8/7/81

# WOMEN'S EDUCATION IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA: INSTITUTIONAL AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENTS, 1875-1915

by

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Thesis presented as a requirement for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in the School of History,
Faculty of Arts,
University of Adelaide

1980

Awarded 8 May 1981.

# Contents

Page

Preface iii
Statement iv
Abbreviations v
Summary vi
Introduction 1

Chapter

I Learning for Life: Female Pupils in the State Primary Schools 9
1. Background Assumptions 14
2. Domestic Economy in Schools 25
3. Needlework in Schools 54
4. Assumptions Established 65

II 'Pinnacle of the State School System': the Advanced School for Girls 69
1. The Advanced School for Girls Takes Shape 70
2. Foundation Years: The First Two Headmistresses, 1879-1885 79
3. Consolidation and Decline: The Third Headmistress, 1886-1908 95

III Further Aspects of Higher Education 116
1. Four Adelaide Girls' Schools 120
2. Tormore House School 132
3. The University of Adelaide 152

IV Educating Working Women 167
1. Domestic Servants 168
2. Women in Industry: Conditions and Reforms 177
3. Female Trade Unions and Factory Inspectors 196
4. Clubs and Co-operative Ventures 214

V Women's Suffrage: An Educational Campaign 226
1. Background to the Women's Suffrage Campaign 227
2. Educational Work of the Women's Suffrage League 235
3. Women's Leadership in Political Education 261

VI Educating Women Voters 267
1. Women and Politics, 1895-6 269
2. Further Work in Women's Political Education: The Woman's Christian Temperance Union; The Woman's League 282
3. The Women's Non-Party Political Association 294

Conclusion 313
Appendices 320
Bibliography 345

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A.J. FLACK

## Preface

In preparing this thesis I have been assisted by a number of people. In particular I would like to thank staff of the Barr Smith Library and of the State Library of South Australia, especially those in the Archives, the South Australian Collection, and the Newspaper Reading Room. In the Mitchell Library, the La Trobe Library and the National Library of Australia staff have also given me valuable assistance.

I am particularly grateful to the South Australian women with whom I have discussed their earlier lives. I am also indebted to those members of the History Department of the University of Adelaide who have helped me, both formally and informally, to complete this work. Lastly, I wish to acknowledge the sustained support, during this extended study, of my family and most of all, of my husband.

## Statement

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any University. To the best of my knowledge and belief this thesis contains no material which has been previously published or written by another person, except when due reference is made in the text.

# Abbreviations

| | |
|---|---|
| AFUW | Australian Federation of University Women |
| CF | Correspondence File |
| Education Department | Education Department of South Australia |
| KUSA | Kindergarten Union of South Australia |
| ML | Mitchell Library |
| NLA | National Library of Australia |
| NSWPP | New South Wales Parliamentary Papers |
| PP | Parliamentary Papers |
| SAGG | South Australia Government Gazette |
| SAPD | South Australian Parliamentary Debates |
| HA | House of Assembly |
| LC | Legislative Council |
| SAPP | South Australia Parliamentary Papers |
| SA School of Mines | South Australian School of Mines and Industries |
| SASA | State Archives of South Australia |
| SLSA | State Library of South Australia |
| ULP | United Labor Party |
| UTLC | United Trades and Labor Council |
| VPP | Victoria Parliamentary Papers |
| WCTU | Woman's Christian Temperance Union |
| WNPPA | Women's Non-Party Political Association |
| WSL | Women's Suffrage League |
| WWTU | Working Women's Trades Union |
| YWCA | Young Women's Christian Association |

## Summary

This work is concerned with education in its broad sense, and it therefore includes both the formal education of women and their non-institutional education in the wider society. The period discussed is that between the two South Australian Education Acts of 1875 and 1915.

Considerable diversity existed in women's education during this period, although the desire to emulate British practice remained an important factor, as did the limitations imposed by South Australia's periodic economic depression and prosperity. Because official attitudes were influenced by contemporary British and European theories of national efficiency, the education authorities, accepting that girls should be prepared as future wives and mothers, imposed preliminary training for these roles in the state primary schools.

The state's attitude to women's education was ambivalent, in that South Australian legislators saw women in two roles. On the one hand they provided preparation for the domestic role, while on the other they encouraged women's higher education. They therefore opened University of Adelaide classes for women from their commencement and persuaded the British government to permit women to be admitted to degrees; they also established a successful state secondary school for girls, the only school of its kind for either sex for nearly thirty years.

