiency of supervision and management generally must be considered. Above all, there is the attitude of the wage earner, compounded of such intangibles as his relationship to his employer, his interest in his work, his prospect of future

rewards and his view of the state of the labour market.

In most cases where the "good" employer has reduced hours below the average for the occupation he has received the benefit of these intangibles as well as the benefit of the workers' improved physical and mental energy. Usually the reduction has been coupled to efficient management and has had the prerequisites of large scale enterprise, advanced technology and reserves of capital. Though such an employer might proudly declaim to others, "Go thou and do likewise" , where all do likewise many of the advantages disappear. Hence reductions of hours have always been opposed by employers as a whole, though not unanimously. In Australia from 1855 to 1890 employers often had to accept a reduction of hours. It is necessary to examine the circumstances giving rise to this for it would be misleading to regard it as originating with employers, of their own volition.

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The early movement for the eight hour day in Australia is well known and need not be examined in detail here, although it is necessary to recapitulate the broad outline for an understanding of the position in the eighteen eighties. Once more it was in Victoria that this movement was most prominent and gained its greatest successes so that

the Victorian movement became the model for the other Australian colonies.

By 1850 a number of small craft unions had appeared in Sydney and Melbourne. Their activities were suspended during the confusion of the gold rushes, but by 1855 they were again beginning operations in both cities. In Melbourne in 1856 the stonemasons and their employers agreed to reduce hours to eight per day; during the same year unions of plasterers, bricklayers, carpenters and joiners, slaters, plumbers and painters were formed and granted the same concession. They were joined by quarrymen, builders' labourers, coachbuilders and saddlers and harness makers.(1) From 1856 dates the Eight Hour Procession and the organised eight hours movement of Victoria. Mainly through the initiative of the masons' union the movement was vigorously prosecuted in Geelong, Portland, Bendigo and Ballarat; though it is some exaggeration to say, as Coghlan does, that "before the year 1856 had closed, eight hours was generally recognised as the length of the working day throughout Victoria."(2) It was principally the skilled building workers who had obtained the eight hour

(1) T.A. Coghlan, "Labour and Industry in Australia", Vol. II, p.728, states that the government and municipal road labourers also obtained the eight hour day at this time, but they are not mentioned in other accounts.

(2) Ibid.

day throughout the colony.

This sudden change in the conditions of labour was a direct result of the gold discoveries. The prospect of easily won wealth, the great migration to the goldfields, and the acute shortage of labour, had resulted in such a rise in wages that, inspite of the rise in prices, real wages had probably doubled in two or three years after 1851. The advance towards the golden age for the workman in golden Australia halted almost as abruptly as it had appeared, for by 1854 there was a relatively depressed period. This, however, was only relative and the skilled and organised sections of the Australian working class still occupied a sufficiently strong position to be able to consolidate their gain in hours with economic recovery in 1857.

For about ten years from 1857 economic conditions in Victoria tended to be depressed. The reduction in hours of work was now not so easily gained. The Sandridge (Port Melbourne) stevedores who struck for the eight hour day in 1857 failed; in the following year shipwrights, engineers, mill sawyers and ironworkers were successful, although they had to accept a proportionate reduction in wages.(1)

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(1) Rae, op.cit., p.261, specifies engineers, boilermakers and iron moulders, as eight hour trades in 1859, shipwrights as gaining the eight hours between 1859 and 1869, and mill sawyers between 1869 and 1871. Coghlan, op.cit., pp. 736-8 lists shipwrights, engineers, mill sawyers and blacksmiths by 1859. Rae states, p. 261, that the coachbuilders lost the eight hour day in 1859 and did not regain it for more than twenty years.

Thus during the fifties an eight hour day, i.e., a forty eight hour week, was usual for skilled building workers, who had pioneered the movement; for some occupations associated with building, such as builders' labourers and quarrymen; for some skilled metal workers such as engineers, boilermakers, blacksmiths, iron moulders and coachbuilders; and for a few other skilled occupations, such as shipwrights and saddlers. The leadership assumed by the building workers is not surprising in view of the great importance of building and construction in the economy of the time. Success in achieving shorter hours depended upon the skilled nature of the worker's occupation, in

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(1) continued:
Coghlan, p. 1040, refers to coachbuilders successfully defending the eight hour day in 1863.
Sutcliffe, "A History of Trade Unionism in Australia", p.25 agrees with Rae that the railway coachbuilders lost the eight hour day in 1859.
W.E. Murphy, "History of the Eight Hours' Movement", confines himself mainly to the events of 1856-7.
Much of this early period of labour history remains obscure. So far as the eight hour day is concerned too much uniformity in its application must not be assumed. Unions might win the shorter hours for a membership which did not embrace all the occupation; differences would exist between workshops and between different occupations engaged in the same industry. Nothing like the present day rigidity in wages and hours obtained. Fluctuations in economic conditions were rapidly and unevenly reflected in labour contracts. For these reasons it may be assumed that when an occupation was mentioned some of its members had gained the eight hour day, but little more than this can be said with certainty of the early period.
The account of H.H. Champion, "The Origins of the Eight Hours System at the Antipodes", Economic Journal, Vol. II, 1892, was written four years before that of Murphy. Murphy may have drawn on Champion, but Champion's account is the slighter.

other words the difficulty of replacing him or the strength of his bargaining position. Some unskilled workers also won the eight hour day but their success was ephemeral, for their strength was not sufficient to hold the gain when economic conditions declined.

The sixties in Victoria were an unsettled period, a retrogression economically from the confidence and prosperity of the early fifties. During this decade the eight hour day was not extended, but tended to be withdrawn by employers. Cabinet-makers, who had gained the eight hour day in the fifties, had reverted to ten hours by 1863.(1) Even in the building trade many unions had virtually disintegrated and the eight hours principle was not very effective in practice.(2) Apart from those trades which managed to retain the eight hour day, the normal working time was ten hours per day at the end of the sixties.(3)

From this period dates the political agitation for legislation to make the eight hour day general. A Short Hours League was formed by unionists and bills to make eight hours the normal day's work were introduced into the Victorian Parliament in 1869, 1871 and 1873; none of them passed. One result, however, was that in 1870 the Victorian Government agreed that in future all government contracts should stipulate an eight hour day.(4)

With the return of steady prosperity from about

(1) T.A.Coghlan, "Labour and Industry in Australia," p.1038.
(2) Ibid, pp.1050-1. (3) Ibid, p.1046. (4) Ibid, pp.1051-2.

1872 there was heightened trade union activity, including demands for shorter hours. In 1873-4 there were strikes, mostly successful, for the eight hour day by gold miners, unskilled government labourers, Castlemaine tanners, Echuca sawmillers, blacksmiths and wheelwrights;[1] agricultural implement makers failed in their attempt.[2] Between 1869 and 1879 seamen, sailmakers, brickmakers, gas stokers and mill sawyers had been added to the eight hour trades.[3] This contrasts with the lack of progress during the sixties and reflects the prosperity of the seventies. The occupations concerned show that the semiskilled and unskilled workers were now attempting with some success to gain the shorter hours.

In Appendix IV Table 1 sets out in summarised form those occupations in which the eight hour day prevailed in Melbourne for each year from 1879 to 1891. Bearing in mind the limitations of the Table as set out in the notes to it, it does illustrate a number of general propositions on the eight hour day in Melbourne, during the eighteen eighties. The sixteen unions listed in 1879 comprise building craftsmen, a few associated occupations, some skilled metal workers and others, with the relatively unskilled gas stokers, brickmakers and seamen who had won the

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(1) Ibid, pp. 1471-2.
(2) Ibid, pp. 1473-4.
(3) Rae, op. cit., p.261.

concession during the seventies. The depression which began in 1879 did not lift until 1881 so that during these years there are no significant additions to the list. Those added for the years 1882 and 1883 (only up to April of the year in each case) were a few skilled occupations, only the furniture workers being at all numerous. With the prosperity of the early eighties union activity grew and continued at a rising tempo for some years. The results of favourable economic conditions and union organisation are seen in the Table for the years 1884, 1885 and 1886, when fourteen, four and ten new occupations were added respectively. This great extension of the eight hour day brought in many more specialised crafts, such as farriers, coachmakers, printers, tinsmiths, slaters, lithographers, hatters, saddlers, engine drivers and brassfounders, often not for the first time. It reached new trades with some degree of skill who had not previously been organised, such as cutters, pressers, bootmakers, bottle makers and bakers. A large proportion of relatively unskilled labour was used in such occupations as confectioner, bookbinder, brewer, tobacconist, agricultural implement maker and tanner; with the wharf labourers, mill employees and ironworkers' assistants, there was little special skill to serve as a bargaining lever.

By the beginning of 1886 the eight hour day had been extended to all the traditional organised crafts, to many new skilled occupations, and to some important sections

of unskilled workers. That year the wharf labourers, seamen and bootmakers were the largest single groups working eight hours. At this point in Victoria a new advance had been made in the hours of labour and the universal eight hour day was confidently expected and eagerly sought.

The growth of the eight hour movement was halted by the recession of 1886-7, but when it was resumed significant additions were made to the ranks of the semi-skilled and unskilled workers, including labourers and navvies. The heightened feeling for union organisation is reflected in the record number of bodies participating in the Eight Hours celebration in 1891; the tide had turned in the following year with the onset of depression and strike defeats.

A few of the most favoured sections of urban wage earners had reduced hours below forty-eight per week. By 1888 masons and bricklayers were working only forty-five hours, since they had a Saturday half holiday without having to make up the time. The carpenters that year failed in a strike to achieve this.(1)

During the eighties the eight hour day was prescribed in some cases by government action. The Mines Act of 1883 limited hours underground to eight per day; the charter granted to a private company by the Tramway and

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(1) Coghlan, op. cit., p.1492.

Omnibus Act of the same year prescribed eight hours as the normal working day; the Harbour Trust Act, also of the same year, required the Harbour Commissioners to apply these hours to their own and contractors' employees. The effect of the Factory Acts on female and juvenile labour had been dealt with in Chapter 3 of this Part. From the beginning of the decade Ministers for Railways were repeatedly asked to establish the eight hours system for all railway employees; they just as frequently replied that they favoured the principle and would apply it wherever practicable. Continued complaints by engine drivers, porters and cleaners show that the shorter day was not made effective until the late eighties.

Thus the extension of the eight hour day in Victoria during the eighteen eighties can be tabulated with some degree of accuracy and provides a significant pattern of time and occupation. But there remain such questions as the actual reduction of hours, the effectiveness of the new hours and the methods by which they were achieved. Evidence on these matters exists for a number of occupations.

Bakers in 1882 were working 70-80 hours per week and in attendance on the job up to fifteen hours daily and twenty on Fridays.(1) Inspired by the Shops Commission they organised to seek a ten hour day;(2) this they obtained,

(1) Vic. Shops Comm., Second Progress Report, Q. 1964; 2000; 2283; 2972; 2987; 2992; 3004; 3015.
(2) Age, 4 July, 1882.

with about twelve hours on Saturdays, by October, 1882.[1] A year later they were demanding the eight hour day,[2] which had previously been considered impracticable and in the struggle for which the bakers' union of Ballarat had been crushed.[3] The eight hour demand was served on their masters; most granted it and a strike was declared in the other shops.[4] So the bakers proudly appeared in the Eight Hour Procession of April, 1884, when only two years before their inhumanly long hours of labour had been a by-word.

The coachmakers, whose history dates back to the fifties, had lost their eight hour day many years ago, and their union was in a moribund condition. When they sought shorter hours in 1882 they formed a new Eight Hour League as a fighting body for this purpose, served their demands on the employers, and declared their intention of striking where these were not granted.[5] The two unions then amalgamated.

The farriers were a small craft, often working side by side with their masters and hoping to be masters them-

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(1) Age, 17 Aug., 1882. Vic. Shops Comm., Factories Report, Q.3152; 3218; 3243; 3263; 3288; 3458; 3470.
(2) Age, 22 Oct., 1883.
(3) Vic. Shops Comm., Second Progress Report, Q. 2210.
(4) Age, 31 March, 1884, 7 April, 1884.
(5) Age, 16 Oct., 1882, 16 Dec., 1882, 30 Jan., 1883.

selves. When their union asked for the eight hour day at the end of 1882 most employers granted it, but some strikes took place, and throughout 1883 negotiations with, and strikes against, individual employers continued, until they could regard themselves as an eight hour trade in 1884.(1)

In the furniture trade the employees' numbers were greater but their position was weakened by competition from cheap Chinese and imported furniture. Against these two threats they had allied themselves with their employers and even formed a joint organisation with them. It was to seek a forty eight hour week instead of the fifty one and one-half hours then worked that a union was first formed in February, 1883. The reduced hours were soon generally granted, but with a proportionate reduction in pay.(2) This was a gain, however, in that overtime was to be paid at time and a quarter. Higher rates for overtime became common in many occupations during the eighties.

In the metal trades the blacksmiths and wheelwrights were closely associated with the coachbuilders. It is not surprising that as soon as the coachbuilders secured shorter hours the two former trades established a union to press for the eight hour day which their fellows in Ballarat and Sandhurst already enjoyed. Most masters soon granted this

(1) Age, 23 Oct., 1882; 13 Jan., 25 Sept., 19 Oct., 1883.
(2) Age, 24 Feb., 24 March, 4 April, 1883.

request.[1] Members of the Amalgamated Society of Engineers had long worked eight hours and this applied to some engineering fitters employed in other industries.[2] With increased use of machinery and new techniques the old craft divisions had less meaning in the metal trades, so that the changing titles of unions should not obscure the fact that by 1884 most skilled metal workers had an eight hour day.

The tinsmiths formed a union to seek the eight hour day in April, 1883. They were partially successful by the middle of the year; after some strike action only a few firms were still holding out in January, 1884.[3] Previously they had worked nine hours per day.[4]

Occupations connected with retailing suffered from the handicap of the usual long shop hours. The hours of shop assistants are dealt with separately later in this Chapter. Before the Shops Commission butchers complained of working from 6 a.m. to 8 p.m. weekdays, 6 a.m. to midnight Saturdays and sometimes on Sunday mornings.[5] A union was formed in January 1883, seeking shorter hours; the following month master butchers agreed to a compromise - 6 a.m. to 6 p.m., Monday to Thursday, 6 a.m. to 7 p.m., Fridays, and 6 a.m. to 10 p.m. Saturdays - while slaughtermen[6]

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(1) Age, 29 Jan., 15 March, 1883.
(2) Vic. Tariff Comm., Q.29849, 29952, 29983, 30027.
(3) Age, 14 April, 1 June, 23 Nov., 1883; 26 Jan., 1884.
(4) Vic. Shops Comm., Factories Report, Q.5999.
(5) Vic. Shops Comm., Second Progress Report, Q.864.
(6) Age, 5 Jan., 10 Jan., 17 Jan., 14 Feb., 13 March, 21 March, 1883.

received the eight hour day. Soon some master butchers were failing to observe the agreement. Having achieved their hours objective the slaughtermen broke away to form a separate union, while shop hours remained much as before, until 1890, when strike action won eight hours for shop butchers.(1)

The hairdressers formed a union in March, 1883, to obtain the ten hour day. Employers agreed, but a few months later a strike on the question took place at one city shop.(2)

Bookbinders, who included many unskilled workers, females and juveniles, had been working about fifty to fifty three hours per week before they achieved the eight hour day in 1884.(3) A similar type of labour force in confectionery and jam making had not worked much more than forty eight hours per week even before they joined the eight hour trades in 1884.(4) It was only under the threat of a strike,, however, that the bookbinders' hours were reduced without any loss of wages.(5)

Even at the beginning of the eighties most hat factories worked only about forty eight hours per week, which was the union rule,(6) although in some instances up to sixty

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(1) Murphy, op. cit., Calendar.
(2) Age, 14 March, 6 April, 29 July, 1883.
(3) Vic. Tariff Comm., Q. 39887; 40073; Age, 25 March, 2 April, 1884.
(4) Vic. Shops Comm., Factories Report, Q. 4874; 4886; 4782. Vic. Tariff Comm., Q. 48011.
(5) Age, 9 May, 18 May, 1883; 17 Sept., 1884.

hours were worked.[1] Early in 1883 the Felt Hatters Union succeeded in having the eight hour day made general under the threat of a strike.[2] Saddlers who had worked a nine hour day,[3] adopted late in 1883 the usual method of delivering an ultimatum to employers that in future they would work only eight hours, under the threat of a strike. They were only partially successful in that they had to accept a reduction of wages with the shorter hours.[4]

For an old established skilled craft union the printers came late into the eight hour fold. The irregular hours of newspaper offices were always a difficulty, and the widespread use of apprentices further weakened their bragaining position. Nine hours a day was common in jobbing offices and often in newspapers.[5] When they were granted eight hours in November, 1883, a simultaneous wage claim was rejected, but the prescribing of overtime rates was a significant gain.[6]

Amongst the unskilled labourers, the coal yardsmen, loaders and drivers, demanded the eight hour day early in 1883, in lieu of the fifty eight hours per week which

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(6) continued: Vic. Shops Comm., Factories Report, Q.4964; 4977; 4992; 5010; 5027. Vic. Tariff Comm., Q.507; 589; 596.
(1) Vic. Tariff Comm., Q. 251; 300; 392.
(2) Age, 31 Jan., 4 April, 1883.
(3) Vic. Tariff Comm., Q. 15225; 15708.
(4) Age, 1 Oct., 12 Nov., 19 Nov., 1883.
(5) Vic. Shops Comm., Factories Report, Q.3872; 3943; Vic. Tariff Comm., Q. 41130.
(6) Age, 15 Oct., 6 Nov., 1883.

they had been working. They were engaged on the waterfront, handling colliers' cargoes. Their strike was accompanied by some violence. The wharf labourers joined them, a rise in wages was obtained, but the eight hour day was not obtained generally, although the more specialised occupation of stevedore gained it.(1) Such unions of casual workers were usually short lived. In May, 1885, the wharf labourers' union reformed in a dispute with employers and the following year successfully struck for the eight hour shift.(2) This was the most significant extension of the eight hour day to urban unskilled labour during the eighties, for in 1889 there were about one thousand members in the Melbourne Wharf Labourers' Union and about five hundred in the Port Phillip Stevedores.(3)

The omnibus drivers were unskilled workers with even less bargaining power, for it was an occupation regarded as a temporary refuge by drifting wage earners down on their luck and it faced a single powerful employer. Their extraordinarily long hours had excited the sympathy of the Shops Commission, and the first concession they sought was a twelve hour day and one Sunday off each month. Public

(1) Age, 12 Feb., 13 Feb., 15 Feb., 20 Feb., 29 April, 1883, 26 June, 1883.
(2) Report of General Secretary, J. Healy, at the 4th Biennial National Conference of the Waterside Workers' Federation, Sydney, September, 1952, p.5. History of Capital and Labour, p.197.
(3) Healy, op. cit., p.7.

sympathy and legislative action in respect of the Omnibus Company's charter resulted in some amelioration.

Workers in grain mills had demanded the eight hour day in May, 1884. It was refused and an intermittent struggle ensued, which was resolved in the employees' favour the following year.(1) Previously their hours had been sixty or more per week.(2)

Brewers and tanners formed unions to secure the eight hour day; the latter, particularly, encountered opposition from employers.(3) Journeymen jewellers formed a union to uphold the eight hour day which they already possessed.(4)

Despite the impressive list of eight hour trades which continued to grow during the eighties, there remained many factories, particularly those employing female and juvenile labour, where much longer hours were the rule. The hours provision of the 1873 Factory Act remained a dead letter; the Shops Commission of 1884 spoke in scathing terms of the long hours, especially in small workshops.(5) The larger Melbourne clothing factories usually gave their hours as not much more than forty eight per week,(6) but the common practice of taking work home meant that such

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(1) Age, 6 May, 30 Aug., 9 Sept., 1884.
(2) Vic. Shops Comm., Factories Report, Q.3328; 3340.
(3) Age, 6 May, 21 Aug., 1 Dec., 1884; 10 May, 1884.
(4) Vic. Tariff Comm., Q. 42816.
(5) Vic. Shops Comm., Factories Report, Report, p.VII.
(6) Vic. Shops Comm., Factories Report, Q.3625; 3640; 3647; 4310; 4391; 4585; 4722; 6029. Vic. Tariff Comm., Q. 2353; 2970.

stated hours had little significance. For the great majority of workers, who were women, payment was by the piece, so that factory hours were not strictly prescribed, but might average from nine to eleven hours per day.(1) Hours fluctuated with demand for the product, in rush periods being extremely long. The great majority of women working for wages, other than domestic servants, was employed in the clothing trade. Even at the time of the tailoresses' strike, despite the great public sympathy which it attracted, the conditions of the industry were such that no direct attempt could be made to shorten hours. In the case of this piecework industry higher wages were equivalent to shorter hours, but no permanent progress was recorded in this direction during the eighties. The continuing low wages meant that, one way or another, long hours would be worked. The Factory Act of 1885 prescribed that all females and youths under sixteen years of age should not work more than forty eight hours per week unless granted an exemption from the Act by the Minister. Until 1890 woollen mills and rope works were given a continuous exemption to work eight and six hours a week overtime respectively.(2) For the first few years after 1885 the Chief Inspector of

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(1) Vic. Shops Comm., Factories Report, Q. 4429; 4458; 4652.
(2) Vic. Factory Inspector's Report for 1888, p.5 and for 1890, p.4.

Factories considered that the hours clause was operating satisfactorily in that few applications for exemptions were received, and these mainly due to seasonal fluctuations in trade.(1) During 1888, of 11,114 females employed in registered factories, 3,811 worked overtime, together with 457 boys, mainly in clothing and dressmaking, with some in printing and stationery, biscuit and bootmaking. The average overtime permitted was about ten weeks of seven and a half hours each.(2) During 1889, 1890 and 1891 there were fewer applications to work overtime due to the "dulness of trade". In the latter year the Chief Inspector refused to grant permission to work overtime unless a minimum rate of overtime, usually time and a quarter or time and a half, was agreed upon, and notified to employees.(3) The prevalence of piece work in the clothing trade made such rules difficult to enforce.

It appears certain that in large factories the 1885 Act had resulted by the end of the eighties in reducing the abnormally long hours of labour of women and children. Some at least of this effect, however, was vitiated by the continuance of the outwork system. In addition many small workshops were outside the scope of the Act and these were regarded as the worst offenders in the matter of long hours. In any

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(1) Vic. Factory Inspector's Report for 1886, p.4 and 1887, p.4.
(2) " " " " " 1888, p.4 and Appendix B.
(3) Vic. Factory Inspector's Report for 1891, p.5.

case regulation was undermined by low wages and piece rates which caused female employees to connive at or accept longer hours in order to increase their earnings. The attempt at State regulation of hours arose from the weakness of this section of workers. The 1873 Act had been virtually ignored; the 1885 Act was more effective, but this fundamental weakness of position vis-a-vis employers remained.

The skilled male clothing trade employees, such as cutters, trimmers and pressers, were on weekly rates and so were able to win the eight hour day by the mid-eighties. Male tailors fared little better than their female counterparts.

Woollen mills, many of which were in country towns, such as Geelong, Castlemaine, Ballarat and Sandhurst, employed many women and almost universally worked a sixty hour week.(1)

Tobacco factories employed skilled male cigar makers who had a union and were able to gain the eight hour day early in the 1880's. They also employed, as a separate section, many females and juveniles in tobacco packing, and for these the nine hour day, sometimes with a half day on Saturday, was common.(2)

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(1) Vic. Shops Comm., Factories Report, Q.6126; 6152. Vic. Tariff Comm., Q. 5167; 5362; 5500; 5691.
(2) Vic. Shops Comm., Factories Report, Q. 3039; 3063; 3101; 3116. Vic. Tariff Comm., Q. 4694.

Brush factories relied mainly on female and juvenile labour but hours did not much exceed forty eight per week.(1)

Men employed in paper mills worked about sixty hours per week in the early eighties, and the small number of women about forty eight hours.(2)

Rope factories employed many children; hours for all hands were about fifty eight per week.(3) Children and many women were used in biscuit making. Here the hours varied from about fifty to sixty per week, the latter being more common. In 1883 one of the largest biscuit factories voluntarily reduced hours from ten to nine per day, but other manufacturers did not follow this example.(4)

In soap and candle works, coopers, plumbers and mechanics had the eight hour day in the early eighties, while unskilled hands worked sixty hours per week on day and night shifts. Boys worked less, about forty eight hours per week.(5) There is some evidence that in long hour industries young children worked less than the full time;(6) this may well have applied to messengers, cleaners

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(1) Vic. Shops Comm., Factories Report, Q.4734; 4753; 4755. Vic. Tariff Comm., Q. 33969.
(2) Vic. Shops Comm., Factories Report, Q.4904; 6196. Vic. Tariff Comm., Q.40342.
(3) Vic. Shops Comm., Factories Report, Q.4825; 4852; 6181; 5355.
(4) Vic. Shops Comm., Factories Report, Q.4782; 5962. Tariff Comm., Q.48210; 48221. Age, 19 May, 1883.
(5) Vic. Shops Comm., Factories Report, Q.5668; 5675.
(6) Ibid, Q.5245.

and incidental juvenile employees, but seems doubtful where children formed an integral and major part of the workforce.

In miscellaneous factories employing unskilled male labour the ten hour day was common, as in bone mills, sugar refineries and tallow works.(1) Where shifts were worked the double shift of twelve hours in attendance and ten hours actually worked each day, seems to have been usual. When bottle makers gained the eight hour day three shifts became necessary in that industry.(2)

In considering changes which took place during the decade, it is noticeable that the unskilled factory worker, either labourer or process worker, made few appearances either as possessing the eight hour day or union organisation. Factory workers who might be described as semi-skilled were more successful. So were the outdoor manual labourer and the navvy, especially if working in conjunction with one of the skilled crafts or in government employment. No union organization effective in lessening hours was set up by women workers, who were held back in their main occupation, the textile industry, by piece work and outwork; but women workers and juveniles had benefited to some extent, particularly in larger factories, by the 1885 Factory Act.

(1) Vic. Shops Comm., Factories Report, Q.5682; 5689; 5698. Age, 10 May, 1882.
(2) Ibid., Q.4931.

It is very difficult to say what percentage of Victorian workers had gained the eight hour day by 1890. One contemporary view was that three-quarters of Victorian wage earners worked no more than eight hours per day by 1890.(1) This seems too high, for the occupations with long hours were not so prominent to the public view as those with shorter hours. However, a safe estimate would be that more than half of urban wage earners enjoyed the eight hour day.

The early history of the eight hour movement in New South Wales follows similar lines to that of Victoria. In 1855 the Sydney masons formed a union and were successful in winning the eight hour day a little earlier than their Melbourne colleagues.(2) For this they accepted a reduction of wages.

In November, 1856 the masons, carpenters, plasterers and bricklayers formed a league to secure the eight hour day in the building trades; their unions did not represent all the employees in the occupation and failed despite strike action.(3) With declining economic conditions it was not until 1861 that further attempts were made.

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(1) J. Rae, "Eight Hours for Work", London, 1894, p.262. The relevant chapter on "The Eight Hours Day in Victoria first appeared in the Economic Journal of 1891.
(2) W.E. Murphy, "History of the Eight Hours Movement", p.40.
(3) T.A. Coghlan, "Labour and Industry in Australia", Vol.II, p. 712.

In that year the plasterers were successful, but the bricklayers and carpenters failed.(1) At the same time the iron trades "made a gallant effort to win the boon," and after an initial defeat claimed a partial success.(2) Partial it must have been, for ten years later the same question was being fought in the same industry.

In the early seventies there was a renewed interest in shorter working hours. The first eight hour day procession took place in Sydney in 1871 with the stonemasons, bricklayers, builders' labourers and carpenters represented, indicating that these hours were now common in the building industry.(3) The same year the first attempt at legislation was made when a Labour Bill to set eight hours as the normal working day was introduced into Parliament following a petition from building tradesmen. The Bill did not pass. The following year shipwrights, a small skilled union in a strong bargaining position, secured the eight hour day after a short strike.(4) With improving economic conditions there followed a series of disputes in the metal industry. In 1872 iron trade employers refused

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(1) T.A. Coghlan, "Labour and Industry in Australia", Vol.II, p. 712.
(2) "History of Capital and Labour", p.43.
(3) J.T. Sutcliffe, "A History of Trade Unionism in Australia" p.24; and Coghlan, op.cit., Vol.II, p.1032. According to Lloyd Ross, "Shorter Hours Movement is One Hundred Years Old", S.M.H., 3 Oct., 1955, the masons and carpenters first began some form of organised celebration of the anniversary in 1866.
(4) Sutcliffe, loc. cit.

the eight hour day even with a reduction in wages.[1] A strike took place as a result of which members of the Amalgamated Society of Engineers won the eight hour day and a fifteen per cent increase in wages;[2] iron moulders and other skilled metal workers also received the shorter hours which were then automatically applied to their labourers as well.[3] The major metal trade industrial dispute of 1874-5 was concerned with the question of meal breaks in the new eight hour day. In 1877 Angus Cameron's Factories Bill proposed to limit the hours of women to eight per day but it was not proceeded with.

The general prosperity of New South Wales continued during the seventies until the recession of 1879-80. Under these favourable conditions Newcastle coal miners won a ten hour day from 1874 by strike action.[4] The eight hour day was extended to many building workers and blacksmiths in country towns. By 1876 the eight hour day prevailed in metal trades, not only for skilled workers such as fitters, coppersmiths, blacksmiths, boilermakers, iron moulders and brass moulders, but also for general labourers. In 1875 Sydney wharf labourers, organised in the Sydney Labouring

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(1) Coghlan, op.cit., p. 1032.
(2) Coghlan, op.cit., Vol. III, p. 1426.
(3) Sutcliffe, op.cit., p.24 and N.S.W. Strikes Commission, evidence of J.H. Talbot, Q. 8723.
(4) Sutcliffe, op.cit., p.35.

Men's Union, struck for the eight hour day and wage increases. They were defeated and the union broken. A similar fate met an attempt by the butchers.(1) In the legislative field the Coal Mining Act of 1876 by restricting labour of persons under eighteen years of age in coal mines to nine per day and less on Saturdays, virtually limited adult labour in coal mines to the same hours.(2)

The spread of the eight hour movement in New South Wales during the eighties is summarised in Table 2 of Appendix IV. For the reasons explained in the Notes to the table, this tabulation does not give such a comprehensive account as that provided for Victoria in Table 1. The position in New South Wales in the early eighties was that the eight hour day had not gone much beyond the traditional building and metal craft unions who had made it secure during the good times of the seventies. New South Wales lagged behind Victoria but followed a similar pattern of development. In the mother colony, however, economic conditions were declining from about 1883 to the depression of 1886-7 so that there is no spectacular increase in the unions listed, such as occurred in Victoria during the first half of the eighties. Nor did New South Wales recover so completely in the late eighties so that the steady additions to the eight hour

(1) Coghlan, op.cit., p.1433, p.1465; Healy, op.cit., p.4; Strikes Comm., Q.5101
(2) Coghlan, op.cit., p.1465.

trades seen in Victoria do not occur. But in 1890 New South Wales was still far from depression, so that the list which refers to the latter part of the year reflects both this and the heightened union consciousness of the Maritime Strike. Apart from the seamen and gas stokers, it was not until 1890 that large numbers of semiskilled and unskilled workers were participating; similarly it was only in that year that anything like the Victorian variety of newly formed specialist unions appeared. In fact the eight hour day was more extensive in New South Wales than the celebration of it indicated; but it was not so extensive as in Victoria.

In addition to those occupations listed in Table 2, corporation labourers, navvies, railway repairers and fettlers had long enjoyed the eight hour day.(1) Sawmill hands were working these hours in the early eighties. Pattern makers, brass finishers, ironworkers' labourers and saddlers were working eight hours some years before they appeared separately in the Eight Hour Day celebrations.(2) In 1883 the New South Wales Immigration Office assured

(1) S.M.H., 5 Oct., 1882; 7 Oct., 1884. Not universally, however. In 1887 labourers on the Hawkesbury River railway bridge construction work struck for eight hours instead of ten per day, "despite the depressed state of trade". (Builder and Contractor, 15 Oct., 1887, p.362.

(2) S.M.H., 5 Oct., 1882. "Australian Information for British Journalists", Immigration Pamphlet, N.S.W. V. & P. of Legis. Ass., 1883-4, Vol. 6, p.97.

prospective British migrants that "...the eight hour system is adopted in almost every description of handicraft; the longer hours of labour being confined principally to tradesmen, shop assistants and employees in certain mercantile establishments."(1) This needs to be taken with a grain of salt; three years later the Sydney Trades and Labour Council despatched John Norton to Britain to correct impressions resulting from "the dissemination of the most exaggerated and misleading statements concerning the state of labour in the various Australian colonies" by those seeking to encourage migration.(2)

Employers' resistance to the eight hour day was more effective in New South Wales than in Victoria. When the Sydney bakers struck for the shorter hours in 1884 their leaders were imprisoned and the agitation ceased.(3)

The brickmakers who struck for eight hours in 1886 endeavoured to rally public support but were defeated; some masters subsequently granted the eight hour day, but in other cases up to twelve hours were worked daily.(4)

In 1890 mill employees were striking against the repudiation by employers of an eight hour agreement recently reached.(5)

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(1) "Australian Information for British Journalists", N.S.W. V.& P. of Legis. Ass., 1883-4, Vol. 6, p.104.
(2) Sutcliffe, op.cit., p.40.
(3) "History of Capital and Labour", p.113.
(4) N.S.W. Strikes Comm., Q.10617; Murphy, op.cit., Calendar, August.
(5) N.S.W. Strikes Comm., Q.4261.

The records of the Sydney Trades and Labour Council contain references to disputes about the eight hour day, other than those already mentioned, by curriers in 1881; butchers in 1883; coopers, coachmakers, tinsmiths and sheet iron workers in 1884; and omnibus maintenance workers in 1885.(1) This is a much smaller list than could be compiled for Melbourne during the same years but it does indicate the presence of the same type of direct action on hours which was so noticeable in Melbourne.

Although the New South Wales government applied the eight hours principle to most of its employees, including navvies, this was never completely implemented in the traffic branch of the railways. Drivers and firemen were complaining in 1882 of working ten to thirteen hours a day without overtime payment; it was agreed to reduce their hours to fifty five weekly, but this was not effective in practice. Even porters, goods yard attendants, point cleaners and such workers in Sydney were averaging nine to ten hours per day in the early eighties.(2)

Bootmakers claimed the eight hour day from 1890, the average hours in large factories being about fifty per week; but the prevalence of piece work and outwork meant

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(1) Quoted by June Phillip, "Trade Union Organisation in New South Wales and Victoria, 1870-1890", M.A. Thesis, University of Melbourne, 1953, Appendix V.
(2) N.S.W. V. & P. of Legis. Ass., 1883, Vol. 2, p. 481 ff.

that in many cases the hours were only nominal.(1) Women workers in the clothing trade also faced these obstacles. The nine hour day was common here for men as well as women, but work was often taken home.(2) The complaints about sweating echo those of Melbourne.

Hours for women and children were often longest. In 1876 a Select Committee on the employment of children had found that juveniles in the tobacco industry, brickyards, leatherworks and woollen mills were working about ten hours per day.(3) It is not likely that there was any appreciable change in the hours of work in these industries before 1890.

In most cases recognition of the eight hour day carried with it overtime at a higher rate. The bricklayers were able to insist on time and a half for overtime.(4) The question of when overtime rates would begin was the key one in casual trades such as wharf labouring where payment was by the hour. After 1885 wharf labourers' rates were time and a half for overtime after eight hours; previously ten hours had been the normal day.(5) No extra pay was given for night shifts.(6)

During the eighties further unsuccessful attempts were

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(1) N.S.W. Strikes Comm., Q.10191 ff.
(2) Ibid, Q.10355; 11207 ff.
(3) N.S.W. V.& P. of Legis. Ass., 1875-6, Vol. 6, P.931 and N.S.W. V.& P. of Legis.Ass., 1876-7, Vol. 5, P.863.
(4) N.S.W. Strikes Comm., Q.8887.
(5) Ibid, Q.932; 1487.
(6) Ibid, Q.347.

made to extend the eight hour day by legislation. Dr. Renwick's Regulation of Factories and Workshops Bill of 1886 was influenced by the Victorian legislation of the previous year. It would have prohibited any female or any person under eighteen years of age employed in factories or workshops from working longer than eight hours per day; and prescribed for these employees holidays on Saturday afternoon, Sundays, Christmas Day, New Year's Day, Good Friday, Easter Monday and public holidays, without loss of pay.(1) It was rejected by the Legislative Council. In 1887, 1889 and 1891 W. F. Schey, M.L.A., former Secretary of the Amalgamated Railway and Tramway Service Association, brought forward Eight Hour Bills to declare that in law eight hours would be a day's labour and forty eight hours a week's labour, unless a written agreement to the contrary existed. None of the Bills made much progress towards becoming law. The organised trade unions endeavoured to enlist public support for this principle,(2) but they made less progress towards general legislation than in Victoria.

As early as 1854 there had been some movement in Adelaide for the eight hour day, but apparently it came to nothing.(3) Indeed, there was hardly any trade union organisation in the city until the early seventies. In

(1) N.S.W.P.D., Session 1885-6, Vol. XXI, p.3405 ff.
(2) N.S.W. P.D., Session 1887-8, Vol. 31, p.3403.
(3) Coghlan, op. cit., p.748.

1863 masons, carpenters and plumbers had held a meeting for the eight hour day, but they were not organised in stable unions. Two years later Adelaide masons and bricklayers formed an eight hour society; they met with no success although a Saturday half holiday was conceded in return for working longer hours during the week.(1) Some years of depressed conditions followed up to about 1870.

With the return of prosperity many unions were formed. Moonta tradesmen were granted the eight hour day in 1873. In the same year some metal trade employers in Adelaide and Port Adelaide conceded those hours to the United Tradesmen's Association, a short lived conglomeration of various craft workers.(2) About this time hours in the building trade were reduced from nine to eight per day.(3) Labourers on public works were also demanding this concession.(4) The successful unions, mainly in building and metal working, held their first eight hour day celebration in 1873.(5)

South Australia suffered the recession of 1879, recovered in the early eighties to a peak of prosperity about 1884, gradually diminishing to the acute financial crisis of 1886, with conditions then improving to the end of the decade.

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(1) Ibid, p. 1066.
(2) L.E. Kiek, "The History of the South Australian Labour Unions", M.A. Thesis, Adelaide University, 1949, p.14ff.
(3) Coghlan, op.cit. p.1066, p.1542.
(4) Kiek, op.cit. p.18.
(5) Coghlan, op.cit., p.1542.

The mid-eighties therefore did not see any extension of the eight hour day, although Adelaide bakers were seeking a ten hour day in 1884.(1) During the late eighties shorter hours were consolidated. From 1886 union printers had the forty eight hour week, with time and a quarter for overtime; this was a reduction of a few hours.(2) Amongst other tradesmen some coach trimmers had their hours reduced to forty eight per week from about 1879, while others continued to work a little more than fifty hours.(3) Some saddlers were also on the eight hour day, the majority, including boys and female assistants, working a few hours longer than this.(4) These were in addition to the building trades and skilled metal workers, including coachbuilders,(5) who had the eight hour day.

An account of the hours worked in many occupations early in 1892 is available; South Australia had not yet felt the full impact of the depression of the nineties so that the conditions disclosed then may be taken, with some reservations, as typical of the late eighties.

In boot factories the forty eight hour week was almost universal for men, women and juveniles.(6) There had

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(1) Age, 2 May, 1884.
(2) S.A. Factories Comm., Q.12198; 12232.
(3) Ibid, Q.10136.
(4) Ibid, Q.1047; 9140; 9152; 9174; 9120.
(5) Ibid, Q.4634.
(6) Ibid, Q.1233; 1370; 3823; 8604; 8770; 8835; 8850; 8921; 8934; 3586.

Out of order?

been very little outwork in this industry in Adelaide since the strike of 1885, one of the terms of settlement then being the abolition of outwork. Finishers were usually on piece work, so that they could to some extent please themselves about hours. Lack of work was the reason they averaged about eight hours a day, but women, children and others on weekly wages also worked only forty eight hours.

For the same reason tobacco workers on piece rates were in 1892 averaging much less than forty eight hours a week, while those on weekly rates worked little more than this.(1)

In the clothing trade hours were not as long as they had been reported in some other colonies. A forty eight hour week or even less was fairly common for girls on weekly wages and some on piece work.(2) Others worked a few hours more or nine hours per day.(3) Since some outwork and taking of work home did exist, these hours for piece workers must be regarded as a minimum, except where they were imposed by lack of work offering.

Women in bookbinding and associated printing employment might work a little less or a little more than forty eight hours per week.(4) The same applied to boys and girls in fruit preserving with boys working a few

(1) Ibid, Q.12955; 1151; 1431.
(2) Ibid, Q.4459; 6735; 8647; 8695; 7776.
(3) Ibid, Q.4036; 5774; 5991; 6389; 7404; 8464; 9047; 9078.
(4) Ibid, Q.8327; 8385; 13279.

more hours, and much longer periods for all in the busy season.[1] Boys in a leatherware factory worked about fifty one hours per week,[2] but youths engaged in packing, cleaning and delivering mostly had to stay later.[3]

In the less skilled metal trades, such as galvanising and tin plate work, fifty to fifty six hours were worked per week by male employees.[4] Descending to the unskilled, tanners were working a nine hour day,[5] flour millers and Port Adelaide wheat stackers a ten hour day,[6] for six days a week.

One feature of hours in Adelaide at the end of the eighties was the prevalence of the Saturday half holiday. This was enjoyed by the great majority of workers, including women, and its effect was to bring about a reduction in total hours. In the "eight hour trades" the forty eight hour week was arranged to leave the half day Saturday free; in other occupations the nine hours for five days plus about five on Saturday was very common, giving a week's labour of some fifty hours.

On the legislative side, an Eight Hours Bill had been introduced in 1889, but was not proceeded with. The Factories and Shops Bill of 1891, from which arose the Royal

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(1) Ibid, Q.10401; 10440.
(2) Ibid, Q.8673.
(3) Ibid, Q.8431.
(4) Ibid, Q.8939, 8999.
(5) Ibid, Q.3411.
(6) Ibid, Q.547; 12089; 804.

Commission of 1892, would have followed the Victorian Act in limiting the hours of women and children; the Majority Report of the Royal Commission urged that women and youths under sixteen years of age should not work more than forty eight hours per week, and this was prescribed, albeit ineffectively, in 1894.

During the sixties and seventies Queensland was a pioneering colony, a vast new area being opened up by a small but rapidly increasing population. It was not until the 1880's that there was a significant concentration of urban population in Brisbane, and even in 1891 the capital did not dominate the colony in population to the same extent as did Melbourne, Sydney or Adelaide.

