COMPULSORY MILITARY TRAINING

AND THE CONSCRIPTION REFERENDUM

IN VICTORIA, 1911 - 1916

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Thesis for the Degree of Master of Arts

by

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CHAPTER I - INTRODUCTION

A vote
taken of all the parents of growing boys in Australia
between the ages of fifteen and twenty-one . . . would
probably be found to be almost unanimous that the new
training improves the conduct and tone of the youth of
the land and it makes the discipline of the home
easier,
surmised a Melbourne daily in August 1913.(1) The estimate was
of public opinion of the compulsory military training scheme.
Referenda questions, however, rarely have such specific terms
of reference. The referendum does not gauge "the fine shades
of public opinion", as another paper(2) asserted three years
later on the eve of the first referendum on compulsory military
service.

The question posed in the Military Service Referendum on
Saturday 28 October 1916, was long and complex:
Are you in favour of the Government having, in this
grave emergency, the same compulsory powers over

1. Argus, August 1913
2. Age, 2 September 1916
citizens in regard to requiring their military service, for the term of this war, outside the Commonwealth, as it now has in regard to military service within the Commonwealth?

In Victoria 353,930 voters answered 'YES', 328,316 answered 'NO'. Of eligible voters, 42.9 per cent favoured conscription, 39.79 per cent were opposed; of actual formal voters, 51.88 per cent favoured conscription and 48.12 per cent were opposed.

Victoria was in step with Western Australia and Tasmania where 'YES' majorities were recorded; it was out of step with New South Wales, South Australia, Queensland and the nation as a whole. The Prime Minister, William Morris Hughes's, move for a popular mandate to conscript men sufficient to provide a flow of 16,500 recruits per month was endorsed by 1,087,557 but rejected by 1,160,037 Australians. (3)

At the ballot-box, shades of public opinion had to be merged into a 'YES' or a 'NO'. Either answer was white or black, depending whether viewed through conscriptionist or anti-conscriptionist eyes. This was clear from analyses of the vote and voters' motives. Such analyses began immediately the likely result was known and were rarely objective. All the publications of the day had been committed participants in the campaign and their analyses were coloured by their convictions.

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The three Melbourne daily papers were ardently conscriptionist. Having campaigned on the grounds that a vote for conscription was a vote for honour, nobility, gratitude and keeping one's word, the Argus, the Age and the Herald saw the 'NO' voter as lacking these "high patriotic ideals".(4) The 'YES' vote required in most cases self-discipline, chivalrous self-sacrifice, the sinking of political bias for a predominant aim, and a strength and fortitude not given to all. Every emotional weakness; every haunting doubt; each suggestion of material prudence . . . directed the blue pencil to the 'NO' square.(5)

The Argus, perhaps the most fiercely conscriptionist of the three, found its doubts about the people's collective wisdom confirmed. The referendum should never have been taken as it showed "... the people were incapable of coming to a high-minded decision on purely national grounds".(6) It was unfair to expect a country to conscript itself by popular vote and the Argus remained "... as convinced as ever that this country is firmly conscriptionist at heart . . ."(7)

It was clear to the dailies that the vote was from the heart but that a majority of voters had consulted the wrong

4. Age, 30 October 1916
5. Ibid.
6. Argus, 4 November 1916
7. Argus, 30 October 1916
emotions. The *Herald* implicitly accepted this analysis but was concerned with lessons to be learned and solutions. More democratic than the *Argus*, it accepted that "it was right and an expression of the spirit of democracy that the people should have been directly consulted on the great war issue". The problem revealed by the large 'NO' vote was one of education. People for generations had been taught the doctrine of selfishness - that the only thing in life was 'to get on', to make an individual worldly success and no more. What has happened at the polls is the natural result of that teaching.

Nationalism must be made a "specific element" in education and then people in such polls as the conscription referendum would vote, not "upon some academic question on which they were free to vote yes or no at will but with a strong spontaneous national feeling".(8)

Analysis of "The Immortal 28th"(9) in the anti-conscriptionist press reflected the bias of the victor. Had not the anti case been vindicated by the people? So, far from revealing a need for better education, the referendum result showed the people to be educated "and the sore point is the fact that the crowd is no longer swayed by what comes from the capitalistic demagogic

8. *Herald*, 30 October 1916
9. *Socialist*, 3 November 1916
press. (10) The *Advocate* described the *Age'*s post-referendum editorial as "a wail" and proclaimed that "the arguments against conscription found their way to the people and beyond doubt influenced thousands of votes". (11) In fact, the whole process of self-justification was put neatly with unconscious irony in the *Advocate* when it concluded a rejoinder to an *Argus* accusation with the words: "When you are defeated, it is comforting to assume, even if you cannot prove it, that you were defeated by improper influences". (12)

Much of this analysis was really only a projection beyond the referendum of hopes or fears expressed in the campaign before the referendum. The closeness of the vote allowed both sides to save face. And there was some need to save face among the antis, too, as writers in both *Labor Call* and the *Socialist* admitted. The latter acknowledged "the Victorian vote is a disappointment, and even that section of it we call the metropolis. How account for it? It is past accounting for . . ." However, the

10. *Socialist*, 1 December 1916 (This rejoinder was evoked by the *Vesta*'s comment that "ignorance" controlled many motives for voting 'NO', *Argus*, 15 November 1916)

11. *Advocate*, 4 November 1916

12. *Advocate*, 11 November 1916 (The *Argus* and the *Advocate* had a mutual antipathy extending well back before the Conscription issue. In this instance, the *Argus*, 4 November had compared Koroit and Horsham in the Wannon electorate. The latter had voted "from the Australian standpoint"; in Koroit, which voted 'NO' heavily, it was possible "to isolate the germ of disaffection towards Great Britain on the Irish question".)
Labor Call took comfort in the fact that Victoria "is verging on the ridiculous" because of "ancient Tory government" and an unscrupulous press. (13) And after a few weeks F. J. Riley was able to account for the anti defeat in Victoria by assuring Sydney questioners and Socialist readers that "Victoria's vote was more anti-militaristic, more pro-peace than that of any of the other states". Not surprisingly, "This explanation did not always suffice". (14) The Woman Voter, published weekly by the Women's Political Association had also accounted for the 'YES' majority in these rather curious terms of the 'NO' vote's quality. (15)

Did the ballot reveal a crossing of party lines? (16) Did women form a disproportionate part of the 'NO' vote and, if so, what were their motives? (17) Did the referendum results show the value of meetings and rallies or "Dispel the illusions of these" as pointless to people's opinion? (18) In these publications which had been so actively committed in the campaign,

13. Labor Call, 2 November 1916
14. Socialist, 3 November and 15 December 1916. Riley was Secretary of the Australian Peace Alliance
15. Woman Voter, 9 November 1916. Maurice Blackburn repeated the claim in "The Conscription Referendum of 1916", Melbourne 1936
16. Age, 30 and 31 October; Labor Call, 2 November 1916
17. Argus, 1 November; Church of England Messenger, 3 November; Woman Voter, 30 November 1916
18. Advocate, 4 November; Age, 30 October 1916
there were conflicting answers to these questions which seemed to arise from feelings of elation or disappointment, as the case may have been, rather than objective attempts at analysis. But attention was being turned towards those questions which the Herald had seen merely as "academic" in the face of the Empire's call. Identifiable groups - women, the Irish, labour - had been accused or applauded, depending by which side, as being susceptible to particular influences. The Age, as early as 30 October suggested that a feeling of remoteness from "the war and its horrors"(19) had influenced voters, presumably to vote 'No'.

Rather more detached contemporary commentators, Henry Stead and the Round Table, included discussion of incidents and actions during the campaign in their analysis of the referendum. Reviewing the vote, Stead was convinced that "there were certainly a large number of electors who felt that somehow or another the figures of needed reinforcements were far larger than there appeared any necessity for".(20) He was, of course, as much subject to his own bias as any other observer; having argued that the question hinged on the numbers required,(21) like any other observer he would be inclined to see the vote as in part confirmation of his argument. But it is not surprising that

19. Age, 30 October 1916
20. Stead's Review, 18 November 1916, p.909
21. Ibid., 23 September, pp.741-743; 7 October, pp.801-803; 21 October, pp.832-833
failure to accept the "numbers of reinforcements required" 
argument should be omitted from conscriptionists' analyses of 
the ballot for several reasons. Discussion of precise numbers 
required was largely avoided by the press during the campaign(22) 
and such discussion would have been, after all, an "academic 
question". That a large number of 'NO' voters would have voted 
thus on the basis of reasoning would not suggest that the pro-
blem revealed by the large 'NO' vote was one of education. 

The Round Table also saw general doubts about the numbers 
of reinforcements needed as "The chief point in the discussion, 
however, and the one on which the Referendum was perhaps 
determined. . . ."(23) The Round Table was certainly in favour 
of conscription. Since the outbreak of war, it had regularly 
deplored the lack of total commitment by Australians to the war. 
It expressed moral indignation at some of the arguments put by 
the anti-conscriptionists and, like the Argus, thought a refer-
endum was not a suitable way of settling a question of national 
as distinct from individual interests.(24) But, like Stead, the 
Round Table detected and recorded a range of influences, in most 
cases without righteous judgement. The call-up of men from the 
beginning of October was a "tactical error" and the "notoriously 

22. The press campaign is discussed in Chapter 4
23. Round Table, No.26, March 1917, p.381
24. Ibid., pp.382-385. On Australia's attitudes to the war, 
No.17, December 1914, p.456; No.19, June 1915, pp.866-870; 
No.20, September 1915, p.158; No.21, December 1915, p.333
capricious" exemption Courts increased rather than decreased "the selfish vote". Stead made similar observations.(25) Both felt that uncommitted voters had been alienated from 'YES' by the inconvenience of the call-up and distaste for the realities of military life experienced in camps. The Round Table listed other influential factors: a "sentimental appeal" to women, fears of a labour shortage, fears of heavy taxation, fears of coloured labour replacing conscripts, Irish-Catholic hostility and Hughes's "culpable error" in having passed by the Executive Council a regulation which could have had the effect of disenfranchising those eligible who had not answered the Proclamation calling men into camps.(26)

Stead did consider the reasons of those who voted 'YES'.

The need for keeping our men at the front properly reinforced was so obvious that it must have been the chief reason which caused over a million electors to vote 'YES' . . . . The need of keeping our promise (of an extra division) to those men caused many who abhor the very idea of conscription to vote 'YES'.(27)

Blackburn found the response for 'YES' "surprisingly popular . . .

25. Round Table, No.26, March 1917, pp.380-381. Stead's Review, 18 November 1916, p.909. The proclamation calling men to the colours and the work of exemption Courts are discussed in Chapter 4

26. Round Table, No.26, March 1917, pp.380-381. The Regulation is discussed in Chapter 4

27. Stead's Review, 18 November 1916
Why did so many people – many of them Labour supporters – vote 'YES'? (28) Most commentators and subsequent historians have ignored the 'YES' vote in favour of dissecting the 'NO' vote. Perhaps this is because there is a fascinating diversity in the anti-conscriptionist ranks inviting analysis. It seems logical, too, that historians explain why people reject the proposals of those whom they have elected to govern rather than why they support them. Nevertheless, when it is a referendum in which people "are asked to support a constructive policy which requires sustained effort and varying kinds and degrees of sacrifice from different individuals", (29) it is surprising that more consideration has not been given to the reasons for the large minority which voted 'YES'. A contemporary British view was of "pride, gratitude and wonder at the enormous vote in Australia for self-compulsion . . . one of the most wonderful and glorious things in human history". (30)

Leslie Jauncey accepts Vida Goldstein's account of the 'YES' majority in Victoria: "... the preponderating conservative vote in such electorates as Henty, Kooyong and Flinders and by the undoubted fact that the 'NO' vote here is more largely an


30. The Spectator, quoted in The Argus, 6 November 1916
anti-militarism vote than in any other state".(31) He makes no mention of crossing of party or class lines apparent in the ballots but otherwise sees the Commonwealth 'NO' majority in the same terms as the Socialist and Labor Call. "The progressive forces of the Commonwealth had won a significant victory in a democratic experiment never before attempted in a modern democracy."(32) Jauncey cited all those factors already identified by other writers as helpful to the 'NO' cause and added to the list: Dr. Mannix as a focus for Irish resentment was "one of the major factors in the defeat of conscription. He gained support far outside his own Church"; many feared industrial conscription; groundwork for opposition to conscription had been laid by the Australian Freedom League before the war; obstacles placed in the way of anti-conscriptionists' presentation of their case won sympathy for 'NO'; Hughes extravagant "pro-German" charges directed at his opponents lost him support along with his other mistakes.(33) But Jauncey's is a one-sided view. His first three chapters seem to rely heavily for their content on Conscription Under Camouflage, a long pamphlet written early in 1915 but not published until 1919. Its authors were J.P. Fletcher and J.F. Hills, members

32. Ibid., p.217
33. Ibid., pp.217-222
of the pacifist Society of Friends and prominent in the Australian Freedom League.(34) Then, as Dr. O'Farrell points out in his Foreword to the 1968 reprint, "the account of the events which followed W. M. Hughes return from England in 1915 is given verbatim from articles in the Sydney Worker of 1919, on 'The Apostasy of W. M. Hughes' - hardly an unprejudiced source ...."

Sir Ernest Scott's volume of the *Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-1918* was published in 1936, the year after Jauncey's book. Chapter 9 on the 1916 Conscription Referendum is a much more balanced account than Jauncey's. Scott held the chair of History at the University of Melbourne from 1914. The University was strongly and actively conscriptionist(35) and in the absence of evidence to the contrary, it seems probable that Scott favoured conscription. Scott certainly thought the referendum was a mistake for the same kinds of


reasons as expressed in the *Round Table*.(36) But, granted the fact of the referendum, Scott did not question the legitimacy of the arguments. Thus on criticism of such appeals to women as, "Will you send another woman's son or husband to his death?" Scott writes, "But the question so put to the women was, after all, definitely part of the issue, and, if a genuine vote was to be sought, such problems had to be faced by the voter."(37) Scott discusses most of those influences already mentioned by others but his judgement differs from Jauncey's on some points. He implies that Dr. Mannix, while undoubtedly a "storm centre" might have alienated many voters.(38) Whereas Jauncey claimed victimization of the anti-conscriptionists brought them support, Scott was "... certain that restraint of freedom of opinion

36. Ernest Scott, *Australia During the War*, Vol. XI of The Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-1918, (Melbourne 1936) pp.360-361. F. B. Smith, op. cit., p.22 suggests Scott wrote the *Round Table* reports. There are some similarities, such as the one mentioned, but also a divergence, perhaps explained by the twenty-year gap, in comments on the Exemption Courts. The *Round Table* writer described them as "notoriously capricious". Scott's opinion is noted in the text above. *Round Table* articles were "written by one person after thorough discussion with others". See "The Round Table Movement", *Melbourne University Magazine*, Vol.10, No.3, October 1916, p.77

37. Scott, op. cit., p.356

38. Ibid., pp.344-47. This opinion is supported more explicitly by later writers; e.g. Evatt, op. cit., p.410; Smith, op. cit., p.11; Ian Turner, *Industrial Labour and Politics*, Canberra 1965, p.115
was not the cause of the defeat of the Government's policy".\(^{39}\)

The exemption courts "appear to have been patient and considerate, dealing fairly with the applications made to them".\(^{40}\)

In the main, factors peculiar to individual states have been neglected. Such studies have been made of two states - Western Australia and South Australia - and they suggest there may have been localised reasons for responding in different ways to the appeals made in the campaign and that sometimes a group supposed to have been influenced by one consideration may well have had a quite different motivation. The Western Australian study by J. R. Robertson, for example, uses the 1911 Census figures to show that the proportion of people living in Western Australia who less than twenty years earlier had been living in England was three times greater than in the Commonwealth as a whole. The Western Australian vote was 'YES' - 94,069, 'NO' - 40,384, and the implication is that pro-British sentiment would naturally be more marked in the West than elsewhere, thereby contributing to the enormous 'YES' majority.\(^{41}\) The South Australian study by P. M. Gibson suggests a discernibly ambivalent attitude by non-Labour politicians in that state.

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39. Scott, op. cit., p.356

40. Ibid., p.352. Evatt disagrees, op. cit., p.408

towards the Hughes sponsored referendum and points out that the high 'NO' vote in electorates with large German populations could well have been because these people were generally farmers.(42)

No separate study of the 1916 conscription referendum in Victoria has been made. Yet the 'YES' majority in this state came as a surprise (43) and both city and country electorates contributed to it. The Age commented, "An analysis of the Victorian figures shows that the man in the country after all was no more to be feared than the man in the city". (44) Press response of both sides, as has been noted, expressed surprise at the lowness of the metropolitan 'NO' vote. Ian Turner, in a general judgement, writes

Ultimately, the defeat of conscription came down to this: a good season, and a shortage of labour . . . .

The radicals had won the labour movement to anti-conscription, and the labour movement, despite the defection of many of its most able and influential leaders, had carried the majority of the working-class with it: but it was the non-Labour farmers who

43. Round Table, No.26, March 1917, p.386
44. Age, 30 October 1916
defeated the government's proposals. (45)
In New South Wales there was a tremendous majority of 117,739 votes for 'NO' and the real strength of the 'NO' vote lay in rural districts. But Victoria expected just as good a season as New South Wales (46) yet the aggregate 'NO' vote in Victorian country (and metropolitan) areas was lower than the total Labour vote for the same electorates in the elections of September 1914.

Thus Victoria offers some paradoxes and inconsistencies with general theories about the vote of 28 October 1916. Some of those claimed influences already mentioned deserve re-evaluation in the context of Victoria - the conditioning effect of pre-war compulsory training, attitudes to the war, the effectiveness of press and campaign methods, the possible influence of religion, class and national origins, and the importance of so-called "tactical errors" by Hughes during the campaign. It is the aim of this thesis to offer some of these re-evaluations.

45. Ian Turner, op. cit., p.116
46. Pastoral Review, 16 September 1916, p.304; 16 October 1916, p.912
CHAPTER II

COMPULSORY MILITARY TRAINING IN PEACE-TIME

I

The first Defence Acts of the new Commonwealth, the Acts of 1903 and 1904, provided that in time of war citizen forces could be called out by the Governor-General who was obliged to state his reason for doing so and to communicate the fact to Parliament. (1) The measures were accepted in and out of Parliament as "... a wholesome principle ... the declaration of this Parliament and of the people of Australia". (2) Only William Morris Hughes urged more positive action in the form of compulsory military training, just as he had done in 1901. (3) Preservation of White Australia and loyalty to Empire were the underlying features of the debate on defence before the war. (4) Japanese defeat of Russia in 1905 created apprehension about the security of White Australia. In September 1905 a National Defence League was founded in Sydney. Labour leader

1. Commonwealth Year Book, 1912, pp.1076-1079
2. C.P.D., Vol. XV, p.3086
J. C. Watson was a Vice-President and W. M. Hughes a joint Secretary. Hughes was working hard for compulsory military training both inside Parliament(5), outside Parliament(6) and even overseas(7). The "yellow peril" propaganda after the Japanese victory was effective. "Militarism is less a curse than the armed occupation of your country by invaders — possibly by raiders of an inferior race,"(8) said the Worker in 1905.

The Labour Party Conference at Brisbane in July 1903 passed, by 24 votes to 7, J. C. Watson's motion making "compulsory training for all males, irrespective of class or condition", Labour policy.(9) The Deakin Government had already (December 1907) proposed a system of universal training, so both parties were now committed to a policy of compulsory military training.

In September 1908, a Defence Bill embodying the principles of compulsory military training was introduced, but the Deakin ministry fell before the bill could be passed. Hughes welcomed

5. C.P.D., Vol. XXXVII, 1 August 1907, p.1282 "... the fourth occasion... submitting a notion substantially similar."

6. Fitzhardinge, op. cit., p.191-192. "In one tour of eight days he spoke at eight meetings, travelled about one thousand miles, and enrolled 450 new members."


8. Quoted by Grimshaw, op. cit., p.177

9. Fitzhardinge, op. cit., p.221-222
the measure(10) but, in general, the parliamentary debate centred much more on the Naval question than on the morality or necessity of compulsory military training. The cost of the proposed scheme, too, obsessed many members.(11) Finally, in October 1909, the Deakin "fusion" government passed a similar Defence Bill. Labour, of course, did not oppose the Bill. In fact Fisher attributed the bill to the efforts and influence of Hughes who had been, in this connection, in the first Parliament, "... a voice crying in the wilderness".(12)

Of some interest in the debate was Mr. Joseph Cook's reply to a query by Andrew Fisher.

I tell the honourable member candidly that if these men are wanted for overseas service in the defence of the Empire, no Government of the Commonwealth, worthy of the name, would hesitate to send them.(13)

Hughes chided Cook on this point:

While it is right to compel a man to fit himself to defend his country, it is not proper to compel him to fight beyond it. If it is, I can only say that I am not a convert to this principle.(14)

10. C.P.D., Vol. XLVII, p.860
11. Ibid., pp.839-1269 passim
12. C.P.D., Vol. LIII, p.5395
13. C.P.D., Vol. LI, p.3626
Ironically, Hughes had earlier taunted Cook, who was now Minister for Defence, for changing sides on compulsory military training. (15) In the same speech Hughes "reached great heights of militaristic ardour" in treating the House "to an emotional declamation of a Swiss Soldier". (16) It was a highly emotional address, directed, said Hughes, to the House and to those "many in this country who regard with suspicion the principle of compulsory training". (17) Those with suspicions were not very active. "Very few members seem to have any deep interest in the Defence Bill" wrote a newspaper correspondent. "As soon as the Defence debate was begun yesterday, the House emptied." (17a)

The electorate seemed to share members' lack of interest. If there were widespread, deeply felt community attitudes at times when defence measures were under consideration, they were not manifest. The Argus was generally fulsome in its praise for a Defence Bill introduced by a non-Labour government. (18) The Age, too, was generally commendatory but was troubled by "the ticklish question" raised in Cook's answer to Fisher.

There is every reason to believe that Australian

15. C.P.D., Vol. LII, 13 October 1909, p.4472
17. C.P.D., Vol. LIII, 13 October 1909, p.4474
17a. Argus, 20 October 1909
18. Argus, 22, 24 September, 14 October 1909
patriotism is great enough to ensure an ample supply of volunteers for foreign service, should the events of the future demand them. But there is a wide margin between any compulsory condition of foreign service and the freedom of the volunteer.(19)

There was some ambivalence(20) in the Labour movement's attitude. Every May day on the Yarra bank the movement declared its opposition to militarism(21) and some sections viewed the 1908 conference decision as a politicians' compromise: a vote catcher playing on the "Japanese" bogey.(22) A full front-page, gothic tableau, "War and the Workers", depicting sword, grim reaper and officers toasting the subjection of the workers and cowering women featured in the Labor Call of 9 July 1908. The caption referred to Deakin's "eighteen days service without pay each year, subordination to a boss, and the obscuring of social evils by martial display".(23) But the latent rebellion did not develop although there was plenty of time for it to do so between December 1907 (Deakin's defence policy speech) and the

19. Age, 14 October 1909
20. C.P.D., Vol. XLVII, 9 October 1908, p.1009, an accusation by Mr. Crouch M.H.R.
21. Labor Call, 5 March 1908
22. Ibid., 16 July 1908
23. Ibid., 9 July 1908
passing of the 1909 Defence Act. The belief that a class-
less, citizen army would protect rather than harm workers'
interests prevailed, a unique working-class party attitude, but the strange dichotomy in attitude showed regularly in succeeding years.

Lord Kitchener had been invited by Deakin to visit Australia and report on the nation's defence requirements. He came at the end of 1909 and the subsequent amendments to the Defence Act in 1910 and 1911 were made only to incorporate Kitchener's recommendations and to adjust the length of training required in each of the phases of compulsory training.

24. Jauncey, op. cit., p.32
25. Labor Call, 23 July 1908
26. Round Table, Vol.1, No.2, September 1911, pp.189-190
27. Commonwealth Year Book: 1912, pp.1090-1092. The 1913 Year Book, pp.1050-1061 gives a detailed plan of the phasing in of the scheme. Broadly the scheme provided for males:

Aged 12-14 years, training in Junior Cadets, total 90 hours
   " 14-18 "   " Senior Cadets,
   Senior Cadets to attend four (4) whole day drills, twelve (12) half-day drills
   24 night drills. (A "day" was at least 4 hours and a "night" at least 1 hour)
   " 18-26 "

Citizen forces. To train for sixteen (16) whole days or their equivalent, of which not less than eight (8) to be in camps of continuous training. (A "day" was at least 6 hours and a "night" at least 1½ hours.)

Boys born between 1894 and 1897 were to register in the first six months of 1911 and begin training as Senior Cadets on 1 July 1911. The Citizen Forces were to begin 1 July 1912 with those turning eighteen in that year.
II

Training began for 89,138 Senior Cadets throughout the Commonwealth, 18,569 of them in Victoria, on 1 July 1911.(28) Within a month the Argus reported "some parents stand a little dismayed by the reality of the service asked from their sons".(29) Loss of pay, cost of travel, curtailment of leisure, lack of drill halls, open-air parades in winter, delays in providing uniforms and the harmful effects of indiscriminate mixing of all types of boys were grievances felt by trainees or their parents.(30) Isolated reports of unruly cadets and disobedience on parade appeared. The Argus admitted receipt of more letters than it could publish, especially objecting to parades called for Easter 1912.(31) A deputation from the Trades Hall to Senator Pearce in August 1912 and another in January 1913 sought abolition of Saturday drill, an imposition on the working lad as school cadets did their training in or after school hours.(32) Discomforts and felt injustices continued to rankle, even when initial shortages of accommodation and material were overcome. Other important issues arose. Not two months after the inception of the scheme, a Ballarat shopkeeper complained that

28. Commonwealth Year Book, 1913, p.1062
29. Argus, 8 August 1911
30. Argus, correspondence through November, December 1911
31. Argus, 2 April 1912
32. Argus, 16 August 1912; Labor Call, 22 August 1912, Argus, 18 January 1913
four of his ten assistants were called to Saturday parades "and this experience is common to all shopkeepers in this city". (32a) In July 1912, employers, worried about time taken from work, sent their own deputation to Pearce. (33) Employees at prosecu-
tions frequently claimed that attendances at parades during working hours would cost them their jobs, a claim not treated sympathetically by magistrates. (34) After some initial uncertainty, (35) prosecutions of cadets without the requisite number of hours began in earnest in July 1912 and a steady stream of prosecutions followed. The Richmond Guardian described a local prosecution day:

While a string band outside a neighbouring hotel played "Fall in, and Follow Me", upwards of 150 youths assembled at the entrance to the court and awaited the magistrates in their turn . . . . The boys were brought before the bench in four divisions.

For the first two detachments, a total of 98 boys appearing for the first time, cases were adjourned for two months. The next group received varying fines, 5/- down to 20/-.

Circumstances of parents were taken into account in setting the fine as well as deficiency in hours. These deficiencies ranged from 56 hours

32a. Argus, 22 August 1911
33. Argus, 17 July 1912
34. Argus, 8 August 1912; Richmond Guardian, 5 October 1912
35. Argus, 29 May 1912. Defaulting cadets were to be given chance to make up deficiencies in own time before 30 June.
short to 10 hours short (against a requisite 64 hours).(36) Pearce had been a consistent defender of the Defence Act, but in July he had issued instructions to district commandants, in anticipation of many prosecutions, to seek lenient magistrates' decisions.(37) Aware of some measure of distaste for compulsory military training, he wanted to avoid exacerbating it. Papers carried reports almost daily throughout October and November 1912, of prosecutions through the suburbs and in the country. Reports were brief, usually only the number prosecuted, often around the hundred mark, and some of the magistrates' sentences and comments. Magistrates varied in the severity of their sentences, the fiercest upholder of compulsion from the bench being Mr. Read Murphy, "Compulsory" Murphy in the Labor Call's sobriquet.(38) He was the subject of a complaint to the Attorney General from the secretary of the Australian Freedom League(39). Sitting at Footscray, Essendon and City courts, his decisions attracted considerable attention. ("What are conscientious objections? Have you any conscience at all? . . . Fined 20/- or fourteen days at Queenscliff. Talking nonsense

36. Richmond Guardian, 5 October 1913
J. P. Fletcher & J. F. Hills, Conscription under Camouflage, 1919 (written 1915), Ch. XV gives accounts of some prosecutions

37. Argus, 4 July 1912

38. Labor Call, 28 May 1914

39. Socialist, 6 March 1914. The Attorney General's department referred the plaintiff "to a higher court".
about conscientious scruples."

But ire was raised by Mr. Murphy, in particular, and by prosecutions in general, only among groups who were opposed, or many members of which were opposed, to compulsion in the Defence Act. There is no evidence of wide-spread protest. Henry Stead claimed there was a "conspiracy of silence" among newspapers; such scrappy reports of prosecutions were published that "the average reader is amazed when he learns that there has been great difficulty in getting lads to register: that there have been over 13,000 prosecutions". Coverage of prosecutions is scarce in newspaper columns through 1913 but shortages of registrations were the subject of regular report. Perhaps prosecutions had lost their novelty, for, though many might be alarmed by the numbers of prosecutions and severity of some sentences, many more were indifferent or would agree with the observation of a suburban paper in a Labour area:

Mr. Read Murphy imposed several sentences of 20 days detention and spoke in caustic terms of the degradation of being a shirker, but it was evident that most of the youths were unimpressed. Some punishment of a more drastic nature is needed to convince the lads that obeying the law of the land is preferable.

40. Review of Reviews, March 1914, p.219
41. Review of Reviews, September 1913, p.676
42. Footscray Advertiser, 6 June 1914
Inevitably, there arose that perennial difficulty of universal service in a democratic community - conscientious objection. Among the most notable cases in Victoria were those concerning cadets Ernest Krygger and Thomas Roberts, and parents the Reverend Alfred Madsen and Joshua Ratcliff. Krygger claimed exemption on the grounds that any form of military training was contrary to his religious beliefs. His claim was disallowed, first by a magistrate then by the High Court and he was committed to the defaulter's centre at Queenscliff. The High Court judgement was that non-combatant duties did not trespass on religious convictions.(43) Alfred Madsen refused to register his son, compulsory military training being "in opposition to his most sacred convictions",(44) and was fined. Joshua Ratcliff was a prosperous business man and member of the Australian Freedom League. In July 1913, he was fined for refusing to allow his sons to drill. In May 1914, he announced in a letter to the Prime Minister that he was leaving Australia, "a nation that violates conscience and individuality".(45) Tom Roberts was the son of Quakers. By civil court he was committed to military custody at Queenscliff for refusing to drill, There, in June 1914, the commandant sentenced him to solitary

43. Argus, 7 August, 16 October, 1913
44. Herald, 4 September 1912
45. Argus, 12 May 1914
confinement.(46) His case attracted more publicity than any other Victorian prosecution or detention during the pre-war years of compulsory training.

That the general conscience was not disturbed by most of these cases is quite apparent. Regular antagonists the Argus (47) and the Advocate were in accord on the High Court's Krygger judgement. If Australia were to be invaded, "where would we be likely to find the Australian Freedom League and its drill-shirking proteges?" asked the latter (48) when there were protests about Krygger's detention at Queenscliff.

The Argus told Ratcliff that the law of compulsory training was "broad-based upon the people's will", that "there is no possibility of its repeal and therefore there is no hope in Australia for either the objecting moralist or the objectionable shirker". (49) Only the Socialist seemed willing to express sympathy for Ratcliff's position. (50) W. G. Higgs M.H.R. raised the Madsen case in Parliament as evidence of the need for a conscience clause (51) but there was no press interest in the

47. Argus, 16 October 1913
48. Advocate, 3 January 1914
49. Argus, 13 May 1914
50. Socialist, 22 May 1914
matter. Only the Roberts case, with its emotional impact of a sixteen year old in solitary confinement, evoked a real debate which suggested that, by this time, June 1914, the conscience issue was becoming a deeply felt one. There was general condemnation of the harshness of the penalty and the debate on the compulsory provisions of the Defence Act intensified in newspaper columns, and in Parliament.(52) The case highlighted the executive scope of the military custodians of cadets convicted by civil courts.(53) Increased Government awareness of the conscience-compulsion dilemma was reflected in the Minister for Defence, Senator Millen's, apologetic explanation of the Roberts' case and request for suggestions to allow an "ease up" on conscientious objectors without opening wide the door "to fraud".(54)

The churches, generally restricted their moral guidance to traditional fields - intemperance and gambling with the Protestant Churches, education, purity of doctrine and the Irish question with the Catholic Church. The Church of England Messenger implicitly supported the whole of the Defence Act

52. Argus, 20 June 1914


54. Ibid. J. W. Barry, Commonwealth Organiser of the Australian Freedom League claimed in August 1913 that Senator Millen had asked for "help" in seeking "a way out of the difficulty" of conscientious objectors in a plan to have them "serve the state in another way". Barry refused. Socialist, 8 August 1913
hoping, in the beginning, that the lesson of obedience to proper authority learnt on the parade ground "may strengthen the individual in his moral and religious life" and sympathising with Senator Millen in the Roberts case, on the administrative puzzle of having a "compulsory provision and yet to allow exceptions". (55) In Victoria, compulsory training did not become a synod item.