Outside the state system, the provision of higher education for women, mainly through the private schools, was directly affected by the state secondary school which stimulated improved academic standards and also provided teaching staff for the independent schools which in turn developed some particular individual emphases. Both state and private girls' schools proved important in transmitting ideals and attitudes.

In the wider society, women's education was both deliberately organized and, sometimes, almost haphazard. Women themselves frequently initiated and organized education among other women. Their work and attitudes reflected facets of the women's movement in England and the United States, although it had particular South Australian characteristics related to the ideals of the free, mainly Protestant settlers. By no means confined to a single cause, many women educators on social questions worked in a number of areas.

Informal education was used to publicize and improve the poor conditions of many working women. Out of these campaigns arose the provision of legal mechanisms of control and regulation, and the emergence of self-education among women through their own trade unions and through co-operative efforts made by women from varied backgrounds.

The overlap of interests among female educators and the emergence of outstanding leaders was nowhere more pronounced that in the educational work for the female suffrage. Its relatively early success was due to a strong campaign in which women combined with men holding similar ideals to overcome both apathy and conservatism. On the basis of Parliamentary suffrage, certain women's associations sought further political reforms through educational means. In South Australia, where women's education was linked with the distinctive nature of the society, it had, in turn, deep influences on the society itself.

## Introduction

South Australia's unique origins as a planned, free, British settlement helped shape the distinctive nature of its society. Other influential factors were the relative homogeneity of its population in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and its special geographic and climatic conditions.

The origin, development and transmission of ideas and attitudes occurred within a relatively stable social framework. Both the framework and the philosophies which grew within it have been examined previously only in an incomplete way, for emphasis has been placed almost exclusively on male activities and influence.

In South Australian history, little attention has been paid either to the activities and influence of women, or to the impact of the South Australian environment on its female inhabitants. Yet from the earliest European settlement South Australian women have comprised almost half the population, and their presence in city, near-country, and more rarely in remote areas, has remained a continuous factor.

South Australia's social history has been compounded of both male and female influences which cannot be specifically measured, nor can they always be separated. To some extent, however, women's part in South Australia's history may be identified. Women have borne a share of the economic effort and have contributed to the community aims and ethos, while themselves being influenced by the already-transmitted ideals and customs of their forbears and those of the contemporary society.

This study is concerned with women's history, in particular with women's education which cannot be completely separated from their general social experience, nor from parallel or similar male experiences.

It is not only unrealistic but also undesirable to separate men's and women's history entirely, for much is inextricably linked. Many aspects of women's history, however, comprise a neglected part of history as a whole, and for this reason require identification in order that a more accurate and balanced view of the past may be achieved.

Women's education in South Australia had a marked influence both on women themselves and on the wider society. Not infrequently, women's education stimulated change - not only educational change but political and legislative change. The history of women's education in South Australia throws light on the way in which ideas, values and skills have been conserved and transmitted.

These matters have been generally ignored in previous Australian histories. South Australian historians have mainly concentrated on aspects of history involving men, and have failed to comment on events and institutions concerning women. Even the notable fact of the early introduction of women's suffrage has been overlooked or merely mentioned. All but a few writers of general histories and of women's histories have consistently used evidence from the eastern colonies and states to generalize about all of Australia.

Again, there has been a marked practice of categorizing all women in Australia as having been subject to common influences which led to their inferiority in a man's world. Not only were there many complexities in South Australian women's history, but the influence of women, especially through educational activities, was much greater than has hitherto been acknowledged.

The span of years included in this thesis marks the period between the South Australian Education Acts of 1875 and 1915. In this work the term 'women' is used in a generic sense to include females of all ages. The women considered are those of European origin; aboriginal women are

outside the scope of this study, for the writing of their history requires the investigative and interpretative skills of the anthropologist in addition to those of the historian.

It is my intention to examine women's education in relation to South Australian conditions, and in the particular meaning which is set out below. Education is the process of teaching and learning in both institutional and non-institutional situations; it is a process not limited by age and it may be experienced by children and adults. The hall-mark of education is the acquisition of knowledge which may in turn lead to alteration of the individual's view of the world and to subsequent changes in attitude, behaviour and action.