Nevertheless, from the beginning building artisans were prominent in Brisbane. In the rapidly growing colony they could, more than in the older established southern colonies, enjoy the advantages of a continuing shortage of labour which only temporarily disappeared when the flood of migration occasionally overwhelmed the demand for workers.

Under these conditions the eight hour day was first introduced in 1858;(1) by the early sixties the Brisbane building trade was working an eight hour day, and other urban occupations usually nine and a half hours.(2) Plasterers and

(1) Sutcliffe, op.cit., p.32.
(2) Coghlan, op.cit., p.1055.

masons took part in the first eight hour day procession in 1865; agitation for a general eight hour day followed. The following year hours of railwaymen in the government railyards at Ipswich were reduced to eight per day; railway contractors' navvies struck for the same concession, but failed.(1) During the financial crisis and depression after 1866, all except the building trades lost their shorter hours. With the return of prosperity by about 1872 the campaign began afresh, with the formation of many new unions who almost invariably made the eight hour day an objective.(2) In 1874 the Brisbane unions had an eight hour bill introduced into the Assembly, where it made no progress.

In 1876 Brisbane wharf labourers struck for the eight hour day, which they gained with a reduction in their hourly rate of pay.(3) The same year labourers engaged in constructing a Brisbane dry dock gained the eight hours from the contractor. The government had refused to adjust this contract, but did agree to stipulate the eight hour day in all future railway construction contracts.(4) Hence by the late seventies most manual labourers had the eight hour day. This was particularly justified on grounds of the hot climate and facilitated by the demand for outdoor labour in the

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(1) Ibid, p.1064.
(2) Ibid, p.1065.
(3) Healy, op.cit., p.4.
(4) Sutcliffe, op.cit., p.36 and Coghlan, op.cit., pp.1507-8.

new colony. Skilled urban workers were represented almost solely by the building trades and a few other artisans who also had the eight hour day.

From about 1883 to 1887 there was some city unemployment in Brisbane as the stream of migrants piled up in the capital. By 1887 wharf labourers had been reduced to a ten hour day again. With the development of secondary industry new occupations appear: of these boilermakers, moulders and gasfitters worked eight hours, carriage builders nine hours.(1) The unions recommenced their celebration of Eight Hour Day.(2) In 1890 the proceeds from the function and an art union amounted to £1,000.(3) Eight Hour Bills were brought forward in 1889 and 1890, without success; the new Australian Labour Federation, which had replaced the Trades and Labour Council, campaigned for these.(4)

Meanwhile there had been growing up those assorted secondary industries, generally on a small scale, which employed factory labour. There the hours were often rather more than eight per day. In the boot trade eight hours

(1) Coghlan, op.cit., pp. 1518-9.
(2) "History of Capital and Labour", p.218.
(3) "Worker", 1 May, 1890, p. 11.
(4) Builder and Contractor, 3 Aug., 1889.

was common in 1891 although some worked nine; most outwork had been done away with, but the prevalence of piece rates meant that the hours were not rigid.(1) Sheet metal workers usually worked eight hours, as did the furniture trade, and watchmakers and jewellers.(2) Printers' hours on newspapers were irregular; elsewhere they sometimes worked more than eight hours, which the union tried to enforce wherever possible.(3) In 1886 bakers had sought a ten hour day and the masters had agreed to eleven. Early in 1890 the men had asked for nine hours, which was agreed to, but not applied in practice, so that a strike took place for the eight hour day, which was then granted in most cases but still the subject of dispute in others.(4)

In the clothing trade tailors generally worked eight hours and female employees nominally about the same. Since payment was usually by the piece and work often taken home the hours are not to be accepted as accurate; probably, however, outwork was not so prevalent in Brisbane as in Melbourne.(5)

Female employees in miscellaneous occupations did

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(1) Q'land Factories Comm., Appendix E and Q.6093ff; 4704; 5000; 7114; 11800.
(2) Ibid, Appendix E.
(3) Ibid, Appendix E, and Q.10005.
(4) Ibid, Appendix E; Q.7500 ff; Worker, 21 March, 1891, p.5; 18 April, 1891, p.7.
(5) Ibid, Appendix E and Q.1024; 6174; 8183; 9047; 14391.

not suffer such long hours as their counterparts in southern colonies. Biscuit, confectionery and jam factories, employing much female and juvenile labour, worked from eight to nine hours per day. "Hop Beer" Marchant, a philanthropic cordial manufacturer, was content with eight hours per day; girls in bookbinders might work less than this. A rope-works, employing mainly boys, worked nine and three-quarter hours per day. In tobacco and cigar factories both men and women worked from eight and a half to nine hours, with some piece work.(1)

On the legislative side Sir Samuel Griffith had introduced an Eight Hours Bill which passed the Legislative Assembly in 1889 but was not returned from the Council. His similar measure of 1890 did not pass its second reading in the Assembly and sincerity of the Parliamentary protagonists of these measures is open to doubt. Certainly they were not likely to pass into law even in Griffith's liberal phase.

Tasmania, left a backwater by the gold rushes, stagnated until the early seventies when gold, and later tin, discoveries and railway building, brought new economic life to the colony.

From this period date the first labour agitation and first reductions of hours. In 1874 the Hobart Shipwrights'

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(1) Ibid, Appendix E.

Society, the first trade union, struck for eight hours, and won nine instead of their previous ten, with an increase in wages.(1) There were few unions, but many small struggles over wages and hours at this time. In 1877 Hobart carpenters formed a union which quickly won the eight hour day, then disbanded.(2) Tasmanian prosperity reached its peak in the early eighties, but showed only a small decline to 1891. In 1883 the shipwrights were able to secure their eight hour day. The same year the Hobart Saddlers' Union was contemplating a strike for the Saturday half holiday.(3) Tasmanian labour looked to Melbourne for advice and example; so that it is not surprising to find many Tasmanian workers forming unions on Victorian models in the early eighties, with the reduction of hours one important objective. In 1884 Hobart bakers were engaged in action for the eight hour day.(4) The Employment of Women and Children in Factories Act of 1884,(5) applied to all females and persons under eighteen years of age working for wages. The hours of women, including shop assistants, were limited to ten per day, of children under fourteen years to eight per day, with

(1) "History of Capital and Labour", p. 250.
(2) Ibid, p.252.
(3) Age, 3 Oct., 1883.
(4) Age, 19 May, 1884.
(5) 48 Vic. No. 20.

the exception in the case of the latter of the busy season in jam factories. Within its limits it was more effective than the Victorian Act, but female and child labour was not so prevalent in Tasmania. By 1889 the usual eight hour bill had been introduced in the Legislative Assembly by a private member, only to be quickly thrown out.

In 1885 Hobart bakers succeeded in reducing their hours from sixteen to ten per day.(1) By 1890 the eight hour day was probably usual in the building trades and some skilled crafts, but not so widespread as on the mainland. From this year dates the first eight hour celebrations in Hobart and Launceston, though these may have been partly advertisement by firms which had adopted the eight hours.(2)

Hours were effectively shortened during the eighties in Tasmania, but in the small scale industry of that colony contracts of employment were often personal arrangements rather than cases of employers facing large bodies of organised employees.

In Western Australia it was only from about 1880 that the small urban working class emerged as a distinctive group. Then the years from about 1886 to 1890 were not altogether prosperous. In 1883 a Perth Labour League was established, with the primary object of securing the eight

(1) "History of Capital and Labour", p. 259.
(2) Launceston Examiner, 2 March, 1891. Coghlan, op.cit., p. 2314.

hour day, but it dissolved without having any effect.[1] Three years later Perth and Fremantle carpenters, bricklayers, painters, plumbers, plasterers, leather workers, boat builders and labourers formed Eight Hour Associations, but accepted the employers' offer of a nine hour day; only the carpenters were yet organised in a union.[2] In 1890 the Eight Hours Association was revived, but nine hours remained the usual day's labour. The first Eight Hour demonstration was held in 1890, but only individual firms had granted the eight hour day by 1891, except for navvies, whose success reflects the demand for outdoor labour.[3] With the gold discoveries the whole scene was transformed; the eight hour day became universal during 1892 and wage earners from the east flocked to the golden west which was now the Eldorado of Australian workers.

From the preceding examination of hours of labour in the Australian colonies some general questions arise. These are concerned with reasons why shorter hours were sought, the methods by which they were obtained and the importance of the hours question to wage earners in Australia over the second half of the nineteenth century.

The fact that the eight hour day was first won in

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(1) Coghlan, op.cit., p.1567.
(2) Ibid, p. 1569.
(3) Ibid, pp. 1574-5 and Sutcliffe, op.cit., p.83.

Australia at a time when the sudden tide of the workers' gold era prosperity had begun to ebb has resulted in the view being put forward that it was primarily a defensive struggle on the part of wage earners. Thus one historian states:

"The eight-hours Movement in the 1850's and early '60's was primarily, I believe, conceived as a defensive measure to safeguard the livelihood of the members of the crafts in a time of economic depression, unemployment or irregularity of employment. More specifically it aimed at spreading limited and decreasing opportunities as widely as possible among the craft members by reducing the hours of labour from ten to eight. And this argument is supported by the unions' acceptance, in nearly every instance, of a lower rate of wages in return for the shorter working day..."(1)

Posed this way the question is a misleading one. The wage earners' position must be considered as a whole. During the fifties their bargaining strength was enough to win shorter hours, but not enough to prevent some reduction of wages from the phenomenal levels of the gold rush years. During the early sixties their bargaining strength was not always sufficient to retain the shorter hours. Coghlan

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(1) June Phillip, "Trade Union Organisation in New South Wales and Victoria, 1870-1890", Unpublished M.A. thesis, University of Melbourne, 1953, p.25.

observes of the first movement in Melbourne that:

"The mechanics did not submit, as in Sydney, to a reduction in wages on account of the shorter hours. They believed that they could have enforced either a rise in wages or shorter hours at their option, and they preferred the latter".(1)

Such a signal advance in wage earners' conditions cannot be termed defensive. The question of why a reduction in hours was sought even, when it could not be avoided, at the cost of a reduction in wages is an important one. Since standard hours are more institutionalised, more rigid and slower to respond to economic change than wages, advantages gained in hours were more likely to be retained. Wage earners were very conscious of the social benefits of more leisure, and, while wages are never sufficient for wants, Australian wage earners from the fifties were far removed from destitution.

As to shorter hours being a cure for unemployment, this was not an influential view in nineteenth century Australia, if only because of the rarity of long continued unemployment. What was important was the theory that a reduction in hours reduced the supply of labour and thereby improved the workers' bargaining strength in every field,

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(1) "Labour and Industry in Australia", Vol. II, p.727.

including that of wages. The Secretary of the Sydney Masons summed it up when in 1855 he wrote to brother masons in England:

"We are about trying to shorten the long hours of toil from ten to eight per day, if we have to sacrifice the two hours wages, for if the eight-hours system be once established it will never again be altered, while on the contrary, with regard to wages, we can always get them up to the old standard when there is a demand for labour."(1)

During every period of economic depression from the fifties employers endeavoured, often successfully, to lengthen hours. From the wage earners' point of view, it was then that defensive struggles had to be waged. It was the prosperity of the seventies and especially of the eighties which enabled many more wage earners to win shorter hours. Here there can be no question of a defensive position. The workers took the initiative by strike or threat of strike, unless employers succumbed without the need for this.

Direct action or the potential for it reduced hours of labour in nineteenth century Australia. This had also been the case in Britain and America, for even the British Factory Acts, important though they were, did not set the pace on hours. Despite this fact, Australian wage

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(1) Quoted by T.A. Coghlan, "Labour and Industry in Australia", Vol. II, p. 711.

earners constantly tried to secure the shortening of hours by political means. Hours of labour furnished, side by side with economic action, and growing out of it, a generation of progress towards political action by wage earners.

The most prominent form of political action is the general legislative enactment. These were brought forward repeatedly. In Victoria, for example, Eight Hour Bills were introduced by Gardiner in 1883, James in 1885 and Rose in 1886 and 1887. Even in Victoria there was little possibility of any of them passing into law. This, however, is not the whole story. It represents only one aspect of the politicising of the hours question.

The emergence of a working class political party is the culmination of a long process of extending joint action and increasing political consciousness on the part of wage earners. The trade union is the forerunner of the political party and the national trade union itself arises only from many petty local combinations. The first questions on which wage earners are forced to joint action are economic ones, arising from their everyday conditions and not capable of solution by individual action. The same problems are then pursued by political action, for a long time political action short of the formation of a separate political party. Of such economic questions standard hours and working conditions are more susceptible to outside control than wages or prices. Hence hours are a subject of

early working class political action. This action takes many forms - public pronouncements, deputations to officials and ministers, canvassing of politicians, campaigns for public support and, finally, the passage of legislation. In Australia before 1890 legislation on hours was limited to special industries and women and children whose need for protection was plainest. The lack of general legislation should not blind us to the prevalence of other forms of political action. The struggle for the eight hour day, and struggle it was, played a major part in moving the Australian working class towards political action in the forty years between the fifties and the nineties. The public role of the Royal Commissions, of which the Victorian Shops Commission of 1882-4 is the most important, derived from the existing political situation, in which the working class, as well as middle class humanitarian feeling, had its place. From the first Intercolonial Trade Union Congress in 1879 the "legalisation of the eight hour day" was put forward as a demand of organized labour. This contrasts with the position in Britain where craft union opposition to the demand for such legislation was still dominant in the early nineties.

From the fifties to the nineties in Australia the hours question was so important that it was often the point around which trade union organisation crystallized. The formation of a union in order to fight for shorter hours

was a very common occurrence even during the eighties. Most such unions continued after their immediate objective had been secured. Joint action over hours brought into being the first association of unions and continued to be a powerful factor in maintaining their co-operation. In the expansive years to 1890, the reduction of hours of labour was perhaps the major motive of Australian unionism.

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The hours of labour dealt with so far have not included those of shop assistants. This group of wage earners had special problems in connection with hours. Numerically shop assistants, as noted, were an important group in the colonies of the nineteenth century. Their hours of work were often a major public question, even before the 1880's, for they involved the hours for shops to be open and thus affected the whole community.

In mid-century Britain shop assistants often lived on the premises so that shops might be open from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. The custom of living-in was virtually non-existent in Australia by 1880, except sometimes in the case of butchers, whose work had to commence very early. Probably the system had never become acclimatised to the Australian colonies with their fluid and independent population, their shortage of substantial shop dwellings and the suburban spread of population which appeared from the beginning.

If anything like the British hours had ever obtained they were soon broken down. In the opinion of the Victorian Shops Commission, Victoria had at first followed British hours but, "In time the climatic conditions of this country, the state of the labour market and other causes rendered a change in this respect necessary, and the Early Closing Association was organised."(1) At a time when shop work was predominantly a male occupation such long hours could not survive the labour shortage of the gold rush period nor be re-introduced later.

A special feature of shop hours is that, in total, the same amount of business is transacted during short hours as during longer hours. A reduction of hours does not affect the turnover or profits of retailers as a whole, but it does affect different classes of retailers differently. Even during the eighties many people lived in the suburbs and worked in the city, so that early closing might transfer some trade from suburban to city shops. The owner-operated shops, which were mainly suburban, looked to long hours of family labour as their main means of competing with larger stores. Shop assistants wanted shorter hours of labour, but by means of shifts, overtime or working proprietors, shops could stay open longer than the individual shop assistant's normal working hours. The whole public was

(1) Vic. Shops Comm., Second Progress Report, p.IV.

concerned with the convenience of shop hours. The question of shop hours is therefore a complex one, in which the hours of shop assistants and the hours of shops need not coincide, in which the location and the type of the shop will affect the owner's attitude, and in which public convenience must be closely watched by legislators. Finally, the more hours are reduced by other shop keepers the more profitable is a refusal to do so by any particular shopkeeper.

The history of the efforts to reduce hours of shop assistants reflects this complex of forces. Once more Victoria provides the most complete development of such campaigns, so that the events there will be traced in more detail than in other colonies.

The organisations which sought shorter shopping hours were the Early Closing Associations. This was the form first taken by shop assistants' trade unions, reflecting the importance to them of the hours question. Although primarily employees' association in membership they often had the support of a considerable number of shopkeepers who desired to eliminate by agreement competition in prolonging hours. The Melbourne Early Closing Association was active with the earliest unions. Its representatives joined the Eight Hours' Labour League established in 1856.(1) Its appeal was directed to the general public on humanitarian

(1) W.E. Murphy, "History of the Eight Hours' Movement", p. 92.

grounds. "Under its auspices lectures were delivered by eminent persons, concerts and literary entertainments were given, and public meetings frequently held....Appeals were also made through the press and by advertisements of every description."(1) Such methods had resulted in most of the large Melbourne shops consenting to close at 6 p.m. weekdays and 10 p.m. Saturdays by the mid-seventies.

By 1873 Early Closing Associations existed at Ballarat, Sandhurst (Bendigo), Geelong, Castlemaine, Echuca, Pleasant Creek and Clunes. At Ballarat that body had secured the closing of the shops at 6 p.m. weekdays and 8 p.m. Saturdays.(2)

By the early 1880's the Melbourne Early Closing Association was in a moribund condition. It had about three hundred members, mainly employed in the large drapery establishments in the city. In these shops the usual hours were 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., weekdays and 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., Saturdays. A considerable proportion of the membership were senior employees, often elderly. The Early Closing Association also numbered some employers amongst its members and was supported by other employers. These employers had granted the shorter hours and the Early Closing Association felt it was "under an implied obligation to their own

(1) Vic. Shops Comm., Second Progress Report, pp. IV-V.
(2) Ballarat Star, 29 April, 1 May, 1873. See Chapter 3 of this Part.

employers to endeavour to shorten the hours of trade in other shops, on account of the competition." On the other hand the Association had not sought seats for female shop assistants "through not liking to appear to dictate to their employers."(1)

The failure of the Early Closing Association to secure the extension of shorter shopping hours resulted in a new organisation being formed by shop assistants who were still working the long hours. This was the Salesmen's and Assistants' Union, formed in 1881. Consisting of younger and more energetic men, it campaigned vigorously, seeking 7 p.m. closing weekdays and 10 p.m. Saturdays.(2) It circularised all shop owners, had the hours sought approved in various suburbs, and inaugurated the reform by demonstrations and torchlight processions with bands.(3) But within weeks early closing in the suburbs was in danger of collapsing, as shopkeepers complained that some proprietors were not observing it, even in the city.(4) The Salesmen's and Assistant's Union redoubled their efforts with pledges of early shopping, house to house canvasses and public meetings.(5) Feeling ran so high that several persons were charged before the Courts with insulting behavior to shop-

(1) Vic Shops Comm., Second Progress Report, Q.197;225;250.
(2) Age, 29 March, 1881.
(3) Age, 18 June, 21 June, 1881.
(4) Age, 2 July, 1881.
(5) Age, 5 July, 9 July, 1881.

keepers who stayed open later than the agreed hours;[1] their shop windows sometimes suffered from stones. At this stage "moral suasion" was relied upon, though the possible necessity of legislation was being foreshadowed by some leaders of the Salesmen's and Assistant's Union, and the Age newspaper which supported them.[2]

Each partial success in the voluntary campaign brought fresh problems; shopkeepers of a suburb which had accepted early closing complained they were losing trade to nearby late shopping suburbs, and there were always some backsliders.[3] In the face of these difficulties the Salesmen's and Assistant's Union and the Early Closing Association following it organised a new series of meetings, petitions, canvasses and appeals to the public, culminating in a torchlight procession from the Trades Hall to Melbourne Town Hall, where a meeting was addressed by the Bishop of Melbourns, three Members of the Legislative Assembly and union leaders. The movement had the support of the Age newspaper, many clergymen, members of Parliament, especially the Liberals, and the trade unions. Ties with the Trades Hall Committee were strengthened by the election of a delegate to that body.[4] although the "Eight Hours Men" and their families

(1) Age, 24 June, 16 July, 1881.
(2) Age, 4 Aug., 5 Aug., 1881.
(3) Age, 6 Aug., 1881.
(4) Age, 10 Oct., 1881.

were often blamed for late shopping. Despite the militant and spectacular methods and the marshalling of widespread public support, it was apparent by the end of 1881 that voluntary agreement by shopkeepers to early closing was not likely to be any more successful in the future than it had been in the past.(1)

In response to this public agitation Gardiner and Deakin, Liberal Members of the Legislative Assembly, in September, 1881, introduced into the Legislative Assembly a bill to close shops at 6 p.m., weekdays and 10 p.m., Saturdays. From the discussion of this in the House arose the appointment of a Select Committee, later a Royal Commission, to enquire into shop hours - the Shops and Factories Commission of 1882-4.(2)

In February, 1882, the Commission began its sittings, dealing with the question of shop hours. The Salesmen's and Assistants' Union gave evidence before the Commission and continued its campaign, now committed to legislation.(3) On this latter object they met some criticism, but, the plunge having been taken, the Secretary of the Salesmen's and Assistants' Union was prepared to support state intervention on hours of labour generally.(4) At the first annual meeting of the Salesmen's and Assistants' Union, the Union

(1) Age, 21 Dec., 1881.
(2) See Chapter 3 of this Part.
(3) Meeting of S. and A.U., Age, 16 Feb., 1882.
(4) Age, 4 April, 1882.

declared that moral suasion had failed and determined to make the question of shop hours "the only political one at elections".(1) The Age was printing accounts of the London early closing movement and the demand for legislation there.(2) The Royal Commission gave the Salesmen's and Assistants' Union new publicity, but the more sedate Early Closing Association practically expired.(3) The Secretary of the Early Closing Association who opposed interference with "liberty of the subject" proved to be out of touch with his members when a poll was taken and a very large majority voted in favour of legislation for early closing.(4)

Thus by the early eighties in Victoria advocates of shorter hours for shop assistants had been convinced that only general legislation could bring about the reform. Soon even critics of shorter hours were paying lip service to the principle of legislation, but it quickly became evident that there were many ways in which legislation could be rendered ineffective.

When the Commission came to tabulate shop hours it was found that the most common hour of opening was 9 a.m., although quite a number opened at 8 a.m., and in the case

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(1) Age, 13 April, 1882.
(2) Age Supplement, 22 July, 1882.
(3) Age, 20 June, 1882 - no quorum, half yearly meeting; Age, 21 Dec., 1882 - small attendance at half yearly meeting.
(4) Vic. Shops Comm., Second Progress Report, Q.253 and Appendix C.

of grocers even 7 a.m. The larger city shops generally closed at 6 p.m., a few at 5 p.m., but most of the suburban shops were open until 8 or 9 p.m., weekdays. On Saturdays a few city shops closed for the afternoon, but the normal hour of closing was 10 p.m., Saturday being the usual late shopping night.(1) The Commissioners found that in drapery, grocery, boot and shoe shops the daily hours were thirteen to fourteen and more on Saturdays. In fruit and confectionery shops, tobacconists, restaurants and refreshment rooms and pawnbrokers' shops the daily hours were said to be from fourteen to sixteen.(2) By way of compensation may employers claimed to give employees a half holiday, some hours or an evening off, weekly.(3) In most Victorian country towns, including Sandhurst and Ballarat, shops closed earlier on weekdays, and the Saturday half holiday was more common.(4)

In the evidence before the Commission the main opposition to legislation for early closing came from suburban shopkeepers and a few in the city. Those favouring early closing by law included almost all employee witnesses, a number of large Melbourne retailers and quite a few suburban shopkeepers who wished to reduce their own hours and supported a legal enactment to make this universal.

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(1) Vic. Shops Comm., Second Progress Report, Appendix A.
(2) Ibid, P. VII.
(3) Ibid, Appendix A.
(4) Ibid, and Q.70; 309; 420.

The Royal Commissioners had frankly regarded themselves as reformers, and in a unanimous report called for legislative control of shop hours. They rejected proposals for local option polls of either ratepayers or shopkeepers, because in any district either body might favour late hours; similarly they regarded the setting of hours for the sale of certain goods as unfair and impracticable. On the other hand, they did not recommend a universal closing hour, as sought particularly by employees. They put forward the compromise proposal that the hours of labour of shop assistants should be limited by law, with the proviso that they should not exceed forty eight per week. This suggestion had been strongly opposed by most employee witnesses who felt that it could not be policed effectively. Many small shopkeepers, however, were prepared to accept it, relying upon family labour or the use of employees as found most convenient. They felt that such a proposal would not rob them of their means of competing with larger concerns.

It was not until 1885 that any action was taken on the Commission's report. Meanwhile the Salesmen's and Assistants' Union canvassed candidates in the general election of 1883, and called for support for Gardiner, member for Carlton, in particular. But the Union's campaigns were not so prominent as they had been. The Early Closing Association looked like collapsing,(1) but revived during

(1) Age, 23 June, 1883; Half-yearly meeting - motion to dissolve E.C.A. and support S.and A.U. defeated at small meeting.

1884, concentrating on suburban branches, which were successful at Collingwood and Fitzroy.[1] A separate Hotham Grocers' Assistants' Union was also active.[2]

In June 1884, W.C. Smith, Chairman of the Commission, introduced an Early Closing in Business Establishments Bill, but did not proceed with it on the assurance that the Government would deal with the subject in its proposed Factory Act.[3] Smith was able to stand forth as the reformer whose recommendations were being avoided by the Government, because there certainly was no eagerness to tackle the thorny question of shop hours despite the Royal Commission's forthright Report.

The long awaited Workrooms and Factories Law Amendment Bill appeared in November, 1884, sponsored by Deakin. So far as shops were concerned, it provided for a closing time of 7 p.m., weekdays and 10 p.m., Saturdays except for chemists, eating houses and tobacconists. Exemptions might be granted by the Minister on receipt of a petition from two-thirds of the shopkeepers of any class of shops in any district. Mixed shops were to be closed, and an inspector could require a shopkeeper to provide seats for employees. Prosecutions were to be directed by the

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(1) Age, 28 June, 1884.
(2) Age, 22 May, 1883; 7 May, 1884.
(3) Vic. P.D., Vol. XLV, p.285.

Minister.[1] In introducing the Bill Deakin said that it followed the proposal Sir John Lubbock had recently placed before the British Parliament. Limiting the hours of shop assistants would not secure uniformity in the closing of shops nor help shopkeepers themselves; the Bill was not coercive, but left in the hands of a majority of shopkeepers the power to extend their hours.[2] Despite some enthusiastic support the Bill did not finish its second reading.

A year later, in September, 1885, the government introduced a new Factories, Workrooms and Shops Bill. This Bill was similar to that of 1884, with the important exception that municipal councils were given power to permit any class of shops to stay open later or close earlier, and to fix penalties for breaches of the law. This considerably lessened the likelihood of effective control of shop hours, but even so the Bill was strongly criticised in Parliament before it passed into law in 1886.[3]

From the beginning the Chief Inspector of Factories reported that the shop closing sections of the 1885 Act were ineffective, owing to the varying hours in different municipalities and the nominal fines for breaches imposed by local benches. Municipal councils had made great use of

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(1) Vic. Legis. Ass., Bills Introduced, 1884.
(2) Vic. P.D., Vol. 47, p.2172 ff.
(3) Ibid, Vol. 49.

their powers to extend hours on petition from the majority of shopkeepers of any particular class.[1] The most common hours of closing in Melbourne and the suburbs were still 9 p.m. weekdays and 11 p.m. Saturdays. Of sixty three prosecutions, eight had been dismissed, thirty five persons convicted and fined 1/- and nine fined 5/-.[2] The Chief Factory Inspector was glad to be rid of this section of the Act when its administration was handed over to the police. The ineffectiveness of the Act became more marked in succeeding years.[3]

In an attempt to remedy the situation Deakin introduced in 1888 an amending bill on shop hours which would have given the Chief Secretary power to make regulations over-riding municipal councils on the recommendation of the Chief Inspector of Factories, and on the presentation of a petition from the majority of shopkeepers of a class of shops in the district. Shopkeepers open later than 7 p.m., weekdays or 10 p.m. Saturdays would not be permitted to work their employees more than forty eight hours per week or more than five hours without a one hour meal break. Set penalties of 10/- for a first offence, £2 for a second and £5 for subsequent ones were prescribed.[4] The bill was discharged at its second reading. It was re-introduced on

(1) Vic. Factory Inspector's Report for 1886, p.8.
(2) Ibid, Appendix B.
(3) Ibid for 1887 and 1888.
(4) Vic. Legis. Ass., Bills Introduced, 1888.

the resolution of the Committee of the Whole, and passed its second reading on 20th December, 1888, but Parliament was then prorogued. Another Amending Act was introduced in June, 1889, but consideration of the second reading was postponed until the Bill was withdrawn in November, 1889.

Thus the position remained the same during 1889 except that prosecutions of any kind, virtually ceased during the second half of the year when the Amending Act was expected.(1)

In 1890 another attempt was made to amend the Act along the lines of Deakin's earlier efforts, but it came to nothing. It is significant in that it was sponsored by W.C. Smith, Trenwith and Maloney, for now a labour group of parliamentarians had been added as a left wing of the liberal alliance. A further attempt to break the impasse by a short bill which would prevent any shopkeeper working his employees later than 7 p.m., weekdays and 10 p.m. Saturdays was withdrawn without debate.

In his Report for 1891 the Chief Inspector of Factories returned once more to the glaring anomalies which arose through different hours being fixed in adjoining municipalities and different scales of fines imposed. He suggested that the shopkeepers themselves should endeavour

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(1) Vic. Factory Inspector's Report for 1889, p.13 and Appendix D.

to seek uniformity. Forty eight prosecutions were launched and dealt with in much the same way as previous years.(1) A further Shops Bill of this year made no progress at all.

The abortive nature of these repeated attempts to effectively limit shop hours indicates the strength of the opposition which could be marshalled against them. Soon after the original Act was passed a Victorian Shopkeepers' Union was formed, petitions against the Act and to municipal authorities for exemption from its provisions were collected. In a manifesto against Smith's proposed amendment in 1890, the Shopkeepers' Union declared that the Act had "embarrassed and brought to insolvency a great number of small and not a few large shopkeepers", and attacked the amendment and the original Act in the strongest terms. It is not possible that such an ineffective piece of legislation as the 1885 Act could have been a serious inconvenience to shopkeepers; but the great prosperity which Victoria had enjoyed during the late 1880's was now disappearing and small shopkeepers were feeling the pinch. The violent opposition to the proposed amendment was on the grounds that it would constitute the Chief Secretary "supreme dictator" and abolish the power of municipal councils to grant petitioners local permits, for it was municipal control which had made the Act a dead letter and enforcement by the local justices which kept

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(1) Vic. Factory Inspector's Report for 1891.

penalties to trivial sums.[1]

It was not until the passage of the 1896 Act in Victoria that hours of shop assistants were reduced. Despite all the agitation and the legislative efforts, throughout the eighties most shop assistants were in attendance from sixty to ninety hours per week, except for those in the large city stores who might work little more than fifty hours.

The history of shop hours in other colonies shows the same forces at work as in Victoria, and those opposing shorter hours more successful. A primarily working class demand which was by its nature political made most progress in Victoria because there the political circumstances were most favourable.

In New South Wales the Sydney drapers (i.e. shop assistants) had an Early Closing Association in the sixties. After the usual vicissitudes it was revived in the early seventies, including some employer members. In 1873 this Drapers' Early Closing Association was circulating trade unions asking their members not to shop after 7 p.m., but was not receiving any effective response. Drapers' shops, whose goods were not the necessities of the meal hour nor the refreshments of the moment, found restricted trading hours a practical possibility, so that the Early Closing Associations were based on drapers' employees. In 1882 the

(1) Statement of Victorian Shopkeepers' Union, July, 1890, quoted in Q'land Factories Comm., p. XXXIX.

Sydney Early Closing Association launched a big propaganda campaign, following the same lines as in Melbourne, to turn the public against late shopping and to persuade shop owners to close early. Reliance was still placed upon "moral suasion", but success was very limited. Seeking stronger support, the Early Closing Association affiliated to the Trades and Labour Council in 1883 despite the opposition of its more conservative members. This action caused the withdrawal of its shop owner members. In 1885 the drapers' assistants appeared for the first and only time in the Eight Hour Day procession. Drapers' assistants from most large city stores had enjoyed the eight hour day with the Saturday half holiday since at least 1880;(1) their appearance was more of a demonstration of shop assistants' demands than a celebration. The shop assistants' movement now sought legislation on hours, but the political climate of New South Wales prevented this issuing in any parliamentary proposals.(2)

Thus in New South Wales, as in Victoria, the eighties saw the emergence of a new, vigorous type of organisation of shop assistants, even though in New South Wales the old title survived. This new organisation demanded legislation on shop hours, being disillusioned with appeals

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(1) H.M. Franklyn, "A Glance at Australia in 1880", Melb., 1881, p.43.
(2) The account of N.S.W. events is from The Co-operator, Eight Hour Souvenir, Vol. VIII, No. 41, Special Issue, 7 Oct., 1912.

for voluntary co-operation; it directed its arguments to unionists on grounds of solidarity rather than to employers on humanitarian grounds.

In South Australia there had been an intermittent agitation for early closing from at least 1870.(1) By 1881 some shops were closing at midday on Saturday, and an Early Closing Association was formed by shop assistants with the particular aim of making this general.(2) It was not until 1889 and 1890 that 6 p.m. closing on weekdays was accepted by many large city firms.(3) At this period the Early Closing Association merged into the Retail Assistants' Union, continuing the same kind of publicity campaigns with which the agitation was invariably conducted.(4) The suburban shops still kept late hours on weekdays and later ones on Saturdays; so did a few of the large city stores, especially those dealing in groceries, so that by 1891 most shop assistants did not enjoy the shorter hours. It was also felt that these hours, where they did exist, rested on a precarious foundation, and were in constant danger of being lost through the defection of some firms.

Hence employee witnesses before the Royal Commission of 1892 pressed for a legal closing hour for shops, administered by the central government, and were wary of any

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(1) S.A. Factories Comm., Q.11735 ff.
(2) Age, 11 Nov., 1881.
(3) S.A. Factories Comm., Q.405.
(4) Ibid, Q.2790.

other proposals. Witnesses opposed to early closing felt that it was not necessary in the relatively small city of Adelaide, and certainly not in the country areas. Even the majority report of the Commissioners led by Kingston recommended that the decision be left to a two-thirds vote of the shopkeepers of any particular trade and district.(1) Dissenting reports opposed any legislation on the subject. It was not until 1900 that South Australia adopted an Early Closing Act, at the same time as Queensland, and following Western Australia in 1897 and New South Wales in 1899.

In Queensland agitation for early closing of shops had extended over sixteen years but it was only at the beginning of 1889 that a serious campaign to achieve this began.

A Shop Assistants' Early Closing Association was formed and launched with those methods which had long been familiar in other colonies. Public meetings were held, the support of the press, doctors and some Parliamentarians was enlisted; sandwich men paraded, handbills were distributed and deputations waited on employers urging them to introduce voluntary early closing. At its peak the Shop Assistants' Early Closing Association numbered some six hundred members, but membership declined as its efforts failed to secure results and it appeared it would collapse

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(1) S.A. Factories Comm., Report.

in the same way as a previous Early Closing Association. A petition containing over twenty thousand signatures was presented by the Early Closing Association to Parliament asking for legislation for 6 p.m. closing, ventilation, prevention of overcrowding and restriction of child labour. This had been assisted by Early Closing Associations in Charters Towers, Gympie, Maryborough, Toowoomba, and by trade unions. In this period, after the Maritime Strike of 1890, and in Queensland where labour was most widely organised and radical and socialist ideas most diffused, the Shop Assistants' Early Closing Association was a much more militant body than its progenitors of ten years earlier. It was aided by large city firms which had granted the shorter hours but primarily it was and saw itself as a trade union. Though not a registered trade union it was affiliated to the Australian Labour Federation, its secretary being a member of the Brisbane District Council of the Federation.(1) Some employers had recently attempted to promote a rival shop assistants' organisation free of this affiliation.(2) The agitation about shop hours and other working conditions resulted in Glassey, who was virtually the first labour representative in Parliament, introducing a

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(1) Q'land Factories Comm., evidence of F.McDonnell; T.A. Coghlan, "Labour and Industry in Australia", Vol. III, p. 1886.
(2) Q'land Factories Comm., Q. 4047.

Factories and Shops Bill in 1890. It did not pass, but out of the debate arose the appointment of a Royal Commission on Shops, Factories and Workshops. The evidence before the Royal Commission provides a picture of shop hours in Brisbane.

In Brisbane in 1891, retail hours ranged from eight to eleven on ordinary days and from four to fourteen on Saturdays, exclusive of meal times. Quite a number of large city stores were closing at 6 p.m., and giving the Saturday half holiday, but in most shops the closing hour on weekdays was 9 p.m., and on Saturdays as late as 11 p.m. Grocers sometimes opened before 8 a.m., but the usual hour of opening for other shops was 8 a.m., to 9 a.m. In special cases such as butchers' shops and restaurants the hours were much longer.(1) Normally one hour was allowed for meals, but sometimes there was no set meal break. It is probable that these hours represented a considerable reduction over the last twenty years.(2) The Majority Report of the Commission recommended that 6 p.m. be made the legal closing hour for shops, with an eight hour day for employees. Even the Minority Report, while opposing legislation. hoped that shop hours would be reduced. It was not until 1900 that any legislation to carry out these

(1) Q'land Factories Comm., Appendix E.
(2) Ibid, Q.10359.
(3) Ibid, Report and Second Report.

proposals was passed.

To a modern reader the amount of attention devoted to hours of shop assistants seems disproportionate; but the public discussion of the time gave even more consideration to this question. The reasons have been noted: shop assistants were numerically important; their conditions affected public convenience and attracted public attention; legislation affecting them also affected different classes of self employed, small employers and large employers. The interests of these groups always conflicted, so that legislation was full of difficulties. Yet legislation it had to be for long experience had shown the futility of individual or union action without legislation. Thus what later became a minor part of industrial legislation was one of the first to be thoroughly debated.

In these debates the same arguments are repeated and the same groups represented, again and again, in all colonies.(1) Pember Reeves, explaining the rebuffs to

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(1) Because the same groups still exist in retailing the arguments are constantly repeated; only the actual hours proposed differ. Thus in Sydney in 1955 the familiar ground was being re-trodden, with a Shop Assistants' Union defending the existing law, the "Shopkeepers' Political Action Committee, a lively group of 1,000 small traders which is campaigning for the right to serve the public after 5.30 p.m."; and a Grocers' and Storekeepers' Association who "are quite satisfied with present closing hours". (S.M.H., 26 Feb., 1955, p.2.).

legislative proposals, points to the political influence of the small shopkeeper.(1) This was certainly true, for liberal as well as conservative governments. From the other side, shop assistants' organisations lacked strength. From a surprisingly early time shop assistants did form unions, which in the eighties were vocal and militant; they had more humanitarian support than usual. What held them back was not gentility, but lack of bargaining strength. Shop assistants were semi-skilled male and female workers whose occupation was attractive enough to be constantly over supplied with labour. Only a few senior men in large stores were specialists and they did receive shorter hours. The trade unions of skilled craftsmen looked down upon the shop assistants rather than vice versa. After the strikes of the nineties unionism was no longer so respectable and unions of shop assistants suffered a decline - the changed attitude was apparent in Brisbane in 1891. During the 1880's the shop assistants struggled through their unions to secure shorter hours of work, but unsuccessfully.

A subsidiary question to hours of work is that of meal breaks and other breaks during working hours. Where a daily working time has been mentioned in the preceding pages, such as an eight hour day, it refers to

(1) W.P. Reeves, "State Experiments in Australia and New Zealand", first published 1902, 1923 edition, Vol. 2, p. 181 ff.

actual working time exclusive of meal breaks. The usual meal break was one hour for lunch. In some factories and shops the lunch break was less than one hour. This was not opposed by employees when their total hours were fixed. It was a subject of complaint in cases where total working hours were not fixed, as in the case of many shop assistants. In piece work occupations, particularly clothing manufacture, the lunch break might be short, for here earnings were the first concern of the workers and low rates of pay precluded the luxury of adequate meal periods. The custom of having breakfast as well as lunch on the job practically disappeared when daily hours were reduced to eight or nine; it was no longer necessary for the worker nor economical for the employer, especially if he was using power driven machinery where the usual steam engine required a fairly long warm-up period to develop full power. In the Sydney iron trade in the mid seventies workers struck to maintain two meal breaks in the new eight hour day but such holding to tradition could not prevail.

Rest periods, other than meal breaks, during working hours, are, historically, a late innovation in working conditions. It is indicative of the wage earners' powerful position during the gold rushes that this custom was established in Victoria in 1855. A business man of the time, partner in a Melbourne firm, with an anxious eye on the

costs, deplores it as follows :-

"A curious practice exists in the Colony [(Victoria)] of taking a 'smoking time' in the forenoon for a quarter of an hour, and again in the afternoon for a quarter of an hour. All the men leave off work and deliberately sit down and smoke. This, with sundry 'nobblers' which they are allowed to take (a nobbler is a small glass of spirits) will count not less than an hour each day for every man..." (1) Rural work, with its long hours of attendance and varied occupations, has always provided, indeed necessitated, such breaks. Probably, it was only the labour shortage of the gold rushes which extended the practice to urban workers on fixed hours. There it survived to some extent amongst building workers until 1890, but was unknown for the new factory occupations.

In considering hours of labour over a period of time such as a year, one other factor needs to be taken into account, namely, holidays. Australia, Protestant ruled and first settled at the end of the eighteenth century, had no succession of Saints' Days to be eliminated by commercialism. It always had, however, a shortage of labour and its original occupations were the seasonal rural ones with their periods of unrelenting toil followed by idleness, voluntary or enforced. Hence both public holidays and

(1) Robert Caldwell, "The Golden Era of Victoria", London, 1855, p.129.

than

private ones were more common in nineteenth century Britain. Usually such holidays were not paid ones.

One consequence of the reduction of working hours from the fifties was the institution of the Saturday half holiday. The eight hour day at this time meant six such days, or forty eight hours of work, per week; but this was habitually worked in five and a half days, five of them of about eight and a half hours each, with Saturday afternoon a holiday. By the end of the eighties a few skilled building workers had reduced their hours to an effective forty five per week, for they worked only the eight hours on week days and five hours on Saturday. In most occupations the weekly total of hours left the Saturday free from 1 p.m. or 2 p.m. Even many of the large city stores closed. An American visitor in the late eighties described Saturday in the colonies as a weekly half holiday, a time of carnival, drinking, sports and wasteful activities generally.(1) Certainly the Saturday half holiday was a cherished possession or a prime goal for urban wage earners. By the 1880's Australia had its Puritan Sabbath, in that theatres, hotels and institutions were closed on Sunday, though private pleasure might be taken; this was made more acceptable by the fact that for most people Saturday afternoon was the equivalent of the Continental Sunday.

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(1) M.M. Ballou, "Under the Southern Cross, or Travels in Australia", Boston, 1888, p. 202 ff.