At the Presbyterian Assembly in May 1913, a motion condemning compulsory military training was defeated. (56) The Presbyterian Messenger did not comment on this or on any of the notable conscience cases but did give implicit support to the compulsory scheme when attacking the August 1912 union deputation to Senator Pearce. (57) Some Presbyterian clergy, notably Dr. Rentoul, did express doubts about compulsion in the Defence Act. Bishop Frodsham, formerly Bishop of North Queensland (and a member of the National Defence League), in a comment on criticisms of the Defence scheme by Reverend Leyton Richards, had stated, inter alia:

The Baptists and Congregationalists of Australia form 3.84% of the population as against 65.89% of Presbyterians, Methodists and Anglicans; or with Roman Catholics included 84.45%. The fate of dissenting

55. Church of England Messenger, 7 July 1911, 14 June 1914
56. Argus, 14 May 1913
57. Presbyterian Messenger, 23 August 1912
resolutions and the passing of supporting motions in Anglican, Presbyterian and Methodist assemblies and Synods leads to the unavoidable conclusion that the majority of religious thought is in favour of the Defence Act.

Dr. Rentoul replied that Dr. Prosham was not "an adequate judge of the feeling of the great Australian cities towards universal training" and that his "assertions are widely divorced from the truth".(58)

The Roman Catholic Advocate, on the few occasions its attention was turned towards the Defence Act, argued the need for citizen defence against threatening China and Japan and scoffed at the "extraordinary manifesto" of the Australian Freedom League; universal training was a "most equitable law" and probably only "sheer laziness" better deserving "the strong arm and strap of parental authority" kept some youths from training.(59) Dr. Mannix arrived in March 1913, but though he was soon prominently reported in the Advocate and secular press on contentious educational and doctrinal matters, there is no record of any utterance by him on the working of the Defence Act. Roman Catholic concerns and circumstances of compulsory military training did not merge during these years.

58. Argus, 8 October 1913

59. Advocate, 3 January 1914; 17 May, 3 January 1913. The Manifesto is printed in Jauncey, op. cit., pp.89-90
The numerically insignificant Society of Friends (60) the
Baptists (61) and the Congregationalists (62) were the only
denominations with a fixed position of opposition to universal
military training (63). The Methodist Church had no settled
policy against compulsory service (64) but there was evidence
of grave doubts, among Methodists, particularly about the lack
of a conscience clause. Alfred Madsen was a Methodist minister
at Collingwood and assistant editor of the Spectator. His own
case was no cause celebre in the Spectator but the misgivings

60. Argus, 5 October 1911, 6 April 1914

61. Spectator, 11 October 1912

62. Argus, 17-21 June 1912. Leyton Richards was the outspoken
Congregationalist critic of compulsion. 
Jauncey, op. cit., pp.48-49; pp.71-75 gives text of
Richards' sermon and a pamphlet by him

63. **Nominal adherents**

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<tr>
<th>of Churches</th>
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<th>In Commonwealth</th>
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<td>1,710,443</td>
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<td>558,336</td>
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<td>547,806</td>
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<td>Congregationalist</td>
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<tr>
<td>Roman Catholic</td>
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<td>921,425</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholic (unidentified)</td>
<td>14,679</td>
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<tr>
<td>Society of Friends</td>
<td>156</td>
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</table>

Source: Census of the Commonwealth of Australia,
3 April 1911, Vol. II, pp.764-769

64. Spectator, 7, 21 March 1913. The Methodist Conference in
Sydney, March 1913, was tied 43-43 on a motion condemning
compulsory training. The motion was defeated on the
casting vote of the President
Argus, 14 March 1913
of at least some Methodists on the *Kryuger* (65) and other conscience cases is reflected in the journal: "Our protestantism rests on freedom of conscience". (66) Madsen was delighted to observe "the laymen of our Church are beginning to say things upon the question". (67)

Clergymen were prominent in the ranks of the Australian Freedom League (68) and some were outspoken critics of compulsory training. Through most of the pre-war training years, however, clergy of most persuasions condoned the Defence Act or ignored it as part of Caesar's realm. Few of them were openly critical of compulsory training; fewer, if any, saw it as their function to berate the disobedience of boys failing to register and to drill. Conscience was gradually becoming an issue and the Roberts case initiated, or crystallised further, clerical opposition on this score. A letter from the Brighton Minister's Association embracing Anglican, Congregational, Baptist, Presbyterian and Methodist ministers protested at the treatment of Roberts and noted signs of incipient "military despotism". (69)

Officially, the Labour movement supported compulsory

66. *Spectator*, 22 October 1913
67. *Spectator*, 8 May 1914
68. Jauncey, op. cit., p.30
69. *Argus*, 27 June 1914
military training. The Labor Call report of the Fifth Commonwealth Political Labour conference held in Hobart in January 1912 noted the counting of the Citizens' Defence Force as legislation effecting one of the fighting planks of the 1908 Conference. (70) A highly emotional article in Labor Call of 18 April 1912 showed Labour concern with both details and principles of the scheme. The writer drew attention to the curtailment of working lads' liberty, the substance of the coming August deputation to Pearce: "But mark you, it is not defence they want at all; we are to have an armed force usable to repel strikers". (71) If unionists feared the French precedent of 1910 as Jauncey claims, they did not mention it, (72) but the spectre of industrial

70. Labor Call, 25 January. The resolution proposing amendment of Act to ensure no use of citizen forces against "workers engaged in an industrial dispute" was not mentioned by the Call. Senator Rae did move a motion to this effect in the Senate, 1 August 1912. (He had moved a similar motion on 2 November 1911) J. F. Finlayson had withdrawn his similar motion in the House of Representatives on 25 July 1912 as he had learned it was unconstitutional. It seems that Rae's motion lapsed although Jauncey says it gained the support of only three Labour members. F. G. Tudor was taxed with this apparent parliamentary betrayal of the party policy and, according to the Socialist, "did not reply". The sequence needs further enquiry. Jauncey, op. cit., p.86; J.P.D., Vol. LXI, 2 November 1911, pp.2147, 2162; Vol. LXIV, 25 July 1912, p.1297; Vol. LXV, 1 August 1912, p.1550 Socialist, 12 September 1913

71. Labor Call, 18 April 1912

72. Jauncey, op. cit., p.64
conscription had not vanished, nor the fear of a political sell-out. A member of the deputation to Pearce accused the Minister of "casuistry". Pearce "endeavoured to whip the deputation into a state of abject terror by rigging up his pantomime Eastern dragon".(73) One of the lessons of compulsory training for the Labour movement was that, even with a classless citizen army, there has to be a boss.

But the dichotomy in attitude remained. The Secretary of the Warrnambool Branch took yet another Pearce critic to task for disloyalty to the policy of the party and claimed to speak for "thousands of others".(74) Regular Labor Call columnist Frank Henty, in an attack on Leyton Richards wrote, "... let Joe Cook put so much as a little finger on the Defence Act and what a howl of protest will arise from stalwart Australia ... the Australian Defence Act ... is good hard common sense ... so 'let's have a bit of common'".(75) The Secretary of the united Ballarat branches of the Political Labour Council disputed the industrial conscription fears of the Australian Freedom League. While there was a free franchise and political Labour organisation, "... the military training of the masses would provide the best of surety against any plutocratic repression of the workers' aspirations".(76) Even so, it seems that the fear of possible

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73. Labor Call, 22 August 1912
74. Ibid., 15, 22 August 1912
75. Ibid., 14, 28 August 1913
76. Socialist, 13 February 1914
industrial use of compelled citizen soldiers was spreading in
the movement. The 1913 Victorian Political Labour Conference
did not discuss the Defence Act, but in February 1914 a move
to have the Act amended was doing the rounds of Labour branches,
(77) and the Conference in April adopted ten amendments to the
Act, drawn up by a drafting committee. The first two of these
amendments were safeguards against industrial conscription.(78)

There was increasing dissatisfaction within the Labour
movement on this score. The Defence Act was amended accordingly
in November 1914, but on that occasion, Senator Pearce showed
the gap that had formed between the thinking of much of the
movement and that of its Parliamentary leadership. The
amendment was

. . . that the Citizen Forces of the Commonwealth shall
not be called out or utilised in connexion with an
industrial dispute.

The government thought the amendment unconstitutional and,
therefore, without force. Pearce announced acceptance of the
amendment, however, for

it will still be a declaration by this parliament and
will serve to rob the opponents of the Defence Act of
that argument.(79)

77. Age, 2 February 1914
78. Argus, 15 April 1914
Labor Call, 30 April 1914
79. C.P.D., Vol. LXXV, 19 November 1914, pp. 785-786
By this time, the war had pushed the argument from most peoples' minds. Differences of opinion on compulsory training were suspended. The Labor Call was anxious to secure for Labour credit for such preparedness as there was; it was angry that the recently deprecated Pearce, "under whose splendid administration the army and navy of the Commonwealth has attained its present position", (30) was not consulted by the government. The electorate's identification of Labour with the concept and practice of compulsory military training may account for some of Labour's great success in the elections of September 1914. (See Chapter 5)

The radical wing of working-class politics represented by the Victorian Socialist Party was also divided at first in its attitude to compulsory military training. Copies of the Socialist show support and opposition through 1912 and Maurice Blackburn, then editor, replied to a correspondent that "the Socialist Party includes convinced supporters as well as convinced opponents of compulsory military training", hence it was not "a matter upon which the Party or the Socialist expresses any opinion". (31) He reiterated this in a comment as retiring editor (32), replaced by R. S. Ross under whose direction the paper gave increasing

80. Labor Call, 27 August 1914
81. Socialist, 28 February 1913. Ian Turner, Industrial Labour and Politics, (Canberra 1965) p.59
82. Socialist, 18 April 1913
prominence to the Australian Freedom League's activities and to prosecuted cadets such as Krygger and Flintoff. (83) A weekly column of "Freedom League News and Notes" began to appear early in 1914 and continued even after the League had declared its "resolve to suspend active operations for the time being". (84) One week later in this column, the league secretary J. B. Howie reviewed the path to the existing Defence Act, W. M. Hughes' part in it, and concluded: "It is the parting of the ways. The present war will assuredly be used by the military authorities as a lever to fasten conscription more strongly on Australia". (85) The Socialist published sixteen questions on compulsory training to be put to candidates (86) and ran a weekly advertisement for a packet of twelve anti-conscription post cards. Compulsory training was a live issue among Socialists from its inception and Victorian Socialist opinion was strongly opposed to compulsory training by the time war came.

83. Socialist, 9 January 1914
84. Socialist, 21 August 1914
85. Socialist, 28 August 1914
86. Socialist, 24 July 1914
III

With few exceptions, "parliament, press and pulpit favour compulsory training" wrote a correspondent to the Argus.(87) But what did the people think of it? All kinds of observers said they thought it was fine. Andrew Fisher told an Australian Natives Association luncheon as much.(88) Lord Denman, the retiring Governor General, told cadets at Duntroon that "everything is going extremely well with the system except in one or two isolated instances in one or two particular localities".(89) The Round Table said, "The Act is really working well and the universal perennial interest in the system is a remarkable stimulus to national consciousness".(90) Opponents of the Defence Act "were never numerous; while it has received the endorsement of democracy generally" said the Melbourne Herald and cited "magnificent and significant" parades and voluntary completion of twice the stipulated time by some cadets as evidence of "how the Act is working".(91) The Argus saw the Defence Act as the weapon against "the spirit of anarchy among the young, the absence of any sense of order and discipline, the lack of the spirit of obedience, the chaos inside the home" and in a

87. Argus, 26 September 1913
88. Argus, 28 January 1913
89. Argus, 6 April 1914
90. Round Table, Number 12, June 1913, p.734
91. Herald, 22 September, 20 October 1913
final burst of lyricism, eulogized the "heroism of the soldier's life . . . . He stands up to death; he 'makes quick-coming death a little thing'". Estimates of the success of the Defence Act couched in such rhetoric need no logic; the Argus offered no evidence other than its own enthusiasm.(92)

But there was more evidence than the few exceptions in Parliament, pulpit and press to suggest that some favourable opinions were wishful thinking. The Herald admitted surprise at the "tenacity" of "the objection to what is speciously called 'conscription'".(93) Henry Stead after six months in Australia had "not been able to find out yet whether the citizens of Australia as a whole are in favour of the Act or not". He did detect an innocence about the possibilities of conscription and pointed out that the fears that exemption for conscientious objection would be abused could not be reconciled with confident claims of near unanimous support for compulsory training.(94) Well-reasoned letters did appear in the press questioning whether it was "a warrantable statement that the people of Australia are overwhelmingly in favour of the Defence Act",(95) although the Herald claimed, in answer to Stead's "conspiracy of silence"

92. Argus, 16 August 1913
93. Herald, 22 September 1913
94. Review of Reviews, September 1913
95. Argus, 27 June 1914
accusation, that "there is very little adverse comment". Donald McDonald, the Argus writer of "Notes for Boys" and no opponent of the Defence Act, wrote that "... the measure of default is not decreasing; it is increasing and that is a bad sign. ... compulsion is failing perilously". McDonald was surprised to discover that "boys of unexceptionable character" found training "a disagreeable duty".

So much of the debate on acceptance of the Act hinged on the numbers of prosecutions and failures to register. Initial registrations in 1911 were thought to be all that might have been expected, coinciding nearly in each age group, 14 years to 18 years with the statistics prepared by the Census Bureau. But the 1898 group, who became eligible for training in 1912, did not register promptly. In January this was put down to leaving registration "until the eleventh hour", but by March, the "great falling-off in cadet registrations this year was still occupying the attention of the Defence authorities".

There were some 20,000 fewer registrations in the Commonwealth for an increased number of boys. King O' Malley, Minister for Home Affairs refused to allow use of the Census to track down missing lads,

96. Herald, 20 October 1913
97. Argus, 17 August 1912
98. Argus, 16 May 1913
99. Argus, 10 January, 19 March 1912
100. Argus, 26 March 1912
but, in Victoria at least, the Education Department agreed to assist(101), and Senator Pearce admitted, when tabling the report of the scheme's operation to 30 June 1912, that the fall-off was a serious matter and that District Commandants had been directed to report on "the step they have taken to prosecute those who have not registered and the action taken to secure full registrations."(102)

The fall-off in registrations was not quite so bad as Pearce thought on the basis of estimations of numbers of eligible youths but, as a measure of public support for the Defence Act, it was alarming. Reality was that some 15% throughout the Commonwealth had failed to register in 1911 (1894-1897 quota), while for Victoria the failure rate was approximately 12%. By

101. Argus, 24 July 1912


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<tr>
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<td>11,585</td>
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<td>(Victoria)</td>
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Males subject to Registration according to 1911 Census

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<tr>
<td>1894 Group</td>
<td>45,765</td>
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<td>1895 &quot;</td>
<td>44,600</td>
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<td>1896 &quot;</td>
<td>43,697</td>
<td>13,081</td>
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<tr>
<td>1897 &quot;</td>
<td>43,184</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1898 &quot;</td>
<td>42,369</td>
<td>12,465</td>
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Source: Census of the Commonwealth of Australia, 3 April 1911, Vol.1, p.3
June 1912, 34% of eligible fourteen year olds in Australia had failed to register; the Victorian failure rate was about 29% - and this after many reluctant youths had been located and registered well after the stipulated final date. Analysis indicated that response to registration did not vary much from city to country though more attention was paid, apparently, to rounding up non-registers in urban areas. (104)

The pattern of increasing unwillingness to register continued. The *Argus* reported in May 1913: "In ordinary circumstances, every boy who will become fourteen this year should have been registered not later than February, but at the end of March only 28,332 had sent in their names". (105) The paper gave an estimate of 39,000 eligibles; the 1911 Census shows 40,678. Separate registration figures for Victoria are not given but it seems reasonable to assume the pattern was maintained in this state. In June 1913, regulations were amended to enable officers to provisionally register youths whom they had reason to believe to be eligible. Failure to answer questions after provisional registration meant conclusive registration and liability to a fine of £10. (106) It was a move to

103. Calculations on basis of figures in tabled report of registrations to 30 June 1912 and of numbers in age groups according to Census of April 1911


105. *Argus*, 16 May 1913

106. *Argus*, 27 June 1913. The allowed time for registration had been extended from January to February. C.P.D., Vol. LXV, 18 July 1912, pp.946-950
combat what was at best apathy, at worst, antipathy, towards compulsory military training. By 31 January 1914, 234,030 youths had registered but many of these had been sought out by area officers and the total number of registrations had continued to drop. (107)

Confident assertions about public support for compulsory military training are hard to sustain in the light of these figures. Willingness to register taken as an index shows that almost one youth in three was a reluctant complier or non-complier; actual registrations, after extensions of time to allow registration legislation enabling non-compliers to be "ferreted out" (108) and obliged to register, and a display of willingness by authorities to use powers, show that about 12% failed to register in Victoria, (109) and about 15% in the Commonwealth.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Numbers registered</th>
<th>Numbers eligible</th>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victoria</td>
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<tr>
<td>To 31/12/1911</td>
<td>48,569</td>
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Sources: Commonwealth Year Books. 1913, p.1062; 1914, p.945; 1915, p.945


109. J. P. Fletcher and J. F. Hills, op.cit., Chapter 18, suggest the spate of prosecutions in April 1913 was to frighten parents into registering their children.
This did not constitute the "breakdown" in the compulsory training system reported in England, (110) but it was much more than the 5% estimate of the Round Table in refuting "wild statements from opponents". (111) The fall-off in registrations possibly explains, too, the inflexible response of authorities to cases like those of Krygger and Madsen which arose when the deficiency was first becoming apparent. There were similar cases in other States. (112) Non-registration was the large tip of the ice-berg; the bulk who registered did their unpleasant duty and were not to be encouraged to disobedience by lack of diligent prosecution on the part of authorities.

Statistics on prosecutions are less conclusive as a guide to public support for the Defence Act as they include some prosecuted more than once as well as parents and employers prosecuted, though the latter groups may be fairly assumed to have been out of sympathy with compulsory training. Prosecutions were for shortages of drills, too, and these may not have been "the outcome of active opposition", (113) but they did suggest further passive resistance. Contemporary supporters of the

110. Argus, 29 July 1912, report of Daily News claim
111. Round Table, No. 9, December 1912, p. 172. The Daily Chronicle had claimed 50% defaulters
112. J. P. Fletcher and J. F. Hills, op. cit., Chapters 15, 16
113. Commonwealth Year Book, 1914, p. 943
training scheme claimed the incidence of prosecutions under the Defence Act was comparable to that under the various state Education Acts and that nobody regarded the latter as excessive. (114) There was some deceit by both sides in the use of this comparison, but it was still used by Pearce well after it had been discredited. (115) Obviously, registration did not necessarily imply support for the Act but nothing more conclusive can be drawn from the prosecution figures. Perhaps of more lasting significance were the impressions of justice dispensed under a system of military

114. Review of Reviews, September 1913, p.675; November 1913, p.810 Socialist, 12 September 1913, interview with F. G. Tudor, M.H.R.

115. Socialist, 15 May 1914. Fletcher and Hills, op.cit., Chapter 19, take the sum of prosecutions for three years to 30 June 1914, 27,749 prosecutions (3086 in Victoria) of all kinds, against a total number of trainees, 123,497, for a prosecution rate of 22.5%. This they compare with annual compulsory education acts prosecutions. Average annual prosecutions rate under the Defence Act to 31 January 1914 were 8,672. Total registrations to that date were 234,030 of whom 122,933 were liable for training. Percentage of prosecutions to registrations was 3.7%, to number liable for training 6.9%. As those exempt or medically unfit were not really subject to the operation of the Act, the figure of 6.9% is the figure to be used in this comparison, remembering that it includes cases of double or multiple prosecution. Annual compulsory education prosecutions were:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Enrolment</th>
<th>Prosecutions</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1910</td>
<td>627,910</td>
<td>12,259</td>
<td>1.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1911</td>
<td>638,850</td>
<td>5,354</td>
<td>.84</td>
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<tr>
<td>1912</td>
<td>662,576</td>
<td>7,832</td>
<td>1.2</td>
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Sources: Commonwealth Year Book, 1914, pp.945-946 Socialist, 15 May 1914. Percentages of education given by Fletcher and Hills are slightly lower
compulsion. Magistrate's interpretations of the law remained unpredictable. (116)

The ballot box offers no satisfactory guidance. Both parties supported compulsory military training and Frank Tudor told an Australian Freedom League deputation that he had gone through a political campaign without receiving much criticism about it. (117) Each of the Revolutionary Socialist candidates who stood in New South Wales with an anti-compulsory military training plank lost his deposit in the May 1913 Federal elections but the Round Table's conclusion that this showed how fully the public supported the Defence Act is unjustified; (118) alienation from other Revolutionary Socialist policies or traditional support for policies of major parties in the absence of compulsory training as an issue better explain the minor party's fate. From the other side, Jauncey facilely attributes J. Matthews, M.H.R.'s, vastly increased majority to his vigorously attacking the Defence Act in Parliament. (119) A more probable explanation is the increase of some 9000 on the electoral roll of Melbourne Ports, a Labour stronghold. (120)

116. C.P.D., Vol. LXXIII, 7 May 1914, p.667
117. Socialist, 12 September 1913
118. Round Table, No.12, September 1913, p.734
119. L. C. Jauncey, op.cit., p.88
Supporters of the Australian Freedom League were, indisputably, opponents of compulsory military training and the league's organising secretary, J. W. Barry, claimed "about 30,000 pledged supporters" in July 1913; (121) the number had escalated to 50,000 in a May 1914 estimate. (122) Barry claimed "overcrowded halls and resolutions carried, oftentimes unanimously" in Melbourne. (123) Jauncey cites the same figures (124) which are impressive, if accurate, but scarcely warranting in themselves, or in the light of the league's apparent influence, that writer's claim that the league was "in sight of the realization of the abolition of compulsory military training" when war came. (125) However, the realization by press and parliament of the rapidly escalating costs of compulsory training (126) would certainly have forced some changes in the scheme had war not intervened. Training of Citizen Forces and Senior Cadets continued till late in 1915. Then the numbers requiring training in the Expeditionary Forces by the limited number of officers and instructors brought its

121. Socialist, 4 July 1913
122. Spectator, 8 May 1914, estimate of Review of Reviews quoted
123. Socialist, 4 July 1913
124. Jauncey, op. cit., pp. 79, 84
125. L. C. Jauncey, op. cit., pp. 103-104
126. Ibid., pp. 43-48. See also Review of Reviews, December 1913, p. 965; C.P.D., Vol. LXXII, 16 December 1913, pp. 4488-4499
suspension. (127) The scheme did not resume in full until early 1917. (128) It was not especially productive of recruits; in September 1914, the Citizen Forces totalled 70,154 of whom only 22,759 had enlisted. (129)

The years of compulsory training provided some experience to live imagination in 1916. At the end of 1914 there were 87,000 senior cadets and 51,000 citizen soldiers in training - the oldest of whom would be twenty years. Employers had an inkling of the effects of arbitrary service; employees had a taste of military life and discipline, a taste to be recalled, for the reluctant, in October 1916. The vagaries of exemption and prosecution courts had been displayed, conscience had counted for little, and churchmen, in the main, had done nothing to suggest they were impartial keepers of the collective conscience. The Labour movement's simple faith in Labour organisation and the vote as guarantee of workers' freedom of action had been shaken, if not entirely destroyed; Senator Pearce had shown himself more responsible to his military underlings than to his theoretical political masters. What, with a few adjustments, might have been tolerable for workers' sons would not be accepted, certainly not voluntarily, by the workers themselves.

127. C.P.D., Vol. LXXXIX, 10 November 1915, p.7369
128. C.P.D., Vol. LXXXI, 6 March 1917, p.11018
129. C.P.D., Vol. LXXIX, 14 September 1916, p.8556. Other figures were: Senior Cadets - 82,107, Junior Cadets - 47,765
Most of all there was the indifference to a noble concept. The Swiss model of Hughes and the romantic soldier of the *Argus* leader were hopeless ideals for remote Australia. The *Age* deplored money spent "in an orgie of frenzied military preparation for a contingency as remote as the millennium"; (130) people felt the same about their time and many failed to register their sons or did so reluctantly under threat of penalty. A majority would not have voted compulsion on their sons but their own lives and livelihoods were not affected and it was but a very small slice of son or brother's time; the issue did not loom large in many people's lives; major parties offered no alternative on the question and, if they had, probably more seriously regarded divisions of class and policy would have been more decisive. The electorate never really voted on compulsion before the war.

130. *Age*, November 1913, quoted in *Review of Reviews*, December 1913, p. 963
CHAPTER III

TOWARDS COMPELION IN WAR-TIME

I

When war did come, there was near "unanimity of opinion concerning the origins of the war and Australia's duty in respect to it". (1) The Labour party was returned to power in the elections of September 1914, its leader Andrew Fisher having promised "Australians will stand beside our own to help and defend her to our last man and our last shilling". (2) Almost every shade of opinion supported Fisher's promise except revolutionary Socialists and the International Workers of the World (I.W.W.). (3) The War Precautions Act conferring extremely wide powers on the Government - even power to conscript - passed through House of Representatives and Senate without a single division or amendment in October. (4) On 3 August 1914 the Commonwealth cabled to London an offer of 20,000 men, the offer was accepted and the recruits began to stream in to depots. After training and stirring farewell parades through capital


2. Ibid., p. 22

3. Ian Turner, op. cit., p. 71

4. Scott, op. cit., pp. 52-54
cities, the first contingent left in October. By then it had been realised that the war might be "of considerable duration" and plans were made to call for further volunteers. (5)

For some time the Australian contingent saw no action. The recruiting target at the end of 1914 was set at 3000 per month. (6) Then came Gallipoli, the casualty lists and the realization of what total war was really like. In June 1915 the target was made 5,300 per month, by October it was 9,500 per month and at the end of November Hughes announced an additional target of 50,000 men before June 1916.

Victoria had contributed relatively fewer recruits than other states up to July 1915. There is no apparent reason for this; Pearce attributed it to the "storm of criticism and misrepresentation . . . that there has been in Victoria" about camp conditions. (8) The first real drive for recruits was organised in July and was a spectacular success. Numbers rose from 1,735 recruits in May to 3,381 in June to 21,698 in July in a Commonwealth total of 36,575 for that month. Parliamentarians of both parties, municipal leaders and prominent citizens took part. Such unlikely allies as Mrs. Baillieu, wife of the

5. Scott, op. cit., pp.203-212
7. Ibid., pp.49, 51, 60, Argus, 25 November 1915
Liberal M.L.C., and Dr. Maloney, Labor M.H.R. for Melbourne, shared a recruiting platform(9). All was harmony, but it was short-lived. Only 3,983 were recruited in Victoria in August and the number fell in each successive month to a low of 1,291 for December 1915. (10) Through these last six months of 1915, the call for conscription began to grow.

At first, isolated voices: the Mayor of Warrnambool, the Chief Secretary, the Mayor of Ballarat and, in the Parliament, Senator Bakhap.(11) Even the Ballarat Political Labour League, retaining its pre-war faith in the justice and safety, under Labor government, of compulsion for everyone, passed a resolution favouring conscription "which would press equally on all branches of the community".(12) The branch felt that employers were pressuring workers into enlistment. The Associated Chambers of Manufacturers and the National Council of Women endorsed compulsion as did prominent Liberals, Sir Henry Irvine and W. A. Watt. (13) Calls for conscription were no longer isolated.

On 20 August, the Secretary of the newly formed Universal

9. Argus, 15 July 1915

10. Scott, op.cit., p.371. Details of recruiting and earmarkations are given in the Table at the end of this chapter


12. Argus, 21 July 1915. See p. above

13. Argus, 13, 15, 23 September, 7 December 1915
Service League in New South Wales, T. R. Bavin, wrote to J. G. Latham detailing the formation of the League in that state and asking "what you think of the possibility of starting a similar movement in Victoria to work in co-operation with us — possibly under a single organization . . ."(14) Bairn suggested "Irvine or Watt, or someone of equal standing" for the Presidency. The Manifesto of the League was issued, stating, in part:

... The people of this country, through their Parliamentary representatives, must voluntarily adopt the principle of compulsory and universal war service for all classes . . . ."(15)

Latham approached J. H. Hewson to move the formal resolutions at a meeting called to establish a Victorian branch of the League. Hewson declined as he felt it would be linked with his position as Chief President of the Australian Natives Association. He also thought "this movement here may be a little premature as a public one".(16)

A Victorian branch of the League was formed, with heavy intellectual artillery on its executive committee. Alfred Deakin, Dr. J. H. McFarland, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Melbourne, Dr. Leeper, Professors Masson, Harrison Moore and Leby

15. *Argus*, 11 September 1915
Mr. F. W. Eggleston, J. G. Latham and others. (17) But, in this state, doubts persisted that it was an opportune time to push for conscription. An overture to the Trades Hall Council was scorned by that body in October. (18) The League feared that potential support from moderate elements in the Labour movement would become impossible. Bairn reassured Latham that Prime Minister Fisher raised no objection to a campaign for conscription and the New South Wales branch pressed its campaign. (19) The Victorians interpreted advice received in a deputation to Hughes, then planning a new drive for recruits, to mean that he thought a campaign for conscription would undermine the recruiting campaign. This advice, wrote Masson, agrees with and confirms our view of the proper action in the existing circumstances . . . I am afraid that the Sydney committee's action will force a break with its own Labour members. (20)

Publicity given the Victorian decision not to campaign temporarily embarrassed the New South Wales branch of the League but Hughes relieved this by immediately issuing a statement that he

17. Argus, 22 September 1915
18. Trades Hall Council, Minutes of Meeting, 13 October 1915
19. Latham Papers, series 17-3, Bairn to Latham, 22 October 1915
20. Ibid., Masson to Latham, 16 November 1915
was not opposed to the Universal Service League's campaign. (21) The League's fear of further alienating Labour was well-founded. In June, the Trades Hall Council had carried a motion of confidence in the Federal Government. (22) A motion urging that Council oppose any scheme of compulsory military and naval service outside Australia was defeated at the 8 July meeting. (23) Thereafter, however, the business of Council shows an increasingly hardening attitude towards matters relating to the prosecution of the war. The 22 July meeting deplored war loans with normal interest as "those who have left and are leaving to fight for and defend Australia comprise at least ninety per cent of the working class". (24) A Trade Union deputation to Fisher in September sought a guarantee that conscription would not be introduced. (25) When the Universal Service League's approach came up at the 13 October meeting, without dissent Council

21. Latham Papers, Bavin to Latham, 26 November 1915
   Age, 23, 24 November 1915

22. T.H.C., Minutes of Meeting, 24 June 1915

23. Ibid., 8 July 1915

24. Ibid., 22 July 1915. Anstey, who had presaged this rift by resigning from the Federal parliamentary party in June in protest against the government's financial policy said of the War Loan "the Tory camp" and "the Labour Caucus" were now talking "the same language". C.P.D., Vol. LXXVII, 21 July 1915, p. 5158. See also L. C. Jauncey, op. cit., p.119; Ian Turner, op. cit., p.78. Speaking in Parliament on the War Loan Bill

25. Argus, 24 September 1916
contemptuously proceeded "to the next item of business".(26) The Union movement, as indeed the whole community, was realizing after one year of war, that the demands imposed by war would increase rather than diminish. The call for increased military manpower would be one of these. Labour was shaping its attitude to this call. Suspicions created by pre-war compulsion and traditional working-class fear that the working-class is the real victim in war were factors in this moulding of official Labour position. The movement was headed towards uncompromising opposition towards conscription, a position soon to be fixed — if it was not already inevitable — by the course of events.