Among specific definitions of education that of John Stuart Mill accords most closely with my view. In his Rectorial Address to the University of St Andrews in 1867, Mill defined education in these words:

> In its largest acceptation, it comprehends even the indirect effects produced on character and on the human faculties, by things of which the direct purposes are quite different; by laws, by forms of government, by the industrial arts, by modes of social life; nay even by physical facts not dependent on human will; by climate, soil and local position. [1]

In short, Mill viewed education as:

> Whatever helps to shape the human being; to make the individual what he is or hinder him from being what he is not ... [2]

Although my view of education is consistent with that of Mill, I do not intend to explore the multitudinous range of factors which his definition embraces, and shall confine it, in conformity with the view of other writers.

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1. Knight, W. ed., Rectorial Addresses Delivered at the University of St. Andrews 1863-1783, London, 1894, p. 19

2. Ibid., p. 20

One such writer whose account of education is largely acceptable in the context of this study is L.A. Cremin, who explains education as:

> ... the deliberate, systematic and sustained effort to transmit or evoke knowledge, attitudes, values, skills and sensibilities, a process that is more limited than what the anthropologist would term enculturation or the sociologist socialization, though obviously inclusive of the same elements. [3]

Cremin sees the central role of public schooling in the chronicles of nineteenth and twentieth century education as 'narrowly institutional, full of anachronism, and painfully moralistic'.[4] He recognizes, as I do, both formal and informal educational agencies which have helped shape society. These include schools and other diverse institutions such as families, churches, and libraries. In the present study educative agencies also include trade unions, other associations formed for particular ends, newspapers and certain individuals.

John Dewey, to a certain extent, also provides a definition of education which is appropriate for this study when he writes of the communication of social life as educative: 'the very process of living together educates'.[5]

But his view has limitations, for example when he states:

> Speaking generically, education signifies the sum total of processes by which a community or social group, whether small or large, transmits its acquired power and aims with a view to securing its own existence and growth. [6]

This is a conservative definition, making no allowance for innovation or individuality; Dewey calls education 'a process of continuous reconstruction of experience',[7] and thus is limited to the status quo, an unsatisfactory basis for this South Australian study.

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3. Cremin, Lawrence, A., American Education The Colonial Experience 1607-1783, New York, 1970, p. xiii

4. Ibid.

5. Dewey, John, Democracy and Education An Introduction to the Philosophy of Education, New York, 1929, p. 12

6. Dewey, in Monroe, Paul ed., A Cyclopedia of Education, New York, 1911, v. 2, p. 398

7. Ibid.

Among modern educational writers, R.S. Peters is one of the few who enquires into the meaning of education, concluding that:

> the educational processes are those by means of which public modes of thought and awareness, which are mainly enshrined in language, take root in the consciousness of the individual and provide avenues of access to a public world. 8

Here are faint echoes of Dewey; and Peters' statement, like Dewey's, is concerned primarily with the individual's links with society, and with conservation of societal mores. Peters writes mainly about children learning, and while child and adolescent education is an important part of this study it places unrealistic limits on the meaning of education.

Few historians or philosophers of education have in fact explored the meaning of the term 'education', and most confine their definitions only to education's aims, function and content. The most common assumption is the equation of education with formal teaching, instruction or training. Such a view however, is too narrow and not satisfactory for the purposes of this study.

The aspects of women's education examined in this thesis are those of leading sectors which deeply influenced both formal educational practice and society in general. They include some which occurred within institutions; others which cannot be separated from male experience; and some which occurred solely in the wider society outside the channels of formal schooling, including those which developed into educational campaigns from almost accidental origins.

Some of the aspects studied include deliberately planned areas of formal education, either for children or adults, while others were almost haphazard in their evolution, and random in whom they affected. Where

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8. Peters, R.S. 'What is an Educational Process?' Peters, R.S. ed., The Concept of Education, London, 1967, pp. 19, 20

possible, distinctive female experiences have been isolated as in Chapter I which includes the curriculum for female pupils and its influence in the state primary schools, and in Chapter II which examines a state secondary school, the Advanced School for Girls, while Chapter III is concerned mainly with female education in certain private schools and at the University of Adelaide.