The Saturday half holiday was the result of a re-arrangement of working time, although a prerequisite was that total hours should not be too long to work in five and a half days.

Public holidays reduced total working time. There was no lack of them in Australia in the 1880's. Christmas Day, Boxing Day, New Year's Day, Good Friday, Easter Monday, the Queen's Birthday and the Prince of Wales' Birthday were observed as full public holidays in all colonies. Often an extra day was proclaimed at Christmas. Each colony had its public holiday in commemoration of its foundation - in Victoria both Constitution and Separation Days. For public servants and most banks and offices there were holidays such as Whit Monday, Easter Tuesday, St. Patrick's, St. George's, St. David's and St. Andrew's Days. Some at least of these holidays were the accepted perquisites of the public servant and the career clerical worker, but not of the general body of wage earners. St. Patrick's Day was rather different; since persons of Irish descent observed it wholeheartedly, wherever they were numerous it had to be accepted as at least a sem-public holiday. Eight Hour Day was a proclaimed public holiday in Victoria from 1879, in New South Wales from 1885; in other colonies some workers took a holiday for the occasion. In Melbourne, Melbourne Cup Day was an effective holiday for all. In addition to these, special public holidays

could be proclaimed on particular occasions, even a half holiday for the first day of the cricket match between Victoria and the Australian Eleven which had just returned from its triumphant 1880 English tour.(1)

The average of eight or nine public holidays annually in the colonies in the eighties is a high one. It compares with the nine or ten of the present day. An explanation of this is necessary. In the first place, it was not obligatory on employers to grant nor employees to take these holidays, although most did. Secondly, for the great majority of workers public holidays were not paid holidays although shop assistants sometimes were paid. The most important exception was the public service, and the proclamation of public holidays was partly a concession to public servants. Clerical employees of banks and some commercial offices also received their salary irrespective of public holidays, but most other workers did not. For them public holidays were time off without pay, a respite from work which, at the ruling rate of wages, they accepted gladly.(2) With the establishment of overtime rates, work done on public holidays was often paid at higher rates. Thus the settlement terms of the Melbourne wharf labourers'

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(1) Age, 9 Dec., 1880.

(2) Employers often complained of the disruption of business caused by public holidays. In New South Wales in 1889 the Steamship Owners' Association decided to join with the Employers' Union in vigorously protesting against the indiscriminate granting of public holidays (Builder and Contractor, 28 Sept., 1889, p.300). Even the Age would sometimes have a rueful editorial on the subject. Occasionally

strike in 1886 set New Year's Day, Good Friday, Eight Hours' Day and Christmas Day as strict public holidays, for which, as on Sundays, work was to be paid at double time.(1)

Paid annual leave was virtually non-existent during the eighties for other than salaried workers. In the public service it did not extend to labourers, though in the Railways Departments engine drivers and firemen usually received a week or more of annual holiday; so did permanent employees in Government Printing Offices. Shop assistants by the end of the eighties often received paid annual holidays of a week or even of two weeks, which was regarded as a recompense for unpaid overtime occurring intermittently through the year and regularly at stocktaking time.(2) In general the paid annual holiday was only given to the salaried, as distinct from the wages, employees.

Holidays are a minor aspect of duration of labour.

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(1) continued:
an employer could boast of paying his workers for all or some public holidays. Examples are: S.A. Factories Comm., Q.8386 - girls in bookbinding works on weekly wages paid for Christmas Day and Good Friday; Vic. Shops Comm., Factories Report, Q.5689 - employees in a Footscray Bone Mills and Artificial Manure Works paid for sickness and public holidays; Age, 30 Aug., 1884 - mill owners refuse eight hour day demand but grant Saturday half holiday and public holidays on pay.

(1) J.T. Sutcliffe, "A History of Trade Unionism in Australia", p. 43.

(2) Q'land Factories Comm., Q.324; 377; 505; 585; 836; 1057; 1190; 1575; 2050; 2205; 2447; 2453; 4082. S.A. Factories Comm., p. 90.

The universal paid annual holiday comes only at a much later period than the 1880's. The prevailing high level of wages encouraged voluntary intervals between jobs or unpaid periods away from work. The same factor made acceptable the public holidays, usually unpaid, which supplied regular intermissions in labour.

PART III - WAGES AND EMPLOYMENT.

CHAPTER 1.

METHODS OF WAGE PAYMENT.

Of the many different aspects of wages as a social phenomenon only a few will be considered here as relevant to a study of working class conditions. The very existence, or prevalence, of wage payments may be used to distinguish different economic systems. Since the wages system was the normal economic environment of urban wage earners in the eighties, we are not concerned with its relationship to other economic systems save in special cases such as those of unpaid workers; and these are not an alternative to but a peculiar characteristic of the wages system. In the countryside, of course, other means of subsistence than wages would have to be examined.

Again, wages as a factor in the economy, as, for example, a cost of production or a determinant of economic change, do not enter into this study. We are concerned

with wages from the recipient's viewpoint, as purchasing power at his disposal, gained in a certain way.

As such we begin with methods of wage payment - by time or by the piece, under what conditions, subject to what deductions and additions and special arrangements wages were paid. These reflect basis relationships between employer and employee. Then the amount of wages must be considered. This is done in Chapter 2 with the examination of money wage rates, prices and real wages. Chapter 3 deals with unemployment, which introduces the greatest difference between wage rates and actual earnings. The final Chapter of this Part examines the position of juvenile workers, particularly the wage systems applying to them.

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The two main methods of calculating wages are by the time worked and by the output. Which method is adopted by the employer depends fundamentally upon the nature of the productive process. Where a product, or part product, of undifferentiated quality and measurable units of quantity is produced by the individual labour of a worker in such a way that his effort or skill determines the output, at a given level of technology, then we may expect piece rates to be used; for piece rates provide the employer with a more accurate accounting of labour cost and return from

labour in each case. Against this the employer must balance the administrative costs of complicated payment systems, especially at a time when office organisation and accounting were little developed. Typically, the goods which were paid by the piece in the eighteen eighties were those which could be put in a bundle and counted - cigars, shirts or half-made boots, for example. For the employer piece rates also have the great advantage of maintaining output without supervision. In a period when the discipline of the factory was not firmly established piece rates, where applicable, would naturally come to mind as the easiest method of producing results from the labour force. In modern industrial countries from about the time of the first world war there has been a tendency by employers to change from time rates to piece rates as a means of increasing the intensity of work. There is no evidence of this change from established time rates to piece rates during the eighteen eighties in Australia.

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Since the employer sees in piece rates a means of making the worker's self interest his taskmaster, this method of payment is more likely to be adopted when other incentives, such as the presence of an alternative labour supply, are not available. Hence such changes as can be observed in methods of payment need to be considered in relation to the level of unemployment at the time.

From the employee's point of view time rates provide security with regard to payment and intensity of work.

Traditionally employees have sought time rates. Of course, if they operated in conjunction with machinery which was speeded up, or improved in operation, they might seek piece rates as compensation for increased intensity of labour or as a share of the increased output. But such cases are rare.

The attitude of employers and employees depends on their evaluation of the particular circumstances. The evaluation does not take place in a vacuum, for in the great majority of the complexities of co-operative effect involved in factory production, piece rates are impracticable. In others, such as clothing manufacture, piece rates are established from handicraft days, and may be carried over to machine production without query.

Although time rates were normal for Australian urban workers in the 1880's, little needs to be said about them. The question of where piece rates prevailed, and why, is the important one.

The greatest area of piece rates in the eighteen eighties was the clothing trade. In Britain and elsewhere this historical feature of the clothing trade predated the factory system and continued with it. The convenience of piece rate payments was a prerequisite for the outwork which distinguished this industry. In Victoria, where clothing manufacture was most developed, piece rates of pay were usual from the beginning of the eighties.[1] often even

(1) Vic. Tariff Comm., Q.2124; 2348; 3390; 3460. Vic. Shops Comm., Second Progress Report, Q.715; 1508.

for male tailors.[1] The same position applied in other colonies. Machinists, cutters and pressers might be on weekly wages or piece rates.[2] Dressmaking was less well adapted to piece rates.[3] Elaborate logs of piece rates existed for most branches of the clothing trade, and disputes about wages concerned prices in these;[4] where time rates were paid they were derived from the piece rate logs.

A similar position obtained in the manufacture of most clothing accessories such as hats and caps and umbrellas.[5] In woollen mills most girls were on piece rates, usually being engaged in weaving, but loomers and other skilled hands, often males, would be on day rates.[6]

In various industries employing women and juveniles on unskilled work piece rates were often used where the processes of manufacture were suitable. In this category falls brush, rope, blacking, soap and candle manufacture, dye-stamping and jam making.[7]

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(1) e.g. Q'land Factories Comm., Q.8094; 10049; 13285; 10224. Reports under the Census and Industrial Returns Act, N.S.W. V.& P. of Legis. Ass., 1891-2, Vol. 7, p.1079 ff. Report No. 1, p.3.

(2) Vic. Shops Comm., Factories Report, Q.3376; 3442. Reports under the Census and Industrial Returns Act, N.S.W., Report No. 1, p.3 - cutters and pressers on weekly rates.

(3) Q'land Factories Comm., Q.13162; 10164.

(4) Vic. Shops Comm., Factories Report, Q.4331; S.A. Factories Comm., Appendix J.

(5) Vic. Tariff Comm., Q.250; 293; 323; 465; 494; 1466; 1639; 1713p 7022. Vic Shops Comm., Factories Report, Q. 4966; 5026.

(6) Vic. Tariff Comm., Q.4117; 4392; 4490; 4544; 5155; 5384; 5497; 5765. Q'land Factories Comm., Q.14387; 13889.

(7) Vic. Tariff Comm., Q.33828. Vic Shops Comm., Factories Report, Q.4836; 5081; 5667. Q'land Factories Comm. Q.9158;

In tobacco factories, cigar rollers, highly skilled workers, were on piece rates; so were tobacco twisters and some girls packing and preparing, while other less skilled tasks such as stripping the leaf were paid on a time basis.(1)

Throughout the eighties compositors sometimes worked on piece rates, sometimes on time rates, without any apparent preference for one or the other on the part of the workers. Probably weekly wages were more common in small country newspapers and piece rates in larger city ones.(2)

In the early eighties boot manufacture, most developed in Victoria, was marked by much outwork in the finishing branch. By the end of the decade outwork was much diminished in all colonies, partly by agreement with the bootmakers' unions. Piece rates of pay for the finishing branch remained usual, with other branches on time rates.(3) In Victoria in the early eighties the Bootmakers' Union was engaged in constant disputes with employers over outwork, rates of pay and the use of boy labour. Towards the end

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(7) continued: Q.12234; 11535.

(1) Vic. Shops Comm., Factories Report, Q.3046; 3064; 3107; Q'land Factories Comm., Q.6957; 10752; 10828.

(2) Vic. Tariff Comm., Q.41131. Vic. Shops Comm., Factories Report, Q.3902. Q'land Factories Comm., Q.10013; 14266; 14307. N. G. Butlin, Economic Record, Dec., 1947, "Collective Bargaining in the Sydney Printing Industry, 1880-1900."

(3) Vic. Tariff Comm., Q.8546; 8645; 8692; 8696; 11821. Vic. Shops Comm., Factories Report, Q.5043. Q'land Factories Comm., Q.4700; 11800; 7114.

of 1883 the interesting situation arose of a rival union, the Bootmakers' Eight Hour Association, being formed, the relatively few members of which were receiving weekly rates of pay.(1) Tremwith, leader of the main boot union, attacked the Eight Hour Association as working under disguised piece rates at low wages with much juvenile labour.(2) Eventually both unions entered the strike, or lockout, of late 1884 on a programme of no outwork, one boy to five men, approval of daily rates and the eight hour day.(3) The weekly wage men were concentrated in one factory, the owner of which claimed that he had never paid piece rates, but always weekly wages.(4) The key to this was the very great division of labour obtaining in that factory, with the work reduced to a great number of such simple processes that mainly unskilled juvenile labour and a few tradesmen could operate them.(5) It was partly the increased use of machinery which led employers to rely less on outwork, and probably the same cause had diminished the importance of piece rates by the end of the decade.

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(1) Age, 30 Nov., 1883; 7 Dec. 1883.
(2) Age, 30 Nov., 1883; 28 Feb., 1884; 6 March, 1884; 10 Sept., 1884.
(3) Age, 16 Sept., 26 Nov., 1884.
(4) Vic. Tariff Comm., Q. 11971.
(5) Vic. Shops Comm., Factories Report, Q.5726.

There were few other occupations where piece rates were usual. Manufacturing saddlers might be paid in this manner;(1) so might workers in small occupations where it was convenient, such as steam laundries and flag making.(2)

Despite the importance of some piece rate occupations time rates were the prevalent mode of payment of urban workers during the eighties. Nothing special needs to be said about them. Such rates were quoted by hour, day or week in various occupations, the daily rate being the customary one. Questions of length of engagement, casual occupations and interval between paydays will be dealt with subsequently.

So far we have dealt with payment for time worked or goods produced. The most important additional payments are those for holidays or periods of illness. The question of holidays and holiday pay is discussed in Part II, Chapter 4. It can be summed up by saying that payment of wages for a few public holidays was not unknown in permanent employment, but paid annual holidays existed only in special occupations, only for some shop assistants in the categories of wage earners covered by this thesis.

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(1) Vic. Tariff Comm., Q.15211; 15321; 15711; 15727; 15824; 15923; 16120. Vic. Shops Comm., Final Report, Q.7037 - about half piece, half time.
(2) Vic Tariff Comm., Q.3764; 6808.

Similarly sick pay was a matter entirely at the discretion of the employer. Throughout most of the eighties sick pay of any kind was a rarity, so little expected that the subject was scarcely mentioned. Provision of sick benefits was usually regarded by trade unions as one of their main functions, for employees had to rely on their own efforts in this regard. It was an exceptional employer, proud of his good relations with his men, who could boast of giving sick pay.(1) It is quite possible, of course, that permanent and valuable employees might receive something in the case of illness, at the discretion of the employer. At the end of the eighties Brisbane shop assistants often received sick pay even for prolonged illnesses,(2) but the practice varied from shop to shop. As with holiday pay, this was regarded as some compensation to shop assistants for their very long hours, and tended to be most common in large stores. In combined retail and manufacturing firms shop assistants often received sick pay while other employees did not. A few other benevolent

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(1) Vic. Shops Comm., Factories Report, Q.5689. H.M. Franklyn, "A Glance at Australia in 1880", p. describes the medical and sick fund ran by the management of the Wallaroo and Moonta mines as unusual. Employees were compelled to contribute and in return received medical attention,, sick pay and funeral benefit.

(2) Q'land Factories Comm., Q.304; 476; 512 ff.; 585; 616; 936; 1775; 2052; 2171; 2207; 3327; 4092; 9020. for examples of sick pay in retail establishments; Q.313; 1429; 25301 2756; 3672; 13213 for cases where sick pay was not given or only partially given.

employers gave this concession,[1] within limits, but it was rare. Occasionally an employer might run a sick fund or maintain a hospital bed, with contributions from employees;[2] or the employees of a firm might organise their own sick fund as an alternative to doing so through the union.[3] But the union benefit, where it existed, was the normal safeguard against absence from work through illness.

Another factor to be taken into account in assessing rates of wages is the existence of special rates. This is apart from the question of whether the nominal rates applied in practice. The two main kinds of special rates are those for shift work and for overtime.

Shift work was not at all common in the eighties. Where it did exist for unskilled or semi-skilled factory labour special rates of pay were not usual. Printers, as a skilled trade many of whom had to work at night, usually received extra for night work, whether on time or piece rates.[4] In 1889 Victorian members of the Amalgamated Society of Engineers were asking for time and a quarter for night shifts.[5] Unskilled labourers such as coal lumpers got nothing extra for night work.[6]

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(1) Q'land Factories Comm., Q.11983.
(2) Ibid, Q.4529; 4572; 4582; 7774; 9252.
(3) S.A. Factories Comm., Appendix B.
(4) Age, 6 Nov., 1883. S.A. Factories Comm., Q.12388.
(5) Builder and Contractor, 28 Dec., 1889.
(6) N.S.W. Strikes Comm., Q.347.

The significance of overtime rates depends on the amount of overtime worked. This is deal with in connection with unemployment, short time and the demand for labour generally. Here we are concerned only with overtime rates. The first prerequisite for an overtime rate is that there should be some paid "normal" length of the working day. This cannot always be taken for granted. The second is that there are occasions at least when the employer wishes to exceed that normal working time, which depends on the demand for the product, the conditions of production and the length of the normal day. All the evidence shows that shop assistants were seldom paid overtime, though they might receive tea money.(1) Their normal working hours were long enough to cover all the requirements of the trade, and they were expected to cope with special circumstances such as stocktakings they arose, sometimes with the general compensation of paid annual holidays. Female workers in the clothing trade seldom received overtime in the early eighties; their extra hours were not regular. Even after the passage of the 1885 Factory Act in Victoria overtime may not have always been paid. In Brisbane at the end of the eighties such

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(1) For instances of ex gratia or tea money payments, see Vic. Shops Comm., Second Progress Report, Q.2438; 2643. Q'land Factories Comm., Q.513; 534; 1158; 3315; 4037; 1652; 4085.

employees sometimes were not paid overtime and higher rates for overtime were rare.[1] In the traffic branch of the railways extra duty without overtime pay could be imposed.[2]

The reduction of normal working hours exemplified in the spread of the eight hour day brought to the fore the question of overtime rates, taking place as it did in a period of generally full employment. During 1882, Melbourne ironmoulders, engineers, boilermakers, bakers and compositors established overtime rates, usually of time and a quarter.[3] When the Victorian Marine Masters and Officers Union was formed in 1884 it sought overtime pay.[4] When wharf labourers, as a casual trade, gained the eight hour day, its significance lay in the fact that additional periods of work were paid at higher rates, of up to time and a half.[5] By the mid-eighties overtime rates were usual where longer hours were often worked. By the end of the eighties most skilled workers were getting time and a half for overtime, with the Victorian Amalgamated Society of Engineers demanding double time for the first two hours.[6] The time and a half rate applied to some semi- and unskilled

(1) Q'land Factories Comm., Q.6605; 6655; 8052; 10150; 9695; 10054; 13360.
(2) Age, 19 May, 1882. See also Chapter on Hours, Part II, Chapter 4.
(3) Age, 26 Oct., 31 Aug., 4 Oct., 11 Oct., 19 Oct., 1882.
(4) Age, 9 Feb., 1884.
(5) Age, 27 Oct., 1883; J.T. Sutcliffe, "A History of Trade Unionism in Australia", p.41; N.S.W. Strikes Comm., Q.658.
(6) N.S.W. Strikes Comm., Q.8887; 5386. - Sydney Bricklayers. Builder and Contractor, 28 Dec., 1889.

workers, but most got less.[1] In 1889 in Brisbane labourers on ship repairs were striking for an overtime rate of time and a half instead of ordinary time.[2] The establishment of overtime rates followed the same lines as the establishment of shorter hours.

The gaining of shift and overtime rates higher than ordinary rates took place as a result of the bargaining strength of the workers concerned. There was not much shift work during the eighties; engineers and printers had special shift rates, less skilled workers did not. The skilled and organised workers who first gained the eight hour day were the first to secure higher rates for overtime. In many cases this did not take place until the eighties. By the end of the decade many unskilled and semi-skilled workers had also obtained such rates.

As noted in connection with piece rates, special systems of incentive payments were virtually unknown in Australia in the eighteen eighties.[3] The nearest approach

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(1) Q'land Factories Comm., Q.5089 - female boot machinists; Q.6745, 6839 - boot factory; Q.13030, 14479 - printers; Q.13384 - confectioners.
(2) Builder and Contractor, 2 Nov., 1889.
(3) A Victorian bottle factory (Vic. Shops Comm., 1884, Q.4926) where employees had to produce a certain quantity and were paid by the piece for output over that amount may have been using an embryonic incentive system. The industry would be one where overheads were high and increased production during a given period of operation would lower costs per unit of product.
A crude incentive system was operated in 1883 by that Melbourne bootmaker referred to previously who relied upon machinery, division of labour and a juvenile work force to dispense with skilled men. A small master tailor, thinking of the apprenticeship aspect, described it scathingly as

was in those occupations where wages included a commission element. Thus some shop assistants received a commission on sales, sometimes for selling difficult lines or slow moving stock.(1) The bonus might be paid on the results of the year's trading, or as a week's extra wages at Christmas(2) but such cases were rare except when given in lieu of paid holidays.

Where piece rates prevailed the rate paid per piece could be raised or lowered by the employer according to his estimate of the labour market and was often the subject of dispute with employees. The use of differential piece rates as a means of increasing production was unknown; they were all flat rates for any quantity. Of course, even from "straight" piece rates, where each additional unit of production is rewarded at the same rate, the employer may benefit not only by saving expense of supervision and so on, but by increased intensity of work, making better use of his machinery and other fixed capital to

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(3) continued:
foll ows: "Look at White the bootmaker; he buys a watch for 22s. 6d.; he says to the boys, 'Whoever makes the most boots gets the watch! ' The boys fire away the whole week, and consequently they all work harder and he reaps the benefit." (Vic. Shops Comm., Final Report, Q.6908).
Such go-getters' improvisations can only be temporary and local in their efforts.

(1) Q'land Factories Comm., Q.2465; 2562; 2873; 3659.
(2) Ibid, Q.3659; 10416. Vic. Shops Comm., Factories Report, Q. 5691.

reduce overhead costs.

Payment of part wages by means of profit sharing was also scarcely known. When the New South Wales Royal Commission on Strikes dealt with the subject in 1891 it cited some British examples and referred to French experience, but not to the practice in Australia.(1) Very rarely, a bonus might be paid to the employees out of profits.(2) The only systematic scheme appears to have been that of Marchant, a philanthropic Brisbane cordial manufacturer, who by 1890, was taking ten per cent on his capital and dividing the balance of profits amongst employees in accordance with wages earned over the year, so that girls might receive three or four pounds annual bonus.(3)

On the whole the urban wage earner of the eighteen eighties received no significant payments or benefits above his ordinary rate of wages for time worked or goods produced, except that sometimes overtime was paid at a higher rate. The many payments or benefits of the social service type which employers were later forced to accept had not yet appeared.

On the other hand fines and deductions from wages were much more common.(4) In the railway service there was

(1) N.S.W. Strikes Comm., Appendix and Literary Appendix.
(2) Q'land Factories Comm., Q.13924 - on Ipswich woollen mill.
(3) Ibid, Q.11990.
(4) The occasional charges to employees for use of premises or power are dealt with in the Chapter on Outwork.

a scale of fines, as well as reductions in grade and dismissals, for offences ranging from idling to negligence and damage to equipment.(1) Some shopowners are mentioned as having their own scale of fines.(2) Special deductions might be made from time to time depending on the circumstances. A complaint that girls in a Victorian hat factory had had one shilling compulsorily deducted from their pay to go towards a fund to oppose a Tariff Commission report considered detrimental to the industry probably reflected a rare occurrence at this time;(3) for though both industrial worker and capitalist had, in Victoria, marched under the banner of Protection, its folds were growing too thin to cover compulsory deductions, save in such cases where the weakness of the workers meant these could not be successfully resisted.

One common type of deduction from wages was for the cost of insurance premiums to cover the worker against accidents suffered at work. Originally this was left to the worker, whose trade union benefits might cover it to some extent. Then from the mid-eighties or a little earlier most colonies passed Employers' Liability Acts (See Part II,

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(1) For Victoria, see V.P.P., 1887, Vol. 1, No. C.5. In four months of 1886, in the Locomotive Branch of the Victorian Railways about thirty fines per month were imposed, ranging from 2/6 to £5.
(2) Q'land Factories Comm., Q.2178; 3410.
(3) Age, 2 April, 1884.

Chapter1), which gave employees the right to sue for compensation for some injuries sustained at work, generally speak- those injuries caused by defective equipment or negligence of superintendence. Employers met this situation by seeking insurance cover, so that the question of who was to pay the insurance premiums, employer or employee, immediately arose. There is no doubt that it was usual for the employer to deduct the premium, averaging about sixpence per week, from employees' wages. Employees complained that they did not know their rights under the policies, or even whether a policy had been taken out, and were often already insured through mutual societies. By the end of the eighties the position was changing, even though a great deal of compulsion was still applied to such a strongly organised body of workers as the New South Wales building trades.(1) Other workers were able to refuse to contribute, so that employers began to complain that employees need not meet the cost of their own accident insurance.(2)

This is an early example of the transfer of some of the cost of social security from the worker to his employer through the intervention of the State. In this case the legislation did not lay the charge directly on the employer but eventually the circumstances obliged the employer to meet

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(1) Builder and Contractor, 28 Sept., 1889. N.S.W. Strikes Comm., Q. 11271 ff.
(2) Builder and Contractor, 19 Oct., 1889. N.S.W Strikes Comm., Q. 2435.

the cost. This process was taking place during the eighties.

Clandestine deductions from pay are almost impossible to trace. In 1891 a representative of Sydney wharf labourers asserted that before the union was formed a regular system of bribing foremen two or three shillings a week to obtain work had existed.(1) There is no reason to doubt the existence of this practice which had not entirely disappeared forty years later in Australia and which has been described as a current abuse in east coast ports of the U.S.A. today. Complaints were made that in other piece work occupations workmen sometimes bribed the employer, manager or foreman with five or ten per cent of their wages for the privilege of constant employment.(2)

One method of wage payment which amounts to a deduction from the worker's wages is the truck system. Truck is the payment of wages in goods instead of money, or in money on the understanding that it will be used to buy goods from the employer or his agent. This abuse had been common in the mill and mining villages of Britain early in the nineteenth century. The British Truck Act of 1831 prohibited the practice, but not until the Amending Act of 1887 was the prohibition made effective. Meanwhile the growth of

(1) N.S.W. Strikes Comm., Q. 1096.
(2) Vic. Shops Comm., Final Report, Q.6973, evidence of a foreman bootmaker.

retailing and the strength of workers' organisations had greatly diminished the practice. In Australia payment in kind was the main form of wages for convicts and assigned servants; but for free city workers it generally disappeared during Macquarie's governorship.(1) It survived in country districts where often there were simply no shops and the employer must provide at least rations. Extortionate prices for rations were complained of by shearers up to the nineties, an abuse which their union set out to remedy.(2) But in the cities the truck system did not exist; perhaps occasionally a shopowner might be able to persuade employees to take part of their pay in appropriate goods,(3) but that would be all.

In the cities provision by the employer of board and lodging was the exception, extending little beyond those occupations where special conditions still render it common. These are such occupations (apart from domestic service) as cook, barman, waitress, restaurant employee. Here meals might be provided even for employees who did not live in. The older British system of shop assistants living in was never so prevalent in Australia, and by the beginning of the eighties it was a rarity, applying only to butchers, some

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(1) T.A. Coghlan, "Labour and Industry in Australia", Vol. I, p. 62.
(2) N.S.W. Strikes Comm., Q.1997 and evidence of Spence generally.
(3) Q'land Factories Comm., Q. 846.

bakers and a few other shop assistants. By the end of the eighties it existed only for butchers and was not universal for them.(1) Where it did exist poor rations and accommodation were often the subject of complaint.

Another cost which the wage earner had to meet was that in connection with obtaining employment. The high charges and misrepresentation of employment registry offices were a source of complaint by workers.(2) These offices were mainly concerned with engaging domestic servants, some hotel and restaurant employees and many types of rural workers. Dissatisfaction with them was reflected in the early adoption by the Labor Party of free (State) Labour Bureaux (as distinct from bureaux for Free Labour).

Cost and difficulty of engagement was a disability mainly of casual labour. More important in depreciating the earnings of casual labour was the intermittent nature of their employment. Outdoor casual labourers such as builders' labourers, navvies and wharf labourers lost time through wet weather, shortages of materials, intervals between engagements, periods of illness and public holidays.(3)

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(1) Vic. Shops Comm., Second Progress Report, Q.270. Q'land Factories Comm., Q.7496; 7542; 8012; 11179; 11218; 12108; 13547; 13991. S.A. Factories Comm., Q.2839 ff.
(2) Age, 24 Feb., 1883; 25 March, 1884.
(3) Age, 11 Nov., 1882 - complaint of public works labourers; Age, 6 Feb., 1884- builders' labourers; N.S.W. Strikes Comm., Q. 739 ff., 972 - ex-President of Sydney Wharf Labourers' Union.

Hourly or daily rates in casual trades always have to be deflated to average earnings over a period of years and in the eighteen eighties it rested on the worker to make provision for all the contingencies mentioned. It was quite an advance when Melbourne wharf labourers, under the terms of the 1886 strike settlement, received half rates for periods when they had been called up during the night and were waiting to work.(1) It was not until the end of the eighties that Sydney wharf labourers received some payment for time between wharf and ship and for "smoke -ohs."(2)

The worker is also concerned with the frequency and regularity with which he receives his pay. He seeks a regular pay day at no longer intervals than a week or perhaps a fortnight. The establishment of these desiderata did not take place until long after the establishment of the wages system.

It was the custom of the time to quote some time rates on a daily basis and some on a weekly scale. To some extent this reflected customary length of engagement in the same way as casual rates would be quoted by the hour. It did not follow that wages were paid at these intervals.

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(1) J.T. Sutcliffe, "A History of Trade Unionism in Australia", p. 42.
(2) N.S.W. Strikes Comm., Q. 946 ff.; 962.

In fact, the weekly pay day, generally on Saturday as the last working day of the week was usual. Occasionally the pay day was earlier in the week than Saturday, a practice which shop assistants favoured in order to diminish late shopping on Saturday nights.(1) Employees generally sought a weekly pay period, while employers may have preferred a longer interval.(2) Shop assistants, as a genteel occupation, were sometimes paid monthly.(3) The greatest complaints were against the irregularity of pay days, in various occupations. With government labourers this might be due to government accounting methods and with private employers to that reluctance to part with ready cash which characterises the small scale stage of capitalism.(4) The withholding of wages was scarcely dealt with by existing colonial laws, although employees had certain rights of suing for wages due. The Tasmanian Master and Servant Act prescribed that wages were payable quarterly;(5) and even a South Australian Act of 1893 did not go further than declaring that notwithstanding any contract for longer intervals, wages were payable monthly.(6)

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(1) Vic. Shops Comm., Second Progress Report, Q.2056; 2092. Q'land Factories Comm., Q.217.
(2) Q'land Factories Comm., Q.6297.
(3) Q'land Factories Comm., Q. 1222.
(4) Age, 13 Jan., 1883; 18 Oct., 1882. Q'land Factories Comm., Q.857; 1462; 1502; 2560; 2599; 9899; 9927.
(5) 19 Vic. No.28. These clauses of this 1856 Act remained in force throughout the nineteenth century.
(6) Workmen's Lien Act, 1893. 56° and 57° Vic., No. 575.

Such long periods between pay days derived from the conditions of country employment in the past, when this was the dominant type of employment. In practice urban workers in the eighties were receiving their wages weekly, with some annoying exceptions. Similarly city wage earners did not come under the system of contract work and payment by cheque when the contract was completed, which obtained for many classes of rural labour.

If the workman did not receive wages due he normally had to seek redress under Master and Servant Acts which dated back to a much harsher epoch. During the eighties many efforts were made to secure easier and more certain procedures for recovering wages due especially from insolvent or absconding employers. In Victoria in 1876 a Workmen's Lien Bill was unsuccessfully introduced by Munro and W.C. Smith to give persons who provided labour or materials for work on a house or mining claim a lien on the house or claim in payment.(1) In 1885 a Master and Servants Statute Amendment Bill proposed that one month's wages of persons employed by mining companies should be the first charge amongst the creditors of the company.(2) This proposal was taken up and extended by the Companies Wages Act of 1885,(3) by which on the winding up of any company first

(1) Vic. Legis. Ass. Bills Introduced, 1876.
(2) Ibid, 1885.
(3) 49 Vic. No. 851.

priority in payments should be given to one month's wages of employees. Similar attempts to give workmen some security for wages due by insolvent employers were made in other colonies.

Under the New South Wales Masters and Servants Act of 1857 (1) a servant could sue for wages due up to £50, pursuing the matter through to the imprisonment of the employer for debt and sequestration of his estate. In 1891 a union official was complaining that a court had held that an agreement between a union and an employers' association to pay a certain rate of wages was not enforceable except against employers who had signed it individually. (2) The defaulting employer who absconded with wages due was not unknown on the waterfront. (3)

The Queensland Master and Servant Act of 1861 (4) gave the servant the right to sue a master or his agent for wages due. By the Wages Act of 1870 (5) a servant could claim on land, stock or machinery under mortgage, lien or bill of sale for six months' wages; and having obtained an order against a mortgagor who failed to pay could proceed against the mortgagee.

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(1) 20 Vic. No. 28, consolidated in 1864.
(2) N.S.W. Strikes Comm., Q.8903.
(3) Ibid, Q.456.
(4) 25 Vic. No.11.
(5) 34 Vic. No. 16. Extended to miners by the Wages Act, 1885, 48 Vic. No. 14.

This kind of protection against an employer who was getting into financial difficulties was specifically excluded by the South Australian Masters and Servants Act of 1878 (1) which laid down that wages could not be recovered from an insolvent employer. A Workmen's Wages Bill with which Kingston was associated was introduced but lapsed in 1889. A Workmen's Liens Act was finally passed in 1893 giving employees a lien on goods to the limit of four weeks wages or £12. (2)

The Tasmanian Master and Servant Act of 1856 (3) gave the servant the common law right to sue for wages. There the matter rested throughout the century; indeed Western Australia led Tasmania, in 1897, with the usual act granting workmen a lien for wages upon work they had been employed.

So far as the legal position was concerned, at the beginning of the eighties a workman could recover wages due only by proceedings for debt and was an unsecured creditor if the employer could not pay. During the decade some protection was given against insolvent employers. This was a safeguard which would be particularly useful to country workers and those on long term contracts of service. The urban worker who had usually established weekly pay periods did not stand to lose so much but the remedies available to

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(1) 41 and 42 Vic. No. 112.
(2) 56° and 57° Vic. No. 575.
(3) 19 Vic. No. 28.

him may scarcely have been worth the trouble when he did feel aggrieved; for this reason the inconveniences of irregular pay days could survive in some instances. On the other side, legislation to limit the attachment of wages had not appeared.

In the Australian cities of the 1880's time rates were the usual method of paying wages. Piece rates applied in some occupations where the worker's skill and effort determined his or her output in easily measurable units. A few were skilled occupations such as cigar making or type setting. The main sphere of piece rates was in clothing manufacture where they pre-dated factory production, the labour force was female or juvenile, and the wages low. Piece rates were also used in minor manufactures employing a similar kind of labour force. They applied in the finishing branch of boot manufacture; here, as in clothing manufacture, they were a necessary condition for the use of outwork. Workers regarded piece rates with suspicion as associated with cheap labour and outwork. Their efforts achieved a little towards replacing piece by time rates.

Additional payments over ordinary rates were rare. Of the urban wage earners the subject of this thesis, only some shop assistants benefited by paid annual holidays or sick pay. Occasionally other permanent employees might receive pay for a few public holidays or a few days of illness. There was little shift work and where it did exist

higher rates of pay were not usual. Higher rates for overtime were rare at the beginning of the eighties, more common by the end of the decade. The winning of them followed a similar pattern of occupations to that shown in the spread of the eight hour day; Shorter hours and full employment led to increased use of overtime. Incentive payments and profit sharing were practically unknown.

On the other hand a number of deductions from pay existed. The truck system was unknown and living-in had disappeared except for some butchers and domestic type occupations. Employers, public and private, often applied scales of fines. When Employers' Liability laws persuaded employers to insure against accidents to employees, premiums were deducted from pay, until workers' opposition began to alter this. Minor bribes and clandestine deductions from wages existed in some casual occupations.

Wages were normally paid weekly. If they were withheld legal action to recover them was cumbersome. During the eighties in most colonies employees were made preferred creditors for wages due from insolvent employers.

The circumstances under which workers receive their wages reflect the stage of development of capitalism and the relationship of employer and employee. During the 1880's Australian urban wage earners improved their position by winning additional payments and some degree of legal security for wages due. .. ..

CHAPTER 2.

WAGE RATES.

The preceding Chapter has dealt with the circumstances under which wages were paid. It is now necessary to turn to an examination of wage rates. The first requirement is to ascertain money wages in various occupations in the different colonies. The occupations selected need to be representative of the main classes of urban wage earners. These figures for the eleven or twelve years concerned enable comparisons to be made between occupations, which may be grouped for convenience, and between wage levels in the different colonies. Trends in money wages over the eighties can also be considered.

The reduction of the money rates to indices

facilitates the comparisons, especially over long periods. Levels of wages during the eighties have to be considered in their historical setting so some representative index which can be extended back to the gold rushes is desirable. On this basis we see how the wages of the eighties compared in the minds of the recipients to those of earlier years. What an index number loses in detail is more than compensated for by the ease of analysis it gives. Suitable index numbers can also be used to examine changes in the relationship of wages in different occupations and colonies.

The differences between colonies and occupations having been noted, a single index number can be used to represent the relevant wages for the whole of Australia and changes over fifty years thereby shown more clearly.

To this stage the analysis is concerned with money wages. Price indices must now be used to reduce the money wages to real wages. Thus the standard of living of urban wage earners during the eighties can be examined and can be compared to the standard of other wage earners and other periods.

All the material for such an analysis is not available. Even at the present day when the keeping of such statistics has been greatly expanded comparisons are fraught with difficulties. However, a surprising amount of material

is available on wage rates in nineteenth century Australia.(1) Collection of such data had been a function of Australian governments from the earliest period. In Australia governments had an interest in the economic life of their colony greater than that usual in a laisser faire age, for what was originally entirely a government economy retained some of that character. Wage rates were of importance to governments in their concern with the supply of labour through immigration policy, the demand for labour through financial policy, and as large employers of labour themselves. Manhood suffrage gave added point to knowledge of wage earners' conditions and statisticians of the calibre of Coghlan and Hayter emphasised the importance of collecting reliable raw material of social history.

For these reasons fairly complete tables of wage rates are available in official publications of each colony. This is fortunate, for the compilation of a wage index from non-official sources would,if indeed it were completely possible, be a very great task indeed for a result which could not be free of grave ambiguities. At the same time, the official rates have their deficiencies.

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(1) See, for example, the comments of G.H. Wood, "Changes in Average Wages in New South Wales, 1823-98", in Royal Statistical Society Journal, Vol. LXIV, Part II, June, 1901, p. 327; and J. Kuczynski, "A Short History of Labour Conditions under Industrial Capitalism", Vol. 1, "Great Britain and the Empire 1750 to the Present Day", Ch. VI, p.204. London, 1942.

A number of characteristics of wage rates in the period need to be taken into account. Wages are quoted as annual average rates, but seasonal variations in wages were more pronounced in the eighteen eighties than at present. The account of urban unemployment given in Chapter 3 of this Part shows many examples of a good demand for labour during the summer with some unemployment during the winter months. This applied particularly to rural industries but also sometimes, as shown in Chapter 3 of this Part, to many urban occupations. The state of the labour market was quickly reflected in changes in the rate of wages, especially for workers with short periods of engagement. Seasonal fluctuations around the annual average are to be expected, particularly in outdoor occupations.

In a period of relatively small scale industry the existence of varying rates for the same occupation was more common than in a later era when base rates at least became rigid. Trade unions recognised this state of affairs in their persistent attempts to standardise wage rates. When figures are given as an average for an occupation a range is often necessary to encompass variations within the occupation.

One result of the existence of a considerable range in practice, no matter how the final figures are given, is to obscure changes in wages. An arithmetical mean of the wages of all employees in the occupation is not possible;

samples may be deficient, and upper and lower limits may not be very significant as a guide. Again, wage data collected as a minor task by officials engaged in other duties is likely to give last year's figures unless a prominent change has taken place.

For these reasons official figures are most useful as a guide to long term trends than short term variations. The figures used can be checked against other sources, such as newspaper reports of "the state of the labour market", information prepared for immigrants, reports by Factory Inspectors, in contemporary books and pamphlets, positions vacant advertisements, news items referring to wages and disputes about them and trade union records. These can throw light on wages of particular occupations, times and circumstances, but they do not provide a general, continuing series for the measurement of wages. The official compilations have their limitations, in part inseparable from any series, but within these limitations they may be taken as a good guide.

Tables of wages and prices are set out in Appendix V. Tables 1 to 5 of Appendix V show wage rates for each colony for the years 1879 to 1891 inclusive (all the South Australian figures are not available) and, for comparative purposes, for the year 1872, which may be taken as marking the beginning of economic recovery during the seventies, and hence a point from which money wages rose to fall again about

1879. Nearly all of these rates are quoted on a daily basis, which was the custom of the time. The weekly rate can be taken as six times the daily rate, since the exceptions to this were few.

The occupations selected are building craftsmen, metal working craftsmen and some others where available. These occupational groups represent the two most important classes of skilled urban workers and unskilled urban workers in general. No satisfactory average figure can be given for piece work occupations. For this reason little can be said about women's wages; the entries for tailoresses and clothing machinists in Table 1 encompass such a range that they are not very illuminating. Semi-skilled factory workers are scarcely represented. Apart from piece rates, many factory occupations were not included on the old official lists. Most factory workers, however, can be taken to be nearer the unskilled than the skilled rates. Juvenile wages present such a variety by age, occupation and circumstances of employment that they cannot be averaged; they are discussed in Chapter 4 of this Part, Juvenile Labour. The rates given in Tables 1 to 6 of Appendix V in some cases refer to particular cities, in some cases to the colony. In all cases they are for urban labour, rural wages being quoted separately; as urban rates they represent mainly the capital cities.

Comparing the colonies, there was little difference in the wages of building craftsmen in Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland, except that Victorian wages scarcely declined to the end of the eighties; in South Australia and particularly Tasmania these rates were lower. Similar inter-colonial differences appear with skilled metal workers. Labourers' rates were highest in Victoria and New South Wales, slightly lower in Queensland and South Australia, noticeably so in Tasmania. From the nature of the data too much cannot be made of the differences, but in the main wages were highest in Victoria, particularly in the latter half of the eighties; New South Wales followed, then Queensland and South Australia, with Tasmania a low wage colony until the late eighties. The years 1885-7 inclusive missing from the South Australian Table were years of financial crisis and depression there. In Tasmania Hobart rates were consistently lower than those for Launceston, the difference being less marked in the late eighties. The levels of wages confirm the general account of economic conditions given in Part I, Chapter 1. Urban wages were highest in Melbourne and Sydney.

In comparing the groups of occupations the building craftsmen can be taken as representative of skilled urban labour. The skilled metal workers were on about a par with these. It is difficult to say more; the occupation usually available, "blacksmith", was a very wide one, and "engineer" more so.