II

The harmony of July was certainly dissipated before the end of 1915. A No-Conscription Fellowship and the Australian Peace Alliance had been formed early in 1915 and their many public meetings(27) were further evidence of the polarizing of opinion, especially on the question of conscription. The Argus warned that this division was untimely and unwarranted; even if banking on the sufficiency of the voluntary system implied a risk, better the risk than "to provoke internecine strife".(28) The same paper's warning to politicians "to avoid expressing definite

26. T.H.C., Minutes of Meeting, 13 October 1915
27. Argus, 24 August, 9, 17, 22, 24 September, 5 October 1915
28. Argus, 18 September 1915
opinions in opposition to conscription"(29) came too late. Hughes had already said,

In no circumstances would I agree to send men out of this country to fight against their will.(30)
Fisher told the Trades Hall deputation in September that he was "irrevocably opposed to conscription".(31) His words would not return to plague him, however, for in October he retired from politics to become High Commissioner in London. Hughes became Prime Minister on 27 October. Two decisions he made almost immediately contributed largely to the final fixing of Labour's determined anti-conscription position.

The conviction that the capitalist class was benefiting from the war had rankled the Labour movement.(32) Hence its general delight when, in June 1915, Hughes introduced Bills to put again the Constitution Alteration referenda on trusts and monopolies which had been narrowly defeated in 1913.(33) Labor Call exulted weekly in the prospect of successful referenda redressing the economic balance in favour of the workers.

29. Argus, 19 September 1915
31. Argus, 25 September 1915
32. See, for example, Labor Call, 25 March ("War on the Fatman") 21 May, 17, 24 June 1915
33. Ian Turner, op. cit., pp.76-81
The referenda poll

should be the daily thought and nightly dream of each
and everyone until they record their vote for a 'YES'
Referenda on Saturday 11 December'' (34)
said Labor Call on 21 October. Just one week later, Hughes
announced the referenda would not be taken. Instead, Premiers
agreed to voluntarily transfer the powers required to the
Federal government for the duration of the war and twelve months
thereafter. (35)

The Victorian Trades Hall Council responded by passing a
strongly worded resolution demanding the taking of the referenda.
(36) A bitter Labor Call commented that "Labour has become
imbued with war lust" and, a little later, described Hughes as
"a doddering Tory". (37) He was held responsible for allowing
circumstances of the war to impede achievement of one of Labour's
cherished social objectives.

Hard on the heels of this came another Hughes decision, the
effect of which was to cement the unity of those angered by the
Government's neglect of Labour's domestic policy and those
opposed to conscription. This was a new recruiting drive, a
"Call to Arms", announced by Hughes to enable Australia to

34. Labor Call, 21 October 1915
35. Ian Turner, loc. cit.
36. T.H.C., Minutes of Meeting, 4 November 1915
37. Labor Call, 11 November, 9 December 1915
recruit 50,000 men in the first six months of 1916 over and above
the regular quota of 9,500 per month presently being sought. (38)
The drive had its origins in a War Census which Hughes had caused
to be taken, despite some Labour misgivings in September 1915. (39)
Eligible men revealed in the War Census were now sent cards
requiring them, by regulation under the War Precautions Act, to
state when they would enlist or why they were not prepared to do
so. (40) Hughes wrote to Mayors and Shire Presidents requesting
them to form local recruiting committees. (41) The information on
the cards returned by eligible men was made available to these
local recruiting committees. There may have been "no compulsion,
no coercion", (42) but the scheme forced individuals into having
to justify themselves to their neighbours; the criticism it
evoked is understandable. Katz, the Secretary of the Clerk's
Union moved at the 9 December Trades Hall Council meeting:

That this council recommends to the members belonging to
unions affiliated with the Trades Hall Council to ignore
the cards which the War Council have instructed to be
sent out.

38. Argus, 10 November 1915
Turner's suggestion that the War Census "seemed to be a
concession to the U.S.L." overlooks the fact that the U.S.L.
had not been formed in June when Hughes introduced the War
Census Bill
40. Scott, op. cit., p.311; Jauncey, op. cit., pp.121-123
41. Argus, 1 December 1915
42. Ibid.
This motion of defiance was carried.(43)

Hughes himself, in company with Frank Brennan attended the next Trades Hall Council meeting. His address and answers to questions were not recorded. He received "a hearty vote of thanks" which was "carried by acclamation",(44) but soon after Hughes showed that he was not prepared, or thought it impossible, to be reconciled with the leadership of the Labour movement in Victoria. At a recruiting rally in the Melbourne Town Hall on 13 January 1916, he attacked what he saw as sinister, syndicalist influences in Labour's ranks.(45) Labor Call responded by calling Hughes "a traitor to his pledge".(46) The breach between the Labour movement in Victoria and the Labour Prime Minister was complete.

Hughes left for England on 20 January 1916. He anticipated no serious trouble during his absence:

The press are unanimous and all are going to back the

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43. T.H.C., Minutes of Meeting, 9 December 1915. Scott, op.cit., p.312 gives the motion with slightly differing wording. A footnote relates that the Council President intimated, on 16 January 1916, that he would not have accepted the motion had he known supply of the information was required by law. Scott states that he (the President) "expunged the motion from the books" but it is still in the Minutes and there is no record in later Minutes of a rescission as mentioned by Turner, op.cit., p.100

44. T.H.C., Minutes of Meeting, 17 December 1915

45. Argus, 14 January 1916

46. Labor Call, 20 January 1916
present policy without reservation - they will say nothing about conscription but will back our scheme and I do not doubt we shall get the numbers.(47)

He was wrong on all counts. During the six months of Hughes's absence, the Labour movement officially adopted anti-conscription as its policy, recruiting did not maintain the levels required and the press and conscription lobbies renewed their campaign.

Hughes and his government's estrangement from the Victorian Labour movement soon became more pronounced. An amendment "That past confidence of the Labour government be struck out" was lost narrowly at the Trades Hall Council meeting of 13 January 1916.(48) The Socialist warned that "unless conscription be terrifically fought here and now it will in all probability be imposed in the Commonwealth".(49) Hughes now appeared as the darling of Bankers, addressing them as "Fellow Workers and Dear Comrades".(50) The theme that the war was promoting the rich at the cost of working-men's lives dominated Labor Call.(51) Readers were told: "In spite of every official denial, conscription will be enacted as soon as William Morris Hughes comes home".(52)

47. Novar Papers, MS 696/2448, letter from Hughes dated 20 January 1916

48. T.H.C., Minutes of Meeting, 13 January 1916

49. Socialist, 4 February 1916

50. Labor Call, 30 March. See also 25 May 1916

51. For example, Labor Call, 16, 23 March, 27 April, 29 June 1916

52. Labor Call, 6 April 1916
commemoration celebration in Bendigo, several speakers attacked the Government. Guest of honour and Navy Minister Jensen replied that "in coming to Bendigo, he had been under the impression he was coming among friends". (53)

Application of the War Precautions Act was a source of grievance. In particular, the sentencing of Skurrie, a Socialist, to three months imprisonment for making statements prejudicial to recruiting, occasioned expressions of deep mistrust in the Hughes government. (54) However, a motion expressing "extreme dissatisfaction" with the "unsatisfactory administration" of the Federal Labour Government was defeated 51 votes to 30 at the 22 June Trades Hall Council meeting. Also defeated was a Socialist inspired move to give Council power to call a General Strike should conscription become law by Proclamation under the War Precaution Act, (55) but the militant unionists did have some important victories. A move for a "monster deputation" to the Acting Prime Minister (Senator Pearce) to have him contact organised workers in every country, imploring them "... to force their respective Governments to openly pronounce themselves upon the terms of peace", was referred to unions for an expression of opinion on the casting vote of the Chairman at the 9 March meeting.

53. Age, 11 April 1916
54. Socialist, 25 February, 7 April 1916; Jauncey, op.cit., pp.127-128
55. T.H.C., Minutes of Meeting, 2 March 1916
It was carried at the 4 May meeting. (56) Most important, a motion that Frank Hyett's successful 2 March resolution calling Council to convene a national Congress of Unions "to discuss the question of conscription and to determine the official attitude of the industrial movement thereon", was passed at the 16 March meeting. (57)

There was not unanimity in the Labour movement about conscription but clearly the view of militant opponents of conscription was prevailing. The official Labour position was fixed politically in Victoria at the May Conference of the Political Labour Council. The Conference pledged itself "to oppose by all lawful means the conscription of human life for military service abroad". Labour members supporting conscription were to be refused endorsement. Most Labour parliamentarians signed pledges of their anti-conscription without delay. (58) The industrial wing's position was fixed by the May Congress which passed overwhelmingly the resolution stating unionism's "uncompromising hostility to conscription of life and labour". (59) The Congress

56. T.H.C., Minutes of Meeting, 9 March, 4 May 1916
57. Ibid., 2, 16 March. Ian Turner, op.cit., p.101
58. Labor Call, 4 May 1916; Ian Turner, op.cit., p.101
59. Australian Trade Unions and Conscription, A Report of Proceedings of the Australian Trade Union Congress together with the Manifesto of the National Executive, 18 July 1916 (Riley Collection, S.L.V.) See also Jauncey, op.cit., p.131; Ian Turner, op.cit., p.102
established a standing committee and E. J. Holloway was given Trades Hall permission to take the position of Secretary to the Congress. (60) On 27 July the Trades Hall Council affiliated with the Australian Peace Alliance and on 10 August with the No-Conscription Fellowship. (61)

Latent opposition in the Labour movement had not mobilised when compulsion was mooted during the first decade of Federation; it had responded quickly and captured the movement during 1915 and the first half of 1916. III

Whatever undertaking the press had given Hughes not to mention conscription was not long honoured. An Argus leader of 29 February considered the "growing opinion in favour of conscription". Publicity had been given previously to advocacy of conscription by Sir John Madden, Speaker of the Victorian Legislative Assembly, Chaplain - General Rentoul, the Premier, Sir Alexander Peacock, and others. (62) The Australian Natives Association at its annual conference, held at Warragul in March 1916, passed a resolution that:

This association urges the Federal Government to take immediate steps to fully utilise the services of every citizen and the resources of the Commonwealth. (63)

60. T.H.C., Minutes of Meeting, 6 July 1916
61. Ibid., 27 July, 10 August 1916
62. Argus, 20 January, 17 February, 2 March 1916
63. Argus, 23 March 1916
A deputation from the Association, "representing 34,000 men in Victoria" waited on Pearce in April, urging the introduction of conscription. It was a matter for Parliament insisted Pearce. The Age urged the Government to summon Parliament immediately to enact conscription.(64)

In May, the Australian Natives Association launched a campaign of public meetings and a petition for conscription. Some of the meetings were stormy. At the Melbourne Town Hall meeting on 3 May, F. J. Riley and Miss Grant, of the Peace Alliance, were bundled out.(65) The petition gathered 70,721 signatures of electors of Victoria and was presented to Parliament on 17 May. In the same period Parliament received two other petitions - one from "15,000 women citizens of Australia" and another from "certain women of Victoria" - all humbly requesting that Parliament introduce conscription.(66) The Universal Service League was fully active in Victoria now and even the Reverend Alfred Madsen was converted to conscription.(67) Everywhere the pressure for conscription was up and the figures for recruiting were down.

64. Age, 11 April 1916

65. Argus, 4 May. Violence was becoming increasingly frequent at conscription and anti-conscription rallies. See, for example, Socialist, 14 January, 17, 24, 31 March, 12 May

66. C.P.D., Vol. LXXVII, 10 May 1916, p.7761; 17 May, p.7921; 20 May, p.8129

67. Argus, 8 May 1916
The concerted drive for recruits in 1916 had been successful for the first three months but, in April, figures declined badly. When Parliament re-assembled on 9 May 1916, it was told that the War Office had communicated that the percentage of reinforcements was substantially reduced. The Federal Parliamentary War Committee had expressed an opinion that Australia was not adequately represented at the front and recommended a monthly recruiting target be set. If this target was not met, the voluntary system should be reviewed. Replying, Tudor made it clear that the Government would take no such steps until Hughes returned with full information on the subject.

In this debate, many Parliamentarians expressed their reluctance to continue unproductive recruiting meetings. In June, the Victorian State Parliamentary Recruiting Committee suggested calling up persons between 18 and 45 years of age for drill on one day per week. The Committee hoped to stimulate recruiting.

68. Recruiting figures (Victorian figures in brackets) for 1916, to 23 August, were:

April: 9,876 (2,571) May: 10,659 (2,887) June: 6,582 (1,581)
July: 6,170 (1,302) August: 4,144 (to 23 August)


69. C.P.D., Vol. LXXIX, 9 May 1916, p. 7686

70. Ibid., pp. 7687, 7741-7760. By May 1916, Australia had recruited about 251,000 men of whom 189,206 had embarked and 62,181 were in training.
as well as ensure greater preparedness. (71) By 31 August, only
the Central Recruiting Depot remained open in Victoria. The
Parliamentary Recruiting Committee reported that

... many of the local committees evidently considered
and several reported that it was impossible to obtain
more volunteers in their districts. The Recruiting
Sergeants also reported that they met with little or no
encouragement. Some Recruiting Committees asked us to
remove the Recruiting Sergeants assigned to them because
they could do no good.

Great public interest was manifested in the line of
action likely to be taken by the Prime Minister on his
return from Great Britain and, both before and after the
ministerial policy with regard to the maintenance of
reinforcements was announced, this consideration appears
to have adversely affected the rate of recruiting. (72)

Opinion on compulsory service was clearly divided before the
return of Hughes, but how even was the division? According to
the Age in April, it was possible "to demonstrate with almost
mathematical precision that a large majority of the people favour

71. Premier's Department Archives, Register No. 2091/16,
9 June 1916

72. Ibid., Register No. 4027/16, 30 September 1916. The
memorandum is signed by Donald McKinnon, Liberal M.L.A. for
and desire conscription". (73) The sum ran thus: 200,000 soldiers, belonging "in an overwhelming proportion to the working class" and, "with very few exceptions", desiring conscription; add an average of two adult relatives for each of these soldiers and there were 600,000, "mostly workers", favouring conscription; add the massed Liberal section of the populace

... and we discover finally in what a radically insignificant minority the shrieking shirker stands.

Convinced as they were of the need for and rectitude of conscription, its advocates could not believe that there was real depth in the opposition to conscription. Estimations such as that of the Age had propaganda value, of course, but even such an astute observer as the Governor-General reported the same confidence privately. In April he had merely noted that "opinion on compulsory service is divided". Three months later he wrote that resistance to conscription was "very vocal ... but once it is needed then, there would, I believe, be general acquiescence in universal service". (74)

IV

Hughes arrived back in Australia on 31 July. In Perth, he received a letter from Pearce noting that there had been "a slackening off in the outcry against conscription, but this might be due to the fact that we have made it quite clear that no action

73. Age, 11 April 1916
74. Novar Papers, M/S 696/813, 818, letters to Bonar Law, 25 April, 25 July 1916
will be taken until you return". (75) Pearce also discussed the recruiting figures as did the Governor General in a letter to Hughes about this time.

The most anxious feature of our military situation is the shortage during the past four weeks in recruiting . . . . Apart from the question of actual need for fresh units, we probably have reinforcements for the year but our camps may be empty on New Years Day. (76)

In interviews, however, Hughes refused "to discuss the conscription issue, or anything else, until he had obtained a thorough grasp of the affairs of state". (77)

Hughes visit to Britain had been spectacularly successful. His message there, as conveyed and endorsed by the press, was total commitment; (78) the able man who would not engage wholly in defeating Germany "shall be a pariah and a leper upon whom men shall spit". (79) Such words delighted the conscriptionists;

75. Peter Heydon, Quiet Decision, a biography of George Foster Pearce, (Melbourne 1965) Appendix 9, p.234
76. Novar Papers, MS 696/2492, 31 July 1916
77. Argus, 1 August 1916
78. An account of Hughes's time in Great Britain is given W. Farmer Whyte, William Morris Hughes, (Sydney 1957) pp.191-270. Selected speeches given during this time are collected in The Day and After. Hughes's own account is in The Splendid Adventure, (London 1929)
they made it unreasonable, said the *Argus*, "to suppose that he intends to pursue the negative policy of opposing conscription". (80) But no surmise could neglect the Caucus and "the executive of the conference, the well-named super-Parliament .... The vision of the Caucus and the executive is limited to Australia ...., and as for conscription, it is anathema to many of them". (81)

A few days before the return of Hughes, authorities raided the *Labor Call* offices and confiscated copies of the Trade Unions' Congress anti-conscription manifesto parts of which, said Pearce, were "seditious and disloyal". Mass issue of the manifesto was not innocently coincidental with Hughes's return but deliberately timed as "part of an organised campaign to intimidate ministers" claimed the *Argus*. (82) In this, it was probably right. The *Socialist* of 4 August was also seized and, in its next issue, a special notice of explanation warned "readers to leave nothing undone in combating the threatened imposition of conscription". (83) Both sides knew that the hour of decision was at hand.

In Melbourne, 4 August, the second anniversary of the war, was observed with meetings and rallies. At the Town Hall, Pearce stressed the need to keep faith with the soldiers. "I am not here to give my view as to the manner in which this is to be

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80. *Argus*, 5 July 1916
81. *Argus*, 1 July 1916
82. *Argus*, 1, 2, 3 August 1916
83. *Socialist*, 11 August 1916
done . . . ." At Williamstown, Sir Henry Irvine said it was to be done by conscription. At St. Kilda, W. A. Watt said whether by voluntaryism or compulsion, "it must be done". (84)

Across the world, 4 August brought at last the capture of Pozieres crest, the high point of "the severest ordeal ever suffered by the AIF". (85) In the battle for Pozieres between 25 July and 7 August, the Second Division lost 6,486 men killed, wounded and missing. 28,000 Australian casualties had been sustained in fighting on the Somme in seven weeks. (86) Such enormous losses, expected to continue when, after a brief respite, fighting intensified at Ypres, necessitated one of two things: vast increase in reinforcements or divisional re-organisation of the AIF. Military leaders did not want the latter. Generals Birdwood and White resisted the War Council's proposal that the Third Division, presently training in England, be broken up to reinforce depleted other divisions. They made their own estimates of the numbers of reinforcements needed to maintain the five divisions of the AIF, "arrived at a staggering total", (87) and advised the War Office of this estimate. These estimates were accepted by Army Council and cabled to the Australian

84. *Argus*, 5 August 1916


86. C. F. W. Bean, *Two Men I Knew*, (Sydney 1957) p.143

87. Ibid., pp.143-144. For a more detailed explanation and discussion of the motives of parties involved, see *The A.I.F. in France*, pp.864-868
Government on 24 August as "... the only means of retaining the 3rd Division for service in the field".(88)

Exactly when Hughes decided that Australia should have conscription cannot be decided here, but it seems the cable was the occasion rather than the cause of his decision. As he travelled across Australia during August, his words "hinted at everything and revealed nothing". (89) In Melbourne on 14 August he said everything but "the magic words". (90) Nine days later, the words remained unsaid but the ardently conscriptionist press inferred the policy "which was surging in his brain and animating his spirit". (91) In this time, Hughes must have realised how formidable opposition had grown within his own party. To impose conscription by regulation under the War Precautions Act would inevitably have split the party and there was small chance of a bill for conscription passing the Senate where Labour held 32 of the 36 seats. (92)

88. Official History, Vol. III, p.868. Requirements as stated in the cable were: "... a special draft of 20,000 infantry be sent as soon as possible ... further that for three months following despatch of this special draft the monthly reinforcements of infantry sent should be calculated at 25% of establishment, that is, about 16,500 per month for five divisions".

89. Worker, 6 February 1919, quoted in Jauncey, op.cit., p.143
90. Argus, 15 August 1916
91. Argus, 31 August 1916
92. Hughes claimed more altruistic reasons for eschewing promulgation of conscription under the War Precautions Act. It was "quite incompatible" with the "principles of democracy" and of "parliamentary government". C.P.D., Vol. LXXIX, 30 August 1916, p.8425
L. F. Crisp sums up the crucial role of Labour's organisa-
tional structure in Hughes decision to hold a referendum:
While the Federal platform had admittedly been silent on
the subject, the facts were that the most recent
Conferences of a majority of State ALP Branches and
major trade union conferences had denounced compulsion,
five State ALP Executives were opposed to conscription
and the sixth (W.A.) had been sufficiently divided to
give its parliamentarians a free hand on the issue. . . .
Hughes, on the other hand, knew that if he waited for the
calling of a Special Federal Conference . . . he would be
overwhelmingly repudiated on the Conscription issue and
the motive and spirit behind any appeal he then made by
referendum would be even more transparent.(93)
The Army Council cable arrived on 24 August, the first day
of five days of Caucus meetings where the Prime Minister had "to
combat his Party in secret conclave".(94) Not until the second
day did Hughes lay "certain proposals in connection with the
prosecution of the war before the party".(95) The then
Postmaster-General, W. Webster, later described Hughes battle to

93. L. F. Crisp, The Australian Federal Labor Party 1901-1951,
(Sydney 1955) pp.135-136

94. Novar Papers, MS 696/237, letter to Stamfordham, 5 September
1916. The Caucus was "a representative system - happily
unknown to the rest of the world" in the Governor-General's
opinion

95. Argus, 26 August 1916
obtain Caucus agreement: "Even the referendum bill hung in the balance for days". (96) The cabled ultimatum from the War Council probably did no more at that stage, than assist in tipping the balance in Caucus in favour of the referendum. Conscription was the solution to the military problem; the referendum was the solution to the associated political problem. Principle, as well as expediency, may have played some part in the latter solution. As early as 1903 Hughes had suggested a referendum as a means of discovering opinion on compulsory military training. (97) He had told a delegation of unionists in December 1915 in Brisbane: "I want to say that no conscription will be brought into this country without an appeal to the country". (98)

The Brisbane answer to the unionists suggests that Hughes was moving away from his at least twice proclaimed antipathy to compelling overseas service. (99) In the whole context of his many speeches on defence and his fight for compulsory military training, this does not surprise. (100) The words Hughes wrote

96. Argus, 26 December 1917, quoted by Jauncey, op.cit., p.158
97. C.P.D., Vol. XV, 5 August 1903, p.3104
98. Jauncey, op.cit., p.121
99. See above p.19 and p.58
100. See C.P.D., Vol. III, 1901, pp.3292-3298 ("The germ of the conscription crisis . . ." Heydon, op.cit., p.70); Vol. XV, 1903, pp.3093-3104, 3118; Vol. XXXVII, 1907, p.1282; Vol. XLVII, 1908, p.867 ("Compulsion is perfectly justifiable once the necessity for it has been made out"); Vol. LIX, 1910, p.6117
years later of Lloyd George might well have applied to his own turnabout on conscription for overseas service:

In the fiery crucible of war, theories, deep rooted opinions, political party ties, class distinctions, even personal enmities no longer counted.\(^{101}\)

Probably Hughes proximity to "the fiery crucible", his part in its higher councils during 1916 and his genuine belief that Australia must give of its all to vanquish the foe convinced him of the need for conscription; the desire to preserve "political party ties" led him to the referendum proposal.

\(^{101}\) W. M. Hughes, *Policies and Potentates*, (Melbourne 1950) p.156
Recruiting in Victoria and the Commonwealth
January 1915 to May 1916

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<tr>
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<td>December</td>
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|       |          |              |
| 1916  |          |              |
| January | 5,043    | 22,101       |
| February | 7,536    | 18,508       |
| March   | 5,585    | 15,597       |
| April   | 2,571    | 9,876        |
| May     | 2,887    | 10,659       |
| June    | 1,581    | 6,582        |
| July    | 1,302    | 6,170        |

CHAPTER IV

THE CAMPAIGN

I

Hughes announced his proposals to a tense House of Representatives on 30 August. Subject to a successful referendum, conscription would be applied to the extent that voluntarism failed to provide 32,500 recruits during September and 16,500 recruits per month thereafter. (1) Conscriptionists were disappointed; they wished Hughes had introduced conscription directly. (2) Press and most members of Parliament, however, shared a common feeling that there would be "an overwhelming majority for the limited conscription proposed." (3) J. G. Latham expressed the conscriptionist's confidence in the people's support for his cause rather than fear that the votes might be needed when he wrote, on the assumption no poll would be taken of AIF men:

It is not too much to assume that the men on active service are strong supporters of conscription . . . .

1. C.P.D., Vol. LXXIX, 30 August 1916, pp.8402-8403; Argus, 31 August 1916
2. C.P.D., pp.8403-8404
3. Age, 31 August 1916
It would not be unfair to provide by explicit legislation that, say 200,000 votes should be added to the affirmative votes on any referendum . . . ."(4)

Anti-conscriptionists responded promptly to the Prime Minister's announcement. The No-Conscription Fellowship's meeting on 31 August ended with a protest march towards Parliament House. Police intervened and four marchers were arrested. The Argus reported "about 300" marchers; the Socialist reported "thousands". (5) On Sunday 3 September there was an anti-conscription rally at the Yarra Bank. The Age estimated "fully 7,000" in attendance; Labor Call estimated 20,000. (6) Attendance at such meeting "consisted of men apparently eligible for military service", reported the Argus. (7) The same paper published a letter suggesting a "Roll of Dishonour" for those advocating a 'NO' vote. (8) It felt the need, also, to admonish lethargic conscriptionists. Anti-conscriptionists "will work early and late and will poll their full strength . . . . Many conscriptionists, on the other hand, may neglect to go to the poll unless

4. Argus, 1 September 1916
5. Argus, 1 September 1916; Socialist, 8 September 1916
6. Age, 4 September 1916; Labor Call, 7 September 1916. See C.P.D., 14 September, p.8588 for complaint by Dr. Maloney, Labour M.H.R. for Melbourne, of gross misrepresentation of numbers at meetings where he presided on 3 and 10 September
7. Argus, 8 September 1916
8. Argus, 8 September 1916
they are spurred to do their duty". A boxed notice urged readers to "Enrol now!"(9)

Eight days into September it was apparent that no rush of volunteers would come. The referendum was inevitable.(10) Mr. Hughes was still wooing the State Labour Leagues' support for his proposals, without much success it seemed, although the censorship prevented full reporting of this.(11) A Referendum Bill had yet to be debated and passed. The precise referendum question had not been given. No doubt the points presently being made might continue to be made but they lacked a focus and the issues had not yet been clarified.

The Military Service Referendum Bill was introduced on 13 September.(12) Its passage was never in doubt. It was a machinery bill only and, indeed, Hughes said in his second reading speech that he should find a remedy under the War Precautions Act in the undreamt of event of the Bill's

9. Argus, 2, 12 September 1916
10. Argus, 9 September 1916
11. See Argus, 4, 5, 6 September (on Hughes meeting with New South Wales Labour League's Executive), 8 September (Victoria), 11 September ("a source in every way authoritative" on the Prime Minister's tour laments his general failure, expects partial success in South Australia.) See also, C.P.D., 20 September 1916, pp.8663-8666 for comments on the censorship and 3 October 1916, p.9229. See Jauncey, op.cit., pp.158-161 for the Worker account of Hughes's failure to gain States Executives' support
12. C.P.D., 13 September 1916, p.8485
defeat. (13) Most speakers addressed themselves to the central question of conscription and the second reading debate is an instructive introduction to the issues in the campaign. It was a disordered – and at times disorderly – debate, but the arguments of the conscriptionists fell into two main groups: conscription was now necessary for military reasons and as conclusive proof of our loyalty. They also sought to reassure those with doubts and to justify compulsion.

The war would be shortened, argued Joseph Cook, if men were speedily provided now. (14) The voluntary system could not supply these men; it had collapsed, as many other speakers also testified, usually referring to recent, fruitless, personal recruiting efforts. (15) Conscription was necessary to provide these men and it would do so on a more rational basis. Said W. A. Watt, Democracy connotes a well-ordered community in which recreant members have to be restrained from doing some things and made to do other things. (16)

Thus men would be called up without regard to class distinction; the selfish family would be made to do its share and the generous

13. C.P.D., 1 September, p.8424. Senator Pearce said later that Hughes had withdrawn this comment though where Hughes did so is not recorded. See C.P.D., 21 September, p.8799

14. C.P.D., 14 September, p.8486

15. C.P.D., 14 September, p.8486 (Cook); 15 September, p.8626 (Webster), p.8635 (Chanter)

16. C.P.D., 15 September, p.8623
need not suffer unduly; arbitrary conscription through mistaken shame, receipt of a white feather or dismissal from employment would end; national resources would be under less immediate and lasting strain as single men, with no dependants to become a liability on the nation, would be sent. (17) Australia had a definite interest in the war for "Australia is the prize Germany is after". (18) The frontiers of Australia were in Europe where "our men . . . (are) fighting for the protection of the hearths and homes of Australia". (19) Better then, to have conscription now than German rule which would be worse than death. (20)

Loyalty and gratitude to our soldiers and Great Britain demanded that conscription be introduced. Mr. Chanter read to the House part of Labour's declared war policy in the 1914 election, a policy of which all Labour candidates had signed acceptance: "... we shall pursue with the utmost vigour, every course necessary for the defence of the Commonwealth and the Empire . . .". The necessary course now was conscription and not to follow it would be to desert the men at the Front. (21) Loyalty to the glorious Gallipoli exploit required conscription

17. C.P.D., See speeches by Groom, 14 September, p.8569; Foynton, p.8570; Bamford, p.8600; Fleming, p.8604
18. C.P.D., p.8597 (Fowler)
19. C.P.D., 14 September, p.8602 (Carr), 15 September, p.8621 (Watt)
20. C.P.D., 14 September, p.8601 (Bamford)
21. C.P.D., 15 September, p.8637, p.8640 (Patten)
and so did our debt of gratitude to Great Britain. "Everything that we possess and all that we enjoy in Australia we owe to the Mother Country", said Liberal Sir Robert Best, and Labour member Archibald agreed. Mr. Piggott went further,

Great Britain, the mother of the Empire, has thrown her flag about Australia and has defended us during every moment of our existence. For that reason, if for no other, we ought to respond ungrudgingly, unselfishly to her call. (22)

Best reassured those who saw sinister implications in conscription. The call was for more men for such time as was necessary to meet the necessities of this war, no longer. As to the present necessity, what better evidence than the changed opinion of the Prime Minister himself? He had left Australia an avowed opponent of conscription and had come back converted. (23)

Compulsion had many justifications. It was a reality of life, said Mr. Bamford, for education was compulsory as was obedience to law; the principle had been accepted by both parties in the Defence Act, pointed out Messrs. Groom and Rogers; it was enforced in unionism and in the Caucus, argued Messrs. Poynton and Gregory. On this score, Mr. Piggott found an ingenious paradox in some Labour members' positions: the Trades Halls

22. C.P.D., 14 September, p.8572 (Best); 15 September, p.8667 (Archibald), 15 September, p.8633 (Piggott)

23. C.P.D., 14 September, p.8572 (Best); 15 September, p.8640 (Patten)
were directing Labour men so "they are really conscripts advocating voluntarism". (24)

In his explanatory speech on 1 September, Hughes had carefully analysed the numbers available and the numbers required. His Parliamentary supporters on both sides of the House devoted little attention to these figures. Not so his opponents. Their arguments were a melange of central and peripheral issues and irrelevancies but they did centre, if anywhere, on the concrete proposals of Hughes. They had too, the benefit of the most coherent and powerful speech in the debate, that of Frank Anstey.

The decision had to be made from the Australian stand-point, said Anstey, and the crucial questions were: Why 16,500 per month? Why at this time? Reports now told of "victories day by day . . . of ignominious defeats of the Germans"; Rumania had recently "in an hour hurled into the battle line nearly 750,000 men, while at the same time she lengthens the enemy's battle line by 300 miles". When the situation looked desperate, the Government had not called for conscription and now the preferred reason was, "Military reasons, change of circumstances". The highest rate of "slaughter" of the war, on the Minister of Defence's figures, was 3,000 per week during the Somme battles, but the present demand was for replacements at the rate of more than 4,000 per week. Anstey saw conspiracy as the explanation.

24. C.P.D., 14, 15 September, p.8600 (Bamford); p.8568 (Groom); p.8672 (Rodgers); p.8570 (Poynton); p.8685 (Gregory), p.8633 (Piggott)
of the apparently inexplicable; stretch out the front line, take more casualties and thus enlarge the demand for reinforcements.

Here Anstey was departing from the demonstrable in favour of the interpretative, losing much of his cogency, and thus he continued suggesting that especially primary industry's work force must be depleted, opening the way for imported Chinese Labour. (25) Similar sinister effects of conscription had been denounced earlier by Frank Brennan. He feared conscription of industry which had had "baneful effects on the working class" in France. (26) This threat to unionism and allied claim that the way was being opened for cheap coloured labour was put by several other anti-conscriptionists, particularly in the Senate. (27)

Other speakers also asked why this many at this time and

25. C.P.D., 15 September, Anstey's speech pp.8674-8683

26. C.P.D., 14 September, p.8559. Brennan's speech was described in the Argus, 15 September, as a "frenzied torrent of invective and abuse".