Later chapters examine non-institutional education of women in the wider society, revealing areas of co-operation and cross-influence where separation between men's and women's activities is not always possible. Chapter IV investigates working women's education which was aimed at generating public knowledge of women's working conditions, and at the foundation of organizations to overcome injustices. Both women and men carried on the campaigns which affected both sexes. Chapter V, concerning the women's suffrage campaign, includes similar co-operation between the sexes, and here the campaign, although partly run by men and partly directed towards the male voter, was primarily a women's campaign, which sought to rouse female support. In Chapter VI it is possible to isolate the political education of women following their enfranchisement, while recognizing that some aspects affected both sexes and cannot be artificially divided.

It is fortunate that there are a number of primary sources in Australia and South Australia which can be examined for this thesis. There is also an abundance of writings by women of the period, some Australian and many British, which throw light on certain contemporary attitudes and experiences and which can be treated very much in the nature of primary material.

It is necessary to recognize the importance of certain British sources. There are several reasons for selecting this material. Most migrants to South Australia, from the colony's foundation in 1836, until

the mid-twentieth century, came from Britain as independent (and primarily Protestant) settlers, many in family groups. Here, perhaps, could be demonstrated Hartz's 'fragment' theory of transplantation.[9] Was South Australia and its female population a society detached from its origins, 'hauled onto new soil', then lapsing into 'a kind of immobility'?[10] Certainly South Australian society reflected its British origins, but British society was itself complicated and constantly shifting in structure. It contained distinctions which were often 'fine, delicate of interpretation, and complex in their origins'.[11]

South Australia, which had an almost continual flow of immigrants from different social backgrounds, could therefore never be considered a static 'fragment' of Britain, transposed in place and frozen in time. Nevertheless, strong British influences were imprinted in the society, and much of what was written in Britain concerning women, their education, employment, political activities and their position in society, was closely related to South Australian women. In addition to women emigrating from Britain, South Australians made visits to their country of origin, returning with current news and ideas which were often printed in the local newspapers, as well as in journals imported from Britain, and in books. There was a continuous traffic in the import of British ideology, some of it occurring almost accidentally, some through

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9. Hartz, Louis, The Founding of New Societies Studies in the History of the United States, Latin America, South Africa, Canada, and Australia, New York, 1964. Hartz argues that the societies he studied are

> fragments of the large whole of Europe struck off in the course of the revolution which brought the West into the modern world. Ibid., p. 3

10. Ibid.

11. Watson, George, The English Ideology Studies in the Language of Victorian Politics, London, 1973, p. 195

the immigration of certain individuals, some the result of deliberate searches by visiting South Australians who looked mainly to British examples as a guide to their decisions, even though there had to be modifications because of local circumstances. It is therefore essential to consider contemporary British writings.

Various views have so far been presented by different authors in writing of women in Australian history. Some are confirmed by this study, while many are found to be contradictory, and none are exhaustive. In this work, the subject is examined further.

# Chapter I

## Learning for Life: Female Pupils in the State Primary Schools

From the time of South Australia's settlement as a free province in 1836, the population included families with children and provisions were made for education. Even earlier, before leaving England for their new life, intending colonists formed two associations to plan for education. These were the South Australian School Society which made plans for children's education[1] and the South Australian Literary Association which had the object of 'cultivating and diffusing useful knowledge among the colonists'.[2] Thus both formal and non-institutional education were given recognition from the outset, and from 1836 a variety of private and government-assisted schools and informal agencies of education developed.

In 1875 the South Australian Parliament passed an Education Act which imposed compulsory attendance on children at primary schools.[3] The state school system established under the 1875 Act remained basically unaltered until the Education Act of 1915. This chapter examines the implications of this system for female primary pupils in the period between the two Acts.

The year 1875 was one of several marked by economic prosperity based on good seasons and high agricultural yields. The early seventies was a time of 'surging optimism' for South Australia, when marginal northern lands were opened for settlement,[4] infant industries

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1. Pike, Douglas, Paradise of Dissent South Australia 1829-1857, London, 1957, p. 487
2. Ibid., p. 114
3. South Australia, Education Act No. 11, 1875
4. Meinig, D.W., On the Margins of the Good Earth, Adelaide, 1970, p. 60

thrived[5] and legislators looked to the schools to inform and influence new generations of farmers, workers, wives and mothers.