One question of interest is the ratio of unskilled to skilled rates. The casual nature of much unskilled labour deflated earnings in unskilled occupations; these occupations also suffered most from such urban unemployment as there was during the eighties. However, for purposes of comparison the nominal wage rates have to be used and these are shown by the entries for labourers in Tables 1 to 6.[5] The scope of the terms "skilled and unskilled" can never be universally settled but common usage has common sense on its side in that a large number of occupations can definitely be ascribed to each class, and that is sufficient for comparisons to be made.

If we take a rough check on the ratio between the rates of unskilled labourers and of skilled building workers for the years 1879 to 1891, it is seen to range from fifty per cent to eighty per cent. Much of this variation is due to the range of rates for the occupations. In most colonies, on average rates, the ratio was sixty five to seventy per cent. In Tasmania the ratio was noticeably lower, in New South Wales higher. There was a general tendency for unskilled rates to show some relative improvement during the eighties.

In periods of full employment the difference between skilled and unskilled rates tends to diminish: a general demand for labour becomes a demand for less skilled labour; and the opportunities to acquire skill are more widely spread, thereby increasing the supply of skilled labour. In nine-

teenth century Australia, a new country putting a premium on physical strength, and one which generally had something of a labour shortage, the ratio between wages of unskilled and skilled labour was probably higher than in contemporary Britain. However, the ratio in Australia during the 1880's was less than that which obtained during the twentieth century. For example, the average unskilled rate in Australia rose from about seventy five per cent of the average skilled rate in 1913-4 to about eighty six per cent in 1951.(1) This twentieth century change is due to the procedure of wage fixing authorities, technological changes and the growth of trade unionism of unskilled workers. During the eighties this last factor was of some importance in helping unskilled workers improve their relative position.

Turning to an examination of trends during the eighties the general picture shown by Tables 1 to 6 is that of stable or rising money wages, with a set back in 1886-7 and some falling off by the end of the decade. There were variations between colonies: Victorian wages scarcely faltered in their rise; New South Wales reached its peak in 1885; Queensland remained steady throughout; South Australia had a severe crisis in the mid-eighties; Tasmania made some

(1) D.W. Oxnam, "Some Economic and Social Consequences of the Australian System of Wage Regulation", p.6, paper delivered at the Australian Institute of Political Science, Winter Forum, Sydney, 12 July, 1952. This paper is an extension of the same author's article, "The Relation of Unskilled to Skilled Wage Rates in Australia", Economic Record, Vol. 26, June, 1950, p. 112.

progress until the late eighties.

To examine trends in wage rates further it is necessary to replace the complexities of actual rates, even in the simplified form of Tables 1 to 6, by representative index numbers. Table 7 of Appendix V sets out a number of wage indices which show trends in various industrial or occupational groups.

We are concerned with the years from about 1879 to 1891; the tables have been converted to base 1891 to facilitate judgment of wage movements over the period. Some attention must be paid to earlier years to place the period in perspective and this is more conveniently done with index numbers than actual rates. In the mind of the wage earner good times or bad times are relative to what has gone before; so that on the important question of workers' reactions to their wages attention must be paid to comparison with at least the recent past. To avoid over-emphasising the less relevant periods figures for only a selection of years before 1879 have been included. For twenty five years of rather confused trends in money wages representative years are not easy to choose. Those given are :-

(1) 1872, when the prosperity of the seventies was getting under way. Since 1879-81 was generally a minor depression, wage rates between 1872 and 1879 had risen considerably, then fallen somewhat.

(2) 1869 represents the trough of the previous depression, about the lowest point to which money wages fell between the gold rushes and 1890.

(3) 1863 is a typical year of the early sixties, when the rapid decline from gold rush standards had levelled out.

(4) 1854 represents the peak of money wages during the gold rush period, and for the nineteenth century. It is included for this background comparison, but the wage earning class then was greatly different in numbers, composition and occupations from twenty or thirty years later.

Table 7 shows only trends within each industrial or occupational group for the years given. In each column one year can be compared to other years, but the columns cannot be compared; in 1891 for example, actual wage rates for each of the groups were not identical though each is represented by the index number one hundred.

Three series are given in Table 7, these being the only ones available. Two are for New South Wales and one for Australia. Some explanation of their compilation is necessary before using them.

The two New South Wales series have been compiled by G.H. Wood[1] and D.T. Sawkins.[2] Wood distinguishes

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(1) G.H. Wood, "Changes in Average Wages in New South Wales, 1823-98", in Royal Statistical Society Journal, Vol.LXIV, Part II, June, 1901, pp. 327-35.

(2) D.T. Sawkins, Appendix No. 4 to the Report of the N.S.W. Board of Trade upon the Rural Industries and the Question of a Rural Living Wage, N.S.W. Govt. Printer, 1921.

industrial, agricultural and domestic wage rates; Sawkins those of craftsmen, labourers and navvies and farm labourers.

Wood calculates his series from wage rates given by T.A. Coghlan in "The Wealth and Progress of New South Wales", 1899-1900 (repeated in the volume for 1900-1901). He has taken Coghlan's money rate for each occupation for each year and converted it into an index number on the basis of 1891 = 100 for that occupation. He has grouped the occupation as follows :- Industrial - carpenters, bricklayers, masons, plasterers, painters, labourers and navvies; Agricultural - farm labourers, shepherds; Domestic - housemaids, laundresses, nursemaids, general servants, cooks, dairywomen. Within each group he has used the arithmetic mean of the individual index numbers for each year; for each group he gives an annual unweighted average.

Sawkins uses Coghlan's figures as collected in "Wealth and Progress of New South Wales" particularly the volumes for the years 1893 and 1898-9.(1) His index for craftsmen is the arithmetic mean of Coghlan's figures for carpenters, bricklayers, masons and blacksmiths each year; where Coghlan gives a range Sawkins uses the mean of the range. His figures for farm labourers and labourers and navvies are taken direct from Coghlan.

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(1) With the exception that for 1879 Coghlan gives the wages of labourers and navvies as 8/- per day, Sawkins as 7/- per day.

The difference between Sawkins and Wood lies only in their different grouping of occupations. Wood's grouping is by industries, Sawkins' by occupations.

Wood's Domestic category does not concern us except as an indication of wage trends in female occupations which were to some extent an alternative to industrial work; their stability over most of the eighties is noticeable. Both Wood and Sawkins show a rapid rise in agricultural wages in the early eighties, which was scarcely affected by the recession of 1886-7. Until 1889 agricultural wages rose relative to industrial wages. Wood's Industrial group includes building artisans, who are dominant, metal working artisans and labourers and navvies. As such it shows urban wage trends with a bias towards skilled workers, indicating for most of the seventies an improvement on the sixties, and a further rise during the eighties. The early eighties showed the greatest rise; the depression of 1886 brought a fall, from which there was no recovery to the end of the decade. Sawkins' Craftsmen group comprises mainly building craftsmen. The index corresponds closely to that of Wood's Industrial group. The wages of labourers and navvies, given as a flat rate, did not alter throughout the eighties; this certainly does conceal some fluctuations.

The indices of Kuczynski in Table 7 are stated to refer to Australia as a whole, are taken from the various

official sources, and are unweighted averages of various occupations within the industry. No further details of computation are given. Generally speaking, trends in his Building and Metal groups correspond fairly closely with Wood's Industrial group and Sawkins' craftsmen, except that Kuczynski does not show such a rise for the four years after 1881, although reference to Tables 1 to 6 suggests that this did take place in other colonies as well as New South Wales. The same applies to his figures for agricultural wages, where the New South Wales picture may have been less typical.

New South Wales indices, which are available in detail, are in many respects a good guide to Australia as a whole, since during the eighties New South Wales experienced neither boom nor depression to the extent of some other colonies. Any overall Australian wage index must be examined with the sometimes considerable differences between colonies in mind, and particularly the exceptional position of Victoria.

The limitations seen in the indices for industrial or occupational groups are accentuated in any single index representing level of wages for the period. Nevertheless such indices are necessary, for the wages of urban workers cannot be considered apart from the general movement of wages, of which it was an important part. Table 8 sets out four such combined indices, the first three for New South Wales, the fourth for Australia. The first column shows Wood's unweighted index, using his nine industrial, two

agricultural and six female domestic items. It shows wages rising until the mid-eighties and declining thereafter. The second column gives a weighted index by Wood, based on his previous figures, weighting industrial by eight, agricultural by nine, and domestic by two, the proportions approximating those of the wage earners engaged as shown in the 1891 census. It follows the same trend as the first column, except that with the diminution of the domestic element the figures are generally higher.(1) The index in the third column also derives from Coghlan's figures; compared to Wood's weighted index it shows a higher level of wages in the early eighties and a lower level from the mid-eighties. Kuczynski's index for Australia in the fourth column takes into account miners' wages, but other details of computation are not given. It shows a great degree of stability for the whole of the eighties, a condition which probably reflects the overall Australian picture when compensatory changes in different colonies are taken into account.

Indices of money wages during the eighties show Australian wage rates at a consistently high level which had scarcely been attained since the end of the gold boom. There were some important differences between colonies, with

(1) Quoted by Miss J. Phillip, "Trade Union Organisation in New South Wales and Victoria 1870-90", M.A. thesis, University of Melbourne, 1953, Appendix III. Compiled by Mr. J.F. Cairns, Department of Economic History, University of Melbourne, for his private use, largely from material in T.A. Coghlan's "Wealth and Progress of New South Wales". Mr. Cairns notes that the figures are intended to give only a general impression of wage movements.

wages in Victoria continuing to rise while in South Australia they fell for some years and were fairly stable in other colonies. It was the period of the early eighties when money wages attained their high level; the fall in 1886 was not entirely recovered. This general picture applies to urban wages, although agricultural wages made a relative advance. For city workers unskilled rates were remarkably stable, while the wages of skilled building workers fluctuated most. All this took place on a level which before the mid-seventies would have seem extraordinarily high.

In the consideration of wages there remains the question of retail prices and real wages. The differences between prices in the different colonies were diminished as the century advanced, with improved methods of communication and the development of Australia wide markets. Coghlan considers that from the early seventies standard prices can be given for the whole of the colonies, except for Western Australia where they were higher.(1) There were differences between city and country, but probably not much difference between the main capital cities with which we are concerned.

Table 9 sets out a number of price series for the period. Coghlan's index is typically described as the average retail price of "articles in common use", without any

(1) T.A. Coghlan, "Labour and Industry in Australia", Vol. III, p.1613, p. 1630.

further particulars being given.[1] The Sydney retail prices of eighteen common items of foodstuffs, groceries, beer and tobacco had been recorded since 1850. The Hobart regimen collected from 1881 was similar. From these G.H. Knibbs, as Commonwealth Statistician, calculated indices by the aggregate expenditure method of weighting.[2] Kuczynski's food cost series is derived from Sydney and Hobart retail prices, and a rough index for Melbourne based on the official prices of common foodstuffs,[3] but details of methods are not given. He observes that it accords fairly well with Coghlan's index for the years 1873-94. Information about Cairns' series is not available except that they draw on Coghlan's material. Sawkins calculates the cost of his food unit for New South Wales from the price of 1 lb. of bread, 1 lb. of fresh Beef, 1 oz. of butter, ¼ ozs. of sugar, 1 lb. of potatoes.[4] None of those series includes rents. Coghlan[5] notes that rents rose rapidly in the seventies and remained high until the collapse of the building booms in the late eighties. The subject is discussed in Part IV but no representative figure can be given.

There are available therefore several price series

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(1) Ibid, p.1613.
(2) Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics, Labour and Industrial Branch Report No. 1, 1912, pp. 39-41.
(3) J. Kuczynski, op.cit., p.206.
(4) D.T. Sawkins, op.cit., p.39.
(5) Op.cit., p.1626.

for New South Wales and Australia, with foodstuffs a big constituent in them. This importance of foodstuffs is reflected in the higher prices in the drought years of 1876, 1877, 1882, 1884, 1885 and 1886. Allowing for this, there is much truth in Coghlan's comment that in the twenty years from 1873 to 1893 "there were no important variations in the prices of household commodities except such as were due to seasonal causes."(1) But both his series and that of Kuczynski do show lower prices for the years 1879-81, as do the indices for New South Wales. Apart from this the Sydney Retail series indicates a great degree of stability from 1874 onwards, with some decline in the late eighties. The great stability of prices is endorsed by Cairns' two series, which reveal some divergencies between clothing and food price trends. Sawkins' grouping by quinquennial periods demonstrates that in the five years after 1861-65 prices fell substantially, to rise again and remain stable after 1871-75.

These price series, despite their limitations, do show that in some important respects the trend in real wages from 1850 to 1890 was not identical with the trend in money wages. Table 9 sets out three indices of real wages.(2)

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(1) T.A. Coghlan, op.cit., p. 1625.
(2) Kuczynski, op.cit., p.201, applying his price index to his wage index. Sawkins, op.cit., p.42, the same. Coghlan "Wealth and Progress of New South Wales", 1900-01, p.761, applying a price index of "the principal articles of consumption" to "an ordinary mechanic's wages."

Considering long term movements, high prices certainly reduced the money wages of the gold period, while lower prices during the sixties to some extent compensated for the fall in money wages. Again, the fall in prices meant that real wages in the first part of the seventies were comparable to those of the gold years, but prices rising faster than wages reversed this movement from 1875 to 1880. Fairly stable prices during the eighties meant that increased wage rates marked a new peak in real wages in New South Wales from 1881 to 1885, but in Australia as a whole this came a little later. By the end of the eighties money wages were falling faster than prices. Coghlan's series which groups together the years 1873-92 does not reveal the variations during this period; but it does clearly show that for these twenty years real wages continued at a level which compared to the past was extremely high.

It is against this background that we must see living standards in the eighties. This fortunate decade was the culmination of a process of improvement which had suffered only temporary interruptions since the sixties. The improvement was sometimes due to falling prices, sometimes to rising wages. During the eighties wage increases, frequently effected through the form of trade union action, were not accompanied by major price increases. Hence to the urban worker it appeared most powerfully that by his

own efforts he was raising his standard of living. Fitzpatrick, leaving aside modifications, distils the essence of this situation when he speaks of "thirty years of almost uninterrupted rising prosperity"[1] and the optimism and self confidence thus bred in Australian wage earners by 1890. Rising standards of such duration are incorporated in the workers' way of life and become the expected normal. The historical or social element in standard of living, those "conventional necessities", the "normal needs" of a "civilized community", measuring the extent to which wages are raised above mere subsistence level, had certainly increased.

International comparisons of standards of living are beset by many difficulties and are not sufficiently relevant to merit detailed consideration here. During the eighties the Australian worker considered he was better off than any other working class, which opinion was heartily shared by Australian employers and accepted by most interested Englishmen. Coghlan can proudly point to the high consumption of foodstuffs in the colonies to support his view of Australian prosperity;[2] and undoubtedly it had much substance. The important comparison was with Britain, a personal one for a large portion of the population. Such a comparison could only confirm the belief that living

(1) Brian Fitzpatrick, "The Australian People", p.37.
(2) T.A. Coghlan, "The Seven Colonies of Australasia", 1892, p. 325 ff.

standards of Australian workers were extremely high. Until the end of the eighties the prospect of this progress being interrupted scarcely appeared.

CHAPTER 3.

UNEMPLOYMENT.

The eighteen eighties are usually regarded as a period of little unemployment, and there is substance in this view, for during the decade there was no prolonged, Australia-wide depression. By comparison, the long-continued unemployment of the nineties represented an important change in economic conditions. Nevertheless, the eighties was not a period of uniform full employment, for fluctuations did occur, over time and between colonies.

Accounts of unemployment before, during and for some time after the eighties are only estimates.(1) The

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(1) "Until 1913, published statistical evidence of Australian employment fluctuations is extremely scanty. We have, before that date, virtually no statistical knowledge of small movements in the level of employment and even in the major depression of the nineties our knowledge of employment trends is primarily qualitative." N.G. Butlin, "An Index of Engineering Unemployment, 1852-1943", Economic Record, Vol. 22, Dec., 1946, p.241.

quantitative material is not available, so it becomes a case of using the recorded data to form general impressions. Cyclical, seasonal and casual unemployment, unemployment due to technological changes and that due to imperfect mobility of labour often cannot be distinguished. Similarly the relationship between urban and rural unemployment is not always clear.

The running account given by T.A. Coghlan in "Labour and Industry in Australia" is the most complete description of employment conditions available for nineteenth century Australia, and the source of most subsequent references to the subject. In "Labour and Industry in Australia" Coghlan drew upon statistical sources, many of which he had compiled, newspapers and journals and his own wide experience and extensive knowledge.(1) His account may require some amendment, but factually it is almost certainly reliable within its limits and is virtually the only source available. Since for the purpose of this thesis it is necessary to examine unemployment Coghlan's account will be used as a basis, expanded by supplementary information.

As shown in Part I, Chapter 1, the course of economic development during the eighties was not identical

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(1) Some aspects of Coghlan's work are discussed by H.W. Arndt, "A Pioneer of National Income Estimates", Economic Journal, Dec., 1949; and H.W. Arndt and N.G. Butlin, "National Output, Income and Expenditure of New South Wales, 1891", Economic Record, June, 1950.

for all the Australian colonies. For this reason it is necessary to examine unemployment in each colony separately and then to sum up the general characteristics.

In Victoria from the mid-seventies there had been some unemployment in Melbourne, particularly during the winter months, accompanied by a good demand for labour in rural areas. From 1873 rural conditions declined and urban unemployment did not disappear during the summer months.(1) The sequence of events, the agitations and arguments which followed, are so typical of urban unemployment during the eighties that they are worth considering in detail.

The city unemployed in Australia followed a time honoured custom of public meetings, petitions and deputations to Parliament asking for relief works as soon as they felt their situation to be serious.(2) During the winter of 1879 this occurred in Melbourne,(3) with allegations of ulterior political purposes freely made.(4) A petition from one thousand unemployed, over a third of them labourers,

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(1) T.A. Coghlan, "Labour and Industry in Australia", Vol. III, pp. 1469-71, 1478-80.

(2) Similar actions had taken place in Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide, Hobart, Launceston and Perth from the early 1840's. (F.K. Crowley, "Working Class Conditions in Australia 1788-1851", Ph.D. thesis, University of Melbourne, 1949, pp. 477 ff.)

(3) Petitions, Vic. V.& P. of Legis. Ass., 1879-80, Vol. I, p.13, 15 July; p.25, 22 July; p.35, 5 Aug; p.187, 4 Dec.; p.191, 9 Dec.; 1879.

(4) Age, 11 June, 13 June, 17 June, 1879.

resulted in the Premier appointing a Labour Board.[1] Charitable relief was collected and distributed.[2] Within a few weeks over three hundred registered for employment with the Unemployed Labour Board; free rail passes were issued to unemployed to seek work in the country; and the Government arranged work such as wood cutting for the railways in Gippsland.[3] Some unemployed accepted these offers, others declined to leave Melbourne, declaring that the pay was too low, or demanding work in their own trades.[4] The Government preferred to ship the unemployed off into the country; they were reluctant to leave Melbourne. The unemployed demanded relief work at ordinary wages, and the Government was equally determined to make relief works less attractive than private employment. Newspapers, churchmen, politicians, all hotly debated the genuineness or otherwise of the unemployed.

This sequence of events and tangle of arguments was repeated again and again, as it had been in the past, especially in Sydney and Melbourne. It was almost a regular winter feature of city life. Even the terms in which it was conducted had become time hallowed. Factually, all that can be said is that it shows some city unemployment,

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(1) Age, 21 June, 24 June, 26 June, 1879.
(2) Age, 9 July, 14 July, 1879.
(3) Age, 4 July, 8 July, 10July, 23 July, 29 July, 1 Aug., 1879.
(4) Age, 5 July, 23 July, 1879.

which was not pressing enough to induce many unemployed to abandon the city for lowly paid relief works or the chance of private employment in the countryside.

Rural conditions improved in Victoria in 1880, but from early April the unemployed were meeting and claimed one thousand men out of work.(1) The Government provided relief works through the Harbour Trust and on roads; by August twelve hundred men were employed on relief works but more were applying. Even as late as the end of October men were still being put on relief works.(2) Undoubtedly there was substantial unemployment in Melbourne in the winter months of 1880. At the same time the unemployed were neither despairing nor desperate. They demanded a free labour bureau, day work instead of contract work, full rates of wages, and formed a Workingmen's Association to carry on this agitation.(3) Governments repeatedly refused to accept responsibility for providing employment for all

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(1) Age, 5 April, 6 April, 9 April, 1880 - deputation to Premier. Coghlan, op.cit., p.1480, says there was little unemployment in Melbourne except during the winter months.

(2) Age, 7 April, 8 April, 17 April, 24 April, 30 April, 25 May, 1 June, 6 Aug., 20 Aug., 29 Oct., 1880. Since the opening of relief works could be a method of winning votes, the number of persons thus employed reflects political considerations as well as the extent of unemployment. Vic. (P.P.), 1880-1, Vol. 2, C. No.15 was prepared in answer to questions which implied political motives in relief works. The Return shows that the Berry Government had put 230 men on relief works just before the election of March, 1880; the Service Government had 1182 thus employed when it was defeated in August, 1880.

(3) Age, 7 April, 23 April, 24 April, 1 May, 6 May, 11 May, 14 May, 3 June, 5 June, 21 June, 1880.

who needed it;[1] but did in fact provide temporary works, partly to "shunt them (the unemployed) away from the public offices, around which they have been accustomed to gather of late."[2]

Coghlan considers that there was little urban unemployment in 1881 in Melbourne; nor in the winter of 1882, except a slight amount for unskilled labourers, while conditions were even better in 1883 and 1884, with a falling off in 1885, except for building labour which still enjoyed a boom.[3] In the winter of 1881 several hundred men were put on relief works at 6/- per day - full labourers wages - and more might have offered at these rates.[4] In the winter of 1882 complaints were rather from employers that the government ought to cut its public works programme to provide labour for private employers, especially in the country.[5] In 1883 the reduction of some public works led to a demand by the men for alternative employment, which Deakin, as Minister for Public Works, refused.[6] Much the same story was repeated in the winter of 1884, when three hundred men registered seeking work, but got a

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(1) Age, 7 April, 24 April, 14 Aug., 20 Aug., 16 Sept., 1880.
(2) Age, 29 April, 1880.
(3) Coghlan, op.cit., pp. 1482-4, 1487.
(4) Age, 26 July, 9 Aug., 12 Aug., 13 Aug., 27 Aug., 1881. Vic. Census, 1881, Report, p.134, showed a total of 4,478 persons unemployed in Victoria in April, 1881. This is certainly not a reliable figure, but it is a very small one.
(5) Age, 24 June, 27 July, 29 Nov., 1882.
(6) Age, 9 June, 19 June, 25 Sept., 27 Sept., 29 Sept., 1 Oct., 2 Oct., 1883.

cool reception from the government and the Trades Hall Council. Employers agreed, however, that there was some unemployment in metal working.(1)

The situation in Melbourne in these years has been examined at some length because it is typical of most urban unemployment during the decade. Its first feature is that the numbers of the unemployed were small, even in years of some economic recession. Included in this number were some who were habitually in receipt of charitable relief. Secondly, the unemployment was temporary. Only occasionally was it present for more than six months. Thirdly, the unemployment was seasonal, occurring in the winter months when urban building, construction, and outdoor work generally, as well as most rural industries, were slack. Fourthly, the unemployed were typically unskilled, casual labourers, so that officials of the Trades Hall Council could condemn them for never having been unionists.(2) Fifthly, while some of the unemployed had drifted to the city from slack country areas, most of them regarded themselves as urban workers and were not prepared to be transported to the country. Finally, they were not in despair, even if in some distress; they demanded work from the government as a right and immediately turned to publicity

(1) Age, 19 May, 20 May, 23 May, 28 May, 30 May, 11 July, 1 Aug., 14 Aug., 1884.
(2) Age, 19 May, 23 May, 1884.

and political agitation. This in turn reflected a background of economic confidence, large scale public works and political democracy.

City unemployed were typically unskilled labourers, and probably also semi- or unskilled factory workers, for in 1883 most employers of the latter type of labour, male, female and juvenile, considered it was in plentiful supply.(1)

From 1885 the employment position in Melbourne began to decline. There was winter unemployment in 1886, and more markedly in 1887, when building was severely affected and relief works opened. Conditions improved in 1888; rural industries had been flourishing. Melbourne was now receiving an influx of workers, especially from South Australia.(2)

During 1889 unemployment from early in the year necessitated relief works. At the end of the year speculative land and building societies began to collapse and the building industry was affected.(3) By mid 1890 the unemployed claimed ten thousand out of work in Victoria, and the

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(1) Vic. Shops Comm., Factories Report. Tobacco factories, Q.3056, 3079, 3145; clothing factories, males and females, Q.3389, 3587; rope and jute works, boys and girls, Q.4831; hats, youths and men, Q.4978; blacking manufacture, girls, Q.5081; bone mills, men, Q.5692.

(2) Coghlan, op.cit., pp. 1487-91. Builder and Contractor, 11 June, 1887.

(3) Coghlan, op.cit., pp. 1493, 1495-6. Vic. V.& P., 1889, Vol. 1, Petition E2, p.1031, July, 1889, is a petition from one thousand unemployed who give names, addresses, etc., to prove their bona fides.

dislocation of the Maritime Strike followed.(1)

The Census of 1891 recorded 23,247 persons, 19,930 being males and 3,317 females, as unemployed in Victoria, in April, 1891. These comprised 4.7 per cent of total breadwinners and about 7 per cent of wage earners.(2) It is possible that others out of work had not been returned as unemployed. In the occupations of the unemployed labourers and navvies were most numerous; skilled building workers followed them.(3) This was unemployment of a different extent and nature from that previously experienced, even in 1886-7. Conditions were to rapidly grow worse; but even 1891 illustrates by contrast the slight impact of unemployment in the eighties.

In New South Wales during the late seventies there was virtually no unemployment. In the winter of 1879, however, some unemployment occurred in Sydney and did not lift until the end of 1880, with new government works. The Census of 1881 showed only three per cent of total wage earners unemployed, including those sick.(4) Full employment continued until the end of 1883; the change then Coghlan ascribes

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(1) Builder and Contractor, 19 July, 1890. The Victorian Year Books, Appendix of Labour Reports, note from 1886 that only a small demand for labour other than female domestic servants existed in Melbourne; from 1889 the usual description was that no demand for labour existed.
(2) Vic. Census, 1891, Report. Separate metropolitan figures were not published.
(3) Vic. Census, 1891, pp. 224-5.
(4) Coghlan, op.cit., pp. 1430-1, 1437-40.

to severe drought and rural depression. The usual meetings of unemployed, the organisation of charity and relief work, took place during the winter months of 1884. The same story was repeated in 1885, although rural conditions had improved. Unemployment appeared early in 1885, was considerable by the end of the year, and again in 1886.(1)

The accompaniments of urban unemployment in Sydney were strikingly similar to those of Melbourne. A working class publication of the time described this well known feature of Sydney life as follows :-(2)

> "It is the custom of those out of work to assemble around the Queen's statue, at the top of King Street, ventilate their grievance, and appoint some member of the Legislature or a deputation to lay their case before the Government. When the distress is made manifest the Ministry usually start relief works at about four shillings per day, and find the men in food till the work is started. The unemployed are supposed to take any employment that may be offered to them by contractors, farmers, etc.; but as a matter of fact they usually stay upon the relief works till they are finished."

Until the mid-eighties it may be taken that the seasonally unemployed in Sydney were similar in composition to, no more numerous than and equally vociferous as their Melbourne counterparts. During 1886, however, perhaps five thousand had been provided with relief work or free rail passes between March and November,(3) and in January,

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(1) Coghlan, op.cit., pp. 1442-5.
(2) "History of Capital and Labour", pp. 84-5.
(3) Ibid.

1887, twelve hundred men were still on relief works with many others unemployed, from all occupations.(1) To cope with these circumstances a Casual Labour Board was established in May, 1887. Between May, 1887 and June, 1888, eight thousand men applied to the Board for relief and a further thousand were employed on subsidised relief works by municipal councils. Most of the eight thousand had found private employment, often in the country, so that whereas in June, 1887 there were 5,667 men employed on relief works in the metropolitan area, and in November, 1887, 2,163, in June, 1888 there were only 1,312.(2) The Casual Labour Board paid mainly by contract rates, with day work at only 3/6 per day; sent the men to camps ten or fifteen miles from the city;(3) and did not hesitate to discharge men for drunkenness or laziness.(4) The residuum of men which it maintained may therefore be taken as representing genuine unemployment. The turnover of men suggests, however, that few were unemployed for more than a matter of months. Of those unemployed in 1887-8, the majority were unskilled labourers; but with some eight hundred skilled

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(1) Coghlan, op.cit., pp. 1446-7.
(2) N.S.W. V.& P. of Legis. Ass., 1887-8, Vol. 8, Return, p.1027; N.S.W. V.& P. of Legis Ass., 1888-9, Vol. 3, p.1083, Return on Unemployed.
(3) N.S.W. V.& P. of Legis. Ass., 1887-8, Vol. 8, Return, p.1027.
(4) N.S.W. V.& P., of Legis Ass., 1888-9, Vol. 3, p.1083, Return on Unemployed.

building tradesmen and over five hundred skilled metal workers, unemployment was not restricted to the unskilled.[1]

The decrease in unemployment at the beginning of 1888 had been accompanied by a demand for rural labour. There was some winter unemployment in Sydney in 1889, but not as much as previous years.[2] The 930 relief workers of November, 1888[3] had dominished to 233 in May, 1889, when the Casual Labour Board was being closed down.[4] The closing of the Casual Labour Board, however, was due to allegations of improper management and costliness, as well as decrease of unemployment; and the Chairman could reply that unless public works were instituted to absorb "the large mass of unskilled labour only partially employed in the city", the public offices would again be besieged by men out of work.[5] Since the number of persons employed on ordinary public works had decreased by about twelve thousand between 1885 and mid-1889, this was probably a true enough picture of the position.[6] In mid-1889 Sydney metal workers were

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(1) Ibid. Some years later the Secretary of the Ironworkers' Union referred to unemployment amongst his members in 1887-8 (N.S.W. Strikes Comm., Q.8734). Printers were also affected. (N.G. Butlin, Economic Record, Vol.23, Dec.,1947, "Collective Bargaining in the Sydney Printing Industry, 1880-1900", pp. 213, 219.).
(2) Coghlan, op.cit., pp.1449, 1452.
(3) N.S.W. V.& P. of Legis.Ass., 1888-9, Vol. 3, p.1083. Return on Unemployed.
(4) N.S.W. V.& P. of Legis.Ass., 1889, Vol. 6, Return,p.1259.
(5) N.S.W. V.& P. of Legis.Ass., 1888-9, Vol. 3, p.1089, The Unemployed - Discontinuance of Services of.
(6) "Wealth and Progress of N.S.W.", 1888-9, p.461.

demanding local contracts to relieve unemployment in their industries.[1]

The improvement in employment during the summer of 1889-90 did not last, and then the Maritime Strike supervened.[2] In 1891 the Census held in April showed the unemployed to number 8,697 males in the metropolitan area and 2,864 in the whole colony; 1,742 females in the metropolitan area and 2,864 in the whole colony. Total unemployment was about seven per cent of total wage earners, much the same as in Victoria, and the metropolitan area had more than its share of this.[3] Hence union officials in 1891 complained of unemployment which was particularly marked in casual occupations.[4]

The main difference in unemployment between Sydney and Melbourne was that in Sydney there had been no complete recovery from the depression of the mid-eighties. Urban employment was still small, but it persisted, fluctuating seasonally, on a rather more serious scale than had been the case in the early eighties.

During most of the seventies Adelaide and South

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(1) Builder and Contractor, 27 July, 1889, p.76; 17 Aug., 1889, p.148.
(2) Coghlan, op.cit., p.1454.
(3) N.S.W. Census, 1891, pp. 705, 715, 625.
(4) N.S.W Strikes Comm., Coal lumpers, Q.380, 420; wharf labourers, Q.738, 836; iron moulders, Q.8769; tailoresses, Q.10372, 11254; builders' labourers, Q.10581.

Australia enjoyed full employment, until in 1879 city unemployment, met by relief works, accompanied depressed conditions in agriculture and mining. Some improvement in 1880 was followed by urban and rural unemployment in 1881, but from the end of that year to mid-1883 a building boom produced a shortage of labour in the city. Adelaide was attracting migrants from other colonies when its speculative building boom collapsed and the employment situation deteriorated to the financial crisis of 1886. Emigration of about nine thousand persons from the colony in each of the two year 1885 and 1886 showed the seriousness of the position. Charitable relief was organised and a Labour Bureau was established.(1) In July, 1886, about one thousand men were on relief works, mainly in the country;(2) in July, 1887, the number had been reduced to 210, but at the same time about one thousand labourers were employed on the northern railway.(3)

Broken Hill was now taking many workers, and conditions continued to improve, with a set back late in 1888, until the Maritime Strike of 1890. It was only in 1891 that there was a surplus of labour in the city and the countryside was able to absorb some of this, for South Australia employment was still very much influenced by the

(1) Coghlan, op.cit., pp. 1542-52.
(2) S.A. P.P., 1887, Vol. 3, No. 80, Return.
(3) Ibid, No. 121, Return.

position in the rural industries. This, with the safety valve provided by emigration to Broken Hill and Melbourne maintained a good level of employment until 1891. Not until 1892 were the Adelaide unemployed again demonstrating for work.(1)

Brisbane in 1881 numbered only some thirty thousand inhabitants as compared with Sydney and Melbourne's quarter of a million. It derived its importance from the rapidly expanding settlement of its hinterland. From the mid-seventies there had been some rural unemployment in Queensland, due to seasonal reverses or an excess of migrants, but a separate market for metropolitan labour hardly existed. In the early eighties there was a strong demand for labour, particularly building labour, in Brisbane. From mid-1883 to 1886 some unemployment appeared in the city, reflecting external influences. These were seasonal conditions in the countryside and the flow of immigrants. A programme of assisted migration from Britain which increased the adult male population by fifty per cent in the three years 1882-4 could not be terminated without a time lag, and when rural Queensland could not absorb the new arrivals they banked up in Brisbane.(2) In 1886 Brisbane unemployed were demanding relief works, while

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(1) Coghlan, op.cit., pp. 1553-4, 1557, 1560.
(2) Ibid, pp. 1509-15.

ordinary public works were providing employment, directly or indirectly for about ten thousand men. A reduction in public works and in the flow of private capital meant that unemployment continued for most of 1887, but rural conditions were now improving.(1)

The unemployment was mainly amongst general labourers, a category into which most migrants were transformed of necessity on arrival. Probably the relatively small number of skilled artisans settled in Brisbane had been little affected by this unemployment.(2)

From the end of 1887 to the Maritime Strike of August, 1890, unemployment practically disappeared in the rapidly expanding economy, although in the second half of 1889 there were sufficient persons out of work in Brisbane, including building workers, for the government to reduce immigration.(3) In early 1891, when the Queensland shearers' strike was in progress, considerable unemployment appeared in Brisbane, the population of which city now numbered over one hundred thousand. The Census of April, 1891, taken during the currency of the strike, recorded 11,263 persons unemployed in the whole colony, 1,557 of them in the city census district and perhaps eight or nine hundred

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(1) Coghlan, op.cit., pp. 1517-18.
(2) Ibid, p. 1521.
(3) Builder and Contractor, 10 Aug., 1889, p.126; 5 Oct., 1889, p.336.

more in the metropolitan parts of adjacent census districts.[1] Despite the strike urban unemployment was no greater than in Melbourne or Sydney. Employee representatives at the time were complaining of some slackness of work and short time, but not of widespread unemployment.[2] Certainly in Queensland such unemployment was a novelty; it was not until 1891 that unemployment reached much beyond unskilled workers and there had usually been a transitory class rather than a stable city working population.

In Tasmania the demand for labour had improved during the seventies with mineral discoveries and good seasons. The same factors continued during the eighties, with government works important by the end of the period. Thus there was little unemployment in Hobart and Launceston, although Tasmania did not show the same economic expansion as the mainland colonies; even in 1891 there was no widespread unemployment in Hobart and Launceston.[3]

The tiny working class of Perth had experienced some unemployment in the late seventies whenever immigration outstripped the demand for labour in the colony. From the early eighties development of the hinterland and the

XLV and XLVII

(1) Q'land Census, 1891, pp. XIV and XIVII.
(2) Q'land Factories Comm., Tobacco factory, Q.7026, 7055; male tailors, Q.8098, 8312, 14444; compositors, Q.9914; tailoring and dressmaking, Q.10113, 10167, 10232; jewellers, Q.13642; woollen mills, Q.14420.
(3) Coghlan, op.cit., pp.1580-6.

construction of railways provided full employment, but after 1886 there was intermittent unemployment in Perth, sufficient for the unemployed to organise and demand work. In such a small community changes in government works policy had an immediate effect. From 1889 conditions in Perth improved and soon gold discoveries launched Western Australia on a real boom.(1) The three hundred odd unemployed in Perth and Fremantle in April, 1891, may have included new arrivals; the figures are too small to be trustworthy.(2)

From the foregoing account of unemployment in each of the capital cities during the eighties some general features emerge.

When numbers of unemployed appeared in any city contemporary opinion, animated by local patriotism, often maintained that many of them came from other colonies. In fact, total inter-colonial migration was not very great. (See PartI, Chapter 1). The divergence in economic conditions between colonies would no doubt lead to some of the unemployed trying their luck in another capital, but if this was of any importance it reflected the smallness of unemployment rather than any vastness of migration. Similarly, rural unemployed might drift to the capital

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(1) Coghlan, op.cit., 1566-71.
(2) W.A. Census, 1891, p.77.

where charitable relief and relief works were available, but urban unemployment did not always coincide with rural unemployment.

Melbourne, Sydney, Adelaide and Brisbane did have their periods of urban unemployment during the eighties. Characteristically it was seasonal and mainly affected unskilled labour in casual occupations. Its seasonal nature was influenced by the seasonal requirements of the countryside, but more so by the winter decline in activity of the important outdoor building, construction and transport industries in the city. Urban workers, even unskilled, felt themselves a sufficiently separate group usually to decline country employment. The differences in way of life between the outback and the cities had existed from the earliest times. By the eighties, especially in Melbourne and Sydney, urban workers had neither the inclination nor the experience to seek employment in the countryside. What affected them was urban unemployment.

When unemployment extended beyond the unskilled, the usually unstable building industry provided most of the skilled workers unemployed. Unemployment amongst skilled metal workers may have moved separately from other

unemployment.(1)

The foregoing applies particularly to Melbourne and Sydney. Until 1891 unemployment in Brisbane arose mainly from its position as distribution centre for migrants to Queensland.

It is very difficult to form any estimate of the extent of urban unemployment, but it was probably very small except during the cyclical depressions of 1879-80 and 1886-7; even here it was nothing like what was soon to become the depression standard. In 1891, not a year of deepest depression, unemployment was worse than at any time during the eighties. Nevertheless, unemployment was frequently a question of the day, for the unemployed were organised, articulate, politically conscious and demanded as a right, work at full wages from the government when private industry failed to provide it.

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(1) N.G. Butlin, "An Index of Engineering Unemployment, 1852-1943", Economic Record, Vol. 22, Dec., 1946, compiles an index of unemployment for members of the Amalgamated Society of Engineers from the records of the union. For the seventies and eighties the index covers New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia and Queensland. The index shows peaks of engineering unemployment in 1875, 1879, 1885 and 1893; and minimum unemployment in 1878, 1882 and 1890. Thus engineering unemployment does not exactly coincide with general urban unemployment. The Australian engineering industry of the eighties was dependent on a fluctuating home market, particularly short term government contracts, so its independent variation is not surprising.
Some information on unemployment amongst members of the Melbourne Board of the A.S.E. to 1882 was tabled before the Vic. Tariff Comm., Q.29854. This shows a high degree of A.S.E. unemployment in Melbourne up to 1881 but what is taken to constitute an unemployed member in the return is not explained.

This was particularly a demand of the unskilled worker. The skilled unionist usually had his unemployment benefit from his union and labouring work, at full wages or not, was not what he sought. The craft unions often disowned the agitation of the unemployed. On this question the building unions could less afford to be aloof than some of their colleagues; sometimes building craftsmen were affected. Then they sought from the government increased expenditure on public works and buildings. This pressure on governments was one reason for the generally sustained public borrowing and expenditure during the eighties. No government was prepared to discontinue it until faced by a real financial crisis.

Unemployment amongst female workers can only be guessed at. With less than one-fifth of Australia's womenfolk gainfully employed there was always a reserve of female labour available, more readily for industry than domestic service. To this reserve returned women workers when industry no longer required their services. Family income suffered but the typical unmarried working daughter was not left destitute and alone when her job disappeared. Only the ready supply of female labour indicated the existence of hidden unemployment.

In the effect of unemployment on the earnings of urban workers, the main consequence was to deflate

somewhat the nominal rates of casual unskilled labour. Unemployment was not a major consideration in standards of living.

Above all, unemployment was ephemeral, and the confident reaction of the unemployed most strikingly demonstrates this. The working class optimism of the eighties was not shaken by the short lived periods of unemployment. Memories would have to go back more than a decade to recall better times. Although circumstances were changing somewhat by the end of the eighties it was not until at least 1891 that the prospect of long continued unemployment appeared to many urban wage earners.

CHAPTER 4.

JUVENILE LABOUR AND APPRENTICESHIP.

In Australia in 1891 seventeen per cent of all breadwinners were under twenty years of age.[1] Some were assistants to their family, especially in rural areas, but scarcely any would be employers or self-employed, so the great majority were certainly wage earners. These minors (the term "juvenile labour" will be used to describe all workers under twenty one years of age) were therefore an important part of the Australian labour force in the eighties.[2] Because of their special position they require separate examination. This has two aspects - their position as workers at a point of time and their position as a

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(1) Calculated from Vic. Census, 1891, Report, p.238. The figures do not include South Australia, for which the returns had not been received. No subdivision into grades of occupation is available.

(2) Although the Australian population of the eighties was a youthful one, the figure is not much greater than that for 1947, when 17 per cent of breadwinners were under twenty one years of age (not twenty years, as above). (Census of the Commonwealth of Australia, 1947, Vol.III, Statistician's Report, pp.234-5). In 1947 the numbers of working age in this group had not been much affected by the low birth

source of adult labour over a period of time.

These juvenile breadwinners were distributed between the colonies as follows :-(1)

TABLE 12 - JUVENILE BREADWINNERS, 1891.