27. For example, in the House, Yates, C.P.D., 15 September p.8720; J. H. Catts, p.8703. (In Committee, Anstey moved that, in the title of the Bill, "Military Service" be omitted and "Coloured Labour" substituted, C.P.D., 20 September, pp.8809-10.) In the Senate, Senator Mullan, 21 September, p.8809, and Senator Ready, p.8833. As my purpose here is only to identify what emerged as the issues in the conscription campaign, I have used the House debate, most of which preceded the Senate debate by a week. The same issues were raised in the Senate debate, sometimes with different emphases, perhaps because Hughes had officially opened the campaign by then and opinions on what was important were better formed. Pearce, for example, devoted the first part of his speech moving the Bill in the Senate to answering the substance of Anstey's speech, C.P.D., 21 September, p.8797
raised other issues. Australia "has done more than her fair share" argued Senator Ferricks. (28) As the Allied armies were drawn from a total population of 284 million while the Central Powers could draw on 123 million, it was ridiculous to claim that 100,000 Australians could make any difference to the length of the war, argued Dr. Maloney. If numbers were the key, it would be a more valuable contribution for Australia to assist in clothing Russian soldiers, fifty of whom might be landed at the Front more quickly and cheaply than one Australian. (29) The numbers demanded by Mr. Hughes would soon necessitate calling up other than single men between 21 and 35 years. (30)

Conscription was "a negation of freedom". Mr. Finlayson disputed the alleged failure of voluntaryism; medical tests had been too stringent and advocacy of conscription had hindered recruiting. It was not right, said some, that those knowing themselves to be safe, women and old men, should vote compulsion on others. Individual freedom must be maintained and the agreed opinion of ninety-nine per cent of the people should not bind the minority which said 'No', thought Senator Ferricks. (31)

Great Britain had not done her share by combating war

28. C.P.D., 13 September, p.8469
29. C.P.D., 14 September, pp.8588-89 (Maloney)
30. C.P.D., 20 September, p.8700 (J. H. Catts)
31. C.P.D., 14 September, pp.8576-8578 (Finlayson); p.8566 (Matthews); 13 September, p.8470 (Ferricks)
profiteering by shipping, coal and other commercial interests. The implication, to Dr. Maloney and Mr. Matthews was that our debt of gratitude was reduced. (32) In this matter of money, the proposals for conscription of men were not matched, as they ought to have been, by definite proposals for the conscription of wealth. (33) This was cause for suspicion of intentions for even a Labour Government could not be trusted in the light of its "harsh and partial application" of the War Precautions Act over two years and the present exercise of the censorship. (34)

The war was 12,000 miles from Australia. Hughes had come back converted but he had conveyed his knowledge to members of both Houses in secret session and yet the overwhelming majority of Labour members in both Houses opposed conscription for overseas service, pointed out J. H. Catts. As for relying on the judgement of others, Senator Ready was dubious of the judgement of the Generals and the War Council in the light of the Royal Commission appointed to enquire into the Dardanelles. (35)

The issues of the campaign were all aired in the

32. C.P.D., 14 September, p.8590, p.8564. Tudor, an anti-conscriptionist, pointed out the irrelevance of such considerations in a later speech, 15 September, p.8608

33. C.P.D., 13 September, p.8475 (Ferricks); 15 September, p.8629 (Charlton)

34. C.P.D., 13 September, p.8476 (Ferricks); 14 September, p.8588 (Matthews)

35. C.P.D., 20 September, p.8691 (Parker Maloney on remoteness of war); p.8702 (Catts); 21 September, p.8830 (Ready)
parliamentary debate, not all for the first time. The most prescient speakers were conscriptionists W. A. Watt and Sir Henry Irvine. Both disapproved of the referendum because it might be lost. (36) Watt predicted that there would be a most acrimonious campaign. (37) Irvine pointed up the fundamental weakness of any public debate on conscription:

The facts on which the question must be answered are known to the Government and so far as they have been able to let us know, are known to us; but they cannot be well known to the people who are to be asked to give a decision. (38)

If the facts could not be made known to the people, then what was the six weeks campaign to be about? (39) Loyalty, duty,

36. C.P.D., 15 September, p.8620 (Watt); p.8628 (Irvine). This was a most undemocratic objection as Hughes had pointed out in defence of the Referendum measure: "If the people of Australia are of that mind, and would turn down this appeal to them, then I say that they destroy their whole case." 1 September, p.8426

37. C.P.D., 15 September, p.8620. His prediction was more accurate than that of Hughes who said the referendum "will not excite the turmoil that surrounds an election, and we shall avoid that outburst of public feeling that would be engendered by an attempt to dragon the country or the Parliament into compulsion against its will". 1 September, p.8426

38. C.P.D., 15 September, p.8628

39. No agreed statement putting the respective cases for 'YES' and 'NO' was published although this was customary with referenda. Hughes replied to a question from Brennan that six weeks was insufficient time for preparation and distribution of such a document and that "only one side has any arguments, and that side is not the one on which the honorable member stands". C.P.D., 27 September, p.8993
gratitude - these were abstractions, capable of passionate assertion and strong emotional appeal but not of argument. Had voluntaryism "failed"? That depended on whether Australia had done "enough", and that, a relative word, depended on what Australia's war effort was related to: the efforts of other dominions, Canada and New Zealand? Or the efforts and sufferings of other allied nations on or within whose frontiers the fighting was taking place, France, Belgium, Britain herself? There was little common ground between those who advocated 'YES' and those who advocated 'NO', so it is not surprising that there was little development in most of the issues aired in the Parliamentary debate.

Hughes officially opened the Victorian 'YES' campaign at the Melbourne Town Hall on Thursday, 21 September. He had performed a similar task in Sydney on 18 September and repeated briefly the general points: it was the State's right to conscript; Germany wanted Australia and the trenches of France were the ramparts of Australia; now was the time for offensive and only single men between 21 and 35 would be called up. Then he moved to refute his opponents. Australia had not done enough for she had not done the equivalent of Britain and she was not ravaged as were France and Belgium. Conscription was for "military service purely"; the criers of "industrial conscription" knew their cry to be false. The argument that Australia could not afford to spare the numbers of men required was equally applicable to a
"sufficient" number of volunteers; those who opposed conscription on this score must also oppose voluntary recruiting. To those who claimed the relatively few additional Australians could make no difference, he recounted the experience of the British Expeditionary Forces at Mons where the arrival of 8,000 men, sent from Paris in taxi-cabs, "assured the success of General Joffre's plans and wrecked the German strategy". (40)

This speech came at the end of the House of Representative's debate, (41) and only a few days after the Roman Catholic Coadjutor Archbishop of Melbourne, Dr. Mannix, had received publicity for an anti-conscription speech at Clifton Hill. The substance of Dr. Mannix's remarks was that Australia had done "enough". (42) Clearly Hughes was taking the issues as they arose and expanding them. He made major addresses on five more occasions in Victoria during the campaign (43) and all his major speeches in other states were reported fully throughout the

40. Argus, 22 September. See Argus, 19 September for report of Sydney meeting. Hughes's manifesto, issued on 18 September, is reprinted in Jauncey, op. cit., pp.169-174

41. C.P.D., 20 September, p.8763; 22 September, p.8969. The Military Service Referendum Bill passed the House of Representatives 48 votes to 12 on the morning of 21 September after an all-night sitting. The Senate passed the Bill the next day, 17 votes to 9

42. Argus, Age, 18 September. Advocate, 23 September

43. At Ballarat, officially opening the South Street Competitions, 9 October; Bendigo, 16 October; St. Kilda, 20 October, women's meeting at Prahran, 20 October; Wesley Church, 22 October
campaign.

Having asserted the primacy of loyalty and duty as the central issues, advocates of 'YES' found much of their development of their case rested on denial of allegations and refutation of claims made by their opponents. Even the positive side seemed often to be presented in a negative way: what made the 'YES' vote so urgent was the need to avoid shame and remorse, to dissociate oneself from the company of devils rather than achieve exaltation and the company of angels. Only the "degenerate could dream of saying 'NO!' to the call of our lads and of the Empire for more help".(44) Australians would hang their heads, recognised everywhere as being from "the country that shirked the job" . . . deserters of men like those at Gallipoli "slowly dying in agony, some of them exposed to fire and riddled with bullets because we had fallen back, not having the numbers to maintain a position . . ."(45) A victory for 'NO' would give comfort to Germans,(46) and the 'NO' voter would find himself in the company of the I.W.W., of the Sinn Fein, the baby-killers of Germany, the violators of Belgian women, the murderers of Nurse Cavell and Captain Fryatt . . . "Is any loyal

44. Age, 14 October
45. Argus, 14 October
46. Argus, 14 October
elector anxious to be associated with these people on October 28?" (47)

Practically all the arguments used by the opponents of conscription in Parliament and on the platform can be refuted quite easily. Most of them, indeed, are palpably insincere and need no answer, claimed the Argus (48) But answers formed the bulk of the conscription campaign. Militarism need not be feared as it "must be bred into the mental texture of a people through generations of command and discipline". (49) "Sentimental objections and prejudice" in the 'NO' case were attacked (50) and the No-conscription Manifesto rebutted (51). Conscription was no greater threat to unionism and wages than voluntarism, "if successful" (52) nor would it lead to economic ruination (53). The suggestion that the Australian Government "hire" Indians and Russians to fight instead of conscripting was disgusting. (54) Those "tender-hearted

47. Argus, 20 October ("The Heterogeneous Antis")
48. Argus, 27 September
49. Age, 19 September
50. Argus, 27 September, 6 October
51. Age, 29 September
52. Age, 4 October
53. Age, 9 October
54. Argus, 10 October
and cloudy-minded citizens" who "cast their votes in the interest of those who have not gone to war, or their relatives, ... will thereby vote for the death of thousands of mother's sons at the front who might otherwise return in health and honour". (55)

Everyone "should vote for the Empire and victory" but, as the sordid argument of self-interest had been advanced by the anti-conscriptionists, especially to farmers and businessmen, it had to be met: "The shorter the war the shorter the period of business depression ... " (56); farmers were assured that Mr. Hughes would exempt rural workers. (57) Lacking scope for development, the 'YES' argument became defensive and often relied on attributing bad faith to opponents, especially the "pestilential forces of the Labour dictators". (58)

The threat to Australia was difficult to establish. Some direct threat had been felt in 1914 from German cruisers, the Scharnhorst and Gneisenau (59) but faith in the British Navy had removed this. Before conscription became a burning issue, in January 1916 the Advocate observed,

One of the good results of the present war is that all dread of an actual invasion of Australia has been pushed

55. *Argus*, 6 October
56. *Argus*, 17 October, see also *Argus*, 23 October
57. *Argus*, 20 October
58. *Argus*, 30 September. Also 24, 26 October
into the background; and yet it is not so long since
attention was given to the fortification of Australian
capitals in such a contingency.

The British Navy was "relatively as powerful at sea as it was in
the days of Nelson".(60) During the campaign a long editorial
asking "Can Australia be Invaded?" appeared in a suburban weekly
and offered the same answer.(61) A catechism in Stead's Review
for October examined the requirements for a German invasion of
Australia and showed it to be virtually impossible.(62) Some
might believe that "Australia is the place upon which she
(Germany) casts covetous eyes - a continent in which the costly
work of colonisation has been done, a land with great stores of
undeveloped wealth . . ."(63); some might have agreed with
Hughes that "we were as much a part and parcel of Great Britain
as were Middlesex and Glasgow".(64) However, most believed that
12,000 miles and the British Navy made Australia safe from immedi-
ate threat, as the Argus admitted in its referendum day plea for
'YES'.(65)

The issues which really did develop were those relating to

60. Advocate, 8 January 1916
61. Fitzroy City Press, 5 October
62. Stead's Review, 21 October, p.858
63. Argus, 15 October
64. Argus, 23 October, report of Hughes's address at Wesley P.S.A.
65. Argus, 28 October
numbers required and importation of alien labour. The second of these lay really in the realm of assertion but was given weight and apparent credibility by the arrival of 98 Maltese labourers in September. (66) Fear of non-white aggressive invasion had reconciled the Labour movement to compulsory military training; now the fear of peaceful invasion reinforced its opposition to conscription. Hughes reacted violently to a claim made by ex-Senator Rae that Asiatics were to be admitted more readily:

This is an absolute and infamous lie and I desire to say that anyone repeating such a statement will be dealt with under the law. (67)

He had promised on 8 October that no Maltese would be admitted, (68) and he repeated on 18 October, "that during the war no coloured labour would be admitted into Australia". (69) His repeated promise was an embarrassing necessity, for it was then

66. Herald, 14 October. Under a heading "Maltese Scare Vanishes Before Official Figures", the official yearly intakes of Maltese immigrants as issued by Mr. Mahon, Minister for External Affairs, were given -

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Intake</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1912</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1913</td>
<td>193</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1914</td>
<td>404</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1914</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1915</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1916</td>
<td>142 (including 98 for September)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

67. Herald, 13 October
68. Argus, 9 October
69. Argus, 19 October
known that a ship with 200 Maltese migrants on board was due in Australia before 28 October. (70) This unfortunate coincidence outweighed declarations in the Australian Manufacturer's Manifesto "neither to countenance nor be a party to any policy that has for its object the introduction of any alien coloured people to meet any dearth of labour which may follow upon . . . a 'YES' majority", (71) and pronouncements of the Government's good intentions by sometime manager of the Worker, Hector Lamond (72). Frank Anstey was able to detail the Government's frantic efforts to prevent the landing of the Maltese before polling day. (73) Hughes use of the words "during the war" in his 18 October statement was also taken up by anti-conscriptionists in conjunction with a report of a statement by Lord Chelmsford, Viceroy of India, on the possible use of coolie labour in dominions after the war", (74)

This attack on the ulterior motives of the Government would have been less plausible had it not been for the larger issue of the numbers required. For, although anti-conscriptionists could argue, on the one hand, that 100,000 men from Australia were

70. Argus, 19 October
71. Argus, 27 October
72. Argus, 19 October
73. Labor Call, 26 October. The account given by Anstey is substantially the same as that given by Jauncey, op.cit., pp.208-210
74. Evening Echo, 25 September, 20, 24 October
Labor Call, 26 October
relatively insignificant to an allied force of some fifteen million, that same number of men between 21 and 35 years of age would seriously deplete the work force here and give the opening for coloured labour. It was Russia's war, too, argued the *Advocate* and Australia would not be decadently paying others to do her fighting. The argument of lost manpower was being "shelved and well it may, for are there not millions of the coloured races who would be only too glad to take the places of our men?"(75)

These were some angles of the numbers debate, but there was another much closer to home. In opening the campaign, Hughes had said that the Government would call up only single men between 21 and 35 years. Exemption courts would be established to grant exemptions to those who were only sons, sole supporters of dependents, members of families where half or more of the sons had enlisted and to those who were deemed to be rendering essential services in industry.(76) Here was a tangible, measurable issue. Men were required at the rate of 32,500 for September and 16,500 per month thereafter. The War Census had given an estimate of 176,000 single men in the prescribed age group.(77) Could the former be supplied from the latter and for how long? The unknowns

75. *Advocate*, 14 October


77. *C.P.D.*, 27 September, p.8971. There were in the age group 21 - 45, 230,000 fit (in their own opinion) single men
were how many of the eligible were fit for military service and how many qualified for exemptions. Answers began to emerge after the 1 October proclamation calling men to the colours began to take effect. In Victoria, only 40% of the first men coming forward were passed for immediate service and 1593 applications for exemption were made in the first two days of attestation, 60% of the fit men.(78) In September, 2,303 volunteers had come forward in Victoria leaving 7,497 to make up Victoria's quota of 9,800 for that month. "It will thus be seen," said the Age, "that the state is likely to have a strenuous task in meeting the immediate needs of the military situation, even if the men now being called up are eventually sent on active service".(79)

Anti-conscriptionists saw it quickly enough and Senator Pearce, attempting reassurance, issued a statement on the number of eligible men based on war census and embarkation records:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Fit (in own opinion)</th>
<th>Doubtful (&quot;&quot;&quot;&quot;)</th>
<th>Unfit (&quot;&quot;&quot;&quot;)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>21-34</td>
<td>80,404</td>
<td>82,377</td>
<td>13,492</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>176,273</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-44</td>
<td>30,142</td>
<td>22,117</td>
<td>3,876</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>56,235</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

78. Age, 5 October
79. Ibid.
This was a total of 232,508 men who might be called up under the provision of the Defence Act. The estimate for Victoria of eligible men in the 21-34 years group was 48,302. Up to 7 October over 40,000 had reported in Victoria and some country districts had not yet been touched. Hence, claimed Pearce, statisticians figures "are on the conservative side".\(^{(80)}\) He went further: "The Government is not calling up married men and the figures I have given are a sufficient answer to that question".\(^{(81)}\) They were not a sufficient answer. Perhaps they would have been had not another of the unknowns, the probable number of exemptions, become clear during the next week when exemption courts began hearings.\(^{(82)}\) From platforms and in the press, the validity of Pearce's claim was attacked.\(^{(83)}\) The *Argus* on Monday, 16 October thought that enrolment figures "should bring comfort to those who are disturbed in mind by statements that married men will be

\(^{(80)}\) *Argus*, 10 October

\(^{(81)}\) Ibid.

\(^{(82)}\) First hearings were at Ballarat on 9 October, coincidentally the same day Hughes spoke there at South Street. Exemptions are discussed in Part V of this chapter.

\(^{(83)}\) For example, see letter of E. J. Hogan and comment by Pearce on statement by Tudor, *Argus*, 15 October; Anstey at Croxton Park meeting, *Argus*, 17 October; Stead's *Review* 23 September, pp. 740-744, published a catechism in which answers showed that requirements could not be met from eligible men. Catechism was printed in leaflet form. A copy is in the Riley Collection.
called up shortly". (84) Pearce, by this stage was far less confident. When asked on 14 October whether married men or only sons would be conscripted next, Pearce replied,

Months before that can happen Parliament will be called together. Probably an election will have taken place and such matters can be thrashed out. (85)

At Bendigo, a few days later, Hughes tried a different kind of reassurance. In his opinion ("and I have talked with the military leaders of Great Britain, France and Italy") the Austro-Hungarian Empire would fall in "April or May next year". Germany would then be vulnerable from East and West, hence pressure applied now would shorten the war, hence single men would be adequate. (86)

Pearce's answer was an admission as much as a reassurance and could hardly ease the minds of those disturbed by the possibility of married men being called up. The referendum question was for open-ended commitment; an election offered a choice between the Labour Government proposing conscription and a Liberal opposition supporting the proposals. Hughes' reassurance raised the issues of trust in his special knowledge, his judgement

84. Argus, 16 October. Figures published on 14 October were:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Reported</th>
<th>Fit</th>
<th>Unfit</th>
<th>Doubtful</th>
<th>Temporarily Claimed</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Unfit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Exempt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victoria:</td>
<td>51,244</td>
<td>27,757</td>
<td>16,008</td>
<td>9,992</td>
<td>1917</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>C'wealth:</td>
<td>139,199</td>
<td>60,301</td>
<td>35,802</td>
<td>20,895</td>
<td>5007</td>
</tr>
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85. Argus, 16 October

86. Argus, 18 October
and, of course, whether 100,000 Australians could apply significant pressure. Hughes realised too late that stronger assurances were needed. At Newcastle on 26 October he said that probably fewer reinforcements would be required in the winter months because of the "relative inactivity" at the front. "We shall only send the number actually required and we shall not send more than 16,500 per month."(87) Stead thought these words "to hundreds of thousands who voted 'NO', because they could not believe reinforcements equal to twice the army in the field would be required in twelve months . . . came as veritable balm in Gilead . . . ." As it was, many did not read it until after they had visited the ballot-box.(88) The numbers asked for "were so huge that the married men all knew that they would be required in a very short time".(89)

87. Age, 27 October. The Governor-General wrote to Hughes on 24 October:

   I can see, on reflexion, no objection whatever to the proposed modification re the married.

   In regard to the announcement of any such modification re the married I would modify what I said this morning to this extent that it would be most effective if made direct in a speech without any appearance, therefore, of being forced.

   Novar Papers, MS 696/2512

88. Stead's Review, 18 November

89. Round Table, No. 26, March 1917, p. 384
II

Presentation

Management of the 'YES' campaign in Victoria was effectively in the hands of the National Referendum Council, Victorian Committee. This was formed on 21 September and immediately set about the establishment of local organising committees with whom it might liaise in the arrangement of speakers and dissemination of material. The Shire President of Colac read a letter from the Committee to a meeting specially convened at its request to form a local Referendum Committee. From 1 October Members of Parliament would conduct a platform campaign. Much house to house work could also be done. It was important to organise midday meetings at factories.

Local municipal authorities usually responded to the call. The local committee formed at the Colac meeting was soon "busy" and announced meetings for 13 October, to be addressed by Messrs. Watt and Plain, and 25 October, to be addressed by


91. *Age*, 22 September 1916

92. *Colac Herald*, 25 September 1916
Mr. J. C. Manifold, M.H.R. (93) The pattern was much the same throughout the State although arrangements were delayed in some areas by such disparate things as local apathy (94) and the very heavy late September rains with consequent flooding. (95) Through the last three weeks of October, citizens like the Honourable W. Hutchinson, M.L.C., travelled to preach the gospel of conscription. That gentleman spoke at the Minyip Show on the afternoon of Tuesday 24 October, at Beulah that evening, Roseberry on Wednesday afternoon and Hopetoun in the evening and at Brim on the Thursday night. (96)

Some suburban municipal authorities, Port Melbourne for example, (97) rejected the National Referendum Council's overtures but non-Labour councils co-operated and other bodies like the Australian Natives Association and the Women's National League organised meetings. For the four days Monday 9 October - Thursday 12 October, twenty-nine city and forty-nine country conscription meetings were advertised. (98) The weekend prior to

93. Colac Herald, 6 October 1916
94. Stawell Times and Wimmera Advertiser, 29 September, 3 October 1916. The meeting convened by the Mayor on 27 September had to be adjourned because of poor attendance. A second meeting was also poorly attended
95. Riverine Herald (Echuca), 6 October 1916
96. Warracknabeal Post, 24 October
97. Argus, 27 September. Ballarat Evening Echo, 27 September
98. Argus, 9, 11, 12 October
the poll, some thirty conscription meetings were scheduled throughout the state. (99)

Meetings were not always successful. A Melbourne Town Hall meeting on 12 October, with the Premiers of Victoria and New South Wales as principal speakers, was "adjourned" by the "manifestly annoyed" Chairman, Lord Mayor Sir David Hennessey, as the audience numbered only 300. The Chairman learned of the unadvertised meeting at 3 p.m. (100) that afternoon. Such mistakes, however, appear to have been rare. Not so rare was disruption of conscription meetings. At Collingwood Town Hall on 6 October, "Men, and women too, stood on their seats and with clenched fists and flaming eyes they endeavoured to convey to Senator Pearce the opinion they held of him . . . ." A leading anti-conscriptionist, F. J. Riley was called to the stage. At Senator Pearce's request, he asked whether the audience wished to hear the speakers. About fifty were for hearing them and "a forest of arms" against. Senators Pearce, Lynch and party left the hall and Riley conducted an effectively anti-conscription meeting. (101)

99. Argus, 21 October
100. Age, Argus, 13 October
101. Age, 7 October. In a letter to the Argus, 9 October, Thomas J. Miller, Commonwealth Organiser of the Australian Freedom League claimed that the disruption at Collingwood was "not organised". It was significant "that in the suburb which has been referred to as the most pronounced in favour of conscription by signatures to petitions, the local protest should be so great".
The next night at South Melbourne conscriptionists again failed to gain a hearing. For future South Melbourne meetings admission was to be by ticket only with those under twenty-one years to be excluded. (102) But Sir William Irvine found a 12 October meeting at the same venue extremely rowdy and one report told of an attempt to abduct the Mayor of South Melbourne after this meeting, an attempt foiled by the police. (103) At Footscray on 11 October, the advertised speakers, including Crawford Vaughan, the South Australian Premier, "were refused a hearing until an anti-conscriptionist had been promised an opportunity to reply". (104) The Socialist, in the last week of the campaign, reported that a crowd "of between three and four thousand would give no hearing to the conscriptionists" at a street meeting in Williamstown. (105) These and other areas where disruption of conscription meetings occurred were in Labour held electorates. Apart from one spectacular failure at Crossley, near Warrnambool, (106) advocates of conscription were heard in country districts without serious interruption and quieter forms

102. Argus, 9 October; Age, 13 October
103. Argus, 13 October
104. Argus, 12 October
105. Socialist, 27 October
106. Argus, 28 October, reported an attack on Mr. A. S. Rogers, M.H.R., and a threat to hang a conscriptionist speaker. The story was highly exaggerated as Rogers himself revealed in a later letter, Argus, 31 October
of protest were observed. (107)

Those who wished to hear or support the 'YES' case put from the platform had ample opportunity to do so. The conscriptionist press usually described such meetings as "largely attended" and the widespread nature and frequency of their occurrence suggests a demand for them. They did not, however, have the enormous mass meetings which were a feature of the anti-conscription campaign. One anti-conscriptionist claimed late in the campaign that "the advocates for conscription diminish and the meetings have fewer attendants". (108) It does seem unlikely that 'YES' advocates would have reached as wide an audience as 'NO' advocates from the platform.

Anti-conscriptionists carried their arguments to vast audiences from numerous platforms at mass meetings. One such meeting was held at the Exhibition Building on 20 September, the evening on which the Military Service Referendum Bill was passed in the House of Representatives. Three platforms were used and the "audience practically filled the building". (109) The main venue, however, was the Yarra Bank. 55-60,000 was the Argus estimate of the Sunday 1 October crowd and the Socialist

107. For example, a number of members of the Dimboola Show Society sent back their tickets when it was known that speakers in favour of conscription were to be heard, Argus, 23 October

108. Labor Call, 19 October

109. Age, 21 September. The Worker (Sydney), 28 September reported an attendance of 30-40,000
concurred with that estimate as well as carrying impressive photographic evidence of the magnitude of the crowd. (110) The Labor Call estimated an aggregate of over 250,000 "at the Yarra Bank on the last three or four Sunday afternoons and during Wednesday October 4. Probably 80% of these visitors were new to the 'Bank',' and were not deterred by the "squalor and inconvenience" (111) which the heavy rains of the period undoubtedly brought. A further 50,000 turned out the following Sunday. (112) These meetings were not without disturbances but there is no record or complaint in the anti-conscription press of platforms being overturned or speakers unable to gain a hearing as at some earlier Yarra Bank meetings. (113)

Use of halls had been refused anti-conscription organisations before this campaign. The possibility of damage arising from "trouble with soldiers" was one reason for such a refusal. (114) The Collingwood and South Melbourne experiences suggest that damage to halls was more likely at conscription rather than anti-conscription meetings. Councils' refusal to grant

110. Argus, 2 October; Socialist, 6, 13 October

111. Labor Call, 12 October. Wednesday, 4 October, was the day of the strike called to protest the Proclamation calling men to the colours. The strike is discussed in Part III of this chapter

112. Socialist, 20 October

113. See Chapter 3, p.66 above

114. Labor Call, 22 June 1916; Socialist, 14 January, 23 June, 28 July 1916
anti-conscriptionists use of Town Halls during the campaign seems to have been for political reasons. Hawthorn Council rejected an application for use of the Hawthorn Town Hall for an Australian Peace Alliance sponsored 'NO' meeting because "... Council cannot see its way to make the hall available for the purpose named" (115) The Town Clerk of Fitzroy notified the same organisation that an application for Fitzroy Town Hall "for the purpose of holding an anti-conscription meeting has been considered by the Finance Committee and I have been instructed to say that the Hall is not available for hire for such a meeting" (116) Council reversed this decision after presentation of a petition signed by one hundred and fifty ratepayers and a promise that both sides would be heard. (117) Brighton Town Hall was unavailable to anti-conscriptionists as the Red Cross had been given "uninterrupted use" of the hall. (118) 'NO' forces also claimed that use of Essendon and Brunswick Town Halls was refused them though the Town Clerk denied this was so in the case of Brunswick. (119) In the Legislative Assembly, Labour members took advantage of the

115. F. J. Riley Papers, MS 1454, A.P.A. folder, letter from Town Clerk of Hawthorn, 12 October 1916
116. Ibid., letter dated 10 October 1916
117. Argus, 12 October
118. F. J. Riley Papers, loc.cit., letter from Town Clerk of Brighton dated 10 October 1916
119. Victoria, Parliamentary Debates, 10 October 1916, p.1897; Premier's Department, Correspondence Inward, Reg. No. 4101, 12 October 1916
Budget debate to urge the Chief Secretary "to give a promise that people will be allowed to give expression to their views". (120) Many examples of refusal of halls and prevention of street meetings by police were given. The Chief Secretary replied that the State government had "no control over the halls or the streets". (121) In the Legislative Council, a member suggested that school buildings be made available to both sides for meetings but nothing came of the suggestion. (122) Labour members argued that, while anti-conscriptionists were denied equal opportunity to put their case from platforms and in the press, conscriptionists must expect disruption of their meetings as occurred at Collingwood and South Melbourne. Conscriptionists, thought the Socialist, were "getting a taste of their own medicine". (123)

But some halls were available to 'NO' advocates. The Richmond Town Hall was crowded "inside and out" to hear Tudor; after a rousing 'NO' meeting at Port Melbourne, Mr. Hughes effigy was burnt (so it was reported). (124) Everywhere meetings were held, generally without the difficulties of disruptive audiences

120. *Victoria, Parliamentary Debates*, 10 October 1916, p.1898; pp.1897-1910 for other speakers
121. Ibid., p.1901
122. Ibid., 12 October 1916, p.2005
123. Socialist, 13 October
124. Argus, 12, 19 October
encountered by 'YES' advocates. The University, that "hot-bed of jingoes . . . (and) bellicose criers" (125) gave anti-
conscriptionist Maurice Blackburn a torrid time at a meeting chaired by the Students' Representative Council President,
Mr. R. G. Menzies, with continual singing of the "National Anthem" and "Tipperary". (126) By singing "patriotic songs",
school children broke-up a meeting being addressed by
Miss Pankhurst at Box Hill. (127) But these were rare occurrences.
Factories and offices were thoroughly canvassed and Frank Hyett,
Secretary of the Railways Union, enjoyed a brief, unexpected
debate with the employer himself, Mr. H. V. McKay, at a lunch
time meeting of 2000 employees and residents at Sunshine. (128)
Midday meetings were held at an average of four or five factories
a day. (129) Speakers could arm themselves with "Points for
Speakers" prepared by Miss Vida Goldstein. (130) Meetings appear
to have been as numerous in city and country as conscription
meetings though they were not so well advertised as the latter

125. Labor Call, 5 October
126. Argus, 24 October
127. Ibid.
128. Socialist, 13 October. Mr. McKay unwisely interrupted
Hyett to point out that, as the whistle had gone, the
workers were being addressed in his time. He was not
sympathetically received when he attempted to put some
arguments in favour of conscription
129. Ibid.
130. Socialist, 29 September
in the daily press. Northcote Councillor Jack Cain addressed twenty different meetings in the one week.(131)

The press was overwhelmingly for conscription. Arguments for 'YES' and refutations of 'NO' were developed in countless leading articles, usually prompted by an accompanying report of a meeting. The Argus, for example, ran forty editorials on the subject between 1 September and 28 October. Meetings, especially those of Hughes, were widely reported. Estimates of attendance varied "according to the predilections of those making the estimate", as the Herald put it.(132) Headlines were important. "Mr. Brennan and Pro-Germans" ran the heading of a report on a Fitzroy meeting where Brennan had actually been attacking Hughes for cultivating Mr. Danckel, M.H.R., the German born member for Boothby in South Australia.(133)

Readers were bombarded with Campaign Notes ("Will you vote 'YES' or 'NEIN'?") and catechetic instruction in the issues of the war, Hughes himself often being the respondent in a column of questions and answers about Maltese labour, duration of conscription, exemptions for rural workers and other refutations of anti-conscription's claims.(134) Hughes's manifestos also

131. Socialist, 20 October
132. Herald, 4 October
133. Argus, 12 October
134. For example, Argus, 25 October
received full publicity in the *Argus* and the *Age*. (135) Columnists such as Archibald Strong in the *Herald* each Tuesday and Ithuriel in the Saturday *Argus* devoted their columns almost entirely to the conscription cause. (136) Cartoons generally appealed to loyalty to our soldiers (three huns to one digger, with a woman in the background placing 'YES' in the ballot box) and featured the atrociousness of the hun (the Kaiser, sword dripping blood in one hand, placing 'NO' in box with other hand). (137)

Parables and allegories were popular. Three toilers and three slackers in a hypothetical Baroo bushfire (138); dialogue between a "little Australian" in the corner of a compartment and another showing him the error of his ways. (139) Honest Bill and Mary Avery, he, a confused anti-conscriptionist whose conscience and reason make him see he has no case, she, a relieved wife, agreeing. The scene concludes, "It might mean that some day, supposin' that the war last long, and it may, that I'd be took an' have to go". Mary consoles him that he must do what is

135. 18 September; 4 October (to women); 25 October (to Organised Labour); 26 October (appeal to farmers)

136. W. F. Finlayson asked that the arrest of Strong be ordered as Strong's comment in the *Herald*, 5 September, "that every vote cast against the referendum may mean the death of an Australian soldier" might "provoke a breach of the peace". *C.P.D.*, 6 September, p.8441

137. *Argus*, 25 October, 22 October

138. *Argus*, 18 October

139. *Argus*, 13 October
right in the present and worry about the future later. (140)

If shame or honesty did not induce a 'YES' attitude, perhaps awareness of one's bedfellows would. Prosecution of twelve I.W.W. members for treason began in Sydney on 10 October. (141) Treason, of course, is a newsworthy charge and the Herald devoted one-third of its front page on 14 October to photographs of the twelve. It was also a most opportune charge. At Bendigo on 17 October, Hughes linked the I.W.W. firmly with the anti-conscriptionists and implicated Anstey with the I.W.W. Hughes read to his audience a letter of support which Anstey had written to Tom Barker, one of the twelve, when Barker had been gaiold earlier in the war for publication of a cartoon prejudicial to recruiting. (142) The press gave great prominence to Hughes's allegation during the rest of the campaign. (143)

German atrocities were much recalled at this time. (144) Hughes made strong use of such appeal in his Manifesto to women, (145) an appeal to emotions of hate and desire for revenge. It was a tactic as were appeals to more noble emotions such as

140. Age, 21 October
141. Argus, Age, 11 October et seq.
143. For example, Argus, 18, 20 October; Herald, 24 October
144. Argus, 7, 27 October. Herald, 27 October
145. Argus, 4 October for Manifesto published in full
loyalty and tenderness.