Apart from scattered aboriginal inhabitants and some close-knit settlements of German immigrants, the population was primarily of British origin, comprising 'a family-based, self-consciously Christian, middle-class society, diverse in skills, imbued with energy ... '[6] Although the population was so homogeneous, South Australian legislators and administrators were to find the task of providing education facilities difficult, both because of geographical factors including great distances and dry climate, and because of the financial strains imposed in carrying out the Act.

The total population of South Australia in 1876 was 213,271, of whom 102,789 or approximately 48% were female.[7] The numbers in the state-supported schools increased after the 1875 Act, as demonstrated in the table below, and costs rose considerably in spite of the income from the fees which remained in force until 1891.

Table 1: Scholars in state-supported schools, South Australia, showing highest number on roll for one month, 1875-1881 [8]

| | 1875 | 1877 | 1879 | 1881 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Number of girls | 9,467 | 11,658 | 14,702 | 15,806 |
| Number of boys | 7,298 | 9,578 | 12,607 | 13,587 |
| Total | 16,765 | 21,236 | 29,387 | 27,309 |

5. Richards, E.S., 'The Genesis of Secondary Industry in the South Australian Economy to 1876', Australian Economic History Review, 15: 2 (September 1975) 130; Harcus, William, ed., South Australia Its History, Resources and Productions, London, 1876, pp. 121-5
6. Meinig, op. cit., p. 20
7. SAPP, 1879, 89, Census of 1876, Part VI, Table III. (Non-Aboriginal)
8. SAPP, 1882, 3, Statistical Register of South Australia, Religious, Charitable and Educational Institutions, Table 4, p. 7

Table II: State-supported schools (public and provisional)[9]

| | 1875 | 1877 | 1879 | 1881 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Number of schools | 268 | 301 | 340 | 405 |

Table III: Net cost of Education Department,[10] exclusive of buildings[11]

| 1876 | 1878 | 1880 | 1881 |
|---|---|---|---|
| £46,352 | £60,125 | £68,555 | £70,977 |

From the preceding information the following percentage increases have been extracted to show the extent of the rises.

Between 1875 and 1881:

Number of female scholars rose by 86%

Number of male scholars rose by 66.9%

Total number of scholars rose by 75.2%

Number of schools rose by 51.1%

Between 1876 and 1881 the net cost of education, exclusive of buildings, to the South Australian government rose by 53%.[12]

In considering the education of girls, these increases are important, for there was a continual conflict between the official ideals and theories concerning girls' education, generally involving extra expenditure, and the difficulty of implementing them when education costs in general were rising. The pattern of increased costs for the initial years tended to be maintained, with particular rises following fee abolition.

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9. Ibid.
10. Until 1878 the Education Council was the administering body. The name became 'Department' in that year.
11. SAPP, 1883-4, 3, Statistical Register of South Australia, Religious, Educational and Charitable Institutions, Table 5, p. 7.
12. All percentages extracted from data in Statistical registers, op. cit.

The centralized system of education established under the 1875 Act was extended by regulations which were designed to control every aspect of state education, including minutiae. Some regulations had particular implications for girl pupils. This is exemplified in the curriculum for girls in state primary schools with its emphasis on domestic subjects.

In South Australia, a paternal attitude towards girls existed, and although it was not made explicit by the education authorities for some years, its presence affected even the earliest regulations. While seeking to protect girls, the proponents of this attitude laid heavy burdens on them. South Australian views on female roles generally echoed British ideas, and these were particularly strong in the Education Department. This was not surprising as, apart from British educational theory and practice being the obvious exemplars for a British colony, the earliest influential figure in South Australian public education, John Anderson Hartley, had come from Britain in 1871 and dominated the state education system from the time of his appointment as president of the Council of Education in December, 1875 and subsequently as Inspector-General of schools with the establishment of the Education Department in 1878.[13] On his death in 1896 a Board of Inspectors, a triumvirate, succeeded him, until in 1902 their chairman Lionel Stanton became Inspector-General. Throughout all these changes, the Board adhered to Hartley's policies. Stanton was succeeded in 1906 by South Australian-born Alfred Williams who became Director of Education.[14] He introduced a fresh approach, but one which was nevertheless not marked by any diminution of British influence.

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13. Australian Dictionary of Biography, v. 4., Melbourne, 1972, pp. 356-7. Hartley, chairman of the Board of Education, became president of the Council of Education in 1875 and Inspector-General of Schools in 1878.