Colony	Male Breadwinners aged 5-20 years		Female Breadwinners 5-20 years		Total Breadwinners 5-20 years	
	Number	Percentage of total male breadwinners	Number	Percentage of total female breadwinners	Number	Percentage of total breadwinners
Victoria	58565	15.2	30924	27.1	89489	17.9
N.S.W.	56700	14.9	23749	28.8	80449	17.3
Queensland	19359	13.3	9250	29.1	28609	16.1
Tasmania	8639	17.9	3741	29.8	12380	20.4
Western Australia	2906	13.9	904	35.4	3810	16.2

There was no important difference between colonies in the proportion of juvenile breadwinners, for the Western Australian female figures are too small to be significant. There is, however, a noticeable difference between the proportions of male and female breadwinners who were juveniles. The fifteen odd per cent of juveniles amongst

(2) continued:
rate of the 1930's. But the juvenile breadwinners of 1947 comprised a much smaller percentage of male breadwinners and a much larger percentage of female breadwinners.

(1) Vic. Census, 1891, Report, p. 238.

male breadwinners, corresponds to a similar percentage of the average working life which five or seven years represented. On the other hand, between one-quarter and one-third of female breadwinners were under twenty years of age. This indicates that most women left work at marriage. In consideration of women's work, wages and conditions, it must be remembered that this large proportion of them were juveniles, regarding their work as temporary until marriage. As females and juveniles they provided a doubly cheap source of labour.

It does not follow that a higher percentage of young females were working than of young males. The opposite was the case, as the following table shows :- (1)

TABLE 13 - JUVENILE BREADWINNERS AS A PROPORTION OF JUVENILE POPULATION, 1891.

Colony	Male Breadwinners Aged 5-20 years as a percentage of male population aged 5-20 years	Female Breadwinners Aged 5-20 years as a percentage of female population aged 5-20 years.	Total Breadwinners aged 5-20 years as a percentage of total population aged 5-20 years.
Victoria	32.53	17.34	24.97
N.S.W.	30.20	12.77	21.52
Queensland	31.34	15.54	23.58
Tasmania	34.23	15.26	24.88
Western Aust.	39.22	13.01	26.53

(1) Vic. Census, 1891, Report, p.239

Although for female breadwinners the age group up to twenty years was particularly important, the percentage of females of this age working was less than half the percentage of males of the same age working.

Statistics for the age group 5-20 years have been used because Australian figures are available. To determine the normal age of starting work and the exceptions to this an age group which stretches from infancy to adulthood is of little use. It is possible to approach the question from the other side by finding up to what age juveniles were not working because they were attending school.

In Australia by 1880 compulsory education was operating in all colonies.(1) The ages prescribed for school attendance varied. The commencing age was six or seven years and the leaving age was twelve years in Queensland, thirteen in Victoria, South Australia and Tasmania, and fourteen in New South Wales and Western Australia. The position is complicated by the fact that exemption

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(1) A brief history of education in Australia from the point of view of legislation and administration is given in the Commonwealth Year Book, No. 2, 1909, p.880; it was compiled by Peter Board. During the eighties the compulsory provisions did not apply to children living at more than a certain distance from a school - two to five miles in different colonies. In the capital cities, however, schools were available and the system was in general operation.

from school attendance was granted to children who had reached a certain scholastic standard, usually attained one or two years before the normal leaving age.(1) The effective age of leaving school is therefore difficult to determine precisely. Information for Victoria collected at the Census of 1891 shows that about eight per cent of children aged between six and thirteen years were not returned as attending school at the time of the Census; this is not a large figure, including as it did those away from school for all reasons as well as those legally exempted from further attendance.(2)

We would therefore expect to find few children under thirteen or fourteen years of age in employment during the eighties. This is seen to be the case where figures are available. The following table shows juvenile employment by age groups for Victoria in 1891.(3)

TABLE 14 - JUVENILE EMPLOYMENT, VICTORIA, 1891.

Ages	Male Breadwinners		Female Breadwinners		Total	
	Numbers	Percentage of age group	Numbers	Percentage of age group	Numbers	Percentage of age group
5 to 15 years	8,798	7.14	3,668	3.04	12,466	5.11
15 to 20 years	49,645	88.23	27,256	47.52	76,901	67.86

(1) Sir George Pearce, "Carpenter to Cabinet", p.13, relates how in South Australia in the early 1880's he reached the required standard and left school at the age of eleven years.
(2) Vic. Census, 1891, Report, p. 106.
(3) Ibid, p.211.

Employment of children under fifteen years of age was not very great, therefore, in Victoria in 1891; and employment of children under the school leaving age of thirteen was certainly very small. The same position applied in New South Wales where in 1891 only 8,612 males and 3,825 females under fifteen years of age were working; Coghlan estimated that not more than 1,500 of them would be under fourteen years of age.(1)

No metropolitan figures for juvenile employment are available; but it is likely that the age of starting work was generally higher in the cities than in the countryside where schooling was more inconvenient and family labour more common.

Although juveniles were a noticeable constituent of the labour force in the eighties, this must be distinguished from the child labour of the early industrial revoluation in Britain. In the cities of Australia almost all children received a normal schooling, although this might terminate as early as eleven or twelve years of age. Non-attendance at school was only at the level of truancy. Thus Australian factory legislation never included provision for part time schooling, as had been the case in Britain. Youthful labour there was, and the limitation of it, which implied a higher school leaving age,

(1) N.S.W. Census, 1891, Report, p. 281.

was often discussed, but widespread child labour did not exist. Cases of young children working were rare. Most of the juvenile labour force with which we are concerned ranged from the early teens to twenty one years of age.

During the 1880's much of the discussion of juvenile labour was conducted in terms of apprenticeship, the traditional mode of employment for juvenile labour.(1) In fact, the usual conditions of juvenile employment at the time were not those of apprenticeship. The essence of apprenticeship is, from the one side, that the youth is bound to serve his master; and, from the other, that the master is bound to teach the youth the trade. Such an arrangement, as it has existed from medieval times, pre-supposes that the skills which the youth acquires are such as to require some years' training, and that this training is available only by practical work under a skilled master. As will be seen, these conditions no longer applied to many occupations in Australia of the eighteen eighties.

Although apprenticeship was not often a reality, the length of time taken to learn the occupation, that is,

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(1) Not, however, for all juvenile labour. As S. & B. Webb point out, "Industrial Democracy", 1902 edition, p.480, apprenticeship has never included in its scope "the large proportion of boys who recruit the vast army of unskilled labourers." In Britain the apprenticeship provisions of the Statute of Artificers of 1563 were repealed in 1814. They had long been a dead letter.

the degree of skill required by the occupation, provides the most useful criterion in an examination of juvenile employment. Any simple division of occupations into skilled and unskilled is open to many objections, although it is necessary for general purposes. When types of juvenile employment are grouped according to the time taken to learn the job many gradations appear.

In the most skilled occupations, where an "art and mystery" still had to be acquired by long practice and instruction, the traditional type of apprenticeship survived. In many such handicrafts skill counted more than capital, the step between master and journeyman was not great and the possibility of a skilled man setting up in business on his own account was always present. In an occupation such as pharmacy, which approached the professions, conditions of apprenticeship might be supervised by a board set up by the state; in any case a premium was usually paid by the apprentice or his parents to the master in return for the training received.(1)

In some skilled occupations which were less professional, the usual method of entry was by the indenturing of apprentices for a long term of years. Jewellery and watchmaking was a notable one, where apprenticeship was

(1) Vic. Shops Comm., Final Report, Q.7074; 7114; 7137. Q'land Factories Comm., Q.11062 ff.; 11694 ff.; 11726.

usual for a term of at least five years, with the apprentice bound by indentures and the master giving instructions to turn out a complete craftsman.(1) Premiums of up to £100 were paid by the boy's parents, which gave unscrupulous jewellers working capital and the possibility of absconding with it; but premiums of this size were not common and sometimes no premium was demanded. Apprentices were usually paid a wage whether or not there had been a premium.

In other skilled occupations a similar form of apprenticeship was usual. This applied to flint glass making and glass bottle making,(2) pottery,(3) bellows making(4) and organ building.(5) The term was usually four to five years, sometimes up to seven years, no premium was asked and wages were usually paid to the apprentice from the beginning.

In cigar making boys were apprenticed, usually on indentures, for a period of three or four years. The cigar makers' unions were usually solidly established small craft unions, which endeavoured to restrict the

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(1) Vic. Tariff Comm., Q.42238; 42304 ff.; 42601 ff.; 42637 ff.; 42964; 43036 ff. Vic. Shops Comm., Second Progress Report, Q.2107. Q'land Factories Comm., Q.9144 ff.; 9164 ff.; 12890 ff.; 12927 ff.; 13587 ff.; 13622 ff.
(2) Vic. Tariff Comm., Q.30575 ff.; 31135 ff.; 31639 ff. Vic. Shops Comm., Factories Report, Q.4923; 4950.
(3) Vic. Tariff Comm., Q.10778; 10785
(4) Ibid, Q.37889.
(5) Ibid, Q.41972 ff.

number of apprentices - to one for four men, for example. Since cigar makers worked on piece rates they might individually employ boy helpers, but they were always anxious to keep down the supply of fully trained men. Even in cigar making mechanisation was displacing all round learning of the craft, and thereby undermining the craftsmen's control of the labour supply through appreciceship requirements.(1)

Other skilled occupations had traditionally been entered by serving a full apprenticeship and the form of this survived. Often, however, the indentures and the full term of years were not enforced, because changing conditions in the occupation made it profitable to employment with a less degree of skill. Compositors were particularly affected and through their unions made their views on apprenticeship known. In the Australian colonies of the eighties conditions of entry into printing varied greatly. The original term of seven years was often not enforced;(2) while metropolitan newspapers generally indentured boys for five years, small country newspapers did not.(3) The boys employed from about twelve years in these country newspapers were not trained

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(1) Vic. Tariff Comm., Q.47276; 47130. Q'land Factories Comm., Q.10723. Age, 4 Sept., 1883.
(2) Vic. Tariff Comm., Q. 41448 ff.
(3) Q'land Factories Comm., Q.14268 ff.; 14302. N.S.W. Strikes Comm., Q.9923; 9932; 9953. Age, 12 Aug., 1880.

as full printers; even in large offices they might learn to operate only one machine.(1) Indentures were not universal, even in Government printing offices, and two to three years was the duration of many so-called apprenticeships.(2) One of the first and continuing purposes of Typographical Unions was to limit the number of apprentices.(3) They sought to improve their bargaining position by restricting entry into the occupation; they complained that half-trained men competing for jobs lowered wages, and that some offices were mainly run by cheap juvenile labour. The attitude of the printers' unions was typical of most unions of skilled workers in Australia, as in Britain; indeed, it constituted a cardinal point of policy with craft unions from the eighteen fifties. It was a policy which, though disliked by employers, might be maintained for many years in circumstances favourable to the employees; but the great and growing obstacle to its success lay in technical changes within the occupations, especially those changes which replaced skilled hand

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(1) Vic. Shops Comm., Factories Report, Q.3848 ff., 3948 ff. This variety of means of entry into the printing industry also applied in Great Britain. See S.& B. Webb, "Industrial Democracy", 1902 ed., p.464 ff.
(2) Q'land Factories Comm., Q.5625; 5644; 9844; 9912; 9969; 9988; 10030.
(3) N.G. Butlin, Economic Record., Vol. 23., 1947 - "Collective Bargaining in the Sydney Printing Industry, 1880-1900."

processes by machinery and so made it possible to use less skilled, easily trained labour.

The conditions observed in printing were typical of many other occupations. Saddlers might have a few indentured apprentices, but they were rare, although juvenile labour was employed.(1) An enterprising manufacturer of saddlery, bags and trunks, could point out with pride that he had so subdivided the processes of production that apprenticeship was meaningless when he was employing boys who learnt their particular job in a week.(2) In cabinet making boys preferred to work in shops using machinery, and normally in Australia did not learn the whole trade.(3) Only a few boys were apprenticed as tailors; the former period of seven years was reduced to about three and sometimes the apprentices were not indentured.(4) This reflected the transfer of most men's clothing manufacture to the factory, where female labour was used, with its own utilisation of juveniles, which will be examined later. Most of the few male hands in ready made clothing factories were cutters and pressers, who were sometimes apprenticed to those trades in some

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(1) Vic. Tariff Comm., Q.15732; 16121. Vic. Shops Comm., Final Report, Q.7030. In South Australia indentures may have been more common - S.A. Factories Comm.,Q.1058 ff.
(2) Vic. Tariff Comm., Q.15385 ff.
(3) Ibid, Q.37684 ff.; 37735 ff.
(4) Vic. Shops Comm., Final Report Q.6218. Vic. Shops Comm., Factories Report, Q.4175. Q'land Factories Comm., Q.8136 ff.; 9624; 13281. Vic. Tariff Comm., Q.3445.

way.[1] Hat making (felt hats, not the luxury item of silk hats), was also becoming a machine industry in the eighties.[2] Boys were apprenticed from three to five years, or up to the age of twenty one, receiving wages and sometimes under indentures. Even so, they learnt only about half the branches of the trade.[3] The union in Victoria accepted apprentices up to one for every seven men.[4] Girls were sometimes described as being apprenticed for twelve months, but they were not indentured and in effect were merely unskilled juvenile labour.[5] In a new occupation such as photography a youth would learn the business and receive wages without going through the form of apprenticeship.[6]

The situation was therefore common where a large amount of juvenile labour was employed in an industry, providing process workers who were sometimes still described as apprentices although the old conditions of apprenticeship no longer existed.

This state of affairs is exemplified in the metal

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(1) Vic. Tariff Comm., Q.2512. Vic Shops Comm., Factories Report, Q.6018.
(2) Vic. Tariff Comm., Q.204.
(3) Vic. Tariff Comm., Q.148; 165 ff.; 218. Vic Shops Comm., Factories Report, Q.4971; 5027.
(4) Vic. Tariff Comm., Q.469.
(5) Vic. Tariff Comm., Q.1619. Vic Shops Comm., Factories Report, Q.4995.
(6) Q'land Factories Comm., Q.3744 ff.

working industries, which cover a great range of occupations and degrees of skill. In most cases apprenticeship had been the traditional method of entry. Technological changes had been taking place for many years so that in Australia by the eighties the division of labour and the development of machinery had greatly changed many old processes. The general direction of developments was from skilled craftsmen to less skilled machine operators, with the resultant confusion of old forms and new content.

The most skilled metal worker was the general engineer - fitter, turner and pattern maker. Here the seven year term of apprenticeship sometimes applied, with the first two years unpaid.(1) A premium might be paid to the employer, in which case the apprentice would usually receive wages of 5/- per week from the beginning of his employment.(2) A five year term was more usual in Melbourne, and the apprentice was not always indentured.(3) Even in general engineering the apprentice usually did not learn the three trades of fitting, turning and pattern making, though if a premium were paid he might be permitted to do

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(1) Vic. Tariff Comm., Q.19165 ff.
(2) Vic. Tariff Comm., Q.25121 ff., Vic Fact. Inspector's Report for 1886, p.6.
(3) Vic. Tariff Comm., Q.12319 ff.; 29841 ff.; 26489 ff.; 26561 ff.; 29161 ff.; 27067 ff.; 27096. Vic. Shops Comm., Second Progress Report, Q.2158.

so.[1] The Amalgamated Society of Engineers did not attempt to limit the number of apprentices,[2] the reason probably being that it was not strong enough to do so,[3] for this was a cardinal point of policy with the British Society,[4] of which the Australian Union was a branch. Even for most skilled metal workers a variety of methods of entering the occupation existed. This was more noticeable in the less skilled branches.

Coppersmiths, brass founders, iron founders and sheet metal workers could be indentured for seven years, without a premium, but more usually served five or six years, without indentures, and receiving wages.[5] The same applied to tinsmiths and the small number of apprentices in wire working, nut and bolt making and spring manufacture.[6] In japanning apprentices were usually bound for five years to learn part of the trade; F.H. Bromley as an employee representative maintained that the term should be seven years.[7] The Ironmoulders' Union in Victoria was strong enough to limit apprentices to one for each three men, and

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(1) Vic. Tariff Comm., Q.29969 ff. Vic. Factory Inspector's Report for 1886, p.6.
(2) Vic. Tariff Comm., Q.29865 ff.
(3) N.G. Butlin, "Economic Record", Vol. 22, Dec., 1946, "An Index of Engineering Unemployment, 1852-1943."
(4) See, for example, S. & B. Webb, "The History of Trade Unionism", 1920 edition, Ch. IV, ff.
(5) Vic. Tariff Comm., Q.12619 ff.; 14764 ff.; 19949 ff.; 20110 ff.; 28093 ff.
(6) Vic. Tariff Comm., Q.28288 ff.; 27152 ff.; 27503 ff.; 26298 ff.; 26387 ff. Q'land Factories Comm., Q.12123.
(7) Vic. Shops Comm., Factories Report, Q.4288; 5986.

unsuccessfully sought a uniform six year term;[1] in Sydney the so-called apprentices were not indentured nor trained as tradesmen.[2] In Victoria there was no system of training boilermakers, which the union wanted. There, as in many other occupations, most of the tradesmen came from Britain.[3] In South Australia some youths were apprenticed to boilermaking.[4] In the important industry of agricultural implement making only the blacksmiths were apprenticed; in the less skilled processes lads were taken on, paid wages, and learnt their particular jobs only.[5] In coachbuilding apprenticeship was more common, usually for five years, sometimes with a premium paid for instruction in body building, but at the same time many unapprenticed youths were employed.[6] In rolling mills juvenile labour was used, but not apprentices.[7]

In the metal trades, from the nature of the work, most of the labour force had to be adult males. Increasing division of labour made it possible for them to be less skilled than in the past, so that argument centred around the necessary length of training. This was the

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(1) Vic. Tariff Comm., Q.29824 ff.
(2) N.S.W. Strikes Comm., Q.9283 ff.
(3) Vic. Tariff Comm., Q.30136 ff.
(4) S.A. Factories Comm., Q.2713.
(5) Vic. Tariff Comm., Q.29420 ff.; 28761 ff.; 30050.
(6) Vic. Tariff Comm., Q.13296; 34948 ff.; 35099 ff.; 35321 ff.; 35582 ff.; 35823 ff. Vic. Shops Comm., Second Progress Report, Q.2414.
(7) Vic. Tariff Comm., Q.25637.

question in the building trades too, where even less juvenile labour could be profitably employed.

In the ancient craft of stone masonry there were virtually no apprentices offering and masters did not wish to have the trouble of training them. A few boys learnt the trade by moving from job to job but most of the labour supply came from overseas, so that the masons' unions took no steps to limit the number of apprentices.(1)

Bricklayers' unions in Sydney did limit the number of apprentices to one for each employer. The usual term was for four or five years, with wages rising from 10/- to 30/- per week; sometimes the indentures were registered with the union. The union maintained that some employers used apprentices as cheap labour; but since all sons of bricklayers were permitted to learn and practise the trade without having been apprenticed, the men's main motive would appear to be limitation of numbers.(37)

Entry into carpentry was made more difficult to control, for in Australia "bush carpenter" had been an

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(1) Vic. Tariff Comm., Q.39510 ff. N.S.W. Strikes Comm., Q.9822 ff.

(2) N.S.W. Strikes Comm., Q.8822 ff.; 8854 ff. S.& B. Webb, "Industrial Democracy", 1902 ed., p.460 ff. Note the survival in a few British unions, including the stonemasons', of this custom of patrimony maintaining "the hereditary right of all craftsmen's sons to scramble up into journeymen as best they can....." (p.462).

accepted occupational title from the earliest days. Colonial conditions produced many men more or less competent in carpentry, so that unions did not attempt to regulate the supply of labour through apprenticeship.(1) A formal apprenticeship was not usual although sometimes it existed, following the British model.(2)

In boot manufacturing processes of production had so changed that besides less skilled adults boys and girls could be employed. Boy apprentices who served a term of up to four years are mentioned in boot manufacturing.(3) In most cases they were not indentured and were paid small wages. In other cases boys and girls were loosely described as being apprenticed, but in actual fact were merely juvenile process workers.(4) A boot manufacturer in Melbourne in the early eighties explicitly pointed

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(1) Vic. Tariff Comm., Q.38918 ff. N.S.W. Strikes Comm., Q.9005-6.

(2) Sir George Pearce as a youth was apprenticed to a country carpenter in South Australia during the 1880's. He was bound for five years, with wages rising from 2/- to 8/- per week, with keep, living with his master, and working fifty seven hours per week. The master contracted to teach the apprentice the trade. The apprentice agreed to serve his master faithfully; obey his lawful commands; not marry without his sanction; not play at cards, dice or any other unlawful game whereby his master might be damages; not to absent himself day or night from his master's service without leave and "in all things behave himself as a faithful apprentice ought to do." "Carpenter to Cabinet: Thirty Seven Years of Parliament", by the Right Hon. Sir George Pearce, London, 1951, pp. 15-16.

(3) Vic. Tariff Comm., Q.7762 ff.; 8687 ff. Vic. Shops Comm., Second Progress Report, Q.2178. Q'land Factories Comm., Q.4758 ff.

(4) Vic. Tariff Comm., Q.8687 ff. Vic. Shops Comm., Final

out that owing to the great division of labour in his factory apprenticeship was unnecessary.[1] Bootmakers' unions complained of the great numbers of partly trained men and of the use of cheap juvenile labour. As early as 1870 a Bootmakers' Union in Sydney had collapsed after a defeat in its attempt to limit the number of apprentices; in 1891 it was unable to enforce its rule of one apprentice to three men.[2] A similar motive had been one of the reasons for the formation of the Victorian Bootmakers' Union in 1879;[3] but the Union's attempts to limit apprenticeship were not successful until 1884 when the employers agreed to restrict apprentices to one for five men, and to apprentice all boys for four or five years.[4] It is doubtful how effective this proved with all employers. In South Australia also the number of apprentices was limited by agreement with the union.[5] In June, 1890, the Queensland Bootmakers' Union was able to have apprentices restricted to one for five men, to be taken on at

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(4) continued:
Report, Q.6250; 6259; 7007. Q'land Factories Comm., Q.5721; 6730 ff.; 7118 ff. S.A. Factories Comm.,pp.219-20.
(1) Vic. Tariff Comm., Q.11976 ff.
(2) N.S.W. Strikes Comm., Q.10202 ff.
(3) "History of Capital and Labour", p.160.
(4) Vic. Tariff Comm., Q.11920 ff. Vic. Shops Comm., Factories Report, Q.5712 ff.
(5) S.A. Factories Comm., Q. 3579.

age fourteen and serve four years.[1] Previously boys had been so employed at an earlier age and used in large numbers.[2] Articles of apprenticeship followed the traditional style, stripped of some of its verbiage; the apprentice was liable for any costs incurred by his absence or action to make him return.[3] The changing nature of boot manufacture was shown by the fact that even apprentices were usually only taught one of the six or seven branches of the trade; the girls became machinists, for the boot sewing machine was now common.[4]

By the 1880's the manufacture of most clothing had been transferred to the factory. This involved a change from male to female, and mainly juvenile, labour. As has been seen, the few skilled male workers might still serve an apprenticeship. For the women workers the method of entry into the occupation was vastly different, even when it still went under the name of apprenticeship.

Just as clothing manufacture made use of outwork, so in the factories some of the arrangements of outwork survived. The most noteworthy in connection with juvenile labour was the practice of adult hands on piece work

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(1) Q'land Factories Comm., Q.4605 ff.; 4751; 11744; 11781 ff.
(2) Ibid, Q.4771; 4826 ff.
(3) Q'land Factories Comm., Appendix C, p.340.
(4) Vic. Tariff Comm., Q.11952. Vic. Shops Comm., Factories Report, Q.5712 ff. N.S.W. Strikes Comm., Q.10302. S.A. Factories Comm., Q.3900.

engaging their own junior helpers, receiving the pay for the increased output, and themselves paying the juniors.[1] These girls usually served two or three months unpaid, then received wages of from 2/6d. to about 7/6d. per week, until they went on to piece work themselves in a year or so. Some skilled hands might have up to four or five helpers. Although in some cases the junior was solely under the control of her senior, in most instances both were subject to factory discipline. This system was so common in Victoria in the mid-eighties that the Victorian Factory Inspector described it as typical of juvenile employment in clothing manufacture.[2]

It was probably more usual, however, for the factory owner to pay the juniors directly, in which case he would not pay the piece worker as well for their output. Rates of wages were very low, usually beinning at 2/6d. per week, often with an unpaid period of perhaps three

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(1) Vic. Shops Comm., Factories Report, Q.3433; 4603. Vic. Tariff Comm., Q.2121 ff.; 2301; 2968. Q'land Factories Comm., Q.6133. S.A. Factories Comm., Q.6385.

(2) "Girls are taken on and taught their trade very often by one of the hands themselves, who pays the girls a small weekly wage to work under her, the woman being thus enabled to get through more work. At the same time the girl is treated as one of the factory hands, and is as much under the control of the factory manager as the workwoman herself." Victorian Factory Inspector's Report for 1886, p. 7.

months, which sometimes extended up to eighteen months.[1] This supply of cheap, or even free, labour was a prime factor in keeping down women's wages in the clothing industry. Speaking of its abuses a municipal medical officer said: "I had been informed that some of the employers, as soon as the girls have worked for three or four years for nothing, tell them that the work is so slack that they can dispense with their services, and then they begin with fresh ones, and commence de novo. I have got a very angry feeling against the people who can be so cruel to the girls."[2]

These unpaid or poorly paid "learners" constituted an important part of the labour force in clothing manufacture. Opportunities for female employment were very limited, but with the growth of cities more and more women wished to become wage earners, if not for self support at least to supplement the family income. Their only alternative was domestic service, but despite the lamentations of people who employed or thought they should

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(1) Vic. Tariff Comm., Q.2476; 2748. Vic. Shops Comm., Final Report, Q.6333; 6530; 6231; 6289; 6697; 4117. Vic. Shops Comm., Factories Report Q.3633; 3650; 3666; 3676; 3593; 4136; 4149; 4218; 3657; 4175; 4115; 4129; 4192; 4204; 4210; 4225; 4156. N.S.W. Strikes Comm., Q.10464; 11202; 11206; 11238. N.S.W. Census and Industrial Returns Act, Report No. 1, p.7. Q'land Factories Comm., Q.9620; 10056; 10220. S.A. Factories Comm., Q.4453.

(2) Vic. Shops Comm., Second Progress Report, Q.2470; see also Vic. Shops Comm., Factories Report, Q.3556; 4233; 4305.

employ servants, and the advice of all self appointed guardians of public morals, Australian girls were reluctant to enter domestic service. The feeling that domestic service implied servility and the desire for independence outside working hours were probably the main reasons.(1) Girls were prepared to spend a period on low wages or no wages at all in order to acquire the skill necessary to become clothing piece workers. They learnt only one particular process; the most difficult, coat making, might take two years to learn.(2) Much the same conditions applied in the making of miscellaneous articles of clothing, such as shirts, underwear and hosiery.(3)

In dressmaking, an even more attractive occupation because of its interest, its personal usefulness and the opportunity to carry on an independent business, the unpaid period tended to be even longer than in clothing manufacture.(4)

In retailing the English system of apprenticeship for three to five years hardly applied at all in

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(1) This was the generally accepted opinion. A large employer of female labour gave such feelings as the reason why girls preferred to work in factories. Vic Shops Comm., Second Progress Report, Q.1603.
(2) N.S.W. Strikes Comm., Q.11238.
(3) Vic. Tariff Comm., Q.5913; 5993; 6661. Q'land Factories Comm., Q.12209; 13333; 14017.
(4) Vic. Shops Comm., Factories Report, Q.3697. Vic. Factory Inspector's Report for 1886, p.7. N.S.W. Census and Industrial Returns Act, Report No. 2, p.7. Q'land Factories Comm., Q.6609; 6661; 10175.

Australia.[1] Indentures were rare, a few boys might be verbally bound, but mostly juvenile assistants were not called apprentices. There was an ample supply of youthful labour for shop jobs, particularly of girls, so that the unpaid period was not unknown.[2] Even butchers and bakers were usually not apprenticed.[3]

There were many other industries which used unskilled juvenile labour. Here the question of apprenticeship did not arise for the great majority, for the present job was an end in itself - later described as a dead end. This was usually the case in brush, confectionery, jam, biscuit, soap and candle, tobacco, rope and jute, starch and blacking factories; in tea and dry goods packing and brickmaking. Other children found employment as messengers, errand boys, street cleaners and newspaper sellers.

It was a fairly frequent complaint[4] that colonial youths did not take kindly to apprenticeship. The reasons given, that they could earn high wages in unskilled

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(1) Q'land Factories Comm., Q.2045.
(2) Vic. Shops Comm., Second Progress Report, Q.83; 710; 799; 2473. Q'land Factories Comm., Q.187; 351; 955; 1138; 1349; 3612; 419; 764; 3392; 2208.
(3) Vic. Shops Comm., Factories Report, Q.3191; 3508. Vic. Shops Comm., Second Progress Report, Q.2190. Q'land Factories Comm., Q.7312; 8767; 12174. S.A. Factories Comm., Q.2881.
(4) See, for example, Vic. Factory Inspector's Report for 1888, p.5; for 1889, p.5.

work, and wished to be free to change jobs as they chose, were probably correct. In the full employment of the eighties plenty of jobs were available for male juveniles, and unskilled wages were high; girls were not so well situated. Although juvenile wages were often particularly low, the unapprenticed could usually start at a higher rate than the apprentice, and at an earlier age. Often there was simply no satisfactory system of apprenticeship available to receive entrants.

In addition to the colonial love of independence, apprenticeship agreements could be onerous, contracts explicitly incorporating requirements which had lapsed for other contracts of service, even where they nominally remained in Master and Servant Acts. The interpretation of apprenticeship contracts was in the first instance in the hands of local magistrates who themselves were usually employers of labour. For example, local courts in Melbourne held that the purchaser of a business had the right to have the apprentices assigned to him, against their wish; one sentenced an apprentice to twenty four hours imprisonment for refusing to do work which he declared was usually done by a labourer.(1) An apprentice could not terminate his service unless his master concurred; while it was a costly

(1) Age, 11 May, 1882; 12 Oct., 1884.

and difficult procedure to obtain damages from a master for not properly instructing an apprentice.(1)

In the circumstances of the eighties, the anarchic apprenticeship system was not operating satisfactorily either to train labour or to provide opportunities of entry into trades.(2) The Royal Commissions in Victoria in 1882-4 and in Queensland in 1891 echoed popular opinion when they recommended state control of apprenticeship, with written indentures and obligation to teach the trade properly. Legislators, however, avoided the problem and no attempt was made to introduce state regulation during the eighties, while state technical education had scarcely begun.

Much of Australia's skilled labour had come, and was still coming, from Britain. In many of the recently established urban industries the question of training a continuing local supply of skilled labour had hardly arisen. In Victoria, where manufacturing was most developed, and where its progress under protection was eagerly sought, the

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(1) Age, 17 May, 1882. A Victorian County Court held that since an apprentice had not complained of inadequate instruction while it was proceeding he was entitled to only nominal damages on the completion of his apprenticeship.

(2) The Australian situation was very similar to that obtaining in Britain during the second half of the nineteenth century. In most cases the similarity extended to the particular occupations. An account of the British apprenticeship position is given by S.& B. Webb, "Industrial Democracy", (first published 1897), 1902 edition, Chapter X.

question attracted most attention, particularly when expanding industries came up against a shortage of skilled labour. In practice most needs for skilled labour were satisfied in an empirical and piecemeal fashion, through migration and a variety of training methods. Any view of apprenticeship as a training system was confused by the application of some of the forms of apprenticeship to less skilled occupations where the conditions for true apprenticeship did not exist; division of labour and the use of machinery were continually expanding this field.

Unions favoured lengthy formal apprenticeship; but here it should be remembered that such unions were craft unions of skilled workers. Their motives was to restrict the supply of labour in their occupation and prevent the appearance of partly trained workers. Where they were strong enough they enforced limitation by union rule; but mostly during the eighties they were not as successful as they desired in this aim. Trade union bodies generally accepted this policy, as at the Inter-colonial Congress of 1886, and even took some steps to have it implemented.(1) All unionists could approve of the demand for adequate

(1) In 1889, following a conference between the Melbourne Trades Hall Council and the Victorian Employers' Union, a joint deputation waited on the Premier asking for a law to enforce the indenturing of all apprentices, a minimum commencing age of fourteen years and provision for compensation for inadequate instruction. Builder and Contractor, 20 July, 14 Sept., 1889.

training and wages for juveniles; but the restrictive exclusiveness of the skilled unions could only be directed against the children of other workers. It was a narrow craft policy which could not become a general policy of the working class; the growing importance of unions of semi- and unskilled workers relegated the exclusive approach to the background - " a system for which only a minority even of unionists were ready to fight had lost all national significance."(1)

The problems arising from the unions' attitude to juvenile labour soon became problems concerning adult labour, as the juveniles reached manhood. Since the restrictive rules of the skilled unions were ineffective in practice there soon grew up a body of adult labour which was not eligible for union membership. So common was this phenomenon that the special term "improver" was used to describe workers who one way or another had learnt or partly learnt a trade without the sanction of the union. Some such improvers might eventually be admitted to union membership, usually by obtaining employment in a locality distant from the one where they learnt the trade. Such acceptance was neither automatic nor quick. Many young

(1) J.H. Clapham, "An Economic History of Modern Britain", Book III, Free Trade and Steel, 1850-1886, p.471, speaking of the same policy in Britain at this time.

adults continued working as improvers, debarred from union membership. They supplied most of the labour in non-union workshops and came forward to take vacated positions when a union strike or boycott was declared. Their existence limited the activities of the skilled unions during the eighties and threatened the very existence of unionism in the nineties until new policies were adopted.

Unions of unskilled workers sometimes had restrictive rules, but these were not based on method of training. All unions could agree that technical training should be provided by the state. To the skilled unionist a proper course of technical training preserved standards of skill in the occupation and had the effect of limiting entry. To the unskilled unionist or unorganised worker such technical courses, preferably free, gave a greater equality of opportunity than the restrictive practices of craft unions or the indifference of employers provided. By the turn of the century it was accepted that only the state could provide for the training of a continuing skilled labour force.

Australian workmanship during the nineteenth century is frequently dismissed as being of the prevalent "middling standard". The oft cited term will not be discussed here in connection with the culture of a new country nor the regrettable failure of the colonies to provide hotels suitable to distinguished tourists and the

service to be expected from true servants. It can be given some precision with respect to economic activity. In rural production Australia called for improvisation, then knowledge and skill to cope with circumstances different from those of the old world. In secondary production Australian industry was first able to compete against British imports in the market for everyday articles, where freight and duties told most against the imports. The small demand for specialised manufactures, artistic and costly products and commodities of superior quality continued to be satisfied from Britain. Australian employers wanted few skilled workers and saw no profit in training them. They relied for their craftsmen and technicians on the stream of migrants and used local youth as cheap labour. Not until the decline in migration and the increase in the scope of their industries confronted them with a shortage of key personnel did they look for a local supply of skilled labour.

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PART IV - LIVING CONDITIONS.

CHAPTER 1.

LIVING CONDITIONS.

The colonists from Georgian Britain who landed on Australia's inhospitable shores found the headquarters of their exile a tiny island in a vast sea of space. Even when the continental expanses which surrounded them were eventually penetrated, their communities remained separated outposts. Space which was the enemy to be hazardously conquered by explorers and settlers was an ally in the colonists' attempts to build themselves habitations. The facilities were not available to duplicate the ancient cramped urban centres of Europe, reluctantly over-flowing their mediaeval walls and hedged still by the price of land, the centralisation of town services and even antique legalities. Such cities, pressed together at their base, strained upwards to accommodate the jostling crowds within them. This city type may well have been the unconscious ideal of the colonists, for whenever they could they trans-

planted and obstinately clung to the style and veriest superficialities of the dwellings of their homeland. In Australia neither materials, skill nor background services were present to duplicate the cities of the old world. The English country cottage became the model for dwellings. The Australian village, town, then city, straggled out over the plentiful countryside, expanding horizontally, using its ample area to compensate for its lack of centralised services.

Thus from the beginning "the suburb was the major element of Australian society".(1) Every Australian city became a growing ring of suburbs; the consciously planned capital of capitals at Canberra, after thirty years of building in the twentieth century, had emerged as a collection of suburbs, testifying to the strength of this Australian city tradition.

The unit of the suburb was the detached cottage, standing on its own block of land. Its materials had progressed through wattle and daub, pise, bark sheets and split logs to weatherboard, brick and stone. After the pioneers' one or two rooms had given way to three, four, or more in square or oblong arrangement, lay-out changed little in the

(1) Robin Boyd, "Australia's Home", Melbourne, 1952, p.4. Boyd's book is the only attempt at a history of ordinary housing in Australia. It gives a vivid and coherent account of the main developments in housing for the great majority of ordinary city dwellers.

cheapest homes, though outward appearance changed as successive styles were adopted from Britain and filtered through from fashionable Australian homes to smaller dwellings.

At the centre of the city were the commercial and administrative areas, and usually the wharves and rail terminus, for the cities were commercial entrepots.(1) The multi-storeyed offices, banks, warehouses and shops there do not concern us in an account of wage earners' housing. Later came the factories, at first not very far from the centre, but soon dispersed through wider area of the city. Their influence on housing lay in the employment they provided, for the wage earner could not afford to live at any distance from his place of work until omnibuses, tramways and railways gave him greater daily mobility. Naturally the density of population was greatest in the inner suburbs, decreasing with distance from the centre. Although land was always available on the outskirts, the inner suburbs were most convenient and therefore more valuable areas.

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(1) The concentration of commercial and administrative functions in the centre of the city was so firmly established that it continued even when space there became extremely expensive or virtually unobtainable. Not until seventy years after the period of this thesis did the commercial area of Sydney, the most congested capital, make a leap for expansion to North Sydney. In 1955 this was still a tentative movement. See "The Embryo Twin City - North Sydney", by Morton Herman, Architect, in S.M.H., 11 Oct., 1955, p.12.

It was here that the detached cottage was first questioned as the most profitable method of housing workers. Investors began to make more use of the space by building semi-detached dwellings and terraces, elininating the space between homes. Then they began to raise two or three storeyed terraces and houses to use the land more intensively; but these were restricted to a few areas until the end of the nineteenth century. The row house of one period often became the slum of a succeeding period as more and more people were crowded into it to increase the return to owner or sub-lessees. Thus a process of change was extending from the centre of the city, but at the same time new suburbs of detached cottages pushed further and further into the countryside.

This growth of the city altered the composition of the population in many city areas. From the beginning the working class areas were close to the centry, often around wharves and warehouses. Fashionable homes of the well-to-do were not far away, perhaps on adjacent higher ground as in the Surry Hills area of Sydney. The business centre tended to absorb the inner working class areas; the wage earners flowed into the previously fashionable areas and the wealthy moved further out. Now several families might live in the former mansion, with its grounds subdivided for more dwellings; but more usually in nineteenth

century Australia it would become an institution or be demolished to make way for a terrace. This spread of the poorer areas, best observed in Sydney as the oldest city, was not uniform, for sometimes it would halt at one point and surge forward at another, leaving the island of the wealthy lapped by the crowding waves of the poor. The causation in each case can be fascinating, compounded of the vagaries of fashion, the schemes of land speculators, the progress of transport, the fluctuations of the building cycle, within the economic and geographical framework. In general the economic and geographical factors indicate the main lines of growth of working class residential areas. The bulk of Sydney's population moved west and south; Pyrmont and Balmain became industrial areas around the shipyards while the eastern Harbour peninsulas remained wealthy suburbs. The poorer districts of Melbourne soon stretched down to the port, north through Carlton, and eastwards less firmly through Richmond, by-passing the well-to-do area of East Melbourne. When Adelaide overflowed its green belt its working class suburbs strung along the railway line to Port Adelaide, which was itself an industrial and working class area.

In the pattern of development of Australian cities the working class suburbs pushed their way out from the centre, the fashionable houses moved far away or retreated to their

own areas, while the middle class pioneered each outskirt suburb then in turn moved on. The location of the wage earning population in the cities during the eighties and the changes taking place then have to be considered against this background.

Melbourne in the eighties shows this typical population distribution. At Little Bourke Street, only a few blocks away from the heart of the city, began the slum areas, the result of overbuilding and overcrowding in the oldest residential part of the city. Here resided the poorest of the poor, the lumpen proletariat, vagabonds, prostitutes and criminals, and the Chinese. Towards Carlton and Hotham overcrowding of a less serious kind existed, merging into the more typical working class suburbs. The wage earner or other person of small means who built himself a small home usually chose the inner suburbs.(1) Richmond, Sandridge and Emerald Hill (the South Melbourne district), traditional working class areas still containing some vacant land, were his usual choices. By the end of the eighties a few more houses of this class were being constructed in the outer suburbs, but it was not by such building that the city area spread.

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(1) The following discussion of housing in Melbourne is based on the material set out in Appendix VI, which analyses the operations of a large Melbourne building society during the eighties. This society, the Modern Permanent Building and Investment Society, handled a significant sample of the housing with which this thesis is concerned. Its position and the importance of its records are discussed in Appendix VI.

The wage earner who wished to acquire his own house was more likely to purchase it than to build it. Here again at first he stuck to the new city suburbs, especially his own suburb, often purchasing the house which he had been renting. Most of the houses built as an investment for wage earners to buy or rent were in the inner suburbs in the early eighties; more of them were further out by the end of the decade. Footscray, Yarraville, Brunswick and Hawthorn were then becoming populous centres. The usual method was for a builder, contractor, estate agent, or some of these in partnership, or with a finance company, to acquire a large area of vacant land, subdivide, and build from two or three to twenty or thirty houses for sale or letting. Building tended to be concentrated in particular suburbs at one time, for each group of new houses begat another group in the next paddock as estate agents and speculators launched the new suburb. As an example, in 1890 the Modern Building Society financed the erection of one hundred and one cheap weatherboard houses in Footscray and forty eight in Yarraville. Previously Essendon, Flemington, Northcote, Hawthorn, Caulfield and other areas had had their turn on a lesser scale. Although many of the houses were cheap it appears that the first occupants of the new area were usually clerks, public servants, school teachers, small business men - middle class people in the

common use of that term. The ordinary wage earner followed later. Footscray, Yarraville and Newport, with their industries, had more than the usual proportion of workers from the beginning. Most wage earners tended to remain in their old suburbs, and when they moved from there it was usually into an adjacent one: from South Melbourne and Sandridge into Emerald Hill, Albert Park and South Yarra; from Richmond, Collingwood, Fitzroy and Carlton into North Richmond, North Fitzroy and North Carlton; from the west city into Hotham.