A sprig of forget-me-not, plucked from one of the trenches occupied by the Australians in France was received in a letter by the last mail. Surely a more eloquent appeal from our loved ones at the front for a 'YES' vote at the forthcoming referendum could not have been conceived.(146)

'YES' voters would be in the company of heroes like Lieutenant Jacka, V.C. whose referendum eve cable to Hughes read: "Anzacs demand to be reinforced. Trust Australia will not leave us in the lurch".(147) Jacka's father had been a speaker at anti-conscription meetings, notably at the 24 October Melbourne Town Hall rally where he was reported to have claimed "his sons would scoff at the word conscription".(148) With Jacka's cablegram, papers published a letter from Reg W. Turnbull of Wedderburn, Jacka's home town, quoting part of a letter from "my pal Lieutenant Jacka V.C." The quoted section read:

Do what you can Reg, to urge all your friends to vote 'YES'. All the boys over here will send the 'YES' votes. I don't think any decent man will vote 'NO'. We want more men if we are to win.(149)

146. Argus, 17 October
147. Argus, 27 October 1916
148. Argus, 25 October 1916
149. Argus, 27 October 1916
Jacka's father issued a sworn declaration that neither he nor his son knew any such person as Reg W. Turnbull in Wedderburn and there is evidence to cast doubt on the honesty of the conscriptionist propagandists. The cablegram and alleged letter were confused in some press reports. (150)

The episode illustrates the conscriptionists' conviction in their campaign that identification with the patriotic and heroic was a powerful persuasion to vote 'YES'. Leaders who knew the urgency of the situation, "The Man Who Calls" (Field Marshal Sir Douglas Haig) and "The Leader of the Response" (Mr. W. M. Hughes) typified the 'YES' company. (151) Those who would make a dastardly attempt on Mr. Hughes's life, as reported in the press on referendum day, by implication typified the 'NO' company. (152)

Country papers were either quietly neutral or conscriptionist, depending on the convictions of their publishers. At Corryong, which proudly recorded the highest sub-divisional 'YES' percentage in the state, the editor/publisher of the Corryong Courier was secretary of the local campaign committee and used his paper effectively:


151. *Herald*, 20 October, pictured the two side by side with these captions

152. *Age*, 28 October. *Age* hoardings outside newsagencies read "Attack on Mr. Hughes", *Truth*, 4 November. The "attack" had taken place some weeks earlier. A policeman at the Prime Minister's Kew home had chased away an intruder
People of the Upper Murray, be true to your boys whom you sent away with cheers, to yourselves, to your good old ancestry, to your own country and to the grand old British flag, which through two years of war has saved your homes, your lives, and allowed you unrestricted freedom . . . "(153)

Others were more restrained or neutral. The National Referendum Council plied country newspapers with material, some of which was accepted, some rejected.(154)

The Referendum Council put out all kinds of material. Railway hoardings advocated a 'YES' vote.(155) Patriotic songs were published and distributed.(156) Patrons at the Caulfield Cup on 21 October found in their race books "a pink leaflet, containing an invitation signed by Mr. W. M. Hughes, the Prime

153. Corryong Courier, 19 October
154. Advocate, 21 October.
Truth, 7 October, after noting that the Electoral Law required articles to carry the signatures of writers there-of, cites "a column of pro-conscription paragraphs in the Inglewood Advertiser bearing the signature A. R. Tayson, Brooke Street, Inglewood, while in the Maryborough Advertiser, the same claptrap appears over the signature Adam McCay, Collins Street, Melbourne, and then again the Warracknabeal Post publishes it word for word, except in this case prefaced with the word "Sir" . . . and this time it is ostensibly signed by W. A. Murton, 395 Collins Street". C.P.D., 3 October, p.9229 for questions about Adam McCay
155. Victoria, Parliamentary Debates, 10 October, p.1902
156. Riverine Herald (Echuca), 13 October, reported receipt of song "Yes, Yes, Yes"
Minister, to vote 'YES' on Saturday . . ."(157) No doubt this was directed at what the Methodist Spectator called "the liquor bar loafer and the parasite of the racecourse"(158) rather than the V.A.T.C. members. There could scarcely have been an eligible voter in the state who had not been reached in some way, by some form of appeal made by conscriptionists.

Anti-conscriptionists were less well equipped to campaign via the printed word, lacking a Melbourne daily to assist their cause. The Labor Call, the Socialist and the Woman Voter devoted their issues almost entirely to anti-conscription during the campaign, stating and restating the issues from the labour and radical points of view. Columns of "Bombs and Bullets" (Socialist) and "Short and Shell" (Labor Call) anathematized Irvine, Watt and especially Hughes. Cartoons showed the bees of Organised Labour stinging the yelping, fleeing, conscriptionist dog; the Crucifixion of the Working Class on the cross of Conscription while the Big Commercial Interests, Royalty and War Profit Makers proclaim, "He Died that We Might Live"; White Australian Labor carrying the cross of Conscription, escorted by Hughes, Holman, the Daily Press and others, with the caption, "Its a Long Way to Calvary"(159) J. K. McDougall penned verse as emotional in its appeal to notions of freedom and the

157. Herald, 21 October
158. Methodist Spectator, 19 May 1916
159. Labor Call, 21 September, 5 October, 26 October
fiendishness of militarism as any appeals presented by conscrip-
tionists. Melbourne Truth maintained its coverage of the con-
temporary seamy scene, but presented in characteristic racy,
alliterative form its opposition to conscription, especially its
conviction that conscription would mean "Chow Consorts for White
Women". (160) A cartoon showed ships passing, "Outward bound is
the ship with brave boys sent to the slaughter, Inward bound is
the junk, with Chows who will fill their places". (161)

The Catholic Advocate planted itself firmly in the anti-
conscription camp in its 30 September issue. A week earlier in
a comment on Hughes's expulsion from the Labour party,
T. C. Brennan, the editor, had accepted the Prime Minister's
"good faith" in seeking conscription through the referendum. (162)
But Thomas Shortill wrote a leader the following week proclaiming
"... Now that the first stage has been reached, issue has been
joined and neutrality on the question becomes impossible".
Mr. Hughes had returned to put the conscription proposals "after
being lionised by the Conservatives of England", (163) hardly an

160. Truth, 23 September
161. Truth, 21 October
162. Advocate, 23 September
163. Advocate, 30 September. For information on and discussion
of the move of T. C. Brennan and the Advocate's strong
line anti-conscription see Alan D. Gilbert, "The
Conscription Referenda 1916-17: The Impact of the Irish
acknowledgment of bona fide motivation. Thereafter Shortill and Dr. Gerald Baldwin used the whole range of 'NO' arguments, not always with charity and delicacy. Hughes had promised exemptions but he had broken his earlier promises and therefore could not be trusted. As to the comparative contributions of Great Britain and Australia to the war effort, the Advocate was callous: "In one case, the loss of millions will only give more elbow room; in the other, the loss of even a few men will vitally interfere with the working of the Commonwealth". (164)

The only Victorian anti-conscription daily was the Ballarat Evening Echo, edited by J. H. Scullin. Through September and October its leading articles and "Referendum Points" columns, reports of speeches in the Military Service Referendum Bill debate and reports of anti-conscription meetings, especially the weekly ones at the A.W.U. hall in Ballarat, presented the 'NO' case. In the closing stages of the campaign, it warned: "Beware the faked cable message next week . . . . Beware of the faked letters written by alleged soldiers, probably from the Conscription trenches in Collins Street . . . .". (165) Sixty thousand copies were turned out, the presses running through the night, on 20 October, for distribution in Melbourne. The copies were despatched on the first train to Melbourne and all sold by

164. Advocate, 7 October
165. Evening Echo, 19 October
midday. (166) This edition and that of Tuesday 24 October, also a Melbourne edition, were not newspapers but collections of previous articles, leaders and snippets published during the campaign. (167)

Anti-conscriptionists were prolific publishers of leaflets, posters and pamphlets. A leaflet, "The Nobility of Sacrifice" argued that available single men would soon be used up then married men would be required; "Conscription Condemned" quoted Hughes at himself; "Conscription - A Sure Poison for Unionism" and "Fight as Free Men", the latter invoking the "seeds of liberty which were sown in the blood-stained soil of Eureka", warned of the threat to workers' liberty. All October issues of the Worker (Sydney) were obviously set out so that the most features could be run off as leaflets, handbills and posters. Special articles and cartoons dealing with conscription were advertised as "No Conscription Supplements" for 25/- per thousand. (168) "The Blood Vote" cartoon appeared in the

166. Evening Echo, 21 October

167. Bertha Walker, A Story of the 1916 and 1917 Campaigns in Victoria tells of drama (Northcote, Victoria, 1968) and subterfuge by Victorian Railways Union men in spiriting consignments from the train in Melbourne. Jauncey, op. cit., pp.174-175, says 60,000 copies were "sent down every day during the 1916 referendum campaign". Reading of the Evening Echo's own account of the work involved in sending 60,000 copies of the 20 October issues suggests he is wrong. An advertisement in the Woman Voter, 12 October, announced a Melbourne edition of the Ballarat Evening Echo daily from 14 October

168. Worker, 5, 12, 19 October
12 October *Worker* and was widely distributed in leaflet form thereafter. (169) In the first week of October, 100,000 handbills and 100,000 manifestos were distributed nationally by the Trades Union Anti-conscription Congress executive under the supervision of Jack Curtin (170) and the printed propaganda effort continued to the end. "The anti-conscriptionists made a special effort at the weekend. They poured pamphlets and circulars and papers into city and suburbs . . ." reported the *Argus*, Monday 23 October. The "unofficial postal service" (171) worked through referendum day as cyclists peddled to booths "laden with Jacka's sworn statement". (172)

Before and after the vote, the *Advocate* conceded credit to Hughes "for allowing free discussion within reasonable limits". (173) The kind of censorship of which Vida Goldstein complained

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(169) Copies of this and all other leaflets, posters and pamphlets mentioned here may be found in the *Riley Collection*, Latrobe Library of Victoria. Many of the leaflets of the Australian Peace Alliance may also be found in the collection. There is little conscription material in the collection and as much of the material bears no date, it is difficult to know whether it related to 28 October 1916 referendum or 20 December 1917 referendum.

170. *Socialist*, 6 October


172. *Socialist*, 3 November

173. *Advocate*, 21 October. It was less kind in 4 November comment: "Even Mr. Hughes did not dare to use his great powers so far as to altogether suppress discussion . . ."
in her letter to members of Parliament on 21 September(174) does
seem to have been relaxed through the October weeks of the cam-
paign. Where it was oppressive, as with the refusal to allow
publication of the sworn declaration by the father of Albert
Jacka on the alleged letter of "Mr. Turnbull", anti-
conscriptionists bypassed the law.(175) The presentation of the
anti-conscription case was wide and thorough.

III

Churches and churchmen were prominent on both sides of the
campaign. All the major Protestant churches were committed to
conscription. Dr. Mannix has always been considered an important
figure in the campaign in Victoria. Allied to Dr. Mannix's
influence are the questions of Roman Catholics' part in general
in the referendum and the effect of incidents in Ireland during
1916.

Dr. Mannix made only two speeches on conscription during
the whole of the campaign. At Clifton Hill on 16 September he
stated his belief

that Australia has done her full share, and more, and
that she cannot reasonably be expected to bear the
financial strain and the drain upon her manhood that

174. Jauncey, op.cit., pp.175-180 gives the letter in full
175. H. V. Evatt, Australian Labour Leader (Sydney, 1945) p.413. These leaflets, 50,000 of them, were signed C. ensor
Conscription would involve. (176) His grounds for opposition were neither novel nor religious; 100,000, or even 200,000, Australians could make no difference; married men, too, would be required; conscriptions' "loudest advocates" would be the first to rise up against the taxation necessary to redeem our obligations to the returned soldiers" or to their widows and orphans.

Niall Brennan says this speech "was to reverberate around Australia". (177) In fact, if the *Argus* had been able to ignore Dr. Mannix, the speech might not have attracted nearly so much notice. But the *Argus* was too foolish, too clever or too bigotted to allow the speech to pass with only a report. Dr. Mannix and the *Argus* were old antagonists. (178) The paper reported the speech and followed with an editorial regretting the Archbishop's words and failure to understand the Australian people. The *Age* gave only 2½ column inches to a report of Dr. Mannix speech. (179)

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176. *Advocate*, 23 September. This and Dr. Mannix's Preston speech of 22 October are reprinted, in part, with comments in Cyril Bryan, *Archbishop Mannix: Champion of Australian Democracy*, (Melbourne, 1918) Chapter XI


178. See Bryan, op.cit., chapters 7 and 8. More recently, at Northcote, Dr. Mannix had said, "But Popes and Princes have no remedy against the silly cackle or the studied insults of papers like the *Argus*." *Advocate*, 26 August. See also *Advocate*, 9 September and *Argus*, 2, 5 September

179. *Argus*, 18, 19 September; *Age*, 19 September
The impression that Mannix was a consistently active anti-conscriptionist is wrong. (180) His only other anti-conscription speech was at Preston on 22 October. There he repeated his views and defended his right to express them. Much publicity had been given in the interim to the statement of Monsignor Cerretti, the Apostolic Delegate, issued on 4 October. The statement noted that Catholics were "... free citizens, and as such should record their votes in accordance with the dictates of their conscience". After acknowledging Roman Catholic newspaper editors' right to express opinions on the issue, Monsignor Cerretti concluded:

It is likewise because the question of conscription does not affect the Church as a Church that I am sure addresses on the subject will not be delivered from the pulpits of our Catholic churches. (181) Dr. Mannix could not dissociate himself "from the position that he holds in the church; his hearers can scarcely be expected to make the decision" said the Argus on this occasion, (182) and castigated the Archbishop after his Preston statement. "He will add far more votes to the conscriptionist side than he will turn.

181. Advocate, 14 October
182. Argus, 5 October
against it". (183) The *Age* did not comment nor, strangely, did the anti-conscription press, apart from the *Advocate*, publicise Dr. Mannix's stand. In its only comment on either of Dr. Mannix's speeches, the *Herald* conceded his right to express his opinion and simultaneously withdrew it:

> Once an archbishop, always an archbishop, and certain of his hearers will always regard his utterances in the light of that fact and not in their natural perspective ..."

Conceding Dr. Mannix's point that other clergy had spoken and not been rebuked, the *Herald* added,

> But it must be remembered that other clerics as clerics do not claim the same authority as that expressed by an archbishop of the Roman Catholic Church. (184)

This was a contradictory argument. However, while righteously adhering to the principle of the realms of God and Caesar, some other Roman Catholic leaders made it clear where they stood. Citing the principle of Monsignor Cerretti's statement, Bishop Phelan of Sale declined a National Referendum Council request to publicise a conscription meeting from the pulpit. (185) In a pastoral address at Maffra a little later, he left little doubt about his own attitude:

183. *Argus*, 24 October
184. *Herald*, 23 October
185. *Argus*, 14 October
Stripped of all verbiage and frothy declamation, the question . . . is . . . shall we drive, and against their will, 100,000 of our young men to fight the cause of Belgium, France, England and Russia . . . ? You are free . . . . But in exercising that freedom . . . ask your conscience how far you are justified in despoiling another of that gift . . . ."(186)

At Geelong, Father W. J. Lockington, S.J., a very prominent lecturer and spokesman said that, as a priest, he had no word to say on conscription, but "as an Australian citizen, . . . I unhesitatingly answer that I AM STRONGLY OPPOSED TO CONSCRIPTION". (187) The see of Bendigo was vacant at this time. The late Bishop Reville died on 19 September but had earlier stated his opposition to conscription.(188) The recently appointed Bishop of Ballarat, Bishop Foley made no public statement on conscription though he had ample opportunity to do so.(189)

Some leading Roman Catholic laymen did publicly support conscription(190) and Archbishop Carr of Melbourne remained

186. Advocate, 21 October
187. Advocate, 28 October. Emphasis as in report
188. Advocate, 23 March 1916
189. Advocate, 22 July for Bishop Foley's appointment
190. Advocate, 11 November, cites, for example; Mr. J. Gavan Duffy, K.S.G., Dr. A. L. Kenny, K.S.G., Mr. Benjamin Hoare, Mr. W. J. McLean, of Maffra, Mr. E. E. Wilson of Geelong
aloof from the question,(191) but clear leadership for Catholics was obviously given. What was the basis of such Catholic opposition? The moral right to compel service was not at issue and Dr. Mannix argued his case on practical grounds. Prominent anti-conscriptionist Labour men, Frank Brennan, Dr. Maloney and J. H. Scullin for example, were Roman Catholics. On the other hand, "... in general, the Liberal Party has managed to draw to itself all the bigots who live by defaming the Roman Catholic people and the Roman Catholic religion".(192) Applying that popular campaign technique of assessment according to company, what Catholic would wish to be in the company of O. R. Snowball, arch-detractor of Catholicism and attacker of Catholic schools,(193) Dr. Alex Leeper,(194) Reverend Henry Worrall(195) and the Argus, all long-time bitter foes of the Roman Catholic Church in Victoria? When questions of encroaching militarism and trespass on conscience had arisen in 1913, they had not evoked official Roman Catholic response; controversy had been on education and matters doctrinal. Now Lutheran schools were under attack, and Roman Catholic schools might be

191. Age, 9 October

192. Advocate, 27 May, 1916


194. Advocate, 7 October 1916

195. Age, 7, 8, 9 July 1913. Advocate, 19 July 1913, 18 March 1916
next. (196) In war-time, Roman Catholic loyalty to the Empire was being questioned, tenuously through the attack on schools, more directly through the Irish question and attacks like that of Dr. Leeper, who said "... the Catholic clergy, almost as a body, (are) wholly standing aloof from the recruiting movement". (197)

The Advocate had endorsed the recruiting campaign of July 1915, saying, "this therefore is our war as much as it is the war of any other part of the empire - and perhaps more so", (198) and had countenanced the possible need, ultimately, for conscription. (199) As the agitation for conscription increased, the Advocate's opposition hardened. (200) Sectarian division was not new, of course, but it seemed to have more sinister elements in war-time. The Advocate was particularly sensitive to criticism of Ireland's contribution to the war and the fact that conscription had not been applied there. (201) At the 12 July Orange celebrations in the Town Hall, Mr. Snowball claimed that Ulster recruits outnumbered those from all other Irish counties

196. Victorian Parliamentary Debates, loc.cit.; Advocate, 26 August, 2 September
197. Advocate, 6 June
198. Advocate, 10 July 1915
199. Advocate, 24 July, 25 September 1915
200. Advocate, 11, 18, 25 March; 1, 22 April; 13, 20, 27 May; 8 July, 19 August
201. Advocate, 22 April, 25 May, 6, 24 June, 22 July
combined and that only thirty seven of the first contingent of 2000 men from Queensland were Roman Catholics.(202)

This was the friction in Victoria exacerbated by news of the Easter rising and subsequent execution of some of its leaders. First responses from Victorian Irish-Catholic leaders were to deplore a foolish revolt.(203) Only Dr. Mannix qualified his comment on the "deplorable" outbreak by referring to "the treason of the Carsonites" and the British Government's "shifty policy in regard to Home Rule".(204) This incurred the wrath of Age and Argus(205) and led to a rather flippant defence of "a bold, bad, Archbishop" in the Advocate.(206)

Contributions to Archbishop Mannix's Irish Relief Fund did show "how deeply Irish sentiment in Australia has been moved by the turn of recent events in Ireland".(207) Reports like this of the Melbourne Herald: "The public's eye is turned towards Ireland because it is thought to be a potential reservoir (of

202. Age, 12 July. Advocate, 22 July

203. Advocate, 6 May. United Irish League and Celtic Club cables used the word "abhorrence". Archbishop Carr "deplored" the rising and Bishop Phelan rejoiced "at the dismal failure of the attempt"

204. Ibid.

205. Argus, Age, 1 May

206. Advocate, 18 May

207. Advocate, 9 September et seq.
manpower). . . "(208) led the Advocate to warn of the shattering effects of conscription in Ireland.(209) At the Cathedral Hall meeting of the Catholic Workers' Association on 23 October, the suggestion from most speakers, generally citing their Irish ancestry, was that conscription here would pave the way for it in Ireland.(210) Yet the majority of members attending the Annual Meeting of the United Irish League remained dispassionate on the conscription question carrying the motion: "That we regard the subject of conscription as one appertaining to the individual conscience of each Australian citizen, rather than a question for the decision of sectional communities".(211)

Dr. Mannix was enormously popular with his flock. He had been from the time of his arrival,(212) and the kind of ovation he received at the Irish Relief Fund Meeting in the Melbourne Town Hall on 18 September, merely confirmed what everyone knew.(213)

208. Herald, 9 October
209. Advocate, 21 October
210. Advocate, 28 October. See speeches by Cr. Joyce, J. McDonald, J. Sheehan, G. R. Baldwin
211. Advocate, 7 October. Brennan, op.cit., p.141 suggests that the League's President was anti-Sinn Fein and thought Dr. Mannix a Sinn Feiner
212. Advocate, 29 March 1913
213. Advocate, 23 September. "He was cheered and cheered and yet again cheered". Apparently realising this popularity, Hughes had sent Hugh Mahon "to enlist Dr. Mannix's support for the Government's campaign. Mr. Mahon, after a short conversation with the Coadjutor-Archbishop, realised that the mission was futile and left without delivering the message". Frank Murphy, Daniel Mannix, (Melbourne, 1948), p.35
His real contribution to war polemics came later, in February 1917 and in the second conscription referendum. He was important in this first conscription referendum, but some accounts of his role seem to be influenced by a backward projection of later controversies. (214) The fact remains that he gave only two addresses, five weeks apart, during the campaign and the second of these was largely a defence of his right to express his views. The 'NO' propaganda machine did not exploit Dr. Mannix; the Roman Catholic press—apart, it was the conscriptionist press and platform which gave him his publicity and elevated him to be patron of the anti-conscription cause. His own motives can only be guessed at. It was natural that he be in the opposite camp to those who denigrated Catholics' war efforts or threatened their cherished schools and doctrines. Irish troubles must have increased his antipathy towards England and Imperialism but they are not a necessary sine qua non of his anti-conscriptionism. His previous record of public utterance showed no strong feelings about the morality of conscription or questions of personal freedom. Dr. Mannix is a partisan's hero of the 'NO' victory.

Having advocated conscription, in most cases, for many months past, leading Anglican, Presbyterian and Methodist churchmen naturally espoused the 'YES' cause. Not for them pretty distinctions about the roles of Church and State in this issue.

214. Niall Brennan, op.cit., p.115 sees the Easter Rising as uniting "the leader with the cause" and Mannix as the leader of an anti-conscription campaign. (p.137)
Commitment was open. The Church of England, intimated Archdeacon Hindley in an unambiguous reference to Dr. Mannix, would send a disloyal Archbishop packing. (215) Archbishop Clarke showed his loyalty by appearing in the uniform of the Chaplain-General: (216) Ministers of many denominations used their pulpits on Sunday 17 September to advocate conscription and the Herald's "Churches and Congregations" report each Monday thereafter showed clearly that preachers saw their mission of the moment to secure a 'YES' vote. (217) Notable preachers gained greater press coverage. (218) Sunday 22 October was declared National Sunday. Archdeacon Hindley requested clergy to "impress on their congregations the immense gravity of the question". (219) The recommendation of the Public Questions Committee of the Presbyterian Church was to be read from pulpits in Presbyterian churches. (220) The recommendation concluded, "... the answer our people ought to give to the Referendum is 'YES'." (221) Wesley P.S.A. became a 'YES' platform with the

215. Age, 19 September
216. Age, 19 September
217. Herald, 18, 25 September; 2, 9, 16 October
218. Argus, 16 October report of Reverend Henry Howard's sermon at the Methodist Cathedral Mission, for example
219. Argus, 21 October
220. Ibid.
221. Argus, 14 October
Hon. L. E. Groom, M.H.R., O.R. Snowball, J. N. Hewison (ex-President of the A.N.A.) and Mr. T. Ryan, M.L.A. (Labour, South Australia), Reverend Henry Howard speakers on successive Sundays and, finally, W. M. Hughes himself gave an address of an hour and ten minutes on Sunday 22 October. (222)

The Presbyterian Assembly accepted its Public Questions Committee recommendation by 92 votes to 3. (223) The President of the Methodist Conference of Victoria and Tasmania issued a statement "To the Members and Adherents of the Methodist Church" urging a 'YES' vote. (224) At the Church of England Synod, a motion moved by Dr. Alex Leeper and seconded by Archdeacon Hindley was carried. The motion stated, in part,

That this synod is so convinced that the forces of the Allies are being used of God to vindicate the rights of the weak and to maintain the moral order of the world, that it gives its strong support to the principle of universal service . . . ." (225)

The official Baptist position, too, was one of support. (226)

Ministers were thus expressing a church point of view as

222. Spectator, 20 September, 4, 11, 18, 25 October
223. Presbyterian Messenger, 13 October
224. Spectator, 18 October
226. Argus, 18 October
well as their own. They believed this was a "righteous war", (227) that the referendum question was therefore not merely a political one (228) and these were sincere convictions. Motives, however, were not unmixed. "Why omit Ireland - or the Roman Catholic portion of it . . . ?" the Spectator had asked when conscription had been introduced in Britain. (229) Catholic opposition to the referendum proposals now seemed to confirm suspicions that Roman Catholics were not doing their share. After criticising poor recruiting in Catholic Ireland and French Canada, the Spectator's "Current Topics" writer asked,

Is there anything in the wind? What do these people hope to gain by seeing the British Empire drained of its best blood for the liberties they enjoy? Was Rome ever England's friend? . . . Dr. Mannix, so strangely silent of late after being so strangely talkative a while ago, and Dr. Carr . . . are neither giving to their people any kind of lead . . . ." (230)

That Roman Catholics could not evade the draft might be a good reason for supporting it. There was, also, a certain puritan attraction in conscription. Much earlier, the Spectator, in a lament about the prevalence of liquor and gambling had said,

227. Spectator, 11 October
228. Presbyterian Messenger, 27 October
229. Spectator, 17 January 1916, p.10
230. Spectator, 18 October, p.1349
"Indeed it constitutes an argument for conscription", (231) and the Presbyterian **Messenger** had fulminated against ". . . the love of pleasure paramount". (232)

Some ministers and adherents protested their church's overt partiality in the referendum. The Reverend Henry Howard's article in favour of conscription (233) evoked a reader's suggestion that "ministers of the Gospel would be well advised to confine themselves more to the holy vocation whereunto they were set apart, viz:—The preaching of the pure Gospel Of Christ, . . .". (234) Two Presbyterian Ministers protested. One wrote of the Public Questions Committee circular:

> I refuse to read it. I regard it as an unwarrantable interference; neither the Committee or the Moderator has any right whatever to make my work difficult. The feeling in Labour classes runs high. I find 8 out of 10 men against the Referendum and Union men are in all our Churches . . .". (235)

Donald A. Cameron said that he had worked in "pioneering or in poor" districts, where the feeling was prevalent that,

231. **Spectator**, 19 May 1916, p.647
232. **Messenger**, 4 February 1916, p.65
233. **Spectator**, 15 September, p.1178
234. **Spectator**, 27 September, p.1251, letter from F.C.R.
235. Presbyterian **Messenger**, 20 October, p.659, letter from H. Erskine
the Church on the present most momentous issue is taking sides in the most partisan spirit, and descending to the level of party politics . . . . Anti-conscriptionists may be mistaken or absolutely right, but the Presbyterian section of them have given as many proofs of good citizenship as their opponents and therefore surely are entitled to something better than accusations of disloyalty, pro-Germanism, and callous indifference about our soldiers at the front when they go to Church for worship or open the 'Messenger' for Sunday reading . . . ."(236)

In the main, Protestant Churches gave the force of their moral suasion to the 'YES' cause. How many adherents looked to church for leadership before they looked to party, class or self is impossible to divine. Probably churches were effective in confirming rather than forming views and this cut both ways; their partiality in what was seen as a political rather than a spiritual question, may have been resented enough to turn some of the faithful away from conscription, even away from Church.(237)

236. Presbyterian Messenger, 20 October, p.667

237. Jauncey, op.cit., p.204 claims, "The attitude of the Protestant Church during the conscription campaign was the means of divorcing many people from the Church". The text and ten signatories of "Conscription and Christianity", a manifesto issued by "the few Protestant Ministers opposed to conscription", are given pp.205-207
IV

Both sides in the campaign agreed that women and farmers constituted defined groups meriting the specially directed appeals.

Lady Munro-Ferguson, wife of the Governor-General, observed the referendum "means that the women are to be asked whether the men shall fight". (238) Women were in an invidious position. Wrote Vesta, in the Argus,

But I have satisfied myself that our is the hardest task, to decide not that our sons should go, but other mothers' sons. (239)

She counselled women to vote 'YES', but the belief that women in particular were susceptible to emotional appeal was apparent in both sides' campaigns.

"The Blood Vote" cartoon focussed on that very dilemma cited by Vesta:

I hear his widow cry in the night,
I hear his children weep
And always within my sight, O God!
The dead man's blood doth leap. (240)

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238. Novar Papers, MS 696/237, letter to Stamfordham, 5 September 1916

239. Argus, 20 September

240. The Blood Vote. See note 169, above
Conscriptionists recognised the potency of such appeals and countered with warnings against a different kind of remorse.

Like the woman who votes 'NO', the non-voting woman may doom a brave man to death and she may save a coward.
Few women will care to have this blood-guiltiness on their hands.(241)

Nine doctors, returned from the front, assured women that they were not sending another woman's son to his death, rather they were sending "... someone to help him, to reinforce him, then both may be saved".(242)

Death was not necessarily involved, Sir William Irvine told an audience of women at St. Kilda, and the Herald echoed him, indelicately:

The greater the number of men at the front, the shorter will be the war and the greater the economy of slaughter, if the phrase may be used.(243)

Casualty lists 226 and 227 had been published the previous day in the Herald giving the names of 287 dead and 1111 wounded, inescapable reminders that death would be involved for some conscripts.