14. Saunders, G.E., 'J.A. Hartley and the Foundation of the Public School System in South Australia', in Turney, C. ed., Pioneers of Australian Education, v. 2, Sydney, 1972, pp. 179-80

The ideal of South Australian legislators and educational administrators was to produce literate, law-abiding citizens of sound moral standards who were ready to enter the existing social framework of occupations and employment.[15]

The 1875 Act built on already-established patterns of literacy which had developed from the piecemeal educational provisions of the Board of Education and from private enterprise schools. By 1871, the proportion of the South Australian population which could read and write was 62%, with slightly higher rates for children between the ages of seven to twelve,[16] indicating an increasing concern with the education of the young. Within this age group a marginally greater number of girls than boys were literate - 0.66%. This distinction between the sexes was to remain and strengthen within the next two decades.[17] Therefore, simple literacy rates indicate no disabilities for females resulting from their primary education, and the ability to read and write appears to suggest that they might have held some advantage over males. The difference, however, was not great, and it may have been related to the habit of keeping boys home from school to help with farm work.[18]

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15. These aims are to be found in South Australian Parliamentary debates and throughout the annual 'Reports of the Minister Controlling Education' from 1875 to 1915. They are explicitly set out in a pamphlet, 'To Boys and Girls Leaving School', written by Alfred Williams and published by the South Australian Education Department in 1911.

16. SAPP, 1891, 74, Census of 1891, Part IV, Education of the People, 'Memorandum' by L.H. Sholl, Undersecretary and Superintendent of the Census, p. 345

17. Ibid., para 11. In 1891 boys between the ages of seven and twelve numbered 24,267, of whom 86.6% could read and write. Girls in the age group numbered 23,515, of whom 87.05% could read and write.

18. As early as 1859 the Chief Inspector noted this tendency. SAPP, 1860, 34, Report of Board of Education, p. 2

All children were subject to the same provisions of compulsory school attendance and hours of education. The Act made no distinction between the sexes, but there was ample scope for this in the regulations[19] which made clearly defined differentiations between male and female pupils, pupil teachers, student teachers and teachers, and which reflect contemporary South Australian mores concerning women in society.

## 1. Background Assumptions

In 1874, the position of women in South Australian society was clearly stated in an editorial in the Adelaide *Young Men's Magazine*. The place which women were 'intended by God to occupy', was, the writer stated, that of 'companion and helpmate to men'.[20] On this premise, he maintained:

> If it is women's province to be the mothers of our children and the guides of our households, then, I say, that women's education should in the first place be domestic, and that the useful should be more generally taught ... [21]

Such ideals were written into the state's education policies, confirming already-established practices. It was presumed that boys would be the country's future defenders and providers, and girls the future housewives. Many school boys were trained in military drill, while some learned gardening and woodwork, whereas all girls were compulsorily taught needlework,[22] and domestic economy became an increasingly important part of the girls' curriculum.

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19. *SAPP*, 1876, 21, Education Regulations, p. 67
20. *Young Men's Magazine*, 2 (1874) 62
21. *Ibid.*, p. 63
22. The boys' special classes were sporadic, dependent on the interest and ability of their teachers, and were not subject to examination. Even before the 1875 Act, with the establishment of the City Model Schools in 1874, needlework was made compulsory for girls from the second to the fifth (highest) class. Simply set out, the requirements for the youngest pupils were: 'To be learning to hem'. *SAGG*, 9 April, 1874, p. 590

The assumptions and practices regarding girls' education had strong links with South Australia's British origins and were reinforced by continuing immigration, by reciprocal visits, and by other cultural links with Britain, such as the import of books and magazines and the reprinting of British articles in the South Australian newspapers.

British educational theory and practice continued, therefore, to be widely known in South Australia, and the British assumptions underlying the education of girls were accepted, along with the resulting practice. Both theory and practice were being determined during the later nineteenth century when many British writers and public-speakers linked the defects of British society with inadequate female education.[23] A prolonged public debate continued into the twentieth century on the standard of the nation's housekeeping. In 1875 the Saturday Review presented 'a shattering analysis' of the average household, emphasizing the 'slovenliness and carelessness' of the housewives who appeared incapable of 'the most rudimentary domestic management'.[24]

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23. An early example of such complaints is an article in the Pall Mall Gazette which includes the following passage:

> Everyone knows that a large amount of the difficulties experienced in the management of the poor, the criminal, in sanitary reform, in household administration, arises from the gross ignorance of women of the ordinary principles of political and social economy, and the laws of hygiene.