The spread of population was largely determined by improvements in transport. When only horse trams and horse omnibuses were available wage earners could not live far from their place of work. By the first years of the eighties railways ran from the city to Williamstown, Port Melbourne, St. Kilda, Brighton and Hawthorn as well as the main line through Essendon; the suburban lines continued to be extended during the eighties. The train services immediately began to occupy the place in city transport which they have filled ever since; it was along the railway lines that much of the new housing development took place. In January, 1882, "a large number of working men" petitioned the Minister of Railways, asking that workmen's trains be run at cheap rates morning and evening and that the men should be allowed to carry their tools with them

on these trains. The workmen's trains were instituted within a few weeks. The special fares were twopence for five miles, threepence for nine miles, with packets of tickets sold at 1/9 and 2/6 per dozen respectively. By March, 1882, 708 single tickets and 127 packets of a dozen were sold in a week - that is, within a month several hundred workmen were using the special trains each day apart from those on the ordinary services.(1) The fares were not excessive - for a maximum of 2/6 per week, about one-sixteenth of an unskilled labourer's weekly wage, a workman could travel to his employment in practically any part of Melbourne served by the railway. The railway gave a new mobility to the population and the city rapidly expanded. A writer on Melbourne in 1880 could, in a lyrical passage, picture the stranger quite out in the country after half an hour's horse drawn journey through the eastern suburbs. Here he would see primitive weatherboard cottages, each in its own allotment, made beautiful by flowers and gardens.(2) By 1890 half an hour's journey by train left the traveller in the suburban area.

The transport network between the railway lines had been filled in by 1887 when most Melbourne suburbs were connected by cable trams.(3)

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(1) Age, 10 Jan., 14 Jan., 23 Jan., 25 Jan., 9 Feb., 6 March, 9 March, 1882.
(2) H.H. Franklyn, "A Glance at Australia in 1880", MP 171-2
(3) Builder and Contractor, 11 June, 1887, p.80.

MP 171-2

Improved transport also removed some of the limitations on the location of industry. Employers were glad to take advantage of the new areas and this in turn led to a growth of population there, under these circumstances more directly working class population. The Chief Inspector of Factories observed for the year 1888:- "The high price of land during the greater portion of the year induced many large manufacturing firms to remove from the city proper, and several large places have been, or are, in the course of being erected on the south side of the Yarra, between Footscray and Williamstown, and in other suburbs. The improvement of the means of access into the city by the erection of new bridges, the trams and the improved waterway, all tend towards sending the factories further from the centre towards the outskirts of the metropolis."(1) Two years later the Chief Inspector of Factories was again drawing attention to the many new factories being erected on the suburban railway lines, especially around Footscray, Yarraville and Newport, ascribing this to high land prices and rents in the inner city area.(2) Newport was also the centre of the rapidly growing railway workshops. The astonishing expansion of working class

(1) Vic. Factory Inspector's Report for 1888, p.7.
(2) Vic. Factory Inspector's Report for 1890, p.7.

housing around this area in the late eighties is explained by the new sources of employment there. The industries along the Yarra and towards the Port were served by the working population of the South Melbourne area. Factories also spread in the older working class areas. By the beginning of the eighties some industries were concentrated in particular suburbs. Thus there was much engineering in South Melbourne; clothing manufacture in Fitzroy; pottery and brickmaking at Brunswick; and wool scouring and tanneries at Footscray;[1] while gas works, fellmongery, bone mills and abattoirs were removed to the waste lands towards the mouth of the Yarra. As industry grew it developed most in areas which already had a working class population, and in turn led to population increases there.

The distribution of the population in Sydney was somewhat more complicated because of the difficulties of the terrain, the indentations of the harbour, and the city's longer history.

The area first settled was naturally around the port, near Sydney Cove, along the eastern side of Darling Harbour, and adjacent areas. This was the residential as well as commercial area, at first for all classes. An

(1) J.E. Parnaby, "The Economic and Political Development of Victoria 1877-81", PH.D. thesis, University of Melbourne, 1951, pp. 51-2.

observer in the late sixties could still note: "The streets are nearly all narrow and crooked, with a great mixture of houses - rich and poor together. There is no West-End; no stately street full of mansions." (1) But the same writer mentions the movement of well to do people to residential areas outside the city - "When the merchants grow wealthy they build villas on some of the numerous bays of the harbour." (2) As a result the city itself did not develop a West End, but it certainly did develop an East End. This was the area of the Rocks and along the city side of Darling Harbour, until stores and warehouses replaced the dwellings in the latter area. In the forties the Rocks region was described as the St. Giles of Sydney; (3) and forty years later it still retained this character. (4) This oldest part of the city with its close packed houses and terraces was reminiscent of European cities; from Observatory Hill, "what with the stone houses and the ugly, unpicturesque manner in which they are built in the crooked narrow streets, you might easily fancy

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(1) C. H. Allen, "A Visit to Queensland and her Goldfields," London, 1870, p.49.
(2) Ibid.
(3) "Settlers and Convicts," by an Emigrant Mechanic, Melb., 1953, Ch. I and Ch. VI, first published, London, 1847. J. C. Byrne, "Twelve Years' Wanderings in the British Colonies," London, 1848, Vol. I, p. 125.
(4) M. M. Ballou, "Under the Southern Cross," Boston, 1888, p. 112.

yourself in England."[1]

It was not long before Woolloomoolloo, Paddington, Surry Hills, Redfern, Camperdown and Pyrmont were working class areas.[2] By the eighties the inner areas of these suburbs were exhibiting slum characteristics of over-crowding in delapidated buildings, and a higher proportion of two-storeyed houses and terraces than usual in Australia. The location of the working class suburbs was natural, for the work of the port and the associated industries which grew up around it provided much of the industrial

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(1) Allen, op. cit., p.50.

(2) Most of these areas passed through an earlier period of fashionable dwellings. An account of the city in the forties describes "Woolloomoolloo, a high sandy hill over-looking the waters of the estuary, at a short distance to the eastwards of the town, ... covered with whole streets of beautiful villas and superb mansions... The houses are, almost without exception, separate, and stand in gardens or pleasure grounds." J.C. Byrne, "Twelve Years' Wanderings in the British Colonies", London, 1848, Vol. I, pp.135-6. But by 1860, "In many parts of Woolloomoolloo, there are narrow lanes of houses with all the evils inseparable from improvident construction, insufficient living room, confined space outside, and want of drainage, in forms as aggravated as in the old cities of Europe." C.M.H. Clark, "Select Documents in Australian History, 1850-1900", p.674, quoting from Report from the Select Committee on the Conditions of the Working Classes of the Metropolis, pp. 8-10, N.S.W. V. & P. of Legis. Ass., 1859-60, Vol. 4.
Francis Adams, critical and sensitive, said of Sydney at the end of the eighties: "No European manufacturing city 'boasts' more hideous slums. Places like Newtown and Enmore, Paddington and the Glebe are simply that congerie of bare brick habitations, which is just as much an arid, desolate waste as the mid-desert." (Francis Adams, "The Australians", London, 1893, p.31.)

employment. Apart from the wharves and warehouses and the Darling Harbour railway goods yards, by the mid-seventies the Colonial Sugar Refinery Company's refinery was established at Pyrmont; P. N. Russell and Co., the largest engineers, were at Darling Harbour; Morts Dock and the slips of the Australasian Steam Navigation Company nearby each employed many hundreds of men.(1) The shores of the harbour west of the city contained much of the shipbuilding and repairing, engineering and timber yards.

Hence working class suburbs continued to spread westward from the city. The change in composition of population is usually a slow one, with many intermediate stages; its impact upon general consciousness is slower still, especially when it is not welcomed. Thus an old inhabitant of Sydney can say ... "I was born in 1875 at Darlington, Sydney. Like adjacent Glebe Point (and Surry Hills!) it was one of the fashionable residential suburbs of those days..."(2) Even in 1881 Darlington and Surry Hills were fairly thickly populated areas (see Map 1), and between 1881 and 1891 the Glebe and Balmain peninsulas moved

(1) G. H. Reid, "An Essay on New South Wales," Sydney, 1876, pp. 86-7.
(2) J. Tyrrell, "Old Books, Old Friends, Old Sydney," Sydney, 1952, p.5.

MAP 1 - DENSITY OF POPULATION IN SYDNEY AND SUBURBS, 1881

(N.S.W. Census, 1891, Report, p.112)

KEY TO MAPS 1 AND 2.

(N.S.W. Census. 1891. Report. p.112)

COLOUR SCALE

Shewing Density of Population per acre in the various Municipalities and Electorates as proclaimed and defined at date of each Census by a series of tints graduated in intensity accordingly

MUNICIPALITIES & ELECTORATES having a population per acre of

less than 0·1 persons

0·1 and less than 0·5

0·5 „ „ „ 1

1 „ „ „ 2

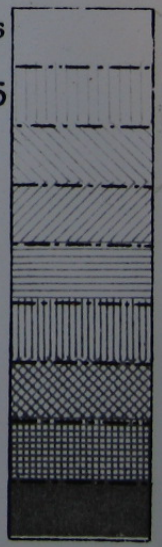
2 „ „ „ 3

3 „ „ „ 5

5 „ „ „ 10

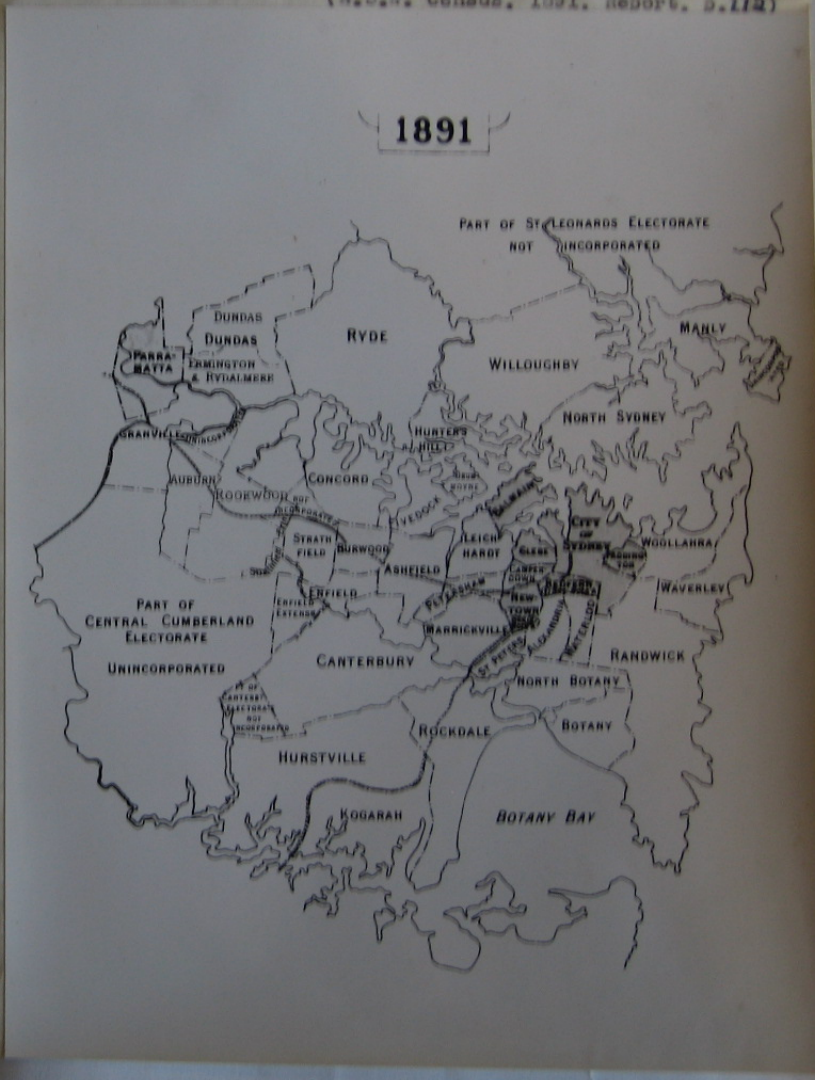
10 „ „ „ 25

25 and upwards



MAP 2 - DENSITY OF POPULATION IN SYDNEY AND SUBURBS, 1891

(N.S.W. Census, 1891. Report. p.112)



into the group of most densely peopled suburbs (see Map 2). Water transport supplied the needs of these populations and made it possible for them to work in the city as well as locally.

On the eastern side of the city there was no similar industrial area, nor any shipping centre beyond Woolloomoolloo, so that the peninsulas and bays to South Head remained scattered residential areas of the wealthy.(1) They also relied on harbour transport, so that the harbour-side was more thickly populated than Waverley and Randwick.

To the south of the city Waterloo, Alexandria, and St. Peters were working class areas less densely settled than the inner suburbs. Noxious trades had already been pushed out towards Botany, and various industries were scattered through these areas, such as the concentration of boot factories in Bourke Street.(2) Marrickville to the south west was a less densely populated working class area in 1881, with its boot and other factories.(3) Settlement was growing in Leichardt to the north west, to supply labour to Glebe and Balmain. Development was more intensive

(1) G.N. Griffiths, "Point Piper: Past and Present", Sydney, 1947.
(2) G.H. Reid, op. cit., p.88.
(3) Ibid.

along the western railway, the only city line in 1881. From Camperdown and Newtown through Petersham to Ashfield and Burwood the more thickly populated areas stretched west. To the north, south and west of these railway suburbs were less settled areas of better class residences. On the north side of the harbour ferries served waterside residential areas around North Sydney and Hunters Hill, the latter being the more exclusive.

During the eighties the movement of population along the western railway line continued. (See Maps 1 and 2). The Illawarra line was constructed, carrying the population south.(1) It had reached Sutherland by 1885. The North Shore line was approaching the Harbour from Hornsby, having reached St. Leonards by 1891; being separated from Sydney it did not bring the usual suburban development.(2)

Harbour transport was still an important determinant in the growth of the city. Even wharf labourers might live at Balmain or the North Shore and travel by ferry.(3) Beyond Glebe and Balmain, Drummoyne was opened

(1) S.M.H. Railways Centennial Supplement, 9 Sept., 1955, p.10.

(2) The Builder and Contractor, 19 Oct., 1889, p. 383, was urging the completion of the line to provide further expansion of the city, since other suburbs had been "gridironed with poky little tenement houses."

(3) N.S.W. Strikes Comm., Q.5145.

up in this way. In the early eighties, "a walk over the Iron Cove bridge led to the open bush with only about a dozen houses where to-day is the suburb of Drummoyne."(1)

What Sydney during the eighties lacked in suburban railways it made up for by the rapid development of steam trams. The first steam tram - a double decker - ran from the Redfern railway to Hunter Street in 1879. By the Tramways Extension Act, 1880, the Commissioner of Railways was empowered to construct lines, and approval was granted for services to Woollahra, Waverley, Randwick, Darlinghurst, Waterloo, Newtown, Marrickville, Glebe and Glebe Point.(2) These new lines and others were soon built. The tramway system particularly aided the development of the eastern, southern and south western suburbs. Sydney was no longer restricted to the railway line and the harbour shore so that by 1891 it had substantially taken its modern shape and,

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(1) J. Tyrrell, op. cit., p. 7. Big suburban subdivisions began in Drummoyne and Five Dock in the early eighties. Bridges over the Parramatta River and Iron Cove were completed in 1881 and 1882, but transport was still by way of the river or by road to Ashfield railway station. Population grew slowly until the trams reached Five Dock in 1893. (J. Jervis, "The Story of Drummoyne," Sydney, 1941, pp. 9, 35, 49.)

(2) 43 Vic. No. 25. An article in the Sydney Morning Herald of 28th Sept., 1954, contains some interesting information and illustrations on the development of Sydney's tramway system. See also Irma and Cyril Pearl, "Our Yesterdays," Sydney and London, 1954, p.66.

allowing for its later expansion, the location of the various classes of the population had assumed modern form.(1)

Between 1881 and 1891 the number of dwellings in both Sydney and Melbourne had increased by ninety per cent. Seen in this way, the physical development of these cities in ten years is extraordinary. Melbourne had been the bigger city in 1881; there some 46,400 new dwellings were built, in Sydney, 37,979.(2) In absolute quantities the physical growth of Melbourne was thus greater than that of Sydney, conforming to population increase.

In Adelaide nothing like the same development of housing took place during the decade. The number of houses in the County of Adelaide, nearly all the population of which lived in Adelaide, its suburbs and Port Adelaide, increased by only 4,777 between 1881 and 1891, from 25,816

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(1) The steam tram began the development of Sydney's beaches as pleasure resorts. In 1887, Thomas Saywell opened his line from Rosebank to Lady Robinson's Beach, (Brighton-le-Sands) on Botany Bay. The trip immediately became very popular. Article, S.M.H., 13 Nov., 1977.

(2) N.S.W. Census, 1891, Report, pp. 263-7. Vic. Census, 1891, Report, pp. 54-67; and Vic. Census, 1881, Report, pp. 39-40 for the number of unoccupied dwellings in 1881, which figures are not capable within a few hundred. The definition of dwellings, the enumeration of unoccupied ones and those in process of construction could cause discrepancies. Demolitions have not been taken into account; they would add to the totals, but probably not substantially.

to 30,373.[1] Much of this increase had taken place by the middle eighties. Over the decade the area and population of Adelaide did not increase to the same extent as Melbourne or Sydney.

Within the original city area North Adelaide was, at the beginning of the eighties, mainly residential.[2] In the mid eighties, after something of a boom in building and business, it could still be stated that "North Adelaide is more like a fashionable suburb, with its grand terraces commanding splendid views, its handsome villa residences and spacious grounds, its streets of well-built residences of all sizes and grades."[3] Southern Adelaide (i.e., the main city) contained many residences, but was the business and commercial centre,[4] and these activities continued to expand. The residences were scarcely working class, even on the western side of King William Street. Terraces had made few inroads on the detached middle class cottage.

As early as 1840 Hindmarsh, Bowden and Thebarton,

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(1) S.A. Census, 1891, p.6.
(2) "South Australia: An Account of Its History, etc.," Adelaide, 1879, p.12. (Reprinted from the South Australian Register of 6th Sept., 1879).
(3) J. P. Stow, "South Australia: Its History, Productions, and Natural Resources," Adelaide, 1884, pp. 111-2.
(4) Ibid.

at the north west corner of the city near the Torrens, and Walkerville on the north east near the river, were minor suburbs. Goodwood, Prospect and Alberton near the Port, were named as villages.(1) By the beginning of the eighties suburbs to the east of the city were Kensington, Norwood, Kent Town, Stepney, Magill and Glen Osmond; to the south Unley, Mitcham, Fullarton, Goodwood and Parkside.(2) These were mainly better class residential areas - "To the east and south east a succession of suburbs with their villas, gardens, vineyards, and cottages, stretch away to the hills."(3) To the north there were Prospect, Medindie, and Ovingham. To the west lay Hindmarsh, Bowden, Thebarton and Brompton, which were mainly manufacturing centres; brickmaking and lime kilns were concentrated at Hindmarsh.(4) These were the principal working class suburbs. The railway to Port Adelaide had been opened in 1856 and working class areas continued to grow along it. The Port itself was an industrial as well as a shipping centre, its inhabitants predominantly

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(1) "Centenary History of South Australia," Adelaide, 1936, pp. 243-4.
(2) "South Australia: An Account of Its History, etc.," p.12.
(3) Stow, op. cit., p. 116.
(4) "South Australia: An Account of Its History, etc.," p.12 and p.28.

working class, and with a population of 16,000 in 1891 was an important part of the Adelaide urban area.

The Gawler railway, dating from 1857, had little influence on suburban development; nor did the private line to the watering place at Glenelg. Tramways provided the necessary suburban transport. The first permanent tramway in Australia, horse drawn, was opened in 1878 between Adelaide and Kensington; the same year a line was laid from the city to North A delaide. Within a few years all the suburbs were connected to the city by this means,(1) the lines being authorised by Parliament and conducted privately.(2) These were generally considered an advanced and rapid means of transport; certainly they were sufficient for the purposes of the city, and where the trams terminated horse-drawn buses took over.(3)

Brisbane had been thrown open to free settlement in 1842; four years later it was still only a bush township of less than a thousand pers ons. Even at this time the population was unusually dispersed. J. D. Lang observed

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(1) Centenary History of South Australia, p.238.
(2) Tramways Acts, 1882, Private Acts 45 and 46, Vic.
(3) R. E. N. Twopenny, "Town Life in Australia," London, 1883, p.29.

that: "There are three insignificant and rival towns (North Brisbane, South Brisbane and Kangaroo Point) on the opposite banks of a broad river, where the whole of the population might be concentrated into one respectable and flourishing town."(1) In 1831, Brisbane numbered only 31,109 persons within the municipality, but population had spread beyond the municipal boundary of the city. Commenting on the small increase of population within the municipality of Brisba ne revealed by the 1831 Census, the Registrar-General said that this "is perhaps wholly accounted for by the considerable number of persons who have recently gone to reside in the neighbourhood of the town, especially at places on and near the line of the Brisbane Ipswich railway, such as Toowong and Oxley. These localities have thus become suburbs of Brisbane. They are not so called because they are not within the census and registry district of Brisbane, but they are actually suburbs of the city."(2)

It was only during the eighties that Brisbane advanced in population and industry to join Melbourne,

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(1) W. W. Craig, "Moreton Bay Settlement, etc.," Brisbane, 1925, p.61 and quotation from J. D. Lang, p.63.
(2) Q'Land Census, 1881, Report, p.xvii.

Sydney and Adelaide as a major urban centre. This was accompanied by increased use of the central part of the city for commercial and industrial purposes and the development of residential areas further out. In the Census of 1886 the Municipality of Brisbane contained 28,529 persons; in 1891 only 25,889.(1) The population of Brisbane and suburbs within a five mile radius of the G.P.O. was 73,649 in 1886 and 93,657 in 1891.(2) There had been a great growth of population in suburban areas in these five years. Greater Brisbane, within a ten mile radius of the G.P.O. contained 101,554 persons in 1891, but in the opinion of the Registrar-General "the city of Brisbane and suburbs are best comprehended within a five-mile radius, as a considerable number of what may be more properly considered as rural population are included in the area between the five-mile and the ten-mile radius."(3)

The expansion of the city had been aided by the railway line to Ipswich, opened in 1875. During the eighties lines to Sandgate, Cleveland and Southport were

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(1) Q'Land Census, 1891, Report, p.xii.
(2) Q'Land Census, 1891, p.43.
(3) Q'Land Census, 1891, Report, p.xii.

added. Suburbs extended along the railways. For the rest, horse trams and buses provided transport and the river had been bridged.(1) The differentiation of working class suburbs had not proceeded so far in Brisbane as in older and larger cities. Most industrial establishments - boot, clothing, tobacco, biscuit, confectionery and printing works - were in or near the city itself, and the employees lived in the suburbs.(2) South Brisbane had more than its share of factories and working class population; workers in shops and factories of the city lived in such a variety of areas as West End, Milton, Petrie Terrace in the city, Stanley Bridge, Kelvin Grove, New Farm and Paddington. Some walked up to three miles to work to save bus fares, for this type of transport was not particularly cheap.(3) As would be expected, the terrace was scarcely known in Brisbane and the detached weatherboard cottage, standing in larger grounds than in the southern capitals, was the almost universal type of housing.

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(1) A. Meston, "Geographic History of Queensland", Brisbane, 1895, pp.51-2. J. Bonwick, "The Resources of Queensland", London, 1888.
(2) Q'Land Factories Comm., Appendix A; Q.2112, 6582, 8970.
(3) Ibid., Q.2903, 5466, p.135 ff., Q.6124, 6133, 6688, 6707, 10782.

Hobart reproduced on a small scale something of the old style city building of Sydney. Even in the fifties, however, a visitor to Hobart was struck by "a large quarter outskirting the town, consisting of some hundreds of cottages for the humbler classes, pleasantly situated on the slope of a hill, all or nearly all being separate dwellings, with a patch of neat garden attached, and with rose and vine clad porches, reminding one of the south of England cotters' homes."(1) Hobart did not experience the gold rush or post gold rush expansion. Between 1861 and 1891 the population of Hobart city increased only from 21,118 to 24,905; but some further 9,000 persons resided in Greater Hobart, and during the ten years such places as Wellington Hamlet, Glebe and Glenorchy were first noted as separate centres.(2) Most of the expansion took place in the latter half of the eighties, especially by the sub-division of church glebes.(3)

In 1891 Perth contained only 8,447 inhabitants. The town extended a mile or so in each direction from its centre near the north bank of the Swan River, with scattered

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(1) C. Turnbull, "The Charm of Hobart", Sydney, 1949, p.16, quoting Colonel Mundy.
(2) Tas. Census, 1891, Report, pp. xxiii-xxiv.
(3) Builder and Contractor, 25 June, 1887, p.119.

also to Fabian's.

settlement along the Fremantle road as far as Crawley. The southern side of the river was bare of habitation. Fremantle, with its 5,607 people, was a separate town clustered around the wharves to the south of the mouth of the Swan.(1)

The development of Melbourne, Sydney and to a less extent Adelaide followed a pattern in the location of the population. Basically it was a pattern of inner commercial city centre; surrounding this, older working class suburbs, which had formerly been more fashionable, where attached houses and terraces had displaced some of the cottages by the eighties; further out, suburbs of detached cottages of the working class merging into middle class suburbs with wealthier areas. Geography, economics and transport determined particular variations. This pattern was not novel, but during the eighties when the number of dwellings in the major cities almost doubled, it was reproduced on a grand scale. The lateral expansion was the most striking. Growth by filling the interstices of existing suburbs was important. There was also some expansion upwards, in the form of two storeyed dwellings, but not much in total.

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(1) W.A. Census, 1891, Report, p.24 and maps at front of volume.

The plan of growth of the major Australian cities was one of concentric zones with expansion on the outskirts accompanied by the extension of each inner zone at the expense of the surrounding one. The pattern was never uniform for it was conditioned by topography and human activities. Of the latter during the eighties the railway was the most important; spreading like spokes from a wheel hub, the railway lines introduced the element of ribbon-like, radial development. Nevertheless, despite all variations, the concentric pattern remained the basic one and the changes in the zones the main reflection of the growth of the city.

This pattern was not peculiar to Australian cities; it appears in all the cities of industrial capitalism, more plainly as the city grows, though in the case of ancient urban centres the old form of the city may still be apparent. The cities of the new world, (A) American and Australian, show the pattern most clearly.

(A) The theory of concentric zones was first explicitly formulated by E. W. Burgess in the early 1920's as a result of his studies of Chicago. "The typical processes of the expansion of the city can best be illustrated, perhaps, by a series of concentric circles, which may be numbered to designate both the successive zones of the extension and the types of areas differentiated in the process of expansion." ("The Growth of the City: An Introduction to a Research Project," by Ernest W. Burgess, in "The City," edited by

(over)

R.E. Park, E.W. Burgess and R.D. McKenzie, Chicago, 1925, p.50).

Burgess' zones, briefly, are (1) Business and Commercial; (2) Zone of transition - theatres, hotels, slums, light industry; (3) Working men's homes; (4) Middle class residential; (5) Commuters' - outer wealthy residential.

This zonal distribution is seen most clearly in American and Australian cities. "The American city expresses more clearly than the European city the competitive forces inherent in the industrialization process. This is true for two reasons: (1) American cities are not superimposed upon urban settlement that survived from previous historical conditions; and (2) American cities have grown more rapidly than those of the European continent." (S. Riemer, "The Modern City: An Introduction to Urban Sociology," New York, 1953, p.91).

Griffith Taylor, "Urban Geography," London, 1949, makes the useful distinction of stages of city growth. Applying the zonal concept to Toronto, he finds that the earlier undifferentiated mixing of industrial, commercial and residential areas gradually gave way to concentric zoning as the population of the city increased. He finds that in the Toronto of 1885, with a population of about 120,000, there was a fairly clear zoning of houses, but the commercial and industrial areas of the city were not clearly distinguished. (pp.73-77; 421-3). In Sydney and Melbourne of the eighties the population was much larger, the zones were clearly established and then entrenched by the rapid expansion of the cities. Sydney's zones were most broken by topography. Other Australian capitals, smaller, were in an earlier stage of development.

In any mechanical application the theory of concentric zones is always falsified by local circumstances. Hence it has often been criticised. M.P. Gist and A. Halbert, "Urban Society," New York, 1950, Third Edition (revised), Chapter 6, give a good summary of Burgess' theory and the objections to it. The criticisms refer particularly to the variety of activity in any area; to the existence of enclaves in every city; and to tendencies towards radial development. These are often important, but for Australian cities, at a certain stage of development the concentric zones hypothesis is a useful aid to description. It is a descriptive concept. Some reasons why such cities tend towards this formation have been indicated in the text; others are outside the scope of this thesis.

For the materials of their dwellings the Australian pioneers turned perforce to whatever was close at hand - bark, earth, undressed timber. The improvisations of bark, wattle and daub and slab soon passed in the cities, though they continued for many years in the country. Corrugated iron and canvas over frames sometimes provided the cheapest huts, while tents as dwelling places were not unknown. In the cities, however, long before the eighties the three predominant building materials were stone, brick and weatherboard. As a rule stone was more expensive than brick, and brick more expensive than weatherboard, so that the latter was more often used for working class dwellings than for mansions. The most striking feature of the choice of materials is the great difference between cities, explained in the main by the availability of the material.

In Melbourne in 1881 and 1891 houses were about equally divided between brick and stone on the one hand and weatherboard on the other, with other types unimportant. The figures for inhabited dwellings were:-(1)

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(1) Vic. Census, 1881, Part I, p.48; Vic. Census, 1891, Part I, p.24. In both cases a few iron and lath and plaster dwellings are included with wood. The 1891 figures refer to Greater Melbourne. For 1881 Greater Melbourne figures are not available; those given refer to the County of Bourke, which comprised rural areas as well as Melbourne. Whereas the County of Bourke contained 59,402 houses, Greater Melbourne in 1881 contained only 52,131. The additional fourteen per cent of rural houses would increase the proportion of wood compared to brick and stone.

1881		1891
Brick or stone	28,074	Brick or stone 49,443
Wood	29,706	Wood 49,886

Allowing for the fact that the 1881 figures include some rural houses more likely to be weatherboard, it is seen that throughout the great building boom of the eighties the proportion of weatherboard houses at least did not decrease. Appendix VI shows that by far the greater number of cheap dwellings being built were weatherboard. The cheap brick houses tended to be in inner or middle class suburbs until the end of the decade (and a large group at Brunswick in 1890 might be partly explained by proximity to brickyards there). The building society examined in Appendix VI made no loans to build cheap stone houses, but a few changed hands. Only in the older dwellings of the inner suburbs was the working class population living in brick, and sometimes stone, houses; while weatherboard survived and was being built there. In the main the Melbourne working class was housed in weatherboard, with brick a sign of better standing, save for older brick houses in inner areas. The brick houses concerned were more likely to be tenanted than owned by their working class occupier. They were also more likely to be semi-detached or fully attached houses than the weatherboard ones.

In Sydney the situation was different, for brick was by far the most popular building material. The figures were:[1]

1881		1891		
Brick or Stone	29,158 (75.5%)	Stone	4,980	(6.3%)
Wood	9,118 (23.6%)	Brick	57,292	(72.1%)
		Wood	15,921	(20%)

One reason for the prevalence of brick would appear to be the greater age of the city, for between 1861 and 1891 a slow process had continued, the proportion of buildings of brick or stone rising from 71 per cent to 78 per cent, and of wood, falling from 28 per cent to 20 per cent.[2] In the city municipal area, which was bounded by Glebe, Camperdown, Redfern and Paddington, over ninety per cent of the dwellings were of brick or stone in 1881 and a higher proportion in 1891.[3] Thus in the older areas brick displaced

(1) N.S.W. Census, 1891, Part 7, pp. 54-5; and N.S.W. Census, 1891, Report, p. 264. The number of stone houses was not given separately in 1881. The figures are not exactly comparable, those for 1891 referring to Greater Sydney and those for 1881 referring to Sydney and suburbs, which covered a slightly less area. In the early forties the erection of wooden buildings within the boundaries of the city of Sydney was prohibited. (J. C. Byrne, "Twelve Years Wanderings in the British Colonies," London, 1848, Vol. I, p.129.)

(2) N.S.W. Census, 1891, Report, p.265.

(3) Ibid., p.264.

weatherboard, and certainly Sydney had not built so many houses in a hundred years as marvellous Melbourne had built in fifty. But since brick had more than held its own in the building boom of the eighties, something more than the age of the city is required to account for its prevalence; the readily available brick-making clays and the firm establishment of a local custom suffice as reasons.

Adelaide, staid and solid in appearance as in character, provides a novelty in Australian house building, for here until 1891, stone houses predominated. In the county of Adelaide, which included some population beyond the city and suburbs, the types of dwellings were:-(1)

	1881		1891
Stone	14,948	Stone	20,452
Brick	4,817	Brick	5,456
Concrete	2,278	Concrete	1,453
Wood	2,495	Wood	2,607

Thus in 1881 some sixty per cent of these dwellings were of stone; in 1891 about seventy per cent, while the smaller proportion built of wood had decreased.

(1) S.A. Census, 1881, Part I, Summary Tables, p.34; S.A. Census, 1891, Part I, Summary Tables, p.48.

Adelaide was unique in that the great bulk of its population lived in stone houses and these were still being built in large numbers during the eighties. In other cities the stone house was either an old cottage or a new mansion; in Adelaide it provided most of the working class accommodation, old and new. The reason was the availability of cheap, easily worked stone near Adelaide and elsewhere in South Australia, as at Mt. Gambier.

The predominance of stone was even more marked in the more truly urban areas of Adelaide. In the corporations of Adelaide, Port Adelaide and nearby suburbs, where nearly two-thirds of the population of Greater Adelaide dwelt, two-thirds of the houses were of stone in 1881, more in 1891, with brick making up most of the remainder and wood practically negligible.(1)

Brisbane shows the other extreme, for here climate, the pioneering conditions, ample wood and little stone made timber the almost universal building material. In the census district of Brisbane, which contained nearly all the population of Greater Brisbane in 1881 and about half of it in 1891, the materials used were as follows:-(2)

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(1) Ibid.
(2) Q'land Census, 1881, Part I, p.27; Q'land Census 1891, Part I, p.37.

	1881		1891
Stone	194	Stone	128
Brick	826	Brick	1053
Wood	4931	Wood	8808

This was the original city and the inner part of it when it expanded so rapidly during the eighties; even here scarcely any building material was known but timber, which continued to be used in increasing proportion.

In Hobart in 1881 three quarters of dwellings were of brick or stone, the remainder weatherboard. There was little building in the city during the decade, but what there was tended to be in wood. Launceston was about half wood, half brick and stone in 1881, with more wood in 1891.(1)

Perth in 1891 was three quarters brick and Fremantle more than three quarters stone.(2)

The Australian urban wage earner of the eighties lived in a house the materials of which varied with each capital city. These individual characteristics had been established on the basis of availability and price of materials, climate, rate of city expansion and local fashion. In Melbourne the urban wage earner probably lived in a weatherboard cottage, but sometimes in a brick house, usually older; in Sydney he was mainly housed in brick,

(1) Tas. Census, 1881, Part I, p.11; Tas. Census, 1891, Part I, p.12.
(2) W.A. Census, 1891, Part I, p.12.

except perhaps in newer suburbs; in Adelaide stone was all but universal, old or new; in Brisbane weatherboard likewise; in Hobart the predominant stone or brick was gradually giving way to wood; in Perth brick was usual.(1)

In the twentieth century the main change was to be a steadily increasing proportion of brick houses which blurred the older individual features of the cities, until in the 1940's the search for economy and variety reinstated timber and brought asbestos cement into common use in outer suburbs.

For Melbourne Appendix VI provides further information about the structure of ordinary houses, as far as their internal walls, ceilings and roofs are concerned.

Internal walls of new brick houses were nearly always brick, with a few of lath and plaster. The weatherboard houses built then usually had partitions of lath and

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(1) R. Boyd, who knows his facts and figures though he uses them brightly, sums up the nineteenth century progress... "each colony eventually discovered its favourite building materials and settled down to making cities; New South Wales, South Australia and Tasmania with stone and b rick; Victoria and Western Australia with brick and wood. Bark, clay and turf still lived on in country buildings." Op. cit., p.127. For the working class population this holds, with emphasis on costs in each case. The danger of the impressionistic account is shown in such an acute observer as R. E. N. Twopenny, "Town Life in Australia," 1883, p.30, where he stresses the brick houses of Melbourne, with the weatherboard cottages lingering on in the poorer outskirts; s tone in Sydney and brick in Adelaide. In this matter statistics are a necessary corrective to general impressions.

plaster. From the sixties, "V-jointed lining boards were giving way to lath and plaster for interior lining to all but the very poor houses."(1) Even during the eighties some older and cheaper forms of partition survived in weatherboard houses, such as wood, or canvas or paper on a wooden framework. By the end of the decade new types of plastering which dispensed with the laths were making this material more common.(2)

Ceilings were almost invariably constructed of the same material as the internal walls, with lath and plaster taking the place of brick. Hence lath and plaster was almost universal for ceilings, with only a few of wood, canvas or paper.

For roofing the progression of materials in ordinary homes had been bark, shingles, corrugated iron, slate. Attempts had been made to manufacture tiles from the fifties, but they were virtually unknown until 1886, when importation on a large scale commenced. "Until the eighties," remarks Boyd, "when its supremacy was first

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(1) Boyd, op. cit., p.40.
(2) Builder and Contractor, 28 Sept., 1889, p.301. Queensland lath splitters were complaining of the damage done to their industry by the substitution of wire netting for laths.

seriously threatened by the tile, slate was the stample roofing material."[1] However, until the end of the decade tiles were not quoted in current price lists of the builders' journal; and they were a novel roofing material for a Sydney church in 1889.[2] Certainly they had not reached cheaper homes, for of all the dwellings tabulated in Appendix VI, not one had a tile roof. For wage earners' houses the cheaper corrugated iron was more common than slate. New weatherboard houses were nearly all iron roofed with a few of slate, and shingles a curiosity. So were the existing weatherboard houses purchased, though a few were still shingled, the shingles to be covered with iron when they began to deteriorate. Older brick houses mainly had slate roofs.

Within these dwellings of stone, brick or timber, the urban population of Australia in the eighties was housed as comfortably as any in the world at the time. The first pre-requisite of comfort is adequate space: here

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(1) Boyd, op. cit., p.136.
(2) Builder and Contractor, 6 July, 1889, p.18.

we must consider the number of persons per dwelling and the size of the dwelling.

The average number of persons per dwelling in each city is set out in the following table.(1)

NUMBER 15 TABLE 15 PERSONS PER INHABITED DWELLING - AUSTRALIAN CITIES, 1881 and 1891

	1881	1891
Melbourne	5.4	5.2
Sydney	5.7	5.4
Adelaide	5.3	5.1
Brisbane	5.4	5.4
Hobart	5.3	5.9
Perth	-	4.1

The average number of occupants of each dwelling in the Australian cities of the eighties was a little more than five.(2) The small change which had taken place during the decade had been in the direction of reducing the

(1) Melbourne-Greater Melbourne; Sydney - city and suburbs; Adelaide - corporation of Adelaide, Port Adelaide and nearby suburbs; Brisbane - census district; Hobart - city and nearby suburbs; Perth - census district. Compiled from: Vic. Census, 1891, Report, p.307; N.S.W. Census, 1891, Report, pp. 262-4; S.A. Census, 1881, Part I, p.34; S.A. Census, 1891, Part I, p.48; Q'land Census, 1881, Part I, p.24; Q'land Census, 1891, Part I, p.34; Tas. Census, 1881, Part I, p.9; Tas. Census, 1891, Part I, p.12; W.A. Census, 1891, pp. 99-100.

(2) In London it was 7.82 in 1881 and 7.72 in 1891. Other British cities had an average of five or even less persons per inhabited dwelling in 1891, but the dwellings were smaller than the Australian ones. J. H. Clapham, "An Economic History of Modern Britain," Free Trade and Steel, 1850-1886, pp. 489-98.

number of persons per house. Standards of living space are relative, each slow-won improvement of the past becoming the accepted requirement of the present; thus Boyd points out that, "By 1947, when public recognition of the great housing shortage was most acute, the average had in fact dropped to 3.9 inmates per house."(1) Of course, the average size of families had also decreased. We cannot be sure how the city dweller of the eighties regarded his housing position, but probably it was mainly with pride, and certainly he could observe that there were fewer inhabitants per dwelling than there ever had been. Absolutely, the average of the eighties was no more than one family per house. Families might be large and houses small, but in the overall picture families did not have to share houses. The average, of course, disguises the fact that some overcrowding did exist, and it was naturally found amongst the poor; but the total figures put the overcrowding within its limits of an unusual phenomenon.

The unmarried male worker whose family did not live in the city usually lodged in one of the many boarding houses, whose standards ranged from the primitive to the comfortable according to the price charged. The custom of a working class family helping its income by taking a lodger

(1) Op. cit., p.114.

was not so common in Australia as in Britain.

The next aspect of housing standards to be considered is the size of the dwellings. The only way in which this can be done is by examining the number of rooms per dwelling and noting any further information. Table 2 sets out the distribution of house sizes, by number of rooms, in the capital cities in 1881 and 1891.(1)

TABLE 16. NUMBER OF ROOMS PER HOUSE, AUSTRALIAN CITIES, 1881 and 1891

1881

	1-2 Rooms	3-4 Rooms	5-6 Rooms	Over 6 Rooms
Melbourne	5,754	27,741	13,538	10,183
Adelaide	1,419	6,924	3,152	2,220
Hobart	581	1,544	899	939

1891

	1-2 Rooms	3-4 Rooms	5-6 Rooms	Over 6 Rooms
Melbourne	3,665	73,999		20,830
Sydney	2,794	23,601	27,522	16,226
Adelaide	801	9,190	5,341	3,751
Hobart	384	1,744	1,200	1,186
Perth	364	722	361	294

(1) The city areas are the same as those used for Table I. Brisbane figures were not recorded, nor Sydney for 1881. Compiled from: Vic. Census, 1881, Part I, p.53; S.A. Census, 1881, Part I, Summary Tables, p.34; Tas. Census, 1881, Part I, p.11; Vic. Census, 1891, Part I, p.24; N.S.W. Census, 1891, Part 7, Habitations, pp. 54-5; S.A. Census, 1891, p.49; Tas. Census, 1891, Part I, p.13; W.A. Census, 1891, p.100.

The Table shows that in 1881 in Melbourne and Adelaide, the most important cities for which figures are available, about half of the dwellings were of 3 - 4 rooms, about one-quarter of 5 - 6 rooms. Those of 1 - 2 rooms amounted to about one-tenth of the total; those of more than six rooms may be regarded as not relevant to working class housing. It can therefore be said that most wage earners in Melbourne and Adelaide in 1881 lived in houses of 3 - 4 rooms, a noticeable number in houses of 1 - 2 rooms, and perhaps somewhat more in houses of 5 - 6 rooms.

In 1891 the average size of dwellings in Melbourne had shown a marked increase, with those of 1 - 2 rooms decreasing absolutely and those of over 6 rooms greatly increased; the single total for houses of 3 - 6 rooms makes it impossible to see the trend in this group, which is the important one. Sydney, with one-third of its houses of 3 - 4 rooms and about forty per cent of 5 - 6 rooms may be taken as a guide; here also the number of 1 - 2 room dwellings was negligible. In Adelaide rather more than half the dwellings were of 3-4 rooms, some twenty-eight per cent of 5-6 rooms; these were both slight increases from 1881, while the number of 1 - 2 room houses had decreased. Hobart shows a similar small trend. In Perth the smaller houses were more common.