The conscriptionists' technique was to show women their sympathy was being wasted on the horrible hun and the shirker.

241. Argus, 12 October
242. Age, 14 October
243. Herald, 3 October
The Prime Minister reminded them of Louvain, Edith Cavell and the Lusitania. (244) Urging the fine example of Dame Nellie Melba in publicly supporting 'YES', the Argus advised, "... let her any woman read (if she can withstand sufficiently long the sickness and horror) the official account of the atrocities in Belgium and the North of France." (245) and in a four column by four inches block asked

Why save the Shirkers?
That is What Voting No Means
Fit Men are Sheltering Behind Women. (246)

A Mr. Lionel Hall wrote to the same paper suggesting that separate ballot-papers should be provided for men and women. The Argus endorsed the suggestion in a leader which both flattered and threatened women. (247)

Both sides organised numerous women's meetings and a highlight of the campaign was the parade of women organised by anti-conscriptionists on Saturday 21 October. Several thousand women and children marched in procession down Swanston Street to the Yarra Bank. They carried banners proclaiming such things as - "Victims of Capitalist Greed", "He Takes Mothers' Last Shilling",

244. Argus, 4 October, Manifesto to Women
245. Argus, 27 October
246. Ibid.
247. Argus, 19 October
"We Stand By the Men", and "Women not Worms".(248) Eggs were thrown at marchers from the Town Hall but, according to A. W. Foster, "the impressive nature of the tableaux and the earnestness of the demonstrators" won the anti-conscriptionists "votes galore".(249)

Both sides accepted the premise that women would be ruled by the heart and not the head. Conscriptionists feared that many women would opt out of their dilemma by choosing not to vote, a fear which proved groundless.

Farmers attracted special attention because they employed seasonal workers in shearing and harvesting which occurred about this time of the year. The *Evening Echo* reminded farmers that, a few months before the last harvest, when fewer than 100,000 men had embarked, the *Argus* "started a scare about the inevitable shortage of labour for the harvest". What might be the effect with 300,000 gone and 16,500 required each month? And as increased shipping would be required to transport the conscripted troops, how could wheat and wool be carried to foreign markets? (250) To a Colac audience, Senator Findley quoted Sir William Irvine as saying "better for crops to rot and sheep to go unshorn" than for the referendum to be lost.(251)

248. *Herald*, 21 October
249. *Labor Call*, 26 October
250. *Evening Echo*, 6 October, articles headed "Conscription and the Crops"
251. *Colac Herald*, 20 October
Conscriptionists detected an uneasiness in rural districts and publicised the Prime Minister's promise to "release a sufficient number of bona fide rural workers after their attestation". Uncertainty persisted, however. Reports a few days apart in the middle of October claimed the Wimmera and country districts in general for conscription.

The farmers, too, have got the measure of the anti-conscriptionists and take a different view now of the 'bogey' which the 'anti' so industriously raise. But, one week later the Argus reported disquiet among farmers around Horsham and Stawell. The Mayor of Horsham expressed the opinion that there would have been far less opposition to conscription in the country districts had the calling of the men into camp been left till after the taking of the referendum.

The Premier, Sir Alexander Peacock, sent Hughes this telegram at Wagga:

Strong feelings amongst farmers that married sons should not count as members of father's families. Perhaps you could announce at tonight's meeting that married sons

252. Argus, 9 October
253. Age, 14 October
254. Argus, 17 October
255. Argus, 24 October
will not count. (256)

This disquiet appeared, even though, in the interim, Hughes had ordered the release immediately of men engaged in rural industries for the harvest period. (257) The Farmers and Settlers Association had urged support for the Referendum (258) and the Minister for Agriculture, Mr. Hagelthorn, did likewise. (259)

Very late in the campaign, Mr. Hughes issued an appeal to farmers in which he sought to calm their anxieties. (260) But if self-interest was influencing farmers' thinking on the referendum, as it seemed to be, then altruism could be forsaken and the argument met on its own ground. Only Great Britain's "good offices" enabled the payment of three shillings per bushel of wheat before it is sold. Therefore,

If the farmer votes 'NO' on the ground that he has done enough is not Great Britain warranted in giving the same answer when the request is made for an advance against the coming wheat crop? (261)

The farmer's choice, as the woman's, was not an easy one it

256. Premier's Department, Outward Correspondence, 23 October 1916, Registry No.3815
257. Age, 20 October
258. Age, 14 October
259. Argus, 24 October
260. Argus, 28 October
261. Argus, 27 October
seemed, and neither side vying for their support could feel confident how they would vote.

V

Liberal members of Parliament from Victoria, State and Federal, campaigned solidly for 'YES'. There is no sign of the Liberal reluctance to campaign for the Hughes-sponsored referendum which has been detected in South Australia. (262) The only Liberal of note to oppose conscription openly was Mr. Samuel Mauger (263) who had lost the Federal seat of Maribyrnong at the 1910 Federal election.

All Victorian Federal members who were present except Fenton (Maribyrnong) voted against the Military Service Referendum Bill. (264) Most of them carried their opposition into very active campaigning for 'NO'. Labour Senators from Victoria, Barnes, McKissock, Blakey, Findley and Barker were declared anti-conscriptionists. Senator Russell, who resigned from Cabinet because of the election-eve voting regulation proposals, declined

262. See Chapter I, p.14, above
263. Eleanor Moore, The Quest for Peace, (Melbourne 1949) p.35
264. C.P.D., Vol. LXX, 20 September, p.8763. Victorian Labour members present were Fenton, Brennan (Batman), Maloney (Melbourne), Hannan (Fawkner), Matthews (Melbourne Ports) and P. Moloney (Indi) and Tudor (Yarra). Anstey was paired. McGrath (Ballarat) and O'zanne (Corio) had enlisted. Hampson (Bendigo) was overseas
to discuss his attitude.(265)

The interesting figure is Frank Tudor. Pearce later claimed Tudor told him that he knew conscription was right but that "Richmond [in Tudor's electorate] won't stand for it."(266) There is evidence to support the claim. In August, Tudor was reported to have implicitly supported conscription at recruiting meetings at Merino and Casterton in Victoria's western district. Questioned about these reports at Political Labour Council meetings at Abbotsford and Richmond, Tudor made "an absolute denial of the alleged speech". But, "... Mr. Tudor, whilst emphatically denying ever having spoken in favour of conscription, omitted to make any pronouncement on the subject".(267) At a rally in Ballarat on 4 October, Tudor acknowledged that "this was the first public meeting he had addressed since he left the ministry".(268) A fortnight later he was attacked again by his own side. J. K. McDougall suggested that Tudor, during the campaign had "not hit his late colleagues very hard and that

265. Argus, 25 October 1916. Russell later left the party with Hughes, Argus, 17 November

266. George Foster Pearce, Carpenter to Cabinet, (London, 1951) p.143. Ian Turner, Industrial Labour and Politics, p.110, dismisses Pearce's claim too readily

267. Socialist, 18 August

268. Evening Echo, 5 October
they, to a man, have very astutely given the soft answer . . . " (269)

Against these accusations must be set Tudor's record. He had resigned from the Ministry(270) and had publicly stated: "I candidly admit that I cannot bring myself to send men out of Australia to fight". (271) He was not a hard-line conscriptionist; he insisted that it was right for the question to be referred to the people(272) and dissociated himself from the irrelevancies being expounded by his colleagues as arguments.(273)

Tudor and Senator Russell were the only Victorian Federal parliamentarians with ministerial rank and their soft-line or neutral approach was the more important because of this. The leader of the State Parliamentary Labour Party, G. A. Elmslie, also gave the impression of ambiguity of attitude. His resignation as leader was reported on 29 September, ill-health being the given reason.(274) The party refused to accept the resignation and granted leave of absence. Elmslie wrote in his letter of resignation:

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269. Socialist, 19 October. This was a response to "oblique references" that Tudor might be reinstated as Minister for Customs as soon as the referendum was over

270. Argus, 15 September

271. C.P.D., 14 September, p.8606

272. Evening Echo, 5 October. C.P.D., 14 September, p.8607

273. See p.87 above

274. Argus, 29 September
I especially regret my breakdown in health at this particular juncture as I had hoped to take part in the anti-conscription campaign. I have urged from every platform I could find time to occupy, the voluntary enlistment and expressed my opposition to conscription.(275)

Again, however, the doubts came from the anti-conscription side; a Councillor Baragwaneth at a South Melbourne meeting claimed that the member of Parliament for the district was in hiding and "likely to be in hiding until the campaign was over".(276) Elmslie took no part in the campaign. He did remain as party leader throughout the remainder of the war although he was not popular with all sections of the party.(277) Three labour members of the Legislative Assembly were expelled from the party:
Mr. J. Chatham (Grenville), Mr. J. W. McClachlan (Gippsland North) and Mr. W. Plain (Geelong).(278)

Nor was there always agreement among unionists. The union movement as a whole was solidly anti-conscriptionist and Victoria was the headquarters of the Trades Union Anti-Conscription

275. Labor Call, 5 October
276. Herald, 3 October
277. This detail I owe to Mr. A. A. Calwell. Elmslie succeeded Prendergast as Leader of the Opposition on 17 September 1913. Mr. Calwell recollects a feeling among Roman Catholics that Elmslie gained the leadership as a result of Masonic inspired manoeuvres while Prendergast was on a visit to Japan during 1913
278. Argus, 13 October
Congress and its National Executive. At its 31 August meeting, the Trades Hall Council declared its "straight out opposition to the proposals submitted by the Prime Minister". (279) The Executive all testified their opposition to conscription. The Council passed motions urging unions to release as many of their officials as possible from full-time work for service in the campaign and approving visits by the members of the Political Labour Council Central Executive to various unions to appeal for funds to carry out the campaign. (280)

The unions baulked, however, on the strike issue. The Congress issued Manifesto 2 on 26 September, condemning the forthcoming proclamation and calling for a 24 hour stop-work meeting to consider recommendations for further action. (281) Unions were asked to endorse the call. At a specially called meeting of one union, "the large attendance of members" carried a motion that "no action be taken and that all members be urged to vote 'NO' at the referendum." (282) It was a typical response as only five unions endorsed the strike. The Argus anticipated a "meagre" response while noting police arrangements for 40 mounted  

279. T.H.C., Minutes of Meeting, 31 August 1916
280. T.H.C., Minutes of Meetings, 14, 21 September
281. Riley Collection, Anti-Conscription Campaign, Trades Hall folder
282. Federated Brick, Tile and Pottery Industrial Union of Australia, Victorian Branch, Minutes of Special meeting in Oddfellows Hall, 3 October 1916. (These are lodged at the Latrobe Library, Victoria.)
and 150 foot police! The next day it reported on a "not impressive" demonstration and the Age referred to it as a "fiasco". (283) The Herald, however, was surprised, as although it had been expected that the meeting "would prove a failure", an estimated 25,000 attended (284) in the pouring rain. A delegate asked the 5 October Trades Hall meeting why the National Executive had failed to avert "the fiasco of last Wednesday" (285) The letter from the National Executive, received the following Thursday, was plainly an attempt to exculpate itself and shame the apathetic hundred-odd unions which had failed to meet the call. The Executive

"... earnestly [testified] that such Unions and Unionists (who stopped work) by their action kept Trade Unionism from being dragged in the mud. (286)

At the 12 October meeting, the Council defeated a motion which would have adjourned it until 2 November and released its officers entirely for referendum work. A motion that all pro-conscription printing be declared black, that the Printers and Typographical Society be notified of such and if they disobeyed, be expelled from the Trades Hall Council was defeated as was an

283. Argus, 4 October
284. Argus, Age, 5 October
285. Herald, 5 October
286. T.H.C., Minutes of Meeting, 5 October
amendment that unionists be urged to refrain from buying the Argus and Age until after 28 October. (287) However, serious deviations were not tolerated. The Brush Maker's Union smartly rescinded "the obnoxious motion supporting conscription" it had passed. (288) The Amalgamated Engineers briefly resisted pressure to withdraw their representatives from the Industrial Exemption Committee but agreed to do so in the face of threatened expulsion. (289) The labour movement was solidly anti-conscription but it was not unanimous. The rank and file unionist and labour supporter, whatever shade his attitude on conscription might be, could find among his leaders someone of a similar colouring. (290)

VI

Hughes was the key figure in the campaign and some mention of his role has already been made. His style and his decisions were important features of the campaign, in Victoria as elsewhere. The effect of his style on the outcome of the referendum

287. T.H.C., Minutes of Meeting, 19 October
288. Ibid.
289. Ibid., 28 September, 5 October
290. Ibid., 12, 19, 26 October

The Exemption Committee was set up by the Minister for Defence to advise on essential services in industry, for which automatic exemption would be granted. The T.H.C. had ignored a request from the Minister to nominate a representative. See Minutes of Meeting, 21 September 1916
is an imponderable; some, no doubt, were alienated by his fiery
denunciations while others, just as surely, were swayed to vote
'YES' by his emotional exhortations and attacks on anti-
conscriptionists. Hughes himself came under intense personal
attack, especially from the Labour movement, which may explain
some of his over-reactions, as, for example, to the telegram of
ex-Senator Rae(291) The threat to Unionism and White Australia
was "a lie . . . not of a very perturbing nature . . . open,
palpable" said the Age. Hughes was feeling these "deliberately
forged and circulated 'lies' with undue keenness - considering
what a seasoned political campaigner he is".(292) His case,
granted his integrity was in dispute, was sometimes over-stated.
His reply to those who charged that the message from Haig was
faked is not atypical: "... (they) vomit forth lies with every
breath".(293)

The election eve attempt to interfere with poll procedure
which was Hughes's most ill-judged and devious campaign act. An
Executive Council meeting at Melbourne on Wednesday, 25 October,
had rejected an electoral regulation requiring men who were
covered by the call-up proclamation to say whether they had
reported. If they had not, their votes were to be placed in

291. See p.95 above
292. Age, 13 October
293. Argus, 23 October
specially marked envelopes for later consideration. (294) Hughes convened another meeting, in Sydney, of the Executive Council, with different personnel including the unwitting Governor-General, and here the regulation was passed. Mr. Higgs, the Treasurer, and Senators Gardiner and Russell who had been parties to the Melbourne rejection, resigned from the Ministry when informed of this development and Higgs and Gardiner issued statements on Friday 27 October. Melbourne papers carried the stories of the resignations on referendum day. (295)

The regulation was withdrawn but the whole exercise was "a culpable error not to be excused even by the excitement of battle". (296) Hughes had said at Albury and Wagga on 23 October that, on referendum day some young men would get "the surprise of their lives". (297) Presumably he had this regulation in mind but his comment was not widely publicised and it is unlikely that many 'NO' voters stayed away from the polling booths because of the

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294. *Evening Echo*, 26 October reported the Executive Council's rejection of the regulation though not in detail.


296. *Round Table*, No.26, March 1917, p.381

297. *Age*, 24 October. The regulations were the subject of a no-confidence motion against Hughes, C.P.D., 29 November pp.9243-9248; 30 November, pp.9276-9329
threats made (298) Probably the whole episode helped the 'NO' cause by swinging its way those who were not yet committed but who saw in it further reason to distrust Hughes. The Governor-General feared the episode would "weaken the P.M's position - he already has the name of being 'full of tricks'". (299)

Why did Hughes attempt such a foolish manoeuvre and persist in the attempt when thwarted the first time? * Although he mildly rebuked Hughes, (by suggesting the Prime Minister show him "all the cards" (300) in such cases) the Governor-General was inclined to excuse him for, as "the little man had to take it [The 'YES' campaign] all upon his own shoulders, ... it is not surprising that the P.M. should sometimes err on the side of being too clever". (301) Numbers responding to the Proclamation were above expectations (see below) so Hughes could not have hoped to reduce significantly the 'NO' vote. That the right to vote went hand in hand with the duty to fight for one's country was one of his longest-held convictions. In 1908 he had said

* The Hughes papers throw no light on this question. I am indebted to Mr. L. F. Fitzhardinge for information on this point.

298. Evening Echo, 30 October, claimed many were kept from the polling booth by the threatened regulations

299. Novar Papers, MS 696/248, letter to Stamfordham, 30 October 1916

300. Ibid., MS 696/2513, letter to Hughes, 1 November 1916

301. Ibid., MS 696/248, letter to Stamfordham, 30 October 1916
those who refused to serve should be deprived of the vote and be regarded as "pariahs and political outcasts". (302) The voting regulations were an attempt to put this principle into practice.

If the decision to call the men into camp was a tactical error, it was also a sign of the Prime Minister's genuine concern for reinforcements. Hughes actually wanted to issue the proclamation as soon as Parliament resumed, a month earlier than was eventually the case. He was forced to compromise with those Labour members who wanted no proclamation issued until after the referendum, in order to obtain majority approval in Caucus for the referendum proposal. (303) The proclamation was issued on 29 September.

Its validity was challenged almost immediately in an opinion signed by A. W. Foster, Frank Brennan and Maurice Blackburn. (304) On 12 October another opinion, declaring the legality of the proclamation, was issued over the signatures of W. Harrison Moore, Dean of the Faculty of Law, E. F. Mitchell K.C., and H. E. Starke, Barrister-at-Law, and the legal skirmish ended there. (305)

302. C.P.D., Vol. XLVII, 7 October 1908, p.875
303. C.P.D., Vol. LXXI, 1 March 1917, p.10776
304. Riley Collection, Anti-Conscription folder, leaflet dated 2 October 1916
305. Argus, 13 October. An interesting comment on legal aspects was that of the Governor-General, writing to Stamfordham on 5 September 1916: "I learnt from the Chief Justice last night, in strict confidence, that in his opinion, this Government has no power to conscript for overseas service and that the point, if raised, might have to be settled by the Imperial Parliament. This must not leak out." Novar Papers, MS 696/237
Enrolment began on 2 October. Papers advertised days and alphabetical groups to report in Federal electorate areas. Men responded "cheerfully", although there was some "confusion" and a shortage of doctors to conduct medical inspection. (306) Men began to go into camp on 9 October at which stage 40,526 Victorians had reported of whom 17,340 has been found fit, 13,132 unfit and 8,179 doubtful in fitness. 12,760 had applied for exemption. (307) Camps had been generally put into the best possible condition so that the new men may enter upon their training in the happiest and most congenial circumstances. Camp life . . . should appeal to the young men and the expectation of the military authorities that at the bi-weekly parades a good many men will volunteer for active service are likely to be realised . . . ." (308)

By 13 October, about 2000 men were in training - 256 at Altona, 960 at Broadmeadows, 124 at Bendigo, 172 at Ballarat, 37 at Castlemaine, 291 at Geelong, 152 at Warragul and 105 at Warrnambool. (309) This total had risen to 3,773 on 17 October. (310)

306. Argus, 3 October; Herald, 4 October
307. Age, 9 October
308. Argus, 10 October
309. Age, 13 October
310. Argus, 18 October. By this date, 151,316 had registered throughout the Commonwealth and 9,664 of these were in camp
On referendum eve, the results of the Proclamation were as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Examined</th>
<th>Fit</th>
<th>Exemption Claims</th>
<th>Total in Training</th>
<th>Volunteers for A.I.F.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Queensland</td>
<td>31,258</td>
<td>19,115</td>
<td>13,512</td>
<td>4,686</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N.S.W.</td>
<td>50,877</td>
<td>25,129</td>
<td>31,019</td>
<td>7,228</td>
<td>510</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victoria</td>
<td>53,302</td>
<td>24,262</td>
<td>20,536</td>
<td>6,578</td>
<td>912</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Australia</td>
<td>17,428</td>
<td>10,616</td>
<td>8,000</td>
<td>2,591</td>
<td>518</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West. Australia</td>
<td>7,664</td>
<td>3,562</td>
<td>2,677</td>
<td>856</td>
<td>288</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tasmania</td>
<td>5,987</td>
<td>2,867</td>
<td>2,655</td>
<td>494</td>
<td>431</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

|                | 166,496  | 85,551 | 78,399            | 22,433            | 2,724                 |

Two conclusions may be drawn from these figures as regards Victoria. First, there was not the failure to register and report that had been apparent in the operation of the compulsory military training before the war. Pearce's estimate of eligible men in Victoria had been 48,302(312) and 5,000 more than this had reported. A very early report on the Proclamation scheme said that about thirty of three hundred who were to report to camp on a given day failed to do so.(313) Second, the number whose lives were wholly disrupted by induction into the army was relatively small, about 0.8% of eligible voters in Victoria. The induction of some would affect families but these were all single men,

311. Herald, 30 October. Obviously some applied for exemption before they were declared unfit

312. Argus, 10 October

313. Argus, 11 October. Senator Bakhap claimed that the referendum regulation relating to those who had failed to report was intended to "intimidate deserters".
probably not falling within any of the exemption categories. In terms of numbers having a taste of army life and voters suffering inconvenience because of the proclamation, this was not the serious tactical error of which Hughes been accused.

His real error in this connection was the extent of exemptions allowed. This was apparent soon after exemption courts began hearings on 9 October.\(^\text{314}\) The press had been surprised at the "unexpectedly large"\(^\text{315}\) number of claims entered for exemption — in the first two days of enrolment, 1593 men, sixty per cent of those declared fit, applied for exemption.\(^\text{316}\) Many were puzzled about exemption provisions, especially that relating to only sons. Was the age of other sons relevant?\(^\text{317}\) The day after the first exemption hearing, the \textit{Argus} engaged in a bout of wishful thinking:

\[\ldots\] many of the men will not take their claims into court. Upon mature consideration they will realise that futile and foolish claims will only waste their own time.

\(^{314}\) Five retired Stipendiary Magistrates and four Secretaries of departments who were Police Magistrates were appointed as additional magistrates to preside in the Exemption Courts in Victoria. \textit{Premier's Department, Outward Correspondence}, 10 October, Registry No.3649

\(^{315}\) \textit{Argus}, 4 October

\(^{316}\) \textit{Age}, 5 October

\(^{317}\) \textit{Herald}, 4 October. In a later judgement, Mr. Justice Hood ruled the words "only son" must be applied literally as the words "of military age" were not in the regulation. \textit{Herald}, 23 October
and that of the authorities . . . ." (318) At Ballarat, on 9 October, 24 applications were heard, 7 were refused, 2 adjourned and 15 granted. (319) The next day, of 63 cases heard at Ballarat, 37 were granted exemption and only 15 refused outright. The same day the Military Secretary stated his belief that sixty per cent of claims for exemption would be disallowed. (320) At that stage, 316 cases had been heard of which 102 had been disallowed and 46 adjourned. If the same average were maintained, 8,974 of the 16,493 who had applied would be granted exemption (321), and continuing reports showed the average was being maintained. In the week ending Saturday 14 October, 504 applications of 1003 heard were granted and 287 wholly disallowed. (322) On 21 October, published figures were:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Claims allowed:</th>
<th>2,331</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Claims disallowed:</td>
<td>1,197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Claims adjourned:</td>
<td>659</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partial exemptions:</td>
<td>386 (323)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On referendum eve, 24,262 of the men reporting had been declared

318. Argus, 10 October

319. Ibid. The Argus gave approximately twenty column inches of its report to details of applications refused and fourteen lines to those granted

320. Argus, 11 October

321. Ibid.

322. Argus, 14 October

323. Age, 21 October
fit and 20,536 had applied for exemption. (324) Clearly Victoria would not provide more than 14,000 conscripts from among single men between 21 and 35. This number would not quite supply Victoria's quota for the months September, October and November.

Weight of numbers rather than personalities or individual cases dominated the exemption hearings. Approximately half exemptions granted in early hearings were to only sons. (325) In Victoria, at least, Scott's assessment of the courts as being generally "patient and considerate, dealing fairly with the applications made to them" (326) is fair. The anti-conscription press would have been a sensitive barometer of "capricious" (327) exemption courts and playing up to the press gallery by magistrates, (328) but one finds no complaint in its columns. The real effect of the proclamation and exemption hearings in Victoria, and elsewhere, probably, was to bring home the fact that conscription of the numbers said to be required could not be

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324. See note 315 above. Some men applied for exemption before medical examination. Those rejected as unfit did not have to apply for exemption but had to undergo a second medical examination. It seems reasonable to assume that the vast majority of exemption claims were lodged by those declared and expecting to be declared fit.

325. Argus, 11 October

326. Scott, op.cit., p.352

327. Round Table, No.26, March 1917, p.385 makes this charge

328. Evatt, op.cit., p.408
achieved from among those single men whom, it was claimed, provided an adequate pool of eligibles. (329)

Overall, the campaign reflected little credit on its participants. The Governor-General's summation was just:

... apart from a few fine appeals, discussion never reached a high level; meetings were rowdy and the arguments which prevailed were advanced to produce false sentiments. (330)

Questioning of motives, personal attacks, guilt by association, irrelevancies, prevarication - these formed the substance of the campaign on both sides. Evocation of Empire and loyalty to the boys at the front had immediate emotional impact. But in the absence of guns and bombs, such rallying calls were difficult to

329. The final figures of the Proclamation to 21 November 1916 were:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number responding:</td>
<td>190,869</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number passed fit:</td>
<td>110,863</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number not examined:</td>
<td>11,350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number claiming exemption:</td>
<td>88,516</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of exemptions granted:</td>
<td>45,760</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of exemptions refused:</td>
<td>18,386</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exemption claims not dealt with:</td>
<td>21,284</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Figures for each state are not given.)

Source: Commonwealth Parliamentary Papers, Sessions 1914-15-16-17, Vol.11, p.215

C.P.D., 1 December, p.9359. 33,384 men entered camps. Figures for each state are not given

330. Novar Papers, MS 696/248 letter to Stamfordham, 10 November 1916
sustain over a long period. Eight weeks gave the individual
time to consult his own interests. The few tangible facts that
came to light – the extravagance of the numbers sought, the
impossibility of their provision from eligible men between 21
and 44 years for more than a few months, the reality of some
Maltese immigrants – cooled the excesses of fevered patriotism,
that might have meant a landslide 'YES'.

On referendum eve, the press carried the Prime Minister's
final exhortation for 'YES' in which he focussed attention on
the reason for it all, the war.

In the face of the stern facts that meet our eyes daily
in the war cables, which prove only too plainly that
Germany is not beaten ...(331)

This interpretation could not be placed on the war cables as
published throughout the campaign. On 18 October the Argus head-
lined Germany's loss of 1,630,000 killed, wounded or taken
prisoner and predicted "Disaster Ahead for the Enemy". A week
earlier, the Herald headline glowed, "Further Ground Gained:
British Move On: Casualties Again Light". (332) The headlines
the evening before referendum day proclaimed the "Shattering of
German Hopes at Verdun". The same edition featured a war corres-
pondent's interview with an Australian private who concluded,

331. Argus, 27 October
332. Herald, 9 October
"My opinion is the Boche is done". (333) Such confident reports were typical; the note of urgency permeating the case for conscription must have lost some credibility in the light of such reports.

Some men were in camp, not of their own volition. They had registered and entered camp without show of violence, confirmation, thought the Governor-General, that "the Australian is more given to grousing than to violence". (334) Some of the younger men had gone to short-term camps before the war without much enthusiasm. Now there would be a vote on their compelled military service after a campaign which provided, or revealed, myriad reasons for voting 'YES' or 'NO'. How the people would vote was unpredictable.

333. Herald, 27 October

334. Novar Papers, MS 696/246, letter to Stamfordham
15 October 1916
CHAPTER V

THE VOTE

I

The Prime Minister requested that Saturday 28 October be declared a holiday.(1) The State Government declined, ... in view of the strong representations that have been made to this Government as to the monetary loss which thousands of daily paid workers in private and government employ would suffer ...(2)

Neither could hotels be closed; the Act requiring them to be open would have to be amended, an impossibility as Parliament was adjourned.(3) Hughes solved this problem with a proclamation under the War Precautions Act closing licensed premises on 28 October.(4)

1. Premier's Department, Inward Correspondence, 12 October 1916, No.4091. A similar request came from the National Council of Women, 14 October, No.4199

2. Premier's Department, Outward Correspondence, 17 October 1916, No.3769

3. Ibid., 20 October, No.3798. The request to close liquor bars came from the Women's Christian Temperance Union

4. Premier's Department, Inward Correspondence, 27 October, No.4470
The poll was taken quietly throughout the state. Until lunch hour, it was "almost exclusively a women's vote" reported the Age. 'YES' supporters had more cars at their disposal "but the 'NOes' were by no means ill-provided for in the way of free conveyance". No questions as to military eligibility were asked "which fact seemed to surprise some of the younger male voters, notwithstanding the published announcement by the Prime Minister that no interference was contemplated".(5)

In Victoria, 696,684 people voted, a record 84.45% of the number enrolled. Voting was compulsory for the first time.(6) Newspapers had urged readers to enrol but they did not stress that voting was compulsory, probably because they felt Labour/ 'NO' would gain most from such reminders. Interest in the issue of conscription, rather than compulsion, accounts for the heavy poll.(7)

Results were awaited impatiently. The Herald published a

5. Age, 30 October 1916. Reports in papers throughout the state gave similar pictures of polling

6. Geoffrey Sawyer, Australian Federal Politics and Law 1901-1929 (Melbourne, 1956) p.139. There is no evidence of prosecution for failure to vote

7. Eleanor Moore, The Quest for Peace, p.34, writes that "at that time voting was not compulsory". This mistaken recollection of an active 'NO' campaigner suggests a general lack of awareness that voting was compulsory. Voting at elections was not compulsory but the poll at the 5 May 1917 elections was almost as heavy. This suggests that political consciousness, roused during the referendum campaign, brought people to the polls on both occasions
special edition on Sunday 29 October and 250,000 copies were sold. People walked from suburbs into the city to obtain copies; others waited along country roads for copies despatched to country districts. At Bendigo, more than 1000 people had gathered outside a newsagency by 11 a.m.; they remained until papers arrived at 1 p.m. (8)

These anxious citizens found incomplete returns which showed a small majority of Victorians favouring compulsory service, but a national majority opposing it. There was some speculation, for a time, that late returns and absentee votes might yet bring a small overall 'YES' majority. (9) On the other hand, a jubilant anti-conscriptionist surmised that some 50,000 shearers would be absentee voters and their support would safeguard the 'NO' majority. (10) When counting was finalised, it showed that a majority of 25,614 Victorians, 3.76 per cent of those who had voted, were in favour of compulsion.

8. Herald, 31 October 1916

9. Argus, 30 October, headlined, "Result Still in Doubt" Age, 31 October, commented: "As the figures grow larger, a majority for conscription seems to become more assured. Victoria's 'YES' majority is growing larger . . ." (At that stage, the Commonwealth 'NO' majority was 85,578. Victoria's 'YES' majority was 14,707)

10. Advocate, 4 November 1916
II

Details of voting in the twenty-one Victorian electorates along with voting in the Federal election of 1914 are given in Tables 1 and 2. The Labour movement and almost all its Victorian parliamentarians had been closely identified with the 'NO' campaign; Liberal parliamentarians were closely connected with the 'YES' campaign. It seems logical that an analysis of the referendum vote begin with a comparison of 'YES' and 'NO' votes relative to the electoral support of Liberal and Labour parties respectively.

The 5 September 1914 election, as the most recent, is taken as a comparative index of party support, but it must be qualified. With eleven of the twenty-one House of Representative seats and all six Senate places, Labour was in the ascendancy in Victoria, federally at least. But the Labour vote in 1914 had been significantly higher than at the two previous elections in May 1913 and April 1910 (Table 3).