Pall Mall Gazette, 14 September, 1866, p. 10. Quoted in Hodgson, W.B., The Education of Girls and the Employment of Women of the Upper Classes Educationally Considered Two Lectures, London, 2nd edn., 1869, n.p. (opp. p. 1).

24. White, Cynthia, Women's Magazines 1693-1968, London, 1970, p. 74. It has been claimed that changes in women's housekeeping role following the industrial revolution were related to moves from the country to crowded city housing conditions, and often also to poverty. For a discussion of this matter see Stearns, Peter N., 'Working class women in Britain, 1890-1914', in Vicinus, Martha, ed., Suffer and Be Still Women in the Victorian Age, Bloomington, 1973, p. 103.

Contemporaneously, similar statements were made in Adelaide. The Minister for Justice and Education, W.H. Bundey, said in 1874 that 'A woman's first duty was to learn domestic duties' and that girls' general education should include 'a thorough learning and teaching of domestic duties'.[25] J.F. Conigrave, addressing the newly-formed Chamber of Manufactures, deplored the side effects of the factory system on housewifery skills, claiming that it was producing a generation of women who could 'neither cook, wash nor sew', with the consequence that

> the food of the household is unsavoury, indigestible and unnutritious, and at the same time unthrifty while the whole ménage has that character of untidiness and discomfort that often drives the husband to the pot-house. 26

Conigrave's argument was that the worker must be well looked after and kept happy at home, otherwise there would be serious social and economic implications. He urged the establishment of a school of housewifery and cookery especially for 'young persons [girls] engaged in factories' in order to counteract the untidy home and thriftless wife whose husband had 'little heart for his work'.[27]

In Parliament, Mr Johnson, MHA, said in a House of Assembly debate:

> He thought it would be well if a cooking school was started for girls. Everyone knew the lamentable waste there was in all households for the want of a knowledge of cookery ... numbers of girls in factories had no means of getting the knowledge, for in most cases their parents knew very little about household management. 28

He pleaded, without avail, for a self-supporting day and evening cookery school. Part of his ideal was to be realized fifteen years later when the School of Mines and Industries opened its first cookery classes[29] at a time when the domestic economy movement had gained further momentum.

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25. Register, 27 November, 1874, 6e
26. Conigrave, J.F., South Australian Manufactures and Industries, Adelaide, 1875, p. 18. Conigrave acknowledged that these words were taken from Chambers Information for the People, Vol. 2, p. 608
27. Ibid.
28. SAPD (HA), 1875, c. 516
29. S.A. School of Mines, Annual Report, 1889, p. 21

South Australians had no hesitation in applying the British theories of national efficiency, evoked for an industrial nation, to the colony founded only forty years earlier. However inappropriate, British theory and practice had direct influence in South Australia.

By the 1890s searching examinations of weaknesses in the population were occurring in Britain because of the fear of competition in international trade and military preparedness. The new public education system, as a British writer has recently pointed out, was seen as an essential component of ideal national efficiency, where children could be prepared for their later roles.[30] In a further study, the same author mistakenly sees these concerns arising only at the turn of the century, writing that:

> the spectre of physical deterioration of the British people which haunted politicians early this century had origins in the recruiting experiences of the Boer War. 31

This writer, Carol Dyhouse, and a further author, G.R. Searle, both accept the beginning of the Boer War as a convenient point of origin for official British anxieties about the nation's physical deterioration, and for remedial action. But official awareness and responses, through formal education provisions, had begun by the 1880s.

These provisions were probably directly stimulated by widespread discussion in the popular press. The Saturday Review's claims and the ensuing public debate led to the foundation of a number of women's home

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30. Dyhouse, Carol, 'Social Darwinistic Ideas and the Development of Women's Education in England, 1880-1920', History of Education, 5: 1 (1976) 41-51; passim.