During the eighties the size of the urban wage

earner's dwelling increased, probably to the greatest extent in Melbourne, Sydney, and it may be assumed, Brisbane, where most building took place. The tiny 1-2 room dwelling, often little better than a hut, was disappearing; for many the common 3 - 4 room house was being left behind for one of 5 - 6 rooms.

In all this discussion it should be remembered that the kitchen was not counted as a room, unless it was also the eating room, which was rare; nor was the bathroom, if any. The rooms numbered were bedrooms, living rooms and eating rooms - offices, usually detached, were extra.

Table 2 of Appendix VI provides information about the number of rooms in cheaper dwellings erected or bought in Melbourne during the eighties; and practically half the Melbourne of 1891 had been built during this decade. The picture of wage earners' housing given there supplements the statistics.

In the early eighties an occasional two roomed house was built by owner-occupiers, and some more purchased, for smaller houses were usually older ones. The new houses were almost universally of three or four rooms; some of those purchased had more than four rooms, since to the buyer five old rooms might be the equivalent of three new ones by the all-important criterion of cost. A narrow front

verandah was common in both old and hew houses. The separate bathroom, laundry, closet or kitchen in the house was rare; usually the first three were in detached sheds in the back yard, with the kitchen a skillion roofed lean-to on the rear wall of the house.

By the mid-eighties an occasional two-roomed house was still built; but the four-roomed house was usual, with some of more than four rooms. The same trend was reflected in the purchases, for many of the houses purchased were recently built. The verandah was ubiquitous and the separate bathroom frequently appeared.

At the end of the decade the records of the Building Society used in Appendix VI do not show any house of less than three rooms being built, and scarcely any being bought. The three-roomed house was not very common; four rooms was the mode, with a number above this. A bathroom was expected in new dwellings, and often found in older ones; a small hall might be added at the front and a scullery or laundry at the back.

A less obvious aspect of housing conditions is the soundness of the construction. With virtually no legal check other than the law of contract, building standards were often low. "It (the eighties) was the golden age of

jerry-building."[1] Jerry-building was frequently attacked by responsible members of the building profession. The trade journal in 1889 denounced the practices of the jerry-builder and similar architects and tradesmen.

> "Floors are laid upon the damp earth; green and 'shuffy' bricks are used in walls which spring up as if by magic; 'drains' of the kind used in the Garden of Eden are 'laid down' - and the germs of deadly maladies along with them; and the house, or row of houses, is announced as 'fit for occupation,' whereas such dwellings should more often be labelled as 'Pest-houses, to let, cheap. Corpses turned out wholesale on the shortest notice!'" [2]

Jerry-building was not new; the contemporary slums had been jerry built in past decades. So far as health and sanitation were concerned, conditions had improved as municipal and government regulations slowly increased. It is to be expected that there would have been much rushed and shoddy workmanship in the great building booms of the eighties, when easy money could be made by the speculator. Much of the criticism was particularly directed against "the speculators who buy allotments of land and run up cottages of the cheapest description," with "dishonesty in

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(1) Boyd, op. cit., p.50.
(2) Builder and Contractor, 26 Oct., 1889, pp. 406-7. The same theme is developed in the issues of 10 Aug., 1889, pp. 127-8; 2 Nov., 1889, p.420; 9 Nov., 1889, p.446; 22 Nov., 1889, p. 469; 30 Nov., 1889, p. 523; 14 Dec., 1889, p. 579.

construction, dishonesty in sale, sham and fraud throughout. The brickwork of the most rotten description, the carpenters' appropriately in character, the plumbers' a deception, and the painters' a mockery." (1) Certainly many wage earners' houses, which were priced as if they would last a life time, were soon decrepit; but mainly this was a problem to be disclosed in the future, and the future held even bigger troubles.

The Australian city had grown from a collection of cottages and the cottage type of construction remained its most striking feature to a visitor from Europe. A Frenchman who arrived in Sydney in 1824 noted that -

> "Sydney to-day is nearly 1½ miles long although it is supposed to have only ten thousand inhabitants. This is easily accounted for by the fact that each house consists of a ground floor only, and has a flower garden next to the street and a bigger garden at the back. They are indeed the genuine 'cottages' which the English love so much and call their 'Sweet Homes.'" (2)

Many other examples have been given of this characteristic of Australian housing from the earliest times. Before the days of the flat the alternative to the detached cottage was the terrace or row house; the semi-detached

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(1) Ibid., 30 Nov., 1839, p. 523.
(2) G. Bears, "Houses of Australia," Sydney, 1948, quoting Pierre Lesson.

house was an intermediate stage. In both cases cheapness was the incentive. By the eighties these types were noticeable in wage earners housing. Some evaluation of their importance is necessary, but the evidence is often obscure.

From the sixties blocks of single storey terrace houses were being built in the inner suburbs of Sydney and Melbourne on narrow frontages. The two-storeyed terrace was not yet common, though some were seen, as in inner North Melbourne;(1) their development came with the boom of the eighties. "In the inner suburbs of Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide, two-storeyed terrace houses were built for rental investments. Whole blocks from street to street were covered with these vertebrate buildings. Each unit was seventeen to twenty feet wide ... Dozens of units on end looked exactly alike."(2) These were distinct from the two-storeyed houses which earlier merchants had used as combined business and living quarters in the older cities, before they moved their homes to distant suburbs. Big areas of new single-storeyed terraces were also being

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(1) Mrs. M. Casey (ed.), "Early Melbourne Architecture," Melbourne, 1953, pp. 86 ff., 108 ff.
(2) Boyd, op. cit., p. 49.

built on the tiniest frontages with the poorest workmanship. This was now extended to the new "tram suburbs," with the same mean results.(1)

The terrace was a phenomenon of Melbourne and Sydney; it was not significant in other cities. It is impossible to say what proportion of the working class in Melbourne and Sydney were housed in terraces; they appeared to dominate some suburbs; and those the ones most easily visible to visitor or historian, but at the same time the detached cottage was reproducing itself so rapidly further out that numerically it must have preponderated.

The Melbourne Building Society whose operations are examined in Appendix VI financed much large scale investment building; the records set out in Table 2 of the Appendix refer to cheaper housing where terraces would be found. Even so, the fully attached dwellings (with a common wall to other houses on both sides) built through the Society never amounted to more than ten per cent of dwellings built, and were usually about five per cent. Semi-detached houses were rather more common. This is not conclusive, for other companies and persons may have

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(1) Builder and Contractor, 17 Sept., 1887, p.298; 24 Sept., 1887, p.315.

specialised in terrace building. Of cheap houses purchased through the Society, one-third were fully attached in 1881; nearly one quarter in 1882; and only a few per cent in later years. The houses concerned in 1881 and 1882 were nearly all bought by investors for letting and with the smallness of the sample occasional block purchases may assume an undue significance. Apparently the terrace house was becoming relatively less important as the building boom progressed. Semi-detached houses ranged from a few per cent to about fourteen per cent of houses purchased.

The figures in Appendix VI provide only a guide on this question. The proportion of wage earners living in detached houses probably increased during the eighties, and it is very unlikely that as much as a quarter of Melbourne's wage earners had ever been housed in any other way.(1) There is no reason to suppose that Sydney had any more terraces, while other Australian cities had many fewer.

The terrace with all its undesirable features is identified in the public mind as a nineteenth century phenomenon. In fact, new areas were put under terraces after the eighties and the Edwardian terrace which succeeded

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(1) R. E. N. Twopenny, "Town Life in Australia", 1883, considered that the Australian wage earner almost always lived in a detached house, terraces and attached houses being disliked. p.38.

The Victorian provides many of the surviving examples of this construction. When William Lane in 1892 wished to depict working class misery in Sydney, he had his family living in an overcrowded two-storeyed terrace in Sydney.(1) Louis Stone, no less acute an observer of working class life, described his Cardigan Street, Waterloo, around the turn of the century, as made up of detached cottages, with the long ugly rows of two-storeyed houses - "the model lodging houses of the crowded suburbs" - creeping out from the city.(2) Stone's picture is more typical for the eighties. Consciousness of the deplorable role played in city housing by the terrace should not lead us to exaggerate its importance or antiquity.(3)

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(1) W. Lane, "The Workingmen's Paradise," 1948 edition, pp. 6-8.

(2) L. Stone, "Jonah," 1945 ed., p.107, p.115.

(3) Professor Denis Winston, Professor of Town and Country Planning at the University of Sydney refers to terraces in an article in the Sydney Morning Herald of 3 Aug., 1954:- "The approach to Australian suburban housing has swung from one extreme to the other - from the terrace home of the last century to the contemporary bungalow in a paddock... People who come to Australia from the confined streets of industrial Liverpool, Manchester and Leeds, were understandably determined never again to live in gloomy terrace homes which opened directly on to pavements and tram lines. Most of the 19th century speculators in Sydney and Melbourne built in this tradition and did nothing to change the new settlers' opinions. The result was a swing to the extreme, which has led to Australian housing taking up too much land..."

The implication that historically the terraces came first in Australian urban housing, giving way to detached dwellings, is incorrect. Similarly, terraces were not the dominant form of Australian housing in the nineteenth century. These drab monuments to investors' greed can be seen in their proper perspective without discounting their detrimental social effects.

The terraces of one era became the slums of a succeeding one. By the eighties this had happened to the terraces of the sixties, and to older inner city buildings. The Rocks area of Sydney can claim the distinction of being Australia's first slum. It remained one, tucked away at the end of the city, while other inner suburbs gradually became more crowded and dilapidated. Later the Goulburn Street-Haymarket end of Sydney became a Chinese quarter, and another resort of destitution and crime.

Melbourne had its slum area, beginning with Little Bourke Street, a few blocks away from the heart of the city, and therefore a cause of much concern to respectable citizens. Here dwellings of all kinds crowded into lanes and courts, dilapidated, filthy, overcrowded; the inhabitants were the poorest of the poor, the semi-homeless, vagabonds, prostitutes, criminals, and the Chinese. This was an old residential area, now intensively and recklessly covered with a confusion of buildings. In 1883 a group of "representative and influential persons" constituted themselves a Back Slums Committee to draw attention to these slums of inner Melbourne. They enlisted the support of the City Council, the police, the Age newspaper, and their

proposals were received by the Premier with expressions of approval.(1) Greater state and municipal control of buildings under Building and Health Acts was sought. The Age was prepared to see the municipal or state authorities as landlords if necessary in order to clear away and replace the slums.(2) Nothing effective came of this agitation, so that in 1889 a building journal was bitterly complaining that the expansion northwards of the business centre was still blocked by "this continuation of dens, where a considerable proportion of the prostitution and crime of the city find refuge."(3)

Only Sydney and Melbourne could be said to contain slum areas; by European standards these were very small. Larger parts of the inner suburbs contained much housing which was inferior by the Australian standards of the day. Generally speaking, deficiencies in housing arose from inadequacies of construction, not from overcrowding.

The change in architectural styles in urban Australia is a fascinating study which illuminates the

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(1) Age, 8 Feb., 13 Feb., 6 March, 7 April, 5 May, 7 May, 1883. The Melbourne Coroner had described many of these dwellings as practically uninhabited and breeding places of disease; he complained that the local Board of Health would not condemn them. (Vic. Shops Comm. Factories Report, Q.5843.)
(2) Age, 15 Nov., 1 Dec., 1883.
(3) Builder and Contractor, 21 Dec., 1889, p.587.

social and cultural history of the country. When the styles of lower middle class and working class homes are considered new complexities arise compounded of climate and geography, economics and politics, class relationships and outlook, imported and local cultural influences, nationalism and tradition, hard facts and fond hopes. It is a field of sociology as well as architecture, but scarcely enters into a study of living conditions. What is of importance here is the structural design of houses, for given the materials the land and the finance, basic design determines what use is made of them.(1)

When the primitive single room cottage was expanded to two rooms it provided a living and a sleeping room in the form of an oblong; generally a narrow verandah was added at the front and a kitchen on the rear wall. In the cities this design survived in a few two-roomed houses in the eighties. When the house had grown to four rooms it was a square or oblong with a passage running down the centre. A contemporary observer of city life picked this without hesitation as the standard design:

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(1) See Boyd, op. cit., Ch. 1, for a lucid description of the main plan types.

> "... the favourite type of Australian house is laid out in an oblong bisected by a three to eight foot passage. The first door on one side as you go in is the drawing room, on the other side the dining room. Then follow the bedrooms, etc., with the kitchen and scullery at the end of the passage, or sometimes in a lean-to at right angles to the hinder part of the house proper. This kind of cottage is almost universal in Adelaide amongst the middle and upper classes and invariable in the working class throughout Australia." (1)

Twopenny adds that verandahs and bathrooms were usual, in poorer dwellings, the latter in a shed in the back-yard also serving as a wash house. The privy was also in a separate shed, its arrangements being "almost invariably objectionable and disgusting."(2)

This key design was reproduced thousands of times in the four-roomed cottages of the period, and helps explain why four rooms became the standard size for cheaper houses. The plans of many of the houses tabulated in Appendix VI are of this type. One room at the front could be pushed forward and the verandah altered at the front to provide some variation in appearance. The same plan could be simply

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(1) R. E. N. Twopenny, op. cit., p.34.
(2) Ibid, p.36.

extended by adding another room or pair of rooms to provide a five or six-roomed house. With this number of rooms the way was open to turn the house sideways on the block to present a more impressive front to the street. This required a fairly wide frontage and street frontage was always reduced to the minimum when cost was the first consideration. The detached working class cottage might be built on a frontage of forty feet, though often the sub-division was smaller than this, with sixteen feet common for terrace rows. Small frontages called for a longer and narrower design which was achieved by running a passage down one side wall and opening into it the rooms, one behind the other. In a terrace row the party walls precluded side windows, so what has been aptly described as the "tunnel plan" was there usually limited to a length of three main rooms.(1) This oblong plan was the second basic design in the eighties.(2)

The deficiencies of these designs were recognised

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(1) Boyd, op. cit., p.11.

(2) Queensland did not quite follow the other colonies in design of houses. "It is only in Queensland where anything approaching a southern style has been attempted. There the arcade, the colonnade, the wide verandah, the airy balcony, the building merging to a cool and spacious centre, are found." G. Gilbert Parker, "Round the Compass in Australia," Melb., n.d., c.1892, p.101. Not many of these elegancies embellished working class homes, but Brisbane was free of the tenement and the tunnel plan; its wooden buildings were more spacious and their wide verandahs planned for use.

by many architects. John Sulman, after two years in Australia, was calling for an Australian style of architecture suitable to the climate, with the verandah an integral part of the house as an outdoor room.(1) Though wealthier people might sometimes experiment, for the great majority no house but the familiar one was within reach. In it neither comfort nor enjoyment was maximised.

Under pioneering conditions many Australians had owned their own homes because the homes and the land they stood on were of little value. In the cities as the land became more valuable and the houses more substantial the resident was often no longer the owner. No doubt Australian cities always contained a larger proportion of owner occupiers than did English cities. Visitors commented on this and it was a source of pride to colonials. From the seventies the building societies were becoming prominent, providing a convenient means of acquiring ownership of a home. An official publicist speaking of Adelaide in the mid-seventies declared that "many of the artisan class here, through the aid of the building societies have erected for themselves comfortable cottages, surrounded by pretty,

(1) Builder and Contractor, 21 May, 28 May, 1887.

fruitful gardens, and they are thus able to live rent free - a matter of no small moment in a country where house rent is high."[1] Building societies flourished on a larger scale in Melbourne and Sydney. A Victorian in the early eighties confidently claimed that a working man could achieve ownership of his cottage in a few years through a building society; and pointed to whole suburbs of building society houses, uninspired and monotonous buildings, but good working class accommodation.[2]

The eighties were the great period of the building society and Melbourne the ground where they grew lushest. The prosperity, the confidence, the optimism about the future, were powerful forces encouraging home ownership, while the homes to be acquired sprang up on all sides. Melbourne had most of all this.

The picture of the thrifty artisan paying off his comfortable home was a favourite one with politicians, publicists and financiers of the day. Francis Adams pointed out the other side of the picture when he wrote:-

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(1) W. Harcus, "South Australia," Adelaide, 1876, p.87.
(2) R. E. N. Twopenny, op. cit., p.37.

"We are told confidently of each town mechanic owning his little suburban cottage and block of land.

"When you come to look more closely, you find that nine out of ten of these men are in the hands of the Building Societies, heavily in arrears with their payments or mortgaged up to their necks with the banks.

"The suburban Building Societies are becoming big landlords as the purchase of these cottages in their 16 and 32 perch allotments falls through, owing to the inability of the harriers to pay their monthly instalments.

"One needs to have seen the inner working of one of these societies to realise their extent, and the power they can put into the hands of their controllers in local and general politics places whole suburban quarters at the mercy of unscrupulous jobbers." (A)

In point of fact the Building Society whose operations are analysed in Appendix VI had very few resumptions before 1891; but it was a relatively cautious lender, and even so arrears were sometimes carried and additional loans frequently granted. The urban wage earners were not unaffected by the speculative land boom which reached its height in Melbourne in the late eighties: they were affected as home builders and even to a small extent as investors. The city land boom was marked by much reckless promotion and some calculated fraud. At the height of the boom house and land prices were fantastically inflated by

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(A) Francis Adams, "The Australians," London, 1893, pp. 208-9.

the prospect of an ever growing resale value. Home builders bought at these prices. Even the first collapse of an important land and building company in December, 1889, did not bring prices down. The whole banking and financial structure of Victoria was finally involved. (B) (1)

Particulars of home ownership of cheaper dwellings through the Modern Permanent Building Society of Melbourne are shown in Table 2 of Appendix VI. Of new houses with a loan of under £300 about one-fifth were usually built for owner-occupiers. The wage earner who wished to acquire a home was more likely to purchase it than to have it built.

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(1). (B) Descriptions of this aspect of land sales and building activities in Melbourne are given by:-
T. A. Coghlan, "Labour and Industry in Australia," Vol. III, pp. 1687 ff.
E. O. G. Shann, "The Boom of 1890 - And Now," Sydney, 1927, pp. 13-16.
E. O. G. Shann, "An Economic History of Australia," 1948 edition, Chapter V.
G. Wood, "Borrowing and Business in Australia," Oxford University Press, 1930, p.51 ff.
An account from the point of view of the British investor is given in the Economist, 12 Sept., 1891, "Melbourne Real Property Institutions and British Deposits."
The defence of the Australian banker is summed up by Nathaniel Cork, Journal of the Institute of Bankers, London, Vol. XV, April, 1894, "The Late Australian Banking Crisis."

In most years more than half of transactions of sale were to owner occupiers. Considering only loans of less than £300 per house, during the eleven years 1881-91 inclusive, this particular building society granted loans to almost four hundred owner-occupiers to build houses and to eight hundred to purchase houses. (Table I, Appendix VI). In the four years 1881, 1882, 1885 and 1890 analysed in Table 2 of Appendix VI loans to owner-occupiers comprised one-third of all loans of under £300. This Building Society was an important one which provides a significant sample of building in Melbourne, and perhaps especially of cheaper home building. An overall estimate of the proportion of owner occupiers is difficult to make, for usually houses were built for sale rather than built directly by the intending owner, and there is no means of telling what number of Melbourne houses changed hands during the period in order to evaluate the importance of owner occupiers among the purchasers. All that can be said is that of cheap houses built or purchased during the period perhaps, very roughly, one-third were acquired by owner

occupiers.[1] In a period of such active building and transactions in houses this must have brought many wage earners into the class of owner occupiers. More expensive homes were more likely to be owner occupied, so the extent of home ownership among the whole urban population by the end of the eighties would be very considerable.

Melbourne was not unique in this respect. Similar conditions existed in other cities. The less metropolitan the centre the more likely it was that houses would be owner occupied.[2]

Home ownership in the eighties was encouraged in some respects, in that there were plenty of financiers to invest capital in building by persuading all and sundry to purchase a home on terms. On the other hand, interest rates were high, there was no government subsidy to housing

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(1) A twentieth century study of the same city, "Rents in Melbourne," by Wilfred Prest, Economic Record, Vol. 21, June, 1945, shows that in 1941-2, 55 per cent of house-holders were tenants, 28 per cent owners, and 16 per cent purchasing owners. The proportion of tenants was great-est amongst persons of low incomes and in the older, inner suburbs (pp.38-40). Home ownership in Melbourne was more common in 1941-2 than it had been in the 1880's.

(2) A trade union witness before the S.A. Factories Comm., in 1891 conceded that - "Many men have been able to pur-chase a home of their own out of their wages." (Q.294). William Lane, "The Workingman's Paradise," 1948, ed., p.35 gives as a sign of Sydney's vanishing prosperity a building society man's opinion that unemployment was causing the resumption of a number of workers' homes.

or government aid to building societies, no thirty or forty year terms. The house was usually required to be paid off in seven to twelve years. Only big wages and the confident expectation of their continuation would persuade wage earners to embark on this commitment. Repayments were considerably higher than rentals. Housing being a commodity of infinite variation in its qualities of size, age, construction, location and fashionableness, comparisons are difficult. The repayments shown in Table 2 of Appendix VI may be compared with the rentals given there, although the houses concerned are not identical and the rentals are a rather arbitrary sample. The comparison shows that over half the rentals were 10/- per week or less, and virtually all the remainder under 15/- per week. Only a quarter of the repayments were under 10/- per week, and two-thirds of them between 10/- and £1 per week. Over the whole of the eighties unskilled wages in Melbourne ranged from £2 to £2.10.0 per week and skilled wages from £3 to £3.10.0 per week. Home ownership repayments could scarcely be less than a quarter of the unskilled workers' wages; usually

they would be a quarter of the skilled workers' wages.(1) It is unlikely on these grounds that home ownership was widespread amongst unskilled workers, and it was certainly limited by cost amongst skilled workers.

Repayments at this level became an unbearable burden when earnings dropped. In this way the depression of the nineties dashed the hopes and swept away the savings of many urban wage earners. Immediately, another aspect of home purchase on terms was that the buyer took responsibility for maintenance, which could soon become a heavy item, for the system was an encouragement to the get-rich-quick builder to use inferior materials and scrimp workmanship.(2)

Within his modest dwelling the wage earner of the eighties was able to place more furniture than he had possessed in the past. The sale of cheap furniture boomed. Local manufacturers complained of the wholesale imports and

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(1) This situation had probably been typical for many years. C. Robinson, "New South Wales: Oldest and Richest of the Australian Colonies," Sydney, 1873, a eulogistic account, states that "... a very considerable proportion of the population live in their own houses: and any labouring man, artisan, clerk, or shopman can, by paying a small sum weekly, equivalent to (say) 25 per cent of his earnings, into one or other of the Building Societies, become his own landlord in the course of eight or ten years. If a man does not choose to buy his house in this way he will have to make a deduction of 20 per cent from his wages for house rent." (p.89). Repayments for purchase were always high, and rents could be cheaper than indicated here.

the under-cutting of prices by local Chinese manufacturers, for the remaining Chinese had congregated in this industry. The truth was that the demand had grown tremendously, and cheap though it was in price, construction and appearance, the quantity of furniture sold was a sign of the improved standard of living. The working class cottage had its horsehair couch, chairs, carpets, hearth rugs, fender, round table, bedsteads, washstands, and chest of drawers; all this to furnish a modest home might be acquired new for £27. (1)

The Australian urban wage earner was a suburban resident, for the Australian city was essentially suburban. Already by the eighties the older cities had quite a history of very rapid expansion and change. Suburbs originally fashionable had passed to working class occupants and the pattern of commercial centre, inner working class suburbs, outer working and middle class suburbs, with the wealthier areas separate, was well established. The tremendous growth of Melbourne and Sydney during the eighties served to

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(2) (contd.) Builder and Contractor, 17 Sept., 1887, p.298 and 24 Sept., 1887, p.315, draws attention to this practice.

(1) R.E.N. Twopenny, op. cit., pp.46-7.

extend this pattern, though improved transport, particularly suburban railways, introduced modifications to it. The class differentiation in dwelling areas which existed in the older and larger cities was not a rigid differentiation; during the eighties the growth of a great many new suburbs lessened the distinctions. Only in the inner suburbs could the worker feel that he was, in housing conditions, placed in a noticeably inferior position. Similarly, it was only in some of the inner suburbs that the Australian's detached cottage had given way to identical row houses which were obviously cheap and inferior dwellings.

In Melbourne the wage earner usually lived in a weatherboard house, wealthier people in a brick one. In Sydney practically all the population lived in brick houses, in Adelaide in stone, in Brisbane in weatherboard. Here the wage earner's dwelling was distinguished only by its smaller size, which was increasing, and by its inferior finishing materials, which were improving. Nor was overcrowding a serious problem, except in a few slum areas of the older cities. The wage earner's house was primitive in design and at the best utilitarian in other respects, but it provided him with modest comfort at a standard which was an improvement on his past conditions and on British

conditions with which a comparison was normally made. He often owned his dwelling, or was buying it, but the cost was exacting. More likely he rented it, particularly if he lived in an old house in an inner suburb. Here, as in other aspects of housing, the skilled, better paid wage earners merged into the middle class, while the unskilled man on lower wages had different conditions. The dividing line in living conditions, vague though it was, cut through the working class and distinguished an aristocracy of labour, which during the eighties was a numerous part of the whole class. The great burst of city building during the decade offered the achievement or the hope of this kind of improvement in housing to increasing numbers of wage earners.

There remain to be considered briefly some other aspects of urban wage earners' living conditions. These concern city facilities and community services. Supply of water, light, heat and disposal of waste are the most important. In these fields, as distinct from the dwellings themselves, the new Australian cities often lagged behind old world cities.

Water was the first need to be supplied on a community basis. Sydney soon progressed in its water

reticulation from the Tank stream to the Botany Swamps, but it was not until 1887 that the Upper Nepean, Cordeaux and Cataract Dams came into operation.(1) Melbourne's Yan Yean reservoir dated from the fifties and its clear sweet water was still a source of pride in the eighties. Brisbane's Enoggera reservoir was built in the sixties; it still supplied plentiful water in the eighties, but local opinion spoke strongly of it as unpalatable and unfit for human consumption.(2) Sometimes it was filtered for drinking, sometimes rain water tanks were kept. Adelaide and Hobart also had their town water supply, but not Perth. Where a piped supply existed its use was practically universal.

Gas was used for street lighting in Sydney in 1826; for house lighting in 1841. By the sixties all the capitals and many smaller towns had their gas supply. It was the general means of lighting homes, with an incandescent

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(1) "The History of Civil Engineering in New South Wales," paper by W. H. Warren, Report of the Proceedings of the Australasian Association for the Advancement of Science, 1888.

(2) See, for example, Q'land Factories Comm., Q.7274, 11635.

mantle, by the eighties. At that time gas companies were promoting the sale of stoves, but the wood fuel stove was still common in poorer homes so that the kitchen often remained in the backyard.

Until the eighties privies in all Australian cities used either a removable pan or flushed from a rainwater cistern to a cesspit. As cities became more densely populated seepage from cesspits proved offensive and dangerous to health. Where the pan system was in operation the removal service provided by municipalities was available for a fee but use of it was not compulsory. It was not until the eighties that a water borne system of deep drainage, that is, one of underground pipes to carry the effluent away from the city, was attempted. Adelaide led the way. The Adelaide Sewers Act, 1878 (41 and 42 Vic. No. 106) set up a Commission to construct a sewerage system, with the power to compel owners to connect to it and then to prohibit the use of cesspits. By 1883 one third of the city was connected, by 1888 the whole city and some suburbs, but not low lying Port Adelaide.(1) For some years yet the

(1) Hon. Allan Campbell, M.D., M.L.C., "The Deep Drainage System of Adelaide - Its Results and Mistakes," Australasian Association for the Advancement of Science, Reports, 1888, p.549.

odour of excreta might still pollute dwellings, owing to the use of porous pipes, ineffective water seals on fittings and lack of ventilators on the sewers. Thus the privy stayed in the back yard, in a detached shed - "a water closet inside a dwelling house is a rare thing in Adelaide," a doctor observed in 1888.(1) This remained the case in working class homes in Australian cities for forty years or more, long after the need for it had passed.

In Sydney in 1876 it was decided to construct an underground sewerage system to an ocean outfall for the city and eastern suburbs and to a sewerage farm at Botany Bay for the southern and western suburbs. Work was begun in 1880, the Metropolitan Water and Sewerage Act of that year (43 Vic. No. 32) having constituted the authority for the purpose. In 1889 fourteen thousand houses, mainly in the city, were connected; by the end of 1890 a further four thousand had been added.(2) The total was less than a quarter of all the dwellings in Greater Sydney, for the outer suburbs and the whole north side had not been reached. Melbourne, where the flat topography presented difficulties,

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(1) Ibid., p.550.
(2) W. E. Cook, "House Sanitation in Sydney," Australasian Association for the Advancement of Science, Reports, 1891, p.400.

did not start a sewerage system until 1891, now Brisbane until later.

Australian cities lacked some of the facilities provided in older cities, as they were free of the worst disabilities of ancient urban centres. To the Australian urban dweller any lack of facilities was more than compensated for by generous space and better dwellings. He was also confident that the application of science and skill would remove any primitive backwardness that remained, for daily he saw this process taking place and heard the discussion of further plans.

Public services such as sewerage are often not commodities to be purchased in greater or less degree according to wealth. Thus they improved urban wage earners' living conditions relative to wealthier city inhabitants. It is a general rule that death rates reflect living standards, the lower the income the higher the death rate. In cities where different economic classes live in different areas, the death rate is highest in congested inner working class areas, other things being equal. Unhealthy living conditions are an important cause of this difference in death rates. When sewerage

systems were begun in Australian cities the inner areas were the first to benefit, so that an immediate consequence was to diminish this one factor in the spread of disease. This temporary advantage relative to wealthier areas was sufficient to give the inner city areas of Sydney a lower death rate than the other suburbs by 1886,(1) though obviously a short term comparison of death rates cannot be pushed too far.

State intervention for regulation of home building is another factor in improving the living conditions of wage earners, since the raising of minimum standards has most effect on cheapest dwellings. This type of legislation had made little impact by 1890. Control generally remained in the hands of municipal authorities who had power to deal with dangers to public health and to ensure soundness of construction. In practice they exercised little supervision over plans or siting of dwellings. An advance was made by the South Australian Building Act of 1881 (44 and 45 Vic. No. 28) which laid down detailed regulations for new buildings and provided for inspection by a Building Surveyor as well as approval of plans by the local Board of Health. One

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(1) J. M. Smail, M.Inst.C.E., "The Present Sanitary Condition of Sydney ...," Australasian Association for the Advancement of Science, Reports, 1888.

specific provision was that every new dwelling must provide an open space of at least four hundred and fifty square feet, which placed some restriction on dwellings completely covering their block of land.

The New South Wales Width of Streets and Lanes Act (45 Vic. No. 28) also set some limits to the jamming of houses back to back, and against the street frontage. It prescribed that new streets were to be at least 66 feet wide and lanes at least 20 feet wide, and prohibited dwelling houses from facing a lane unless at least 23 feet from it. It did not affect existing streets, lanes or buildings. This kind of legislation was intended to prevent indiscriminate building, especially of terraces, in crowded inner suburbs. Under the law houses could still be built facing lanes if the block was deep enough to permit of a building alignment 23 feet from the street alignment. The old narrow streets and lanes of Sydney where back to back houses and terraces had been built remained.

The Queensland Undue Subdivision of Land Prevention Act of 1885 (49 Vic. No. 15) followed the same lines as the New South Wales Act.

The State intervention which reached many fields of human activity in nineteenth century Australia was

unimportant in housing. While Australian cities continued to expand laterally as their main means of growth the congestion which is the first obvious subject of regulation had not become a major problem. Such tentative control as did exist applied to and was designed for the inner city areas which had departed from the normal pattern of the detached cottage. Politically the question was an awkward one for legislators. Building was an immense industry made up of a vast number of small business units, down to the individual sub-contractor; land ownership was widely spread, the number of home owners was growing. The property rights of large sections of the community would be affected by any far reaching measure. Meanwhile houses were sprouting like mushrooms, the industry was booming and housing conditions were on the whole improving. No government was likely to seriously interfere with this state of affairs where profits and houses poured out to satisfy both groups of recipients.

The 1880's saw a tremendous expansion of Australian cities. For wage earners in general this meant improved housing. The housing conditions of many wage earners were not noticeably different from those of the small business man, the petty official or the salaried

employee whose standards are normally superior. More wage earners saw home ownership within their grasp. Private enterprise did all this, government enterprise hurried to provide the community services necessary, both drawing on the seemingly inexhaustible supply of British capital. The crash of the nineties exposed the weak foundations of the imposing structure. Until then many urban wage earners seemed to be advancing in housing conditions a good step towards their workingman's paradise. The benefits, however, were not evenly distributed. At the same time as the suburban allotment was being duplicated on an immense scale on the outskirts of the city, it was disappearing in the inner suburbs. There a section of the poorest wage earners living in terrace houses were marked off by distinctive and inferior housing. The separate allotment, the backyard, the propinquity to semi-rural surroundings, the Australian city's natural advantage of plentiful space, disappeared there to leave city dwellers pure and simple whose rented tenements lined the drab streets, their children's playground, whose front doors opened on to the pavements which youth trod in search of adventure towards the beckoning lights.

PART V - INSTITUTIONS, ORGANISATIONS AND OUTLOOK

CHAPTER X

THE LAW AND THE WAGE EARNERS

As citizens, wage and salary earners were subject to the general law of the land. There was also a type of legislation which affected them specifically as wage and salary earners. In earlier chapters consideration has been given to laws which regulated certain material conditions in industry - Factory, Boiler Explosion, Machinery, Employers' Liability and Wages Acts. The judgment of Métin that in Australia before 1890 social legislation was an echo of British laws on the same subject is substantially correct.(1)

But there was in addition another body of law which affected the wage earner in his relations with his employer, and wage earners in their relations with one

(1) A. Métin, "Le Socialisme Sans Doctrines," Paris, 1901, p.231.

another. These were the Master and Servant Acts and the Trade Union Acts.

The legal relationship of individual employers and employees in Australia during the 1880's was governed by Master and Servant Acts dating from a much earlier period.(1) The first Australian law on this subject was the New South Wales Masters and Servant Act of 1828. It was extended in 1840 to employees on squatting runs and superseded in 1845 by a law which was further extended to seasonal and contract workers. In 1847 an Amending Act allowed for the hearing of cases by any two Justices of the Peace. The Masters and Servants Act of 1857 (20 Vic. N o. 28) defined a servant so as to include all labourers under written or verbal contract. A servant breaking his agreement by absence or misconduct was liable to a fine of £10 or fourteen days' gaol; if wages had been advanced and the work not carried out he was liable to three months' gaol (female servants could not be imprisoned). A servant wilfully spoiling or losing property was liable to fourteen days' gaol. Persons harbouring deserting servants or inducing them to desert could be fined

(1) An account of the N.S.W. legislation on this subject during the nineteenth century is given by Brian Fitzpatrick, "The British Empire in Australia," 1941 edition, Appendix 8, p.1 48.

£10 or sentenced to fourteen days' gaol. The servant was given the right to sue for wages up to £50. Two Justices of the Peace were empowered to settle any dispute between Masters and Servants and to enforce any award.

The provisions of this 1857 Act were the model for similar legislation in all colonies. Its most noteworthy features are the severe penalties imposed on employees for any breach of contract and trial before local Justices of the Peace. That such Justices were almost invariably employers weighted the proceedings against the worker.

A Consolidating Act of 1864 raised all penalties imposed on servants to a maximum of three months' gaol. Servants were directed to receive a certificate of discharge on leaving a situation and masters to give such a certificate, which they were bound to require upon engaging a servant. Servants could sue for wages and compensation for ill-usage. This Act remained in force in New South Wales during the 1880's.(1)

The other colonies adopted the principles of the New South Wales Acts. The Victorian Acts (27 Vic. No. 198) of 1864 provided for three months' imprisonment and

(1) Its provisions are set out on p.65 (P) of the Appendix to the N.S.W. Strikes Comm. In the Minutes of Evidence (Q.6941 ff.) Mr. Justice Windeyer acknowledged that the Act was out of date.

confiscation of whole or part of wages due for desertion, misconduct or failure to carry out a contract of service.(1) In 1874 striking Castlemaine tanners were imprisoned under this Act for leaving their work without permission. "This ... led at once to an agitation for the removal from the Statute Book of a law which awarded imprisonment to the men and a fine to the master for similar offences. Various public meetings were held to force this view on Parliament, and though an immediate repeal of the obnoxious law was not obtained, there was a tacit understanding that it should be allowed to remain in abeyance."(2) The law continued in force during the eighties.

The first South Australian Act was passed in 1847. It was amended by the Masters and Servants Act, 1878 (41 and 42 Vic. N o. 112). This Act provided that for breach of contract a workman could be fined up to £20, have damages or compensation imposed and be obliged to provide security for these. If the money was not paid it could be recovered by

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(1) Brian Fitzpatrick, "British Empire in Australia," 1941 edition, Appendix 8, p.150.
(2) T. A. Coghlan, "Labour and Industry in Australia," Vol. III, p.1476.

distraint of goods or chattels, in default up to three months' gaol; but wages could not be seized or arrested. One half of fines could be paid to the employer as compensation; fines were prescribed for harbouring servants under contract. Thus this amendment at the end of the 1870's scarcely modified the harsh provisions of earlier laws.

The Queensland Master and Servant Act of 1861 (25 Vic. No. 11) provided that for a servant's breach of contract a fine of up to £20, with distress of goods or chattels, or imprisonment for three months (but not for females) could be imposed. Similar penalties were prescribed for failure to enter into service as contracted, and for wilfully spoiling or losing property. A servant absent unlawfully or imprisoned must return to complete his contract. Penalties were imposed for inciting servants to desert and harbouring deserters. Justices could adjudicate and impose penalties of up to £20 in disputes between master and servant. In Maryborough in 1872 a number of contract labourers from Sydney were fined, and on failure to pay the fines imprisoned, for refusing to comply with a contract to work at less than the current local rate of wages. Coghlan, noting there was no protest about this incident, comments that "the case

sufficiently illustrates the conditions surrounding employment" in Queensland.(1)

The Tasmanian Master and Servant Act, 1856 (19 Vic. No. 28) followed the existing New South Wales Act. In 1884 the Master and Servant Act (48 Vic. No. 36) removed the authority of Justices to issue a warrant for the arrest of a labourer. The Master and Servant Act of 1887 (51 Vic. No. 3) provided that the defendant was not compelled to give evidence in cases before Justices. These amendments reflect not so much the strength of Tasmanian liberalism as the fact that the Acts were applied there and hence needed to be made more up to date than in colonies where they remained a dead letter.

In Western Australia the law of 1842 had rendered a servant liable to three months' hard labour for breach of contract. By an amendment of 1882 a fine of up to £10 was made an alternative to imprisonment. A further proposal that a servant guilty of breach of contract should be liable only for any damage resulting from the breach of contract was rejected by the elected members of the Legislative Council. In Perth a workman had just been imprisoned for

(1) T. A. Coghlan, "Labour and Industry in Australia," Vol. III, p.1505.

impertinence to his master and the legislators regarded this punishment as appropriate.(1)

A number of characteristics were common to all these Master and Servant Acts. No matter how recently they had been re-enacted, they all closely followed models which dated from convict times. Many of their provisions were framed to deal with outback workers who took the place of convict labour. Nevertheless, they extended to all wage earners. The basic penalty was that for breach of contract by the worker, normally imprisonment. From this followed offences such as assisting and inciting servants to desert or harbouring them; causing damage to the Masters interests by desertion or failure to work properly; and requirements such as certificates of discharge. Australia's outback labour was often engaged for long periods and these laws set out to bind the worker to his master. Even imprisonment did not bring expiation, for the contract still had to be served. The administration of the Acts was placed in the hands of the local voluntary magistrates, usually the largest employers and men of substance in the district. Thus employers as a class were given the administration of these laws and the settlement of all disputes arising from contracts of service.

(1) T. A. Coghlan, "Labour and Industry in Australia," Vol. III, pp. 1567-8.

The existence of a body of law which set out to make employment a bondage reflected Australia's shortage of labour and the employers' view of the relationships necessary for pastoral occupation of the interior. The effectiveness of the laws in practice is a different matter. They had certainly been applied in earlier periods.(1) Several examples of prosecutions during the seventies have been mentioned in the discussion of the Acts. Newspapers report a few lower court actions, almost certainly under the Master and Servant Acts, against city workers during the eighties for leaving their employment,(2) or concerning dismissal for misconduct.(3) Occasionally union representatives complained of similar instances.(4) In effect the laws remained a dead letter for

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(1) J. T. Sutcliffe, "A History of Trade Unionism in Australia," p.16.

(2) Age, 9 Oct., 1880:- In Melb. District Court hotel waiter sentenced to two days' imprisonment for leaving employment without notice. Age, 12 Feb., 1881:- Woollen mill foreman convicted of using threatening language and absenting himself without leave bound over for six months and forfeited £7 wages in Footscray Court; he was warned by the Magistrate (the Mayor) that he had had a narrow escape from three months' hard labour. Age, 2 Sept., 1887:- In Fitzroy Court striking bootmaker imprisoned for one month for breaking written agreement to serve one month with his employer.

(3) Age, 3 March, 1881:- In Carlton Court three servants suing for wages due had their cases dismissed on the grounds that their misconduct had been proved. Age, 23 Aug., 1887:- In Williamstown Court servant girl suing for wages in lieu of a month's notice had her case dismissed on grounds that she had been negligent in her duties.

(4) H.S.W. Strikes Comm., Q.3908 ff., 8950 ff.

urban wage earners in the eighties. Their existence may have inhibited workers but they were not the normal machinery for regulating the relationship of employers and employees. When an emergency arose, as in the Maritime Strike, they were an instrument at hand for employers. During the Maritime Strike, for example, prosecution of strikers for breach of contract under the Masters and Servants Act were common.(1)

The question arises as to why such archaic laws were accepted by the trade union and liberal movements. Union and liberal opinion did protest about them,(2) but they were never a major issue because they were not applied in practice. Their existence and the possibility of their use was one more incentive for labour to turn to politics. The firs t platform of the New South Wales Labour Electoral League in March, 1891, included a demand for the repeal of the Masters and Servants Act. Nevertheless, the actual relations of urban employees and employers in the 1880's were only to a very minor extent regulated by these laws. Long periods can

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(1) For example, four wool warehousemen prosecuted by Alfred Lamb, an active member of the Employers' Association, were fined £10 or 14 days, for breach of contract. S.M.H., 3/9/90.
The Sydney Morning Herald of 30/9/90 and 1/10/90 reported successful prosecution of shearers for breach of contract.