TABLE 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Election</th>
<th>% of Enrolled Voting</th>
<th>% of Valid Vote*</th>
<th>Number of Seats Won</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Labour</td>
<td>Liberal</td>
<td>Labour Liberal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910</td>
<td>66.58%</td>
<td>48.37%</td>
<td>46.26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1913</td>
<td>75.49%</td>
<td>49.43%</td>
<td>49.15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1914</td>
<td>79.15%</td>
<td>53.40%</td>
<td>46.59%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* As some seats were uncontested, the percentage of valid votes is of votes cast for Senate candidates. In 1914, the seat of Gippsland was won by an independent who defeated a Liberal opponent. Source: Hughes and Graham, A Handbook of Australian Government and Politics, (Canberra 1968) pp.303, 307, 312
### TABLE 1

**SEPTEMBER 1914 ELECTION (HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES) AND REFERENDUM RESULTS IN LIBERAL DIVISIONS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DIVISION</th>
<th>ELECTION, SEPTEMBER 1914</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>No. on Roll</strong></td>
<td><strong>Number Voted</strong></td>
<td><strong>Liberal Vote</strong></td>
<td><strong>% of Valid Vote</strong></td>
<td><strong>Labour Vote</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>METROPOLITAN</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BALACLAVA</td>
<td>39,360</td>
<td>30,852</td>
<td>17,607</td>
<td>58.43</td>
<td>12,526</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* HENTY</td>
<td>45,944</td>
<td>34,340</td>
<td>17,742</td>
<td>52.82</td>
<td>12,607</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>∅ KOOYONG</td>
<td>41,758</td>
<td>31,865</td>
<td>19,344</td>
<td>62.83</td>
<td>11,446</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COUNTRY</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CORANGAMITE</td>
<td>38,023</td>
<td>32,640</td>
<td>16,575</td>
<td>51.62</td>
<td>15,535</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECHUCA</td>
<td>36,500</td>
<td>29,447</td>
<td>16,805</td>
<td>58.23</td>
<td>12,053</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FLINDERS</td>
<td>37,400</td>
<td>29,033</td>
<td>14,956</td>
<td>52.55</td>
<td>13,448</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WANNON</td>
<td>35,471</td>
<td>30,461</td>
<td>16,079</td>
<td>53.63</td>
<td>13,902</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>∅ WIMMERA</td>
<td>35,808</td>
<td>27,543</td>
<td>17,884</td>
<td>66.44</td>
<td>8,984</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>∅ GIPPSLAND</td>
<td>36,996</td>
<td>30,831</td>
<td>16,576</td>
<td>55.59</td>
<td>13,239</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REFERENCE</td>
<td>NO. on Roll</td>
<td>% of Valid Vote 'YES'</td>
<td>% of Valid Vote 'NO'</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>-----------------------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>25,728</td>
<td>64.87</td>
<td>12,306</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>45,347</td>
<td>68.23</td>
<td>14,127</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>43,995</td>
<td>66.96</td>
<td>12,509</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>35,13</td>
<td>66.04</td>
<td>12,509</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>31,063</td>
<td>63.21</td>
<td>14,260</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>30,210</td>
<td>60.50</td>
<td>12,579</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>32,563</td>
<td>57.27</td>
<td>12,655</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>19,268</td>
<td>54.73</td>
<td>14,195</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>15,095</td>
<td>51.54</td>
<td>10,867</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16,881</td>
<td>60.84</td>
<td>9,930</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>28,453</td>
<td>63.39</td>
<td>9,930</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>39,204</td>
<td>63.39</td>
<td>9,930</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Henty, a third candidate polled 3,256 votes.

In Wimmera and for Gippsland, Senate figures are given for Somers (Liberal) and for the independent opposition leader, Robertson (Lab) and the Liberal opposition leader, Cochrane. There was no endorsement by the Labour candidate in Gippsland.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Division</th>
<th>No. on Roll</th>
<th>Number Voted</th>
<th>Liberal Vote</th>
<th>% of Valid Vote</th>
<th>Labour Vote</th>
<th>% of Valid Vote</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>METROPOLITAN</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* BATMAN</td>
<td>38,332</td>
<td>27,654</td>
<td>- 7,462</td>
<td>29.66 (Brennan)</td>
<td>- 19,451</td>
<td>70.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BOURKE</td>
<td>44,628</td>
<td>34,065</td>
<td>- 11,407</td>
<td>34.07 Anstey</td>
<td>- 22,075</td>
<td>65.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAWKNER</td>
<td>39,765</td>
<td>30,090</td>
<td>- 11,981</td>
<td>40.66 Hannan</td>
<td>- 17,483</td>
<td>59.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MARYBURNONG</td>
<td>42,582</td>
<td>32,991</td>
<td>- 11,574</td>
<td>35.71 Fenton</td>
<td>- 20,834</td>
<td>64.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MELBOURNE</td>
<td>37,709</td>
<td>27,472</td>
<td>- 8,194</td>
<td>30.73 Maloney</td>
<td>- 18,471</td>
<td>69.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* MELBOURNE PORTS</td>
<td>45,285</td>
<td>31,180</td>
<td>- 5,828</td>
<td>21.48 Matthews</td>
<td>- 24,583</td>
<td>78.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* YARRA</td>
<td>59,607</td>
<td>29,141</td>
<td>- 5,355</td>
<td>20.59 Tudor</td>
<td>- 23,200</td>
<td>79.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>COUNTRY</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BALLARAT</td>
<td>38,097</td>
<td>33,263</td>
<td>- 15,963</td>
<td>48.82 McGrath</td>
<td>- 16,734</td>
<td>51.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☞ BENDIGO</td>
<td>35,566</td>
<td>29,788</td>
<td>- 13,145</td>
<td>44.90 Arthur</td>
<td>- 16,134</td>
<td>55.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CORIO</td>
<td>38,712</td>
<td>31,899</td>
<td>- 15,316</td>
<td>48.81 O'Keane</td>
<td>- 16,064</td>
<td>51.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☞ GRAMPIANS</td>
<td>34,740</td>
<td>29,706</td>
<td>- 14,517</td>
<td>49.70 Jolley</td>
<td>- 14,694</td>
<td>50.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INDI</td>
<td>35,236</td>
<td>30,636</td>
<td>- 14,900</td>
<td>48.98 Moloney, P.</td>
<td>- 15,519</td>
<td>51.02</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## TABLE 2

### REFERENDUM

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. on Roll</th>
<th>Number Voted</th>
<th>'YES'</th>
<th>% of Valid Vote</th>
<th>'NO'</th>
<th>% of Valid Vote</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>38,222</td>
<td>32,737</td>
<td>11,555</td>
<td>36.3</td>
<td>20,277</td>
<td>63.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49,458</td>
<td>42,491</td>
<td>18,196</td>
<td>43.64</td>
<td>23,499</td>
<td>56.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40,174</td>
<td>33,022</td>
<td>16,154</td>
<td>50.41</td>
<td>15,891</td>
<td>49.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46,022</td>
<td>39,912</td>
<td>18,198</td>
<td>46.44</td>
<td>20,987</td>
<td>53.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36,692</td>
<td>29,311</td>
<td>11,650</td>
<td>41.01</td>
<td>16,759</td>
<td>58.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44,120</td>
<td>36,332</td>
<td>12,356</td>
<td>34.68</td>
<td>23,271</td>
<td>65.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41,227</td>
<td>33,504</td>
<td>9,825</td>
<td>29.81</td>
<td>23,138</td>
<td>70.19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Figures in election are mean of votes for Liberal and Labour Senate candidates

◊ There were by-elections in Bendigo and Grampians on 6 February 1915. Labour retained Bendigo but lost Grampians

Victoria was the only state in the Commonwealth with a non-Labour government. After the state elections of 26 November 1914, Labour had twenty-two Assembly seats and the Liberals forty-three. Of Labour seats, thirteen were metropolitan and nine were country, three of the latter being Bendigo East, Bendigo West and Eaglehawk. Of the Liberals forty-three seats, thirty-five were in the country. (11) Labour members represented electorates with a total of 310,626 constituents; Liberals represented electorates with a total of 500,171 constituents. (12) Thus there was no real tradition of a depth in Labour majority support in Victoria.

In general, the results of the referendum show a correlation between party and attitude to conscription. Only one Liberal held electorate recorded a 'NO' majority, Grampians, and this had been won by Labour in 1914 but lost narrowly in a February 1915 by-election. In all other Liberal held electorates except Wannon and Echuca, the 'YES' majority was significantly greater than the Liberal candidate's majority in 1914. Eight Labour held electorates returned 'NO' majorities; Indi, Corio and Fawkner


12. For discussion of party electoral support in Victoria, see:
recorded majorities for 'YES'. Corio and Indi had been Liberal seats before 1914 and the swings which made them 'YES' divisions were about 3½ per cent and 2½ per cent respectively. The slight 'YES' majority in Fawkner represented a swing of some five per cent, but Fawkner had been a Liberal seat before 1913. Only in the electorate of Ballarat was the 'NO' majority greater than that of the successful Labour candidate in 1914.

A federal Labour majority became a 'YES' majority; ipso facto, more Labour voters of 1914 changed allegiance to vote 'YES' than Liberals to vote 'NO'. "Parties and sexes voted anyhow", thought the Governor-General in an early comment.(13) The analysis in a later Affairs Report, however, employed assumptions about switching of sides.

... if every "labour" voter in that state [New South Wales] voted 'NO', then 14.8 per cent - or more than one in seven - "liberal" voters voted 'NO'.

If it is assumed that all "liberals" in Victoria, Queensland, Western Australia and Tasmania voted 'YES', then in those states, 9.9, 11.4, 43.9 and 13.2 per cent of the "labour" vote also voted 'YES'.(14)

It was "in that section of it [Victoria] we call the metropolis", as the Socialist(15) sadly admitted, that Labour lost

---

13. **Novar Papers**, MS 696/255 letter dt Stamfordham, 10 November 1916


15. **Socialist**, 3 November 1916
expected support. Labour candidates had totalled 182,406 votes in metropolitan constituencies in September 1914 as against 116,474 votes polled by their Liberal opponents.(16) In the same constituencies, the 'NO' aggregate was 182,764 while 'YES' totalled 176,346. Most obviously, anticipated support for 'NO' failed to materialize in the Labour electorates of Bourke, Fawcetter, Maribyrnong and Melbourne for which most sub-divisional voting figures are given in Table 4. 'NO' fared badly relative to the 1914 Labour vote in populous Labour areas such as Albert Park, Prahran, South Melbourne, Flagstaff Gardens, Gipps, North Melbourne and West Melbourne.(17) Many large sub-divisions in the electorates of Bourke and Maribyrnong show a large increase in enrolment. While this may have affected the previous political balance in the electorates, many Labour voters must have defected to 'YES' to account for the results in such areas of Bourke as Brunswick North, Brunswick South, Northcote, Preston and in all the sub-division of Maribyrnong. Pockets of Liberal

16. These aggregates include the mean vote of the six Labour and six Liberal Senate candidates respectively in Batman, Melbourne Ports and Yarra, where retiring Labour members were unopposed, and in Kooyong where no endorsed Labour candidate opposed Sir Robert Best.

17. Local histories of Prahran and South Melbourne exist but they do not offer much information on the political composition of the districts. Charles Daley, The History of South Melbourne (Melbourne 1940); John Butler Cooper, History of Prahran. (Revised edition, Melbourne 1924)
## Table 4

**Election (H. of R.)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Division</th>
<th>Sub-division</th>
<th>Enrolled</th>
<th>Voted</th>
<th>Lib.</th>
<th>Lab.</th>
<th>Enrolled</th>
<th>Voted</th>
<th>Referendum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>FAWKNER</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albert Park</td>
<td></td>
<td>7990</td>
<td>5741</td>
<td>2077</td>
<td>3621</td>
<td>7843</td>
<td>5676</td>
<td>2720</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle Park</td>
<td></td>
<td>3522</td>
<td>2669</td>
<td>1596</td>
<td>1248</td>
<td>3686</td>
<td>2738</td>
<td>1525</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prahran</td>
<td></td>
<td>11227</td>
<td>7665</td>
<td>2811</td>
<td>4711</td>
<td>11290</td>
<td>7784</td>
<td>3436</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Melbourne</td>
<td></td>
<td>7287</td>
<td>5146</td>
<td>1210</td>
<td>3874</td>
<td>7354</td>
<td>5095</td>
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**Referendum 28 October 1916**

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</tbody>
</table>
strength in these electorates - Middle Park, South Yarra, Ivanhoe, East Melbourne - do not show so marked a disparity between Labour and 'NO' votes. 'YES' made smallest gains where there were fewest Labour voters. The implication is that so-called Labour strongholds contained many soft-core Labour supporters, at least where conscription was concerned.

Where enrolment was stable, 'NO' lost ground; where it had increased, generally 'NO' failed to gain a share of votes proportionate to Labour's share in 1914. Some ten per cent more voters than in 1914 cast votes. Professor Sawer has suggested that the introduction of compulsory voting by the Labour government was motivated by its belief that most non-voters at elections were Labour supporters. (18) If Labour's reasoning was correct, 'NO' should have received more support than 'YES' from referendum voters who had not voted in 1914. If it did, then the incidence of defection by Labour voters must have been even greater than appears at first sight.

Less obviously, Labour/ 'NO' lost ground in Batman, Melbourne Ports and Yarra. Brennan, Matthews and Tudor had been unopposed in these seats in 1914 and they returned enormous 'NO' majorities. However, when one compares the 'NO' vote in each of these divisions with the mean vote of the Labour Senate candidates (Table 1) in 1914, it is evident that 'NO' fared badly in these divisions also. Batman showed greatest fidelity to the Labour stand with a loss of only

18. Sawer, op. cit., p.139
6.6 per cent on the 1914 Senate figures; heaviest loss was in Carlton sub-division and lightest in Fitzroy Central. 'NO' was down 9.4 per cent in Yarra with a fairly uniform loss through sub-divisions. 'NO' fared worst in Melbourne Ports, especially in Newport, Port Melbourne, Williamstown and Yarraville sub-divisions. Overall, the 'NO' vote in Melbourne Ports was down 13.2 per cent on the Labour Senate vote in that division.

The same patterns are apparent in the metropolitan Liberal seats. For example, in 1914, John Curtin had a majority in the sub-division of Balaclava in Balaclava electorate. The 'NO' vote there was almost 300 fewer than the Labour vote even though 600 more voted. The 'YES' vote was an increase of 900 on Watt, the Liberal candidate's, tally in 1914. In Prahran Gardens, also carried by Labour in 1914, about the same numbers cast votes on each occasion. 'NO' was down 274 (13 per cent) on the 1914 Labour vote and 'YES' was up 334 (21.5 per cent) on the Liberal vote. Elsewhere in the division of Balaclava, the 'NO' vote was almost as large numerically as had been the Labour vote but 'YES' scored from 15 to 30 per cent more votes than had Watt in 1914.

Comparisons in the divisions of Kooyong and Henty are more difficult as each was a three-cornered contest in 1914, and Vida Goldstein was not an endorsed Labour candidate in Kooyong. Oakleigh (Henty) was the only sub-division in either electorate with a Labour majority and comparison of Liberal/ 'YES' and
Labour/"NO" votes here shows the same pattern as in Balaclava and Prahran Gardens. Again, too, the Labour/"NO" votes were about the same numerically in most sub-divisions but the 'YES' majorities were much greater than had been Liberal majorities, especially in Henty where votes cast were up by 33 per cent.

The failure of anti-conscriptionists to retain Labour supporters in the provincial centres is also clear. In only six of the thirty-five country sub-divisions where 2000 or more votes were cast did 'NO' increase its proportion of votes relative to Labour's share in 1914. 'YES' improved relative to the Liberal vote in twenty-seven of these centres. Again it is areas of previous Labour voting strength that show the most marked swing: Geelong West and Barwon (Corio), Eaglehawk and Golden Square (Bendigo), Maryborough (Grampians) and Wonthaggi (Flinders).

It is clear that many who had voted Labour in 1914 voted 'YES' in the referendum in cities and towns throughout the state. It is also clear that infidelity to the Labour position was most prevalent where Labour had previously shown greatest strength. The incidence of Liberal supporters voting 'NO' is difficult to determine; it is obscured by the heavy traffic of Labour voters crossing to 'YES'. Results of the 5 May 1917 elections suggest that some Liberal voters did vote 'NO'. In nine of the eighteen electorates contested, Liberal candidates scored a two per cent, at least, greater share of votes cast than had 'YES'. (Table 5)
TABLE 5

COMPARATIVE RESULTS, 'YES'/LIBERAL AND 'NO'/LABOUR
AT REFERENDUM 28 OCTOBER 1916, AND
ELECTIONS, (HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES) 5 MAY 1917

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Division</th>
<th>Yes 1917</th>
<th>+ or</th>
<th>Percentage of Vote</th>
<th>+ or</th>
<th>Labour Candidate 1917</th>
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<td>48.90</td>
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<tr>
<td>Henty</td>
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<td>70.63</td>
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<tr>
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<td>66.30</td>
<td>Unopposed</td>
<td>33.04</td>
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<tr>
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<td>52.16</td>
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<tr>
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<td>-1.26</td>
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<td>60.25</td>
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<td>33.75</td>
<td>-0.93</td>
<td>65.32</td>
<td>66.25</td>
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<td>28.68</td>
<td>-1.13</td>
<td>70.19</td>
<td>71.32</td>
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COUNTRY

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<td>39.16</td>
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Source: Referendum figures, loc. cit.
Only in Batman did Labour gain a more than two per cent better share of the vote than 'NO'. It made small recoveries in Melbourne, Melbourne Ports and Yarra and lost a little of its referendum support in Bourke and Maribyrnong. Thus the traffic was largely towards the Liberals, especially in the country, but also in Henty and Balaclava. The split in the Labour party after the referendum may have cost it votes but it is difficult to see why Labour voters would follow Hughes in 1917 if they had not done so on conscription. A more likely explanation of the increased Liberal vote is the return of those supporters who, for their own reasons, had voted 'NO' at the referendum. Signs of this reversion to Liberal support may be seen in some of those sub-divisions referred to earlier as pockets of Liberal strength in Labour areas. Labour's share of the vote fell by more than two per cent from the 'NO' vote in Ivanhoe, Middle Park, South Yarra and East Melbourne. Probably Labour retained its hard-core supporters in these sub-divisions but Liberal voters who had swelled the 'NO' vote returned to the Liberal fold. Of course, it must be remembered that if many Liberal voters did vote 'NO', any estimate of Labour/'YES' voters must be increased accordingly.

The pattern is too general to be explained by local influences, but results in some districts invite conjecture about the

19. Scott, Australia During the War, pp.363-396 explains and discusses political metamorphoses after the referendum
effect of local members' roles in the campaign. 'NO' lost Labour voters in the areas of Labour expellees (20) Plain and Chatham (whose seats fell within Corio) and McLachlan (Gippsland). Plain, who had been the member for Geelong for eight years and had the prestige of secretaryship of the National Referendum Council, must have been influential in Geelong. Uncertainty about the attitude of Elmslie (21) may have been a factor in suburbs around South Melbourne in Fawkner electorate. (The Labour vote in South Melbourne in May 1917 improved on the 'NO' vote although it lost ground elsewhere in the electorate.) Allegations against Anstey (22) may have alienated some erstwhile Labour supporters in Bourke, and perhaps elsewhere, from anti-conscription.

On the other hand, the surprising support for 'YES' in mining Wonthaggi could not be attributed to the influence of someone like Sir William Irvine. Neither is there a convenient local member to explain the 'YES' vote in Maryborough, a state Labour seat. Dr. Maloney was a very active campaigner against conscription, Frank Tudor apparently less so, yet more Labour supporters were faithful to 'NO' in Yarra than in Melbourne. A. T. Ozanne (Corio) and D. C. McGrath (Ballarat), both Labour, were the only Victorian federal members on active service.

20. See above, p.146
21. See above, pp.145-146
22. See above, p.113
Corio returned a 'YES' majority; Ballarat returned a 'NO' majority greater than McGrath's.

The vote in Wedderburn (Grampians), home of the Jacka family, suggests that a genuine local issue could influence attitudes and votes. In three federal elections, September 1914, a by-election in February 1915 and in May 1917, the Liberal and Labour candidates respective tallies were 1101 - 524, 934 - 395, 924 - 452. In the referendum of 1916, 'YES' polled 748, 'NO' polled 643. This was an extraordinary improvement in the 'NO' vote relative to the Labour vote. It suggests a strong local reaction in favour of Jacka Senior and against the mysterious Reg W. Turnbull of that town - or against the tactics which created him. (23) Such genuinely local issues are not to be found elsewhere, however. The major influences and issues of the referendum were general rather than local.

III

Outside the metropolitan area, 'YES' polled 177,584 and 'NO' 145,552. This gave 'YES' its state majority but there are features of this result which show that country people, particularly those outside the large provincial centres, were dubious about the effects of conscription.

Using support for Labour or Liberal candidates in September 1914 as an index of likely attitudes to conscription, comparisons

can be made in nine of the eleven country electorates. Wimmera and Gippsland were not contested by Labour in 1914. In these nine constituencies, the Liberal candidates' aggregate in 1914 was 138,256 votes and Labour candidates' aggregate was 124,655. In the four seats won by Liberals - Corangamite, Echuca, Flinders and Wannon - the Liberal aggregate was 64,415 and 'YES' polled 67,579 in these same constituencies. As Tables 1 and 2 showed, there was little or no increase in numbers voting in most country electorates (24) and the small increase in the 'YES' vote in these four divisions is entirely due to the result in Flinders, much of which was fringe metropolitan. Labour candidates polled 54,938 votes in these divisions in 1914 and 'NO' polled 53,367 in 1916. Labour candidates totalled 79,145 votes in the five divisions won by Labour in 1914 - Ballarat, Bendigo, Corio, Grampians and Indi. Liberal candidates polled 73,509 votes in these divisions. In the referendum tallies for these divisions, 'YES' totalled 73,509 and 'NO', 70,988. In the May 1917 elections, the coalition "Win the War" Party polled significantly better in country divisions, without exception, than did 'YES'. (Table 5)

Seemingly then, Labour supporters held to the Labour anti-conscription line better in the country than in the city and more Liberals than in the metropolitan area were inclined to vote 'NO'.

24. Actually, enrolment in the nine country divisions excluding Flinders (an increase of 1973) and Wimmera (an increase of 4865) was down by a total of 13,389 on the September 1914 figures. Only in Ballarat (down 4 per cent) did the percentage of enrolled electors voting drop significantly. In almost all other cases it rose
Further distinctions, however, need to be made. As was pointed out earlier, 'YES' improved its position relative to the Liberal vote in the great majority of voting centres where 2000 or more votes were cast. Thus it must have been in the smaller, rural centres that 'NO' had appeal. This is confirmed by adding the totals of 'YES' and of 'NO' votes in each of the sub-divisions of 2000+ within Ballarat, Bendigo, Corio, Echuca, Indi and Wannon divisions. In each division, the balance of votes to be drawn from the smaller sub-divisions shows a higher ratio of 'NO' votes and lower ratio of 'YES' votes in those sub-divisions than in the larger centres.

Voters in Gippsland were clearly in favour of conscription with no reservations apparent in the vote. Flinders was semi-urban and the bulk of Corio, Ballarat and Bendigo divisions came from the three large provincial cities. Table 6 is a summary.

<table>
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<th>Region</th>
<th>Wheat (acres)</th>
<th>Wool (lbs produced)</th>
<th>Cattle (includes dairy cattle)</th>
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<td>21,182</td>
<td>8,367,921</td>
<td>284,998</td>
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<td>Mallee</td>
<td>1,245,751</td>
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<td>845,155</td>
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<td>67,803</td>
<td>6,736,135</td>
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<tr>
<td>Western</td>
<td>164,560</td>
<td>32,471,659</td>
<td>273,175</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wimmera</td>
<td>706,697</td>
<td>14,403,191</td>
<td>40,900</td>
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Source: Victorian Year Book, 1916-17, at p.664
of land utilization and primary production for 1916. The country divisions other than the five just mentioned are located in the areas named in the summary approximately as follows:

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<tr>
<th>Division</th>
<th>Region in Year Book Summary (see map)</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Northern</td>
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<td>Grampians</td>
<td>Wimmera and Northern</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wannon</td>
<td>Western and Wimmera</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wimmera</td>
<td>Mallee and Wimmera</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The figures suggest that the cattle and dairy men of Gippsland and Corangamite feared nothing from conscription and voted accordingly. Where Corangamite division ended in the Western region and Wannon began, the sheep country began and Wannon extended up into the Wimmera region. 'NO' scored well in Wannon and in Echuca which took in most of the wool-rich Northern region. Grampians, a Liberal seat which returned a 'NO' majority, straddled Northern and Wimmera regions, second and third most productive areas of wool and wheat. Wimmera electorate, embracing the whole of the Mallee region, did return a large 'YES' majority. Labour had no candidate in 1914 but a comparison of the 'YES' vote with the mean vote in Wimmera of the six Liberal Senate candidates shows the 'YES' vote 6.5 percent down on the Senate vote. None of this shows a dramatic turn to 'NO' in wheat and wool country but it must be remembered
that Labour's vote in country seats in 1914 had been exceptionally high and that the defection from Labour's anti-conscription in its metropolitan centres of acknowledged strength was of the order of five per cent. The 'NO' vote in Wannon, Echuca, Grampians and Wimmera was sufficiently solid to suggest that wheat and wool growers feared some adverse effects if conscription were implemented.

But, at most, it can only be said that the Victorian farmers were dubious. They did not respond to the threat of conscription as did their New South Wales counterparts although there seems to be no reason why farmer reaction in the two states should be so different. The Census of 1911 showed 83,343 Victorian males engaged in agricultural pursuits and 27,019 engaged in pastoral pursuits. The corresponding figures for New South Wales were 77,599 and 69,274.\(^{(25)}\) New South Wales produced 262,044,982 lbs. of wool in 1916 as against Victoria's 82,330,998 lbs.\(^{(26)}\) New South Wales had 3,805,699 acres under wheat crop and Victoria 3,125,692 acres. However Victorian crops yielded 16.37 bushels per acre as compared with 9.71 bushels per acre in New South Wales for the 1916-17 season.\(^{(27)}\) Such a "bumper" crop would have been foreseen by 28 October 1916 which suggests Victorian


\(^{26}\) Commonwealth Year Book, 1918, p.323

\(^{27}\) Ibid., p.337, 343
wheat farmers should have been more apprehensive about scarcity of labour for the harvest than their colleagues over the border.

The Governor-General believed that recruiting politicians, "funking the unions . . . energetically toured country districts to flog the willing horse with the result that the land industries . . . have lost men where there were already too few."(28)

Neither here nor in a similar comment to Bonar Law, then Secretary of State,(29) did Munro-Ferguson distinguish among states. To the end of September 1916, 90,342 Victorians had enlisted and 125,487 New South Welshman.(30) These totals represent similar proportionate representation from each state and there is no available evidence to suggest that recruiting was more successful in the country areas of New South Wales than in the country areas of Victoria. Total enlistments for Australia at that date were 327,636.(31) For the whole period of the war, enlistments of those whose occupation was given as "Country Callings" was 57,430.(32) This figure does not suggest that Australia in general, or New South Wales or Victoria in particular, was

28. Novar Papers, MS 696/248, letter to Stamfordham, 30 October 1916

29. Ibid., MS 696/834, 29 October 1916

30. Scott, op.cit., figures compiled from Appendix No.3, p.871. It must be remembered, of course, that the 3rd Military District, "Victoria", included the Riverina district of New South Wales

31. Ibid.

32. Ibid., p.872
demurred of its rural work force. The Pastoral Review of August 1916 made passing reference to a shortage of labour in Victoria to explain the lower acreage of wheat that season. In September, the journal's only comment on labour problems was on the attitude of shearsers in New South Wales seeking a higher award. It was "anticipated there will be plenty of shearsers available" in Victoria. The October review of the rural scene said the only threat in New South Wales to the best season for years was the possible danger of heavy rains damaging crops. (33) Only Queensland was noted in the Labour Bulletin for July to September 1916 as a state where "in the agricultural and pastoral industries ... the supply of labour is unequal to the demand." (34)

It seems that the rural labour shortage was more imagined than real. The call-up in October gave it some reality. The men required for agriculture had been promised exemption by Hughes on 20 October, but they were not let out of camp until the day of the referendum, "... too much of an eleventh-hour proceeding to do any good", wrote Munro-Ferguson. (35) As has already been pointed out, the numbers in camps were not large, but such tardiness must have given the impression of reluctance. However, the impression would have been as strong in Victoria,

34. Labour Bulletin, No.15, July-September 1916, p.224
35. Novar Papers, MS 696/248, letter to Stamfordham, 30 October 1916
where uneasiness about the call-up and consequent scarcity of labour had been expressed, (36) as elsewhere. If "wheat unharvested and sheep unshorn, cattle unslaughtered and cows unmilked - these were the worst of all possible evils, and the farmers voted against them," (37) why did not Victorian farmers vote against these evils? Clearly prospects of "cattle unslaughtered and cows unmilked" do not seem to have moved the dairymen and cattlemen. Wheat and woolgrowers' enthusiasm for conscription is obviously tempered, but these Victorian farmers did not respond to the threat to their interests as did the New South Wales farmers. One is forced to the conclusion that either propaganda to this end was much more effective in New South Wales than in Victoria or the political character of New South Wales rural constituencies is quite different from that of Victorian rural constituencies. In other words, the referendum votes of farmers in Victoria had only a little to do with their being farmers and much more to do with the many issues in the referendum affecting all classes and occupations.

36. See above, p.141
37. Ian Turner, Industrial Labour and Politics, p.116
IV

Conscriptionists' fears that women might refrain from voting proved groundless; women voters increased in the same ratio as men voters. In metropolitan Labour divisions, from six to fourteen per cent more of eligible women than had done so in 1914 went to the polls. In Henty and Kooyong, eleven per cent more of the eligible females voted at the referendum.

The ballot box does not definitely yield up its secrets on the point, but it does not seem that women were especially concerned to save their own or other mothers' unenlisted sons by voting 'NO'. A distinct inclination by women as a group to vote 'NO' would have been reflected in the ballot. Because of the war-time circumstances of the referendum, women formed an unusually high proportion of voters in the sub-divisions. This discrepancy between male and female voters is most marked in metropolitan divisions because of the large increase in enrolment in these divisions. Assuming the general validity of past Labour or Liberal support as a pointer to probable attitudes to conscription, this imbalance of male and female voters does provide a clue about the votes of women as a whole. If, as well as the general voter trend to 'YES' already outlined, female voters had a partiality to 'YES', this trend would have been accentuated in the sub-divisional voting. On the other hand, if women on the whole were partial to 'NO', their greater numbers would have compensated for the trend to 'YES' in metropolitan sub-divisional voting.
<table>
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<tr>
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<td>480</td>
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<td>2561</td>
<td>2360</td>
<td>3387</td>
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Table 7 shows the numbers of males and females voting in the various sub-divisions of Balaclava, Bourke and Fawkner constituencies in the House of Representatives election of September 1914 and the conscription referendum. The striking feature of Table (apart from the Liberal/YES increase and Labour/NO decline or failure to improve, already noted in relation to Table 4 above) is the increase, more than ten percent in every sub-division, in the number of women voters. In most cases, the number of male voters shows a slight decrease in 1916. The suggestion is not that the increased number of women is responsible for the increase in 'YES' votes over Liberal votes, but that as they constituted such a disproportionate part of the sub-divisions, any failure by women to contribute their share of 'YES' votes would be revealed in these circumstances. If women in general were susceptible to persuasions to vote 'NO', male Labour voters must have been persuaded to vote 'YES' in inexplicably large proportions to effect the sub-divisional increase in 'YES' over the 1914 Liberal vote. It is much more likely that women contributed at least a proportionate share to the 'YES' vote.

In the country, the percentage of eligible women voting did not vary much from that of September 1914 except in Flinders (up 6 per cent), Echuca (up 5 per cent) and Ballarat (down 6 per cent). The 'YES' vote in Echuca lost ground to the Liberal vote of 1914, probably for the rural-economic reasons discussed in Part III of this chapter. The percentage of eligible women voting was static
in Wannon and down slightly in Grampians, both of which had the same rural-economic reasons for the relative decline in the 'YES' vote. However, there are no clear reasons why Ballarat should have swung further to 'NO'. That six per cent fewer of a decreased number of eligible women voted in Ballarat, where 'NO' improved on the Labour vote of 1914, could suggest a reliance by 'YES' on strong support from women. Such a suggestion must be very tentative, however, for in Corio 'YES' polled extremely well in Geelong, Barwon and Newtown-Chilwell where there was no increase in numbers of women voters.

In the absence of any clear pattern, it seems reasonable to conclude that women had no peculiar susceptibility to the blandishments of either conscriptionists or anti-conscriptionists. There is no evidence for the "tentative conclusion" reached by the Argus that "the women's vote was more anti-conscriptionist in proportion than the men's, but not to any great extent".(38) It is one more example of post-referendum analysis being coloured by desire to have campaign suspicions confirmed, a tendency with 'NO', as well as 'YES', advocate/analysts.(39) Thus the 'Blood Vote' cartoon, for example, remains an interesting archetype of a certain kind of appeal but, if the women's vote is the test, analysis does not suggest that it was necessarily more effective than any other piece of propaganda.

38. Argus, 1 November 1916
39. See above, p.139
The disproportion of the sexes was reversed in the votes cast before Authorised Witnesses or Presiding Officers; 77,640 males voted by these means and 28,364 females. 'YES' polled 53,879 of these votes and 'NO', 43,228. (Table 8) These figures included the soldiers' votes which were subsequently announced to be, for Victoria, 'YES' 20,783, 'NO' 16,612. (40) Thus, of votes other than those cast at sub-divisional ballot booths and by soldiers, 'YES' polled 33,096 and 'NO' 26,616. Even after deduction of the soldiers' vote, male voters in this group outnumbered female voters almost two to one. If men were more willing than women to vote 'YES', the 'YES' margin would have been far greater than is shown here.

The really significant feature of these absentee votes was the difference between the attitude to conscription they reflected and the attitude reflected in the division as a whole from which the voters came. As Table 8 shows, 'YES' outnumbered 'NO' among absentee voters in Ballarat, Bendigo and every one of the metropolitan Labour seats. Suspicion of this oddity may have prompted Frank Brennan's extension of campaign mistrust into the

40. L. C. Jauncey, op.cit., p.242. Hughes had refused earlier requests from Brennan (C.P.D., 1 December 1916, p.9359) and Joseph Cook, who said "conflicting statements" were being made, (C.P.D., 19 December 1916, p.10217) to publish details of the soldiers' vote. A War Precautions Act regulation authorized the "allocation of the votes of the A.I.F. and of the crews of transports amongst the various states according to the place of enlistment of the voter". (Jauncey, p.239) Hughes told Cook that a request from the Imperial Military Authorities precluded him from announcing the figures. Even after release of the figures, anti-conscriptionists continued to question their veracity. See Jauncey, pp.243-244
TABLE 8  ABSENTEE VOTING IN REFERENDUM, 28 OCTOBER 1916

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Division</th>
<th>Totals for Division</th>
<th>Vote Before Presiding Officers or Authorized Witnesses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>METROPOLITAN</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balaclava (Lib)</td>
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<td>12306</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fawkner (Lab)</td>
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<td>15891</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Henty (Lib)</td>
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<td>14127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kooyong (Lib)</td>
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<td>12509</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Batman (Lab)</td>
<td>11555</td>
<td>20277</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bourke (Lab)</td>
<td>18196</td>
<td>23499</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maribyrnong (Lab)</td>
<td>18198</td>
<td>20987</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melbourne (Lab)</td>
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<tr>
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<td>12635</td>
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<td>12579</td>
</tr>
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<td>Gippsland (Ind)</td>
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<td>Indi (Lab)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wimmera (Lib)</td>
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</table>
post-referendum period when he spoke on 6 November of "mysterious manipulation of the few remaining votes". (41) But the paradox held good for Liberal seats too. 'NO' scored a markedly higher ratio of these absentee votes in Henty, Kooyong, Gippsland and Flinders than it scored of votes cast in the normal manner within sub-divisions in these constituencies. In Wannon, the ratio was reversed in favour of 'NO'. As the vote in the constituencies broadly reflected political alignments, the absentee votes mild redressing of balance in each case suggests that the soldiers' vote, which constituted more than one third of the total absentee vote, may have been classless and apolitical in its motivation. However, this is a line of enquiry beyond the scope of this thesis.

41. Argus, 7 November 1916
V

National statistics of religious adherence do nothing to explain the different state responses to the referendum question. New South Wales and Western Australia had similarly high proportions of Church of England members, about 45 per cent, but recorded opposite results. Victoria had a relatively high proportion of Presbyterians (18 per cent) and Methodists (13 per cent), South Australia an extremely high proportion of Methodists (25 per cent) but the states recorded opposite results. New South Wales had the highest proportion of Catholics, 25 per cent, but South Australia, another 'NO' state, had the lowest, 15 per cent.

In Victoria, the majority of Methodists and Presbyterians, both of which churches passionately espoused the 'YES' cause, lived outside the metropolitan area. (Table 9) Yet it was in the metropolitan area that 'YES' made its greatest gains. The members of the Church of England, which had also preached a 'YES' vote, were more concentrated in the metropolitan area but Victoria overall had a lower percentage of Anglicans than most other states so this was not a highly significant concentration.

More evidence than is provided at national and state level is required to assess the influence of the churches on the vote. The 1911 Census gives numbers in each denomination in the counties of Victoria. In Victoria the approximate ratios of church

42. See figures given in Chapter 2, footnote no.63
TABLE 9  
VICTORIAN DISTRIBUTION OF ADHERENTS OF MAJOR 
DENOMINATIONS, METROPOLITAN - COUNTRY 

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<th>Country</th>
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<td>217,805</td>
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<tr>
<td>Presbyterian</td>
<td>88,929</td>
<td>145,604</td>
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<td>Methodist</td>
<td>64,167</td>
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<td>Roman Catholic</td>
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<td>161,534</td>
<td>286,433</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Source: Census of Australia, 1911, Vol. III, pp. 826-827

nominal memberships to total state population of 1,315,551 in 1911 were:

Church of England 1 : 3  Presbyterian 1 : 6
Methodist 1 : 8  Roman Catholic 1 : 5

By comparing the numbers of members of each of these denominations with the total population of the county, it is possible to identify those counties where the respective denominations have a significantly higher ratio of adherents than the state average. Table 10 is the result of such a comparison.

At this level it is still not possible to discern a pattern to suggest a 'YES' influence by the Protestant churches and a 'NO' influence by the Roman Catholic church. Anglican strength is dispersed. The centres of Methodist and Presbyterian strength are spread through electoral divisions which showed no real enthusiasm for conscription - Grampians, Wannon, Ballarat - as well as divisions which did - Corangamite, Bendigo, Corio and Indi. Roman Catholic voting strength is confined more to the
TABLE 10 VICTORIAN COUNTIES WITH HIGH PROPORTIONS OF NOMINAL ADHERENTS OF MAJOR DENOMINATIONS

<table>
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<th>DENOMINATION</th>
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<th>COUNTY POPULATION</th>
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<th>ELECTORAL DIVISION</th>
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<td>Indi</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Dundas</td>
<td>10,450</td>
<td>3,162</td>
<td>Wannon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Normanby</td>
<td>11,907</td>
<td>3,181</td>
<td>Wannon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Villiers</td>
<td>22,727</td>
<td>5,185</td>
<td>Wannon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Corangamite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hampden</td>
<td>12,895</td>
<td>4,823</td>
<td>Corangamite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ripon</td>
<td>13,912</td>
<td>4,426</td>
<td>Corangamite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gladstone</td>
<td>16,713</td>
<td>3,573</td>
<td>Grampians</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kara Kara</td>
<td>15,539</td>
<td>3,704</td>
<td>Grampians</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>METHODIST</td>
<td>Bendigo</td>
<td>54,500</td>
<td>13,646</td>
<td>Bendigo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Grant</td>
<td>71,477</td>
<td>14,404</td>
<td>Corio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Grenville</td>
<td>43,070</td>
<td>9,022</td>
<td>Ballarat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Corio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kara Kara</td>
<td>15,539</td>
<td>2,743</td>
<td>Grampians</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Talbot</td>
<td>47,931</td>
<td>10,511</td>
<td>Grampians</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Wimmera</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lowan</td>
<td>13,313</td>
<td>3,233</td>
<td>Wannon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ROMAN CATHOLIC</td>
<td>Bogong</td>
<td>27,905</td>
<td>7,571</td>
<td>Indi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dalhousie</td>
<td>17,641</td>
<td>5,965</td>
<td>Grampians</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hampden</td>
<td>12,895</td>
<td>2,979</td>
<td>Corangamite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Villiers</td>
<td>22,727</td>
<td>8,666</td>
<td>Wannon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Corangamite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Moira</td>
<td>31,842</td>
<td>8,705</td>
<td>Echuca</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Census of Australia, 1911, Vol. III, pp. 842-843
Grampians, Wannon and Echuca (where 'NO' did better than might have been expected).

Available statistics of church membership on a local electoral sub-division are sketchy. Assumptions must be made about boundaries of church or parish areas in relation to electoral districts and about the age composition of the church memberships. The most definitive figures available are for Methodism. As Methodists comprised only 13 per cent of the total Victorian population, only rarely would they occur in concentrations sufficient to indicate a possible Methodist influence on the vote. Metropolitan comparisons are impossible on available data; Methodism was not strong in the metropolitan area anyhow. (Table 9)

Table 11 lists country areas where there seems to have been a high proportion of Methodists (granted the assumptions mentioned above). The seemingly large numbers of Methodists in Eaglehawk (Bendigo) and Maryborough (Grampians) could help explain the swing from Labour to 'YES' in those sub-divisions. But if it was Methodism per se, then Maldon (Bendigo), apparently strongly Methodist, St. Arnaud and Daylesford (Grampians) should not have reflected party lines as drawn in 1914. Neither should Charlton have shown a marked drift towards 'NO'. This absence of consistent evidence of Methodist influence can also be noticed in the Wannon sub-divisions of Hamilton, Heywood, Horsham and Whill. It may be, of course, that other factors in all or some of these

43. Methodist Church, Minutes of the Fifteenth Annual Conference, (Victorian and Tasmanian), pp.95-104
TABLE 11
VOTING IN COUNTRY AREAS WITH AN IDENTIFIABLY HIGH PROPORTION OF METHODISTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Electoral Division</th>
<th>District or Sub-division</th>
<th>Total Attendance at Public Worship</th>
<th>Liberal Vote 1914</th>
<th>'YES' Vote</th>
<th>Labour Vote 1914</th>
<th>'NO' Vote</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bendigo</td>
<td>Eaglehawk</td>
<td>2882</td>
<td>1153</td>
<td>1110</td>
<td>2242</td>
<td>1491</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Maldon</td>
<td>1135</td>
<td>701</td>
<td>574</td>
<td>793</td>
<td>618</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grampians</td>
<td>Maryborough</td>
<td>975</td>
<td>1117</td>
<td>1132</td>
<td>2184</td>
<td>1561</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Daylesford</td>
<td>1260</td>
<td>1536</td>
<td>1330</td>
<td>1611</td>
<td>1394</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>St. Arnaud</td>
<td>995</td>
<td>1444</td>
<td>1106</td>
<td>1403</td>
<td>1142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wannon</td>
<td>Hamilton</td>
<td>1130</td>
<td>1480</td>
<td>1438</td>
<td>1566</td>
<td>1130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Heywood</td>
<td>595</td>
<td>447</td>
<td>417</td>
<td>534</td>
<td>447</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Horsham</td>
<td>1170</td>
<td>1435</td>
<td>1345</td>
<td>1034</td>
<td>668</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Whill</td>
<td>980</td>
<td>1420</td>
<td>1039</td>
<td>510</td>
<td>407</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wimmera</td>
<td>Charlton</td>
<td>825</td>
<td>734</td>
<td>522</td>
<td>348</td>
<td>444</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTE: (1) "Total attendance at Public Worship" includes "members and scholars as well as others"

(2) Election figures for Charlton are votes recorded for first-listed Liberal and Labour Senate candidates respectively.

Source: Methodist Church, Minutes of the Fifteenth Annual Conference, 1916 (Victorian and Tasmanian Conference), pp.95-104

Local areas acted to produce a balance of 'NO' votes.

44. The influence of German/Australian votes, for example, may have been important in Wannon where 1063 votes were set aside for special consideration under Section 9 of the Referendum Act. This Section specified that votes of electors of German origin be not counted until considered by Tribunals set up for this purpose. The Victorian total of such votes was small, 2463 for the whole state.
close study of the districts listed in Table 11 is necessary before more than the tentative suggestion of an absence of definite Methodist influence can be made.

Local membership details for Presbyterian and Roman Catholic churches are even more limited, altogether inadequate for a meaningful comparative survey. The Presbyterian Church does seem to have been numerically strong in Corryong (Indi), which voted 'YES' in the ratio 8 to 1, the highest sub-divisional ratio in Victoria. (45) Maryborough (Grampians) seems to have had a large number of Presbyterians (46), as well as of Methodists. Mortlake district, however, with an even larger number of "communicant" Presbyterians, (47) was not part of the Corangamite drift to 'YES'.

Some records of the Australian Catholic Federation exist and these include a card index system showing the Estimated Catholic Population (E.C.P.) of some parishes and/or the quota set for

45. A 1901 figure gave the number of church-going Presbyterians in Corryong as 425, an extraordinarily high figure in a town with a population, in 1911, of 557

Year Book of the Presbyterian Church of Victoria 1901, pp. 70-79; Census 1911, p. 2259

46. The number of "communicants" in 1915 was 1293 compared, for example, with Ballarat 2105 and Bendigo 1913. Proceedings of the Commission of the State General Assembly, November 1915, n.p.

47. Ibid. The number given is 1700
the parish in the Federation's 1918 membership drive. These figures confirm the dominant Catholic influence in Koroit (E.C.P. 1200) and Crossley (E.C.P. 750) which was part of Koroit sub-division. The figures for Elmore and Kilmore, given in Table 12, suggest a Roman Catholic predilection for 'NO', but those for Coburg, East Melbourne and Omeo suggest reservations about such a claim. Again, unfortunately, the figures are too few to allow more than the tentative conclusion that Catholics in rural regions were not kindly disposed towards conscription.

The Irish influence in these cases seems to be the crucial factor rather than the Roman Catholic influence. The total number of Irish born people in Victoria in 1911 was 41,477(50) a little over 3 per cent of the state population. The Census reveals little of the distribution of the Irish or of those of recent Irish descent. Dalhousie, Moira and Villiers are the

48. Again the details are sketchy and cards are blank for many parishes where branches were "dead". The quota was apparently about 65 per cent of the E.C.P. Some of the figures are puzzling. For example, the E.C.P.'s for 1916 of Bendigo and Ballarat (including Ballarat East) are 8,800 and 4,800 respectively. Such unlikely disparities suggest that more information about how the E.C.P. was arrived at and the actual areas specified on the cards is needed.

49. The Referendum result in Koroit occasioned the bitter comment in an Argus leader of 4 November 1916: "It is possible, so to speak, to isolate the germ there ...." The "germ" was disaffection "towards Great Britain on the Irish question".

TABLE 12  VOTING IN AREAS WITH AN IDENTIFIABLY HIGH PROPORTION OF ROMAN CATHOLICS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Electoral Division</th>
<th>District or Sub-Division</th>
<th>E.C.P.</th>
<th>Liberal Vote 'YES' 1914</th>
<th>Labor Vote 'NO' 1914</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wannon</td>
<td>(Koroit) (Crossley)</td>
<td>1200</td>
<td>1378</td>
<td>827</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1537</td>
<td>1879</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bendigo</td>
<td>Elmore</td>
<td>485</td>
<td>385</td>
<td>238</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>278</td>
<td>338</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Echuca</td>
<td>Kilmore</td>
<td>800</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>294</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>391</td>
<td>477</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gippsland</td>
<td>Omeo</td>
<td>780</td>
<td>385*</td>
<td>330</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>313*</td>
<td>284</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maribyrnong</td>
<td>Coburg</td>
<td>3000</td>
<td>1880</td>
<td>2594</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3014</td>
<td>3020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melbourne</td>
<td>East Melbourne</td>
<td>2500</td>
<td>1595</td>
<td>1815</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1270</td>
<td>1273</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Senate voting for first listed Labour or Liberal candidate

Source: Records of Australian Catholic Federation deposited at St. Mary's Presbytery, West Melbourne, Victoria

counties with highest proportions of Irish born people and the writer's experience suggests to him that the Irish Catholics of centres like Kilmore (Dalhousie), Katamatite (Moira), Koroit and Crossley (Villiers) account for this. C. L. Hamilton has argued that there existed an Irish/Catholic-Labour alignment long before 1916. (51) Such an alignment would mean a natural disposition among Irish Catholics to vote 'NO' as Labour supporters. However, the voting in Koroit sub-division shows clearly that there was another element which is well summed-up by another

As far as the Irish issue is concerned, it is clear that after Easter 1916, Irish affairs had a profound effect on the mood of Irish Catholics in Australia and secured for anti-conscription some of that fairly small minority of Irish-Catholic votes which would otherwise have endorsed the Government's proposals.

Obviously many Koroit non-Labour voters supported 'NO' in 1916 (Table 12) but returned to the Liberal side in the election of May 1917. In the latter contest, Rodgers, the Liberal candidate polled 1027 votes against his Labour opponent's 1716.

One is groping to verify or disprove churches' influence on the referendum vote. A voter might be a Labour man as well as a Methodist, a Liberal as well as a Roman Catholic, a wheatgrower as well as a devout Anglican, the wife or mother of a young man almost certain to be conscripted as well as a Presbyterian. In short, religion was but one of a multiplicity of forces working to form the voter's opinion. No doubt it was effective with some voters, and probably counter-effective with some others, but the fine shades of church influence cannot be isolated from the other influences which induced a 'YES' or a 'NO' vote.

The influence on Irish Australians of events in Ireland

during 1916 can be isolated. However, in Victoria the number of Irish Australians was very small. The number of those of Irish descent probably was not but these people were dispersed through the state. The important feature of the Easter rebellion in Ireland and its suppression, as far as the conscription debate in Australia is concerned, is the ammunition it supplied factions on both sides of the campaign. It added to the sound and fury of a sectarian feud already existing. Probably the Irish issue was productive and counter-productive - Protestant and Roman Catholic/Irish spokesman offended as well as persuaded. The extent is such influences cannot be estimated by any analysis of the voting; it remains a secret of the ballot-box.
CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSIONS

The ambivalent attitude of the Labour movement is the feature of greatest significance to emerge from a study of compulsory military training in Victoria from July 1911 to the end of 1914. It provides the key to understanding the position adopted by Labour towards conscription in 1916.

The Labour movement need not have been explicitly anti-conscription in 1916. Pre-war experience had forced it to sift its ideas on compulsory military training. Labour's fundamental unity stemmed from accepted ideas about how to achieve social and economic improvement for the working-class. It was pragmatic in its method - "socialism sans doctrines" as an early observed termed it.(1) The military policy that Labour evolved in the first decade after Federation was pragmatic also. It evolved because of a feeling in the movement that working-class gains must be protected against the "yellow peril". In practice, where the military policy impinged on class questions - as, for example, in the working lad's compelled leisure-time

1. A. Metin, quoted in C. M. N. Clark, Select Documents in Australian History 1851-1900, (Sydney 1955), p.652
drilling under a military instructor while the schoolboy did his in school hours under a sympathetic master - the Labour government, the creation of the movement, spoke with a voice of its own. Sometimes its views were contrary to those of the movement. By 1914, the pragmatists were less certain that compulsory service could not be a two-edged sword.

Labour picked up the threads of its debate on conscription in 1915, with opinion still divided, at a time of mounting hostility, in Victoria especially, to the federal Labour government. For, to the more radical element in the movement, it seemed that the Labour government had lost sight of its proper goal - ameliorating the condition of the working class - in its zeal for prosecuting the war. After the Constitution Alteration referenda were postponed and the "Call to Arms" was announced, Hughes and the Victorian leadership of the Labour movement were irreconcilable. There was no prestigious moderating influence in Victoria, like Holman in New South Wales, or Crawford Vaughan in South Australia. Compulsory service had always had its sinister elements for the movement; now it became the focus of all kinds of discontent. Labour's total opposition crystallized and was organised during 1916. Victoria was the key state in this process; the idea of the national Trade Union Congress came from Victoria and Victorian delegates went to each state to ensure representation from all states. (2) Different shades of opinion

2. T.H.C., Minutes of Meeting, 13 April 1916
were still discernible within the movement, but without industrial and political Labour's official, determined resistance, there would have been no effective campaign against conscription in 1916. By October 1916 it was no longer possible for Labour men to hold publicly views sympathetic to compulsion. Ambivalence was at an end.

A second feature of compulsory military training in the period 1911 to 1914 was its unpopularity. The scheme was not "broad-based upon the people's will". (3) Many youths viewed their obligation to drill as a disagreeable duty. Many were prosecuted for their failure to drill and, after one year's experience of the scheme, almost one-third of eligible youths failed to register of their own volition. The general impression is of indifference to what the patriotic idealists who initiated the scheme saw as a noble concept - the citizen's preparation for proper performance of his highest duty, the defence of his country. For very many, the scheme was meaningless preparation for "a contingency as remote as the millennium". (4)

What legacy did the scheme leave in 1916? For some, no doubt, there were distasteful recollections of military life. The real significance of the scheme, however, is that it failed to capture the public's imagination as a noble concept. Conscription was put to the people as a war-time measure and war

3. See p.28 above
4. See p.50 above
obviously gives compulsion and military life a new perspective. But acceptance of conscription in 1916 depended very much on acceptance of noble concepts - loyalty, gratitude and duty to Empire, country and troops at the front. When parents, employers and youths felt their personal interests, whether business or leisure, affected by compulsory military training before the war, they often neglected their obligations or complied under protest. War gave greater point to interference with private affairs but the conscription envisaged in 1916 meant incomparably greater disruption of many more lives and business affairs. A Victorian might feel his state to be as much part of the Empire as Middlesex or Glasgow, but he could not feel it to be as threatened as these places. Moreover, he was constantly being told that the Allies were moving inexorably towards victory. The actual threat was as remote as the contingency for which the pre-war trainee was compulsorily prepared. Given the chance, as the voter was in the referendum, why would not the wife, parent, young man, businessman or farmer consult his or her own interests in this instance rather than rise to the challenge of duty to the Empire? Although one was practised in peace-time and the other proposed in war-time, there are points of similarity between compulsory military training and conscription. Response to the former in the three years before the war should not have encouraged the belief that the public would vote the latter upon itself in 1916.
The campaign which preceded the referendum went badly for conscriptionists. The 'YES' case depended on the force of its appeal for selfless acceptance, at this time, of obligations to the Empire, to the troops at the front and a realisation of the threat to Australia. Such appeals tended to lose their spontaneity during the eight weeks of the campaign. There was time for the immediate resolution stimulated by Hughes' appeal to be sicklied o'er, as it were, by the pale cast of "academic" considerations. (5) Thus the 'YES' campaign, striving to maintain the urgency of its appeal, found itself often on the defensive. Malice, mistrust and dishonest tactics, in the press and on the platform, became the way of the campaign. Consideration of what was a reasonable Australian contribution to the war effort degenerated into emotional declamations of loyalty to the Empire from the conscriptionists, or accusations of ulterior motives from the anti-conscriptionists. The valid argument that conscription achieved equitably a flow of recruits, which could be controlled in the national interest, was rarely advanced, even though it appealed to some Labour minds too. As conscription became an issue only because emotional appeals for volunteer recruits had failed, it is surprising that conscriptionists relied on these same kinds of appeal. Apparently they thought it was only the remaining eligible men who were immune to such appeals and that these men might be coerced by the still keen

5. See p.4 above
sense of loyalty and duty in the rest of the populace.

The 'YES' campaign carried the incubus of the numbers specified in Hughes' conscription proposals. After the exemption courts began their hearing, it was soon obvious that 16,500 men per month could not long be obtained from fit, single men between 21 and 44 years. This not only provided rational grounds for opposition to the conscription proposals, but also gave a measure of credibility to the more specious arguments of the anti-conscriptionists: the intention to replace workers with cheap, coloured labour, the untrustworthiness of Hughes and the threat of a conscripted work-force.

Whatever may have been the spontaneous reactions to the Prime Minister's first appeal for conscription, voters had ample time and encouragement before 28 October to consider their own interests. Nevertheless, a majority of Victorians responded to the appeal in the spirit in which it was made. The 'YES' majority in this state surprised, partly because the tide of the campaign had seemed to run in favour of 'NO', but mostly because the depth and solidity of the Labour/'NO' front was overestimated while Liberal strength and influence were underestimated.

The mistaken judgement of Labour/'NO' strength had several causes. Victoria was the state of organisers of the Trade Union Congress, which had headquarters in Melbourne. Victorian federal Labour members Anstey and Brennan were leading and long-time anti-conscription activists. Almost all Victorian federal Labour
members had opposed even the referendum bill. Only three state Labour members publicly supported conscription and only one of these, Plain, was moderately well-known. On the surface, Labour opposition to conscription was unqualified. The fact remains however, that there was more backsliding from an official position among Labour men than there was among Liberals in Victoria. Some anti-Labour men were lukewarm/conscriptionists. Even the union movement was not willing to go to the extremes of a general strike, even for one day, or of declaring black the printing of conscription propaganda. Probably, too, there were still within the Labour movement strands of belief in the equity and safety of universal service under a working-class government. Vast, morale-boosting rallies, efficient dissemination of propaganda and heady victories over conscriptionists at some of their own meetings misled anti-conscriptionists. By referendum day, even conscriptionists were overestimating support for 'NO' in Victoria.

Political Labour's sweeping victory in Victoria at the Federal elections of 1914 created an excessively contemporaneous view of Victoria's political alignment. Victoria was basically a conservative state, the only state in the Commonwealth ruled, in October 1916, by a non-Labour government, and that elected two months after Labour's federal victory. It was the state of Sir William Irvine and W. A. Watt, both ex-Premiers, both ardent, active conscriptionists with great prestige. Victoria was the state in which the fiercely conscriptionist Argus and Age exercised enormous influence. A return to reality after the heady
atmosphere of the campaign can be sensed in Labor Call's exasperated post-referendum complaint of an "ancient Tory government" and an unscrupulous press. (6) The conviction that the daily press was the cause of the 'YES' majority in Victoria sparked immediate union efforts to begin a Labour daily. (7)

The 'YES' vote was more than "the preponderating conservative vote" in Henty, Kooyong and Flinders. (8) Clearly 'YES' attracted support in Labour areas; the old dichotomy of attitude towards universal service still existed among the rank and file. Equally clearly, however, the 'YES' vote was predominantly a conservative vote. Demographically, Victoria was in no way distinctive. There was nothing in the composition of the Victorian population like, for example, the high incidence of English-born people which J. M. Robertson has noted in Western Australia. (9) Victorian farmers faced the same prospect of a future labour shortage in an excellent season as did their fellow wheat and woolgrowers in New South Wales. Unlike the latter group's vote, however, Victorian wheat and woolgrower's vote for 'YES' was only marginally qualified. There was a uniformity in the conservative vote in Victoria, whether city or country. One must conclude that the kind of appeal which was central to the case for

6. Labor Call, 2 November 1916
7. T.H.C., Minutes of Meetings, 2, 9, 30 November 1916
8. See p.10 above
9. See p.14 above
conscription - an appeal to notions of loyalty and Empire - was one to which conservatism responds best. The predominantly conservative nature of Victorian politics accurately reflected the character of the state and was the primary reason for the large 'YES' vote in this state.

The study of pre-war compulsory military training also throws into relief the role played by churches, particularly the Roman Catholic Church, in the conscription referendum. Just as the Labour movement's explicit opposition to conscription was formed, in part, by extraneous issues, so was the implicit opposition of the Roman Catholic Church in Victoria. There is discernible a shadowy, defiant assertion of independence in the attitude to conscription expressed by the Roman Catholic Church press and many of its spokesmen. This was not opposition to conscription on principle for the Advocate had been, among church journals, one of the staunchest supporters of compulsory military training and no Roman Catholic clergy voiced support for pre-war conscientious objectors. At a time when other churches and their journals moved from covert doubts about some aspects of compulsory military training to overt support for conscription, the Roman Catholic Church moved the opposite way. In part, at least, this seems to have been a backlash against attacks on the loyalty of Catholic schools and accusations of Roman Catholics shirking their recruiting obligations, as well as Irish/Catholic bitterness towards British treatment of Easter 1916 rebels.
Dr. Mannix, since his arrival in Melbourne in 1913, had aggressively asserted and defended Roman Catholic doctrines and schools. His two anti-conscription addresses during the campaign were his first comments on compulsory military service. His importance in the first conscription campaign has been exaggerated, partly because of Roman Catholic pride in a brilliant champion of a cause (defeat of which, in Victoria, is conveniently forgotten), partly because of a failure to distinguish this first, relatively small incursion into war polemics from Dr. Mannix's later, more spectacular forays into this field. His anti-conscription speeches alerted his regular antagonists—who were also ranged opposite him on conscription—that the war was a new theatre of controversy. Dr. Mannix's "sordid trade war" comment (which Ian Turner wrongly locates in the conscription campaign) occurred in a speech on 23 January 1917. His real notoriety as a war critic dates from there.

Dr. Mannix's contribution to the campaign was to bring both Irish and sectarian issues into sharper focus. One can only speculate as to his effectiveness and that of his fellow Roman Catholic clergy. Certainly the Irish vote in Victoria went


11. *Argus*, 29, 31 January 1917; Murphy, op. cit., p.37
against conscription and with it, inseparably a part of the Roman Catholic vote. Otherwise it seems that Roman Catholics voted on both sides of the question probably with a slight bias to 'NO' reflecting the Roman Catholic/Labour alignment.

Contemporary and later commentators have given undue emphasis to the effect of the course of events in Ireland in 1916 on the conscription referendum. Professor K. S. Inglis wrote in 1966: "Had it not been for the Sinn Feiners and Sir John Maxwell, Australian conscripts would have gone to France". Many influences contributed to the making of the 'NO' vote. If the Irish Easter rebellion had not occurred and/or punishment of the rebels had not been so harsh, more than 36,240 of those who voted 'NO' might have voted 'YES' to reverse the result of the referendum. However, a similar number might also have done so, say, had not a boatload of Maltese arrived in October or had rural workers been exempt from the October call-up at its outset. In other words, it is pointless to single out Irish disaffection as the decisive influence in the defeat of the referendum merely because it is one of the few strands that can be examined in isolation from the otherwise inextricable tangle of threads which is the conscription issue.

The influence of the Protestant churches is part of that tangled web. It seems that none of them was especially effective

in securing a 'YES' vote. Probably they served to reinforce the conservative appeal of 'YES' rather than exercised an independent influence. More information about church attendance and general influence is needed. Church attendance disappointed many churchmen. (13) It may well be that only a small proportion of nominal adherents came directly under the influence of the churches on conscription.

There is no evidence that women, so assiduously wooed by both sides in the campaign, were won by either. The "peace vote" is not capable of isolation. Claims that it formed a large part of the Victorian 'NO' vote (14) seem to have been rationalisations of disappointment at the Victorian 'YES' majority. The overwhelming support for Hughes and the 'Win-the-War' party in the May 1917 showed that peace advocates were neither particularly effective nor numerically strong.

Finally, some comment must be made on William Morris Hughes who, more than anyone else, was the maker of the history discussed in these pages. For Hughes inspired compulsory military training and he brought on the conscription referendum. In a sense, his part in the drama is like that of the classic Greek hero. Almost everything he had done to achieve military preparedness and in the making of the Labour party stood against him

13. For example, Methodist Spectator, 16 August 1912, p.1311; Church of England Messenger, 19 May 1916
14. See p.6 above
when, in 1916, he came to see conscription as his country's greatest need. The intransigent opposition of his party was neither necessary nor accidental. It was the result of a long debate, begun at Federation, quickened by the practice of compulsory military training, and finalised in war-time with Hughes' decisions as Prime Minister the vital catalysts.

There was a point in time - early November 1915 - when Hughes might have mustered sufficient Caucus support from those who had "a suppleness in their anti-conscriptionist ardour"(15) to impose conscription with the support of his Parliamentary party. Ironically, he did not then think conscription to be necessary and he was himself opposed to compulsory service abroad. Twelve months later, when his views on both points had changed, the course of events, for which Hughes himself was mainly responsible, had made introduction of conscription by this means impossible. Like the Greek hero, Hughes had been over-confident and had brashly offended his Gods - the Labour movement. The double irony was that Hughes himself had played such a leading part in establishing the rule of caucus and the pledge.

Even in the referendum, Hughes seemed dogged by forces beyond his control: the extravagant numbers of reinforcements he was committed to ask for because he had to use the War Office

cable of 24 August to gain support for his referendum proposal; the necessity of the call-up, because of the pressing need to prepare reinforcements, even though the call-up might lose 'YES' votes; events in Ireland; exemptions granted to retain support for 'YES' but effectively demonstrating that married men would be required; the arrival of a boatload of Maltese. Even his attempt to disenfranchise those who had not answered the call-up rebounded against Hughes. Well might he have felt a malign fate working against him.

Hughes, however, was a resilient hero. He was not the kind to end his own political life. Defeat at the referendum merely marked the end of his career with the Labour party. Perhaps it was fitting that Hughes should have continued his political career as member for Bendigo in Victoria, the only one of the larger states in which public opinion at the referendum endorsed the principles of compulsory military service for which Hughes stood.
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