(2) See, for example, the Official Report of the Debates, Second Intercolonial Trade Union Congress, 1884, where the motion asking amendment or repeal of the Masters and Servants Act was carried by acclamation.
In a leader of 11 Dec., 1882 the Age described the Victorian Masters and Servants Act as "more applicable to a community of convicts than of free men and women," and declared that "... the justices who would have to administer the law are recruited exclusively from the ranks of the employers."

elapse when laws are in disuse, the law being enforced at the cost of friction, its content avoided by new interpretations or practice, or simply falling into desuetude. Such laws basically reflect economic relationships of production, which are constantly changing. The laws, however, are more rigid, the product of institutions and attitudes which have a life of their own. Actual relationships are not to be judged solely by the legal framework.

A second category of laws affect the employee in his combinations with his fellows. These are represented in nineteenth century Australia by acts dealing with trade unions.(1)

Until special colonial acts were passed Australian union s were governed by the British legislation of 1824 and 1825. These acts removed the criminal liability of combination for the increase of wages or the alteration of hours but made offences of activities incidental to a strike such as molesting and obstructing. The British Trades Union Act of 1871 gave protection to the funds of trade unions and provided that the purposes of any trade union should not be deemed

(1) A summary of this subject is given by J. T. Sutcliffe, "A History of Trade Unionism in Australia," p.56 ff.

unlawful by reason merely that they were in restraint of trade. At the same time a Criminal Law Amendment Act was passed reaffirming and even increasing the stringency of penalties for picketing, intimidation, molesting, watching or besetting. After four years of agitation by unionists the Criminal Law Amendment Act was repealed by the Conspiracy and Protection of Property Act of 1875. Under this Act peaceful picketing was expressly permitted and the words "coerce" and "molest" were removed from the law. By and large it was the laws of 1871 and not that of 1875 which were followed in Australia.

For many years Australian unions functioned without legal recognition. This does not mean that they were subject to persecution by law. They were not illegal, but they had no recognition as legal entities. Thus they could not take legal action as a union, which meant their funds were not protected against embezzlement by officials. It was primarily to remedy this that unions sought legal recognition, which would also make easier and more secure normal business dealings.

The first Australian law was the South Australia Trade Union Act of 1876 (39 and 40 Vic. No. 41). This followed the British Act of 1871. It provided that activities of trade unions, by reason merely that they were

in restraint of trade, should not be deemed unlawful so as to render any member liable to criminal prosecution for conspiracy or otherwise. Agreements for the purposes of trade unions were neither void nor voidable but were not enforceable at law. Unions were enabled to register and on doing so they were permitted to purchas e land, vest property in trustees and the treasurer was accountable for funds. Thus the law gave security to union funds and a legal status for their normal operations.

The other side of the coin was shown in the Conspiracy and Protection of Property Act of 1875 (41 and 42 Vic. N o. 109) which followed the British Criminal Law Amendment Act. Actions in a trade dispute were declared to be not punishable as conspiracy unless a similar act committed by one person were punishable by imprisonment; but this did not affect the law relating to riot, unlawful assembly, breach of the peace or sedition. Breaches of contract by persons employed in the railways, tramways, water or gas supplies, depriving other persons of the use of these were specified as offences punishable by a fine of up to £20 or three months' imprisonment. The same penalties applied to breaches of contract involving probable injury to a person or property; and to the offences of violence, intimidation, persistent following, hiding of tools, watching or besetting

or following with two or more persons in a disorderly manner so as to prevent a person from doing acts to which he had a legal right.

So far as Australian unions were concerned these restrictions on strike activities, capable of very wide interpretation, more than outweighed the legal recognition of existence.

In New South Wales a Trade Union Funds Protection Bill was introduced by Angus Cameron in 1876. After amendments by the Legislative Council it was laid aside. The same bill was not returned by the Council the following year. In 1881 the Trade Union Act (45 Vic. No. 12) was passed, with provisions similar to those of the South Australian Act of 1876. During the debate Cameron forcibly stated the view that all the unions wanted was protection for their funds and that they regarded the registration provisions with suspicion.(1) The Act was not accompanied by any punitive legislation on the activities of unions.

The Queensland Trade Union Act of 1886 (50 Vic. No. 29) followed the provision of the New South Wales Act. No equivalent of the South Australian Conspiracy and Protection of Property Act was passed in that colony until 1894. Then the Peace Preservation Act (58 Vic. No. 3),

(1) N.S.W.P.P. Session 1881, vol. 6, p.2188 ff.

passed during the bitter shearers' strike, provided that in proclaimed districts the Governor might appoint magistrates whose powers were practically unlimited. This was the forerunner in Australia of many similar coercive acts but it belongs to the period of industrial struggle in the early nineties.

In Victoria a bill to legalise trade unions following the New South Wales Act, was introduced by liberal parliamentarians in 1882. It lapsed and was re-introduced in 1883. The Legislative Council amended it, principally by inserting a clause that acts of a union or member in restraint of trade should still be unlawful.(1) Under these conditions the bill was not acceptable to its sponsors. In 1884 Deakin and Gillies, on behalf of the government, re-introduced the bill. It passed into law as the Trades Unions Act (48 Vic. No. 822) after the Legislative Council had again deleted the clause that the purposes of a trade union should not by reason merely of the fact that they were in restraint of trade be unlawful. Finally, in 1886 the Trades Unions Act Amendment Act (50 Vic. No. 880) was accepted by the Council, exempting union members from prosecution for conspiracy for acts which would not otherwise be so punishable. In 1891 the

(1) Bills Introduced. Legislative Assembly, Second Session, 1883.

the Employers and Employes Act 1890 Amendment Act (55 Vic. No. 1219) reproduced in its Conspiracy and Protection of Property Section the provisions of the South Australian Act of this title.(1)

In Tasmania the usual two laws on trade unions were passed in 1889. This year marked the high tide of Tasmanian unionism, with the sixth Intercolonial Trade Union Congress held in Hobart. Even so the Trades Union Act (53 Vic. No. 27) encountered much opposition from the Legislative Council before it became law. A condition of its passage was the enactment of the Conspiracy and Protection of Property Act (53 Vic. No. 28), in the usual terms.(2)

Not until the end of the century did Western Australia legislate on trade unions. There the Conspiracy and Protection of Property Act of 1900 (64 Vic. No. XIX) preceded the Trade Union Regulation Act of 1902 (2 Ed. VII No. 19).(3)

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(1) The title of the Victorian Act arises from the fact that Victorian statutes had been consolidated in 1890, and the Act of 1891 was therefore an amendment to the 1890 consolidation. J. T. Sutcliffe, "A History of Trade Unionism in Australia," p.59, is apparently referring to this Act when he incorrectly ascribes one of a similar title to South Australia.

(2) For an account of the circumstances of these Acts see M. R. McRae, "Some Aspects of the Origin of the Tasmanian Labour Party," Papers and Proceedings of the Tasmanian Historical Research Association, Vol. 3, No. 2, April, 1954.

(3) T. A. Coghlan, "Labour and Industry in Australia," Vol. IV, p.2078, is in error in stating that the law to give legal status to trade unions was passed in 1898.

The Master and Servant Acts current during the 1880's were anachronisms: the Trade Union Acts passed during the period were belated. They followed British example, with a considerable time lag and less liberal conditions. The "legalisation of trade unions" had been sought by labour for many years. It appeared on the agenda of the First Intercolonial Trade Union Congress and remained in such platforms until it was granted. The unions wanted protection for their funds and recognition as legal bodies for the conduct of ordinary business. The lack of these could be a nuisance but it was not a crippling disability. Australian unionism had arisen and established itself without the protection of the law. Legal status affected business dealings, benefit funds and the building of Trades Halls rather than activities in trade disputes. Thus it concerned the stable craft unions rather than the new organisations of unskilled and semi-skilled workers. When legal status was granted unions were slow to register to avail themselves of it. In actions arising from disputes with employers the position of unionists was not materially improved by the Trade Union Acts, as legal proceedings consequent on the strikes of the 1890's showed.

On the other hand the Conspiracy and Protection of Property Acts specified as offences certain actions by

unionists in trade disputes. Even where such Acts did not appear in the statute books such actions were in general punishable under existing laws. The Australian experience was that recognition by the State of trade unions immediately involved specific restriction of their activities. Restrictive legislation was increasingly directed against workers as members of a union rather than as individual employees. This, of course, was a tendency which has continued to grow.

Wage earners of the eighties felt that in their position as wage earners they were subject to discriminatory laws. While they sought State intervention in some fields of welfare, in the ordinary bargaining of employers and unions they wanted the State to do no more than keep the ring. The fact that governments were not referees but protagonists became plain when employers were faced with situations so critical that they had to call strongly on government aid. The discrepancy between wage earners' legal status and their aspirations was a powerful factor turning the working class to the formation of its own political party. The discrepancy existed during the eighties and was made apparent during the nineties.

CHAPTER 2

ORGANISATIONS AND OUTLOOK

To complete the picture of the urban wage earners' material conditions during the 1880's it is necessary to examine those services and safeguards which the normal wage earner could call upon in time of unemployment, sickness or temporary distress, and which small sections of the wage earning class had to rely upon through permanent incapacity. Broadly the theory of the welfare state is that these services should be provided by the community; the theory of laisser faire capitalism is that the individual must look after himself. Neither theory ever applies fully in practice. For Australia the first major step towards the acceptance of the welfare theory was the inauguration of old age pensions

in 1900. During the eighties provision of these "social services" was shared by the state, private charity and mutual assistance organisations of wage earners.

Superficially, state intervention in this field appeared to be less than in contemporary Britain. Anthony Trollope felt it necessary to explain to his British readers that -

> "There are no poor-laws in the colonies, and consequently no poor rates. Destitute men and women are not entitled to be fed and housed at the public expense, as they are in England. As far as the law is concerned any man who cannot feed himself may lie down and die."
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> "But," he added, "such is not the result of things as they exist." (1)

This is to be expected, for such social services are not simply a reflection of kindness of heart on the part of individuals or of a benevolent state's own concern for its citizens. Economically they are a necessary expense to the maintenance of the wage earning class, a part of the total wages bill of the country which cannot be earned by the recipient in the usual way and therefore must be subscribed in some other manner. The amount of these additional payments is a flexible one, for in the

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(1) Anthony Trollope, "Australia and New Zealand," Australian edition, Melb. 1874, p.255.

short term the afflicted or destitute may even be hurried to their graves without seriously affecting the supply of labour. Here social feelings enter into the question and in the Australia of the 1880's every strain of thought made entire neglect of the helpless unthinkable.

Britain's Poor Laws fulfilled many purposes, particularly the functions of maintaining a reserve of labour and of preventing mass starvation which would kindle political resentment to danger point. In Australia the elaborate relief apparatus did not exist because there was no permanent need for it. Unemployment, a cause of distress which irrespective of their own efforts may affect large numbers of wage earners, did not appear in acute and sustained form in Australia until the depression of the nineties. When unemployment did occur during the eighties and earlier government action was taken, as shown in Part III, Chapter 3. This action was empirical rather than systematic because the conditions were temporary, but colonial governments did provide sustenance to avert starvation, provide relief works at a subsistence wage and often expand normal public works programmes to provide for city unemployed. In the outback the custom of giving a meal and rations to the traveller maintained the migratory labourers who were needed casually and seasonally.

Some trade unions endeavoured to provide against unemployment. Of the Sydney unions listed in Table I of Appendix VII only eight had specified unemployment benefits.. Most of the occupations concerned were not subject to much unemployment. A large number of other unions had distress funds which could be used in the event of occasional unemployment of a few members. The change from individual unemployment insurance to the demand that the state provide employment or sustenance was easily made in Australia because the private efforts were never s ignificant. One reason was that unemployment was not a major problem to wage earners.

During the eighties, despite the absence of any formalisation through legislation wage earners had a safeguard in the form of government support during occasional periods of unemployment. This was sufficient to cope with unemployment on the scale usually experienced though not without distress. The achievement of this position was the result of political influence wielded in one form or another. It was more important than trade union insurance against unemployment.

In time of sickness the wage earner had no direct government help. He paid for his own medical attention or sought free treatment at a hospital.

Hospitals were few and though they gave emergency treatment free it was a generally enforced rule that all who could must pay. Most hospitals were privately managed and maintained partly by fees and private subscriptions and partly by the state.

The loss of earning power during illness is usually more important than the medical expenses, and during the eighties sick pay was a rarity. To meet the possibility the wage earner had to rely on his own insurance. This state of affairs was responsible for the importance of Friendly Societies, in Britain as well as Australia. In the second half of the nineteenth century, at least as soon as the Australian population was stably settled, Friendly Societies became widespread, their membership during the eighties totalling about one quarter of Australia's adult male population.(1) A membership of this size must have included many urban wage earners. In the main, however, the Friendly Societies catered for the salary earner or the better paid

(1) In all colonies Friendly Societies were controlled by legislation which particularly dealt with their management and acturial soundness. Each year elaborate returns were furnished to the Registrar of Friendly Societies. The estimate given above is an approximate one based on the first Australian compilation, made by Coghlan, referring to Queensland and South Australian figures for 1891 and figures for the other colonies for 1892. (T. A. Coghlan, "Seven Colonies of Australasia," 1894, p.336).

wage worker; their control and management were noticeably middle class.

For sickness insurance the urban wage earner looked primarily to his trade union. The Sydney unions listed in Table I of Appendix VII nearly all provided accident or sickness benefits. In some cases these funds were optional, with a subscription separate from the union dues. Occasionally the union maintained a hospital bed, as did Trades Hall and Eight Hour Committees. Many of the unions which did not provide sickness benefits had been formed at the end of the eighties when a new conception of union functions was replacing the old emphasis on benefits.(1) In general it was the skilled workers in their old established craft unions who could make the best provision against sickness, the unskilled and semi-skilled workers who lacked this, or even lacked unions at all.

Unemployment and sickness are occasional

(1) The new unions did not despise social security, though they placed greater emphasis on other objectives of unionism. It was rather that they were not in a position to provide effective benefit schemes. Such funds require a stable membership able permanently to meet the cost of contributions. The new women's unions particularly endeavoured to run sickness benefits, but usually found that this could be done only on a small scale.

disabilities of the ordinary wage earner. Other groups, which belong to the working class as a whole, require permanent or lengthy support. In this category are the chronically ill, the helpless aged, the deaf, dumb, blind, the insane, orphans and deserted children, deserted wives and expectant mothers, inebriates and demoralised and broken people who cannot earn their own living. During the eighties these classes were cared for, more or less, by a combination of private and public charity. Every colony had its mental asylums, Deaf, Dumb and Blind Institutes, Benevolent Asylums, Female Refuges, Girls' Homes, Inebriates' Retreats and similar institutions.(1) Care of the insane was solely a government responsibility; care of orphans and the deaf, dumb and blind rested mainly in government hands. Many of the other institutions were privately managed but received a government subsidy. Generally speaking they were characterised by government and some private finance with voluntary

(1) Where there was any degree of government subsidy or control annual reports of some kind were usually tabled in parliament and printed in Parliamentary Papers. Payments to such institutions appeared in the annual financial statements of the colony. Useful brief accounts of public and private charitable institutions are given in: "The Vagabond Papers," Firs t and Second Series, Melb: 1877; South Australia: An Account of Its History, Progress, Resources and Present Position," Adelaide, 1879, pp. 48-50: "New South-Wales in 1 881," Govt. Printer, Sydney, 1882, pp. 104-5; "The Industrial Progress of New South Wales," Govt. Printer, Sydney, 1871, p.412 ff.; Waldemar Bannon; "The Colony of Victoria Socially and Morally," Melb: 1896, pp. 47-54.

management and a few paid employees. The prevalence of private management can lead to an under estimation of the extent of government aid. No definitive figures could ever be calculated, but Coghlan estimates that in 1889, 1890, and 1891 at least £1 million was spent in the Australasian colonies on hospitals, asylums and all kinds of charitable relief; and that of this governments contributed £815,000 in 1889, £638,000 in 1890 and £560,000 in 1891.(1)

Much of the private charity originated with religious bodies or individuals motivated by religious feelings. Such missions provided the night refuges and soup kitchens for the "homeless poor," vagrants who drifted around the city broken in health or personality, old in years; unable or unwilling to work. They aroused religious conscience, affronted civic pride, had souls to be saved and presented the interesting possibility of malingering to be detected. The home missionary is epitomized in Dr. John Singleton who for a generation took food, medicine and salvation with crusading zeal to the

(1) T. A. Coghlan, "The Seven Colonies of Australasia," 1891, p.281; 1892, p.363; 1893, p.437. New Zealand figures are included in each case.

criminals, vagrants and unfortunates of Melbourne.[1] In fact, by 1890 his energy and determination had been responsible for the establishment of most of the purely private charitable institutions in Melbourne. This also indicates the scale of the task, for the homeless poor of the largest Australian city did not number more than a few hundred during the "normal" years of the 1880's.[2]

The social services available to the Australian urban wage earner in the 1880's were scanty by modern standards. In fact he provided them himself through his own contributions. In the main, however, they were furnished in the name of private charity and financed largely by governments. In practice governments took steps to relieve such unemployment as did occur. The better paid wage earners took care of sickness and accident through Friendly Societies and trade unions. More poorly paid workers lacked the money or the organisations to do

(1) See John Singleton, "A Narrative of Incidents in the Eventful Life of a Physician," Melbourne, 1891.

(2) See Jacob Goldstein, "The Homeless Poor," Melb., 1889 (Pamphlet, Victorian Public Library, Political Economy Pamphlets, Vol. CI). Goldstein, Secretary of the Charity Organisation Society, made a careful investigation during the winter of 1889 of the number of vagrants and destitute persons in Melbourne and of the relief provided for them. The investigation arose out of claims made by Singleton as to the number needing help. Goldstein found that the number of homeless and destitute persons averaged about one hundred and sixty each night.

this. The unfortunates of the cities had to rely entirely on private charity. Since widespread poverty did not exist this mixture of safeguards sufficed. The degree of state intervention reflects the prevalent attitude of the time rather than any political battles to win this position. It was a position which made it easy for Australia, despite the lack of a poor law, to advance rapidly in the field of state provided social services, when the fading of prosperity showed the need for them and a working class political party demanded them.

In another aspect of welfare Australian governments played a larger role. This was education, which had often been a major political question and was finally settled regardless of British precedent.

The Australian wage earner of the eighties looked to the state to educate his children. For many years colonial governments had taken an increas ing part in education. By 1880 the state systems were firmly established with the schools of the Catholic Church the only sizeable group of elementary schools outside public control. The great controversies which had accompanied the Acts to set up the state systems derived their feeling from religious issues; the need for general schooling was not denied. The battle cry of free, compulsory and secular reflected the

dominant attitude of the working class. By 1880 these aims had been realised and working class interest in education declined. Union spokesmen were generally in favour of raising the school leaving age, but this was not a universal nor strongly held view. No tradition of preferment through learning existed in Australia to send hard working sons of poor parents toiling their way up on the educational ladder to success. The colonial bureaucracies did not make available attractive positions. The achievement of almost universal literacy was a source of pride, but ordinary wage earners had little interest in general education beyond this. The secondary school system planned in the New South Wales Act of 1880 was not implemented; until about the end of the century there were only four public high schools in New South Wales. Obviously secondary education was not a practical possibility for the children of urban wage earners.

Wage earners' spokesmen were more concerned with technical education. Skilled workers expressed anxiety about the lack of training for juvenile entrants into their occupations. As a me thod of training apprenticeship was breaking down because of the displacement of old skills by simpler processes. Insistence on a certain level of training had the additional effect, which skilled unions also

sought, of restricting the supply of labour. At the same time free state technical education would provide greater equality of opportunity for the sons of less skilled workers. Thus organised labour sought the extension of technical education.(1) This influence had much to do with the establishment of state systems of technical education, which was taking place during the eighties. Usually the existing voluntary educational agencies were taken over. In Sydney this was the Mechanics' Institute which was subsidised to give technical training in 1878 and finally replaced after 1890 when the Board of Technical Education began the building of Sydney Technical College. In Melbourne the similar private institution taken over was the Ormond Working Men's College, founded during the eighties by a private philanthropist with widespread union support.

The Mechanics' Institute which virtually died in giving birth to technical education had in their youth been the agencies intended to bring scientific and useful knowledge to the masses. The Industrial Revolution produced amongst workers much interest in the scientific knowledge

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(1) Intercolonial Trade Union Congress passed motions on the subject from 1879. The Sydney Bricklayers' Union at the end of the eighties paid the fees of its junior members attending the Sydney Technical College courses, although it criticised the courses as being too theoretical. (N.S.W. Strikes Comm., Q.8800, 8835-6.)

which they had to handle in one form or another. It was not solely as a job qualification that workers sought some mastery of science. It was a natural field for that intellectual curiosity which never dies though society may inhibit it.

The Sydney Mechanics' School of Arts was founded in 1833, only twelve years after the origin of these institutions in Scotland.(1) Thereafter similar institutions multiplied in Australian suburbs, towns and villages. Their original purpose of the diffusion of scientific and useful knowledge was soon broadened to include lectures on literary and cultural subjects. They provided adult education for advancement or self improvement. In 1870 the Sydney Mechanics' School of Arts had 1,800 subscribers at 5/- per head; a library of 16,000 books; and conducted classes in mathematics, design, languages, shorthand, singing and other subjects.(2) By 1876 there were about one hundred such institutes in New South Wales.(3)

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(1) For a brief history and discussion of Mechanics' Institutes in Britain see J. L. and B. Hammond, "The Bleak Age," Pelican Edition, 1947, p.217 ff.

(2) "The Industrial Progress of New South Wales," Govt. Printer, Sydney, 1871, p.

(3) G. H. Reid, "An Essay on New South Wales," Sydney, 1876, p.111.

Meanwhile the social composition of the membership was changing. In Britain the working class gradually neglected the institutes which were taken over by the middle class subscriber and the philanthropic visitor. The same process took place in Australia. In the early 1880's the Age was speaking of "the failure of the 'mechanics' institutes' to meet the requirements of the mechanics. The institutes fell into the hands of the middle classes and what are called the working classes held aloof from them."(1) In adult education a kind of Gresham's law operates whereby the working class moves out of leisure time organisations as the middle class moves in. By the 1880's class divisions in Australian cities were too pronounced for manual worker, clerk and employer to enjoy themselves side by side in Mechanics' Institutes.

The situation was most clearly exemplified in the ambitious project of the same type which was launched by Ormond, a Melbourne philanthropist and unive rsity benefactor, during the eighties. In 1882 he offered £5,000 to found a Workmen's College if an equal amount could be raised separately. Trade union leaders supported the scheme but

(1) Age, 28 Aug., 1883. See also Age, 19 Sept., 1883.

from the beginning expressed fears that it might go the way of the Mechanics' Institutes and pass under middle class control. The Age rallied all Melbourne's liberal and humanitarian feeling to raise funds; over ten thousand persons subscribed through the trade unions. Then it became plain that more money would be needed. Ormond increased his offer to £22,500 if £12,500 could be raised elsewhere. Disagreements appeared between Ormond and the Committee about the purpose of the College and its management. Fund raising continued but in the opinion of the Age the scheme was "being stifled by aristocratic surroundings and august patronage."(1)

The basic cause of the difficulties was that once the first vague impulses were brought down to earth it had to be decided whether the purpose of the institution was to provide specialised technical training or general adult education. If the purpose were technical substantial buildings, equipment and full time staff were required; if general, then only a meeting place and visiting lecturers. When, as happened, the emphasis was placed on the technical side the resources required were getting beyond the possibilities of private fund raising.

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(1) Age, 1 June, 21 Oct., 30 Oct., 1882; 17 Nov., 1883; 2 Feb., 1884.

In 1885 the College opened, giving courses in mathematics and technical drawing. Victoria already had its Schools of Mines at Ballarat and Bendigo, which were taken as models. Soon the government was helping financially and then the College was incorporated in the State technical education system.

Thus ended the greatest mass education project of the time. It was clear that the acquisition of knowledge, per se, was no panacea to be handed down to a duly grateful working class. Technical education, though necessary, was a humble outcome of such lofty aspirations.

It would be wrong, however, to imagine that the eighties were a period of intellectual torpor for wage earners. In the city, as in the country it was a time when novel ideas were gripping the minds of many. The history of working class ideas is always difficult to trace, until suddenly the changes which have been taking place beneath the surface reveal themselves in action.

We can point to symptoms of working class intellectual activity during the eighties. The Bulletin, for example, won a wide influence for its unorthodox ideas. Radical, republican, secularist and socialist journals appeared, and usually disappeared, but only for successors to arise. With Lane's "Boomerang" and "Worker" they reached

large sections of wage earners. The embryonic socialism of the time was not a practical programme but an intellectual challenge. Pamphleteers advanced similar ideas, while British journals of the same type were widely circulated. The ideas of the land reformers and single taxers took a new lease of life before they were swamped by labour doctrines. Henry George's "Progress and Poverty" and the works of A. R. Wallace were widely read. Trade union journals multiplied and assumed propagandist functions. British and American socialist thought began to have an impact on Australia through the writings of Bellamy, Gronlund and others.

An incident such as the reception to Henry George or the support to the British dock strike brought the changed ideas into the open. The intellectual questing and self education of urban wage earners was taking place not in schools of art:or lectures under Vice-Regal patronage, but at the workplaces, in their unions and in their discussions with their fellows. If one's attention is confined to the formal and institutional, then the changes in the labour movement following 1890 seem inexplicable, as indeed does the fervour of the Maritime Strike itself. It was the prior changes in men's ideas which made possible the organisational changes required by new conditions.

Australian trade unionism arose in the cities among skilled craftsmen. Their skill gave them the bargaining power to combine successfully. Their membership was small and they turned to exclude the unskilled as well as face the masters. Generally speaking their battles had been fought and won by the end of the seventies or earlier. These struggles were concerned with the eight hour day, the maintenance of wages and the preservation of union organisation and privileges. They continued to resist encroachments on their conditions by employers and to seek improvements in wages and conditions when circumstances seemed appropriate. Benefit funds reflected the stability of certain callings and this in turn gave them a security which marked them off from less successful urban workers. These unions occupied the leading position in trade union affairs, which grew up around them and their Trades Hall committees. Their complacency and satisfaction with conditions made them conservative forces. Some of their exclusiveness was directed against less skilled competitors, so that Australia had its equivalent of the "new model" unionism of Britain. These unions might number their members in hundreds but not in thousands.(1) Their members worked in small groups, not in

(1) See the membership of Sydney unions set out in Appendix VII.

large numbers with a single employer. The building industry, for example, was divided between a multitude of small masters, a status to which any craftsman might himself aspire. Skilled metal workers were spread among the engineers' shops and craftsmen in old processes worked in small enterprises supplying a limited market.

Proud of their position, conscious of the history and tradition of their unions, the skilled craftsmen felt indeed that "defence, not defiance" should be their motto,(1) for they had much to defend. Such groups differed little from the middle class whom they emulated in standards of life, dwellings and dress. They reflected faithfully the respectable middle class values of the time.(2)

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(1) Unionists' interest in the history of Australian unionism became prominent in the eighties. This was a reflex of pride in achievements, Australian nationalism, and the fact that the generation of the 1850's were now honoured veterans. "The History of Capital and Labour" reflects this feeling; so do the testimonials to leaders such as Stephens (£604 was raised - Age, 9 Aug., 1884), and the enquiries into the origin of the eight hour day ("Report of the Committee Appointed by the Victorian Operative Masons' Society to inquire into the Origin of the Eight-Hours' Movement," Melb., 1884 - Political Economy Pamphlet, Vol. XXXIX, Melb. Public Library).

(2) For a discussion of the outlook of urban society in this period see A. W. Martin, "Political Groupings in New South Wales, 1872-1889," Ph.D. thesis, Aust. Nat. University, 1955, p.27 ff.

At the beginning of the eighties the majority of urban wage earners did not belong to a union. The 1880's gave them an opportunity, which they grasped, to form unions. The prosperity of the decade brought a great extension of unionism, less stable but more vigorous than the old unions, for the benefits which the latter enjoyed had to be won afresh by each new organisation. Often gains were quickly conceded by employers on receipt of an ultimatum but this should not disguise the fact that it was the power to strike which was the final argument. This was the method by which the eight hour day, the most signal gain of the 1880's, was won. The same method was used in wage disputes. Unions were born, flourished or languished, sometimes died, but in total grew. The process has been traced in detail in Melbourne in connection with hours of work. In Sydney, of the forty-four unions whose dates of foundation are listed in Appendix VII, eleven were founded between 1880 and 1885, twenty between 1886 and 1890. The confused scene at any particular time, the overlapping, the separations, the amalgamations and the changes of title were part of this process of the extension of unionism.

The new unions were less concerned with benefits, which they could not adequately provide. Strike pay they would furnish when they were able. Their objects became more general, reflecting growing class consciousness, until

the hundred odd members of the Sydney Aerated Water, Cordial and Ginger Beer Employees' Union, formed during the Maritime Strike, simply proclaimed their purpose to initiate reforms, sweep away abuses and guard the interests of members whenever they were assailed.(1) Such flamboyancy was extreme but the process was unmistakeable.

A prerequisite to the extension of unionism was the concentration of employees in large groups. The aristocrats of labour may combine and bargain despite their dispersion but less skilled workers can only do so when they are brought together in large numbers to face a single employer. The rapid increase in the size of manufacturing businesses was a striking feature of the eighties. In Melbourne and Sydney the factory of a hundred or more hands was common by the end of the decade. Many workers were similarly concentrated in the important transport industries. Under such circumstances even the unskilled were moved to organisation. The organisation could not be based on exclusiveness or costly privileges. The only foundation possible was comprehensiveness and unity.

The new unionism paid. It paid on hours, where the gain was simple and permanent. It paid on wages,

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(1) See Appendix VII.

where wage rates rose during the 1880's, and unskilled workers on the whole improved their position vis-a-vis skilled workers.

The movement to organise the bush workers is well known. Its influence on Australian unionism is undeniable. It is important, however, to see that the same process was taking place with urban workers at this time. The reasons were the growth of the cities, the great growth of industry, the rapid increase in the size of industrial units, the prosperity which sharpened the bargaining power even of the unskilled, and the ideological changes which accompanied these. It was the unions of urban workers which in the long run had the greatest effect on the Australian working class movement.

The growth of industry brought together more workers to pursue their common interests. The employers with whom they bargained were also changing during the eighties. In the past the master had usually been a self-made business man, who had learnt his trade in Britain (often north of the Tweed), emigrated to Australia, sought gold or experience in various places, and worked at the bench until he became his own master with a few assistants. He was more likely to be found at the factory than in the club, and more likely to be in the workroom than the office.

This was typical in the fifties and sixties and early seventies when so many of the firms which developed Australia's secondary industries were founded. Progress was rapid. By industry, shrewdness and thrift, as he saw it, or, objectively, by the great expansion of Australian production, he found his business grown beyond his personal control. Older, prosperous, accepted by the merchants, bankers, officials and even Vice-Royalty, he was now a distant figure to his hundreds of employees. Perhaps the business was run by his sons, more likely it had been formed into a company. The 1880's saw personal relationships of employer and employed giving way to class relationships.

Class consciousness was reflected in the new unionism. It is true that any combination of members of a social class betokens some class feeling, conscious or unconscious. In the history of the working class, however, we can distinguish the broad stages of trade union consciousness, class consciousness and socialist consciousness. The first is awareness of community of interest with some fellow wage earners, the second with all workers and the third with all workers for the purpose of reconstructing society in a certain way. Each stage grows out of, but does not destroy, the former. During the 1880's class consciousness in this sense grew, revealing itself organisationally and in outlook. Socialist consciousness

first appeared, vaguely and on a small scale.

Class consciousness is not an attribute of one class. During the eighties employers also began to marshal their forces in a way which proved during the strikes of the nineties to be very successful. True, the main employers concerned were pastoralists and shipping companies but they had the support of much wider circles of employers.

A single employer is in a superior bargaining position compared to a single employee. With the development of unions the superiority is diminished. Eventually the competition of employers must admit united action on some issues where they all face a united body of wage earners. During the eighties workers' leaders contemptuously dismissed the dangers to them of such combinations; in 1890 the combinations revealed their power, when falling export prices determined them to call a halt to unionism.

It was the growth of the economy which overcame the independence of employers in this respect. At the same time unions had urged employers to form associations. This was not simply a matter of over confidence or short sightedness on the part of the unions. They wished to deal with one body representing all the employers in industries covered by their unions. In this way

recurrent piecemeal disputes with individual employers could be set aside and firm agreements negotiated. In the economy of the eighties wages, hours and conditions varied from workplace to workplace. Much of the unions' activities were concerned with attempts to standardise wages, hours and conditions. They fought the "bad" employer and appealed to the "good" employer who had an incentive to see competition equalised through his competitors being forced to grant the conditions which he gave. Often the bad employer was a small one, lacking capital, squeezing his workers to establish himself, using cheap labour in the form of outwork to compete with superior technical equipment. To the unions the standardisation of rates and conditions would amount to a total improvement and replace guerilla skirmishes by firm agreements.

Unions did not call employers' associations into being, but in some respects they welcomed them. The increased scale of industry during the eighties and the integration of financial control produced the employers' associations and agreements. Once they existed two permanent forces existed and a modus vivendi between them had to be found. This was eventually done through state intervention in the form of Wages Boards, Conciliation and Arbitration. Unionism as a whole had no desire or

ability to eliminate capitalism; employers, even in the midst of their victories of the nineties, had to accept the fact that unionism would continue.

Much of the union demand for legislation on hours and conditions arose from the same desire to standardise these. Even the more favoured sections of the working class wanted governments to set by law certain minimum standards, above which negotiations could continue. To them such legislation was desirable but not vital. The progress of industry made minimum standards acceptable to many employers who granted them in any case. Thus a beginning was made with factory legislation on workplace conditions, hours of women and children and minimum age of employment.

Less favoured sections of urban wage earners looked to legislation to substantially improve their conditions. In this they were disappointed. Hours of adult males were never prescribed, state regulation of wages never arose and women and children gained only minor advantages from the 1885 Factory Act in Victoria.

Before 1890 the British working class benefited more directly from legislation than did the Australian working class. This applied both to social legislation and the legal position of wage earners. Australia in the

second half of the nineteenth century is often regarded as a country where state intervention in economic life was great, where such intervention was directed by political democracy, liberalism and equalitarianism towards the improvement of the lot of the wage earner. The wage earner's condition was an enviable one but it was not due to direct state intervention. The demand for legislation on it was not urgent for it had been won without legislation. Not until the favourable conditions vanished during the 1890's was the help of the law determinedly sought. Australian governments had abandoned laisser faire but the role they played was that of midwife, agent, regulator and assistant to private enterprise. Working class political activities existed before 1890 but they were conditioned by this role of governments.

What has been said about hours, wages, living conditions and social security directs attention to big differences between skilled and less skilled urban workers. The terms "skilled" and "unskilled" are not clear cut definitions, but merge into each other with many gradations. Despite the theoretical lack of clarity some such terms are essential to direct attention to workers at one or other end of the scale of skill and rewards for it. During the 1880's the differences were no greater than they had been in the past, for less skilled workers made some

notable gains in hours, generally maintained their wages position relative to the skilled and did not suffer serious unemployment. They moved rapidly into the fold of unionism, thereby participating in some of the benefits which formerly had been enjoyed only by the craftsmen. This improvement was part cause and part effect of a change in outlook on the part of all workers, but particularly of the unskilled. Their position had not worsened but the temper of the times was such that they became more determined and able to further improve it.

In the trade union movement the result was a shift of power from the old unions to the new, at the same time as the attitude of unionists as a whole was changing. This move was not accomplished without friction nor was it anything like complete by 1890. It was most noticeable in the unions of bush workers where the old influences had scarcely existed. In the cities the process was an uneven one of co-operation and antagonism, of argument and apathy, of old forms and new content. In general by 1890 the Trades and Labour Councils in all colonies were strongly influenced by the representatives of the new unionism. The argument of numbers alone could not be ignored.

With this came a new type of union official, assailed as a "paid agitator," for he was a full time

functionary, receiving his wage of £3 to £5 per week from his members. The older, smaller unions had paid their officers expenses, but that was all. The new unions required full time officers and found those active enterprising men who often organised the most diverse bodies of workers.(1) These leaders were often militant for their job was to inaugurate and sustain unions in the face of employer opposition. We only have to think of the well known names and watch their steady progress towards conservatism and position to dismiss any charge against them of socialist conviction. They were the salesmen and business managers of the new unionism, capable, hardworking, alert to the day to day needs of their members. The strength of their devotion to empirical unionism need not be doubted. It was a new development for Australian unionism to find and maintain its own professional secretariat, a step made possible by the extension of unionism during the 1880's and of great importance in political and industrial history thereafter.

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(1) The type is well known, for some of the leaders of the early Labor Party came from this group. Trenwith and W. G. Spence were prominent examples during the 1880's. The witnesses before the major Royal Commissions used for this thesis included a great many union officials of all kinds.

Despite their successes the path of the new unions was not a smooth one. Any picture of the 1880's as a period of peaceful class collaboration would be a misleading one despite the lip service paid to this ideal. There were a multitude of small disputes; employers had to accept, but did not welcome unionism or its immediate demands. Victimisation for union activities was common when unions were being formed or when they had suffered temporary defeats. Active unionists often lost their jobs and found it difficult to obtain others. However, the industry wide blacklist was only to appear with a greater degree of co-ordination of employers.

Attention has been drawn to the existence of an aristocracy of urban labour, consisting of building, engineering and other craftsmen, who enjoyed a superior position in respect of wages, hours, social security and housing, and reflected this in their outlook. This aristocracy of labour continued but was submerged by the movement of the great majority of workers outside its orbit. It could no longer speak as the voice of urban labour. Among the less skilled two special groups have been examined in their economic relationships. These are female and juvenile workers. Some

consequences of their economic position requires examination.

Australian women were brought into industry by machinery and the growth of the market. The sewing machine particularly, and other machinery which eliminated heavy manual labour, made their employment possible; demand for the products made it profitable. Only a small proportion were thus employed, though many sought employment. Their alternative was domestic service, lowly paid and often distasteful. From the reservoir of female labour flowed a constant stream of job applicants. Hence women's wages were low and their hours long, especially as their main field of employment, the clothing industry, was subject to much outwork. Their position as a defenceless group attracted much sympathy and led to moves for industrial legislation to remedy it. Little had been achieved by this means, however, before 1890. During the 1880's the first determined attempts were made to organise women workers, whose numbers were rapidly growing. This took place in Sydney, Adelaide, Brisbane and Ballarat as well as Melbourne, with the tailoresses, the pioneers in each case, and boot machinists, waitresses and miscellaneous female workers following. The unions did not flourish

owing to the over supply of labour, the short working life and the lack of union consciousness of women workers. Male unionists of all types extended their sympathy and help on humanitarian grounds. The officials of the male tailors' unions saw further than this and finally accepted the fact that it was in their direct interest to raise women's wages for only thus could their own be protected from the competition of cheap labour.

Such an attitude of mutual interest was an exception among male wage earners. The more common one was that women's place was in the home and the existence of any women wage earners was due to regrettable circumstances. Women were not welcomed by skilled workers in their trades. Jewellers, compositors, cigar makers and such occupations where deftness and intelligence counted more than strength successfully opposed the introduction of female labour. They correctly regarded it as cheap labour, and sought to prevent its use by prohibition, not by the demand for equal pay. This division of opinion on the political and economic rights of women workers continued in the Labour Party until the mid-nineties. Some of the feeling has always remained.

The other group of particularly defenceless wage earners were the juveniles. Employers regarded them merely as cheap labour, unions ignored or excluded them. At least they had the remedy of growing out of their state, but some unions found to their cost that the youth had fathered a man who returned their hostility. It was to be many years before industry was obliged to give some attention to their training and longer before a shortage of youthful labour resulted in substantial improvements in their position. Until 1890 nothing had been done about their wages and little about their hours. The minimum school leaving age had incidentally affected the age at which they could enter employment.

Since youth is never idle, though Satan find the mischief, the activities of the youth caused many misgivings. Colonial youth had always been regarded as independent, freedom loving, contemptuous of authority, characteristics of the Australian population which the young possessed in greater measure. The larrikin in his push had been a subject of concern in Australian cities for many years. There was cause for concern, probably more so during the eighties than in previous years. But a note of caution must be sounded. The activities of the younger generation have at all times been deplored by their elders. The

Australian newspapers of the 1950's, for example, could be used to provide startling evidence of juvenile gangs and delinquency. The key questions of fact and proportion are very difficult to answer now, and almost impossible for a period seventy years ago. Similar phenomena of other countries and periods would have to be considered to put the Australian picture in perspective.

A few comments can, however, be made on larrikinism. It is a phenomenon of the city and it grew with the cities which expanded so much during the eighties. It betokens lack of other attractive outlets and the working class youth of the 1880's had little in job, training, education or leisure activities to attract him. The boredom of the dull suburb or the bleakness of the tenement now was his lot: the congregation of hundreds of thousands offered anonomity. The expanses of the country were beyond his horizon. He turned restlessly to the streets in search of comradeship and adventure.

Even the city youth had their sports, cricket and football the dominant ones. The sports of a capitalist society are in nature different from, even though in form they be similar to, the sports of a peasant community. Modern sport depends on the city, not the countryside. Its essence is organised competition in an ascending scale.....

(Despite the myth of the "village green" as the heart of cricket, it was in Australia as in the cities that the game flourished in hundreds of competitions based on the city, town and suburb as the area of play.)

of skill. Most of its characteristics are determined by the extent of participation. While climate and custom fix the type of sport the standard of living decides how many can participate. Australian sport came of age during the 1880's, the product of the growth of the cities, continued prosperity of wage earners and the leisure and energy given by an eight hour day. It was a source of national pride, in the devotion to a unique code of football, in the cricket competition with England or the activities of Australian rowers.

The same factors which encouraged the development of sport brought to the fore all other kinds of leisure activities, worthy or otherwise, which by their extent surprised visitors from the poorer cities of the old world.

Visitors were surprised in the first place to find cities the size of Melbourne and Sydney. Their growth during the 1880's had been phenomenal. These cities in the form they retained for the next thirty odd years were to a large degree the product of that decade, bearing its physical and even mental features. This second golden age left its deepest imprint on Melbourne, which was never again to be so important in Australian affairs. Urban Australia as a whole came to maturity in the 1880's.

The period influenced the cities and the cities influenced the period. Australia had always had its urban centres and permanent urban population but by 1891 no less than half of Australia's wage earners were urban workers. In the metropolis the conditions they encountered and the characteristics they acquired were different from those of wage earners in the countryside. The typical Australian was no longer the bushman although the ethos of the bush worker profoundly influenced the national character which appeared plainly by the end of the nineteenth century. The urban wage earning class was to play an increasingly important role in the national life of the future. A knowledge of the formative years is necessary to an understanding of this role.

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