31. Dyhouse, Carol, 'Good Wives and Little Mothers, Social Anxieties and the School Girls' Curriculum 1890-1920', Oxford Review of Education, 3: 1 (1977) 22. See also Searle, G.R., The Quest for National Efficiency A Study in British Politics and Political Thought, 1899-1914, Oxford, 1971, p. 2.

management and advice magazines.[32] These found a ready market following the increase in literacy consequent on the English Education Act of 1870 and some were distributed in South Australia.

The improved domestic standards which were being sought and which were described in the women's advice magazines and demonstrated through domestic economy classes were unrealistically high. They presupposed certain domestic conditions including adequate space, equipment and facilities, in addition to a systematic approach to her tasks by the housewife. In analysing the new attitudes to housework, a social historian, Patricia Branca, writes:

> A whole new 'science' of rational domestic economy developed ... Simply to maintain middle class standards ... women busily pursued the art of domestic economy which became a nineteenth century household catchword. [33]

While writers and speakers were promoting maxims of efficiency for British households, women's efforts were criticized as inadequate to meet the new and higher standards of child-rearing, nutrition, food preparation, cleanliness and household accounting.

In order to counteract the inadequacies of housewives, the English Education Department, in the 1880s, had begun to establish cooking classes and in 1891 began laundry classes, in addition to the continued compulsory teaching of sewing in primary schools.[34] The rationale for

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32. White, op. cit., pp. 58-92

33. Branca, Patricia, Women in Europe since 1850, London, 1978, p. 106

34. Sewing was part of the English curriculum for girls from the 1870 Act and had traditionally been taught in girls' schools. Numbers of girls learning cooking and laundry work in English schools were as follows:

| | 1885-6 | 1895-6 |
|---|---|---|
| Number of girls learning cooking | 12,438 in 643 schools | 134,930 in 2,279 schools |
| Number of girls learning laundry work | 632 in 27 schools | 11,770 in 400 schools |

Funds were provided for facilities for instruction 'in the various branches of domestic economy' under two Acts, the Technical Instruction Act of 1889 and the Local Taxation Act of 1890. Great Britain, Education Department, Special Report on Educational Subjects 1896-7, 'Domestic Economy Teaching in England', by Mrs Pillow, p. 157.

such classes was clearly stated in a special report of 1896-7 to the English Education Department on domestic economy teaching. The author, aptly named Mrs Pillow, wrote:

> The great aim throughout has been to awaken intelligence, to make women think, to teach them to avoid errors in the administration of their homes, and to give some knowledge of the science of home life - knowledge, which when acquired and applied, not only enhances the comfort and happiness of the family, but, considered from a national point of view, must produce extremely important economic results in regard to the health, physique and increased intelligence of the rising generation. [35]

Mrs Pillow's statement was published eight years before similar aims were recommended by the British Physical Deterioration Committee of 1904.[36] In both documents national weakness was identified as stemming from individual home conditions. Such thinking had decided influence in South Australia.

It is not possible to determine to what extent the presumed deficiences in British housekeeping occurred similarly in South Australia; no contemporary study was made of the subject.[37] It is clear, however,

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35. Ibid., p. 172. In addition to the report on English domestic economy teaching in 1896-7 the Education Department also commissioned enquiries into housewifery schools and domestic education in other countries including the United States, Spain and Belgium where such classes flourished.

36. PP. 1904, V.1, 'Report of Inter-Departmental Committee on Physical Deterioration', para. 293.

37. Some evidence of unsatisfactory home management in the poorer areas of the city of Adelaide, especially in regard to child care, nutrition and hygiene, is to be found in the annual reports of the Kindergarten Union of South Australia from 1906-7.

    Few studies of Australian city history have yet been made. A notable exception is Graeme Davison's The Rise and Fall of Marvellous Melbourne, Melbourne,1978. Davison refers to the problems of industry, slums and disease; see for example, p. 50.

that those who spoke publicly on these issues in South Australia, as in Victoria at the same time, were giving 'counsels of perfection',[38] which were almost impossible to achieve. The pursuit of the ideal in housekeeping performance was, like the ideal of national efficiency, linked with the popular nineteenth century concept of progress, a complex but constant theme of public discussion in Australia as in Britain, for, as the English author George Watson writes,

> To live in Victorian England was to watch progress happening; men were aware of an ebb and flow, but they were above all conscious of a movement that was irresistibly for the better. 39

The limits of progress, many believed, would be extended if the basis of society, the home, was run efficiently and happily; these simple sentiments were persuasively expressed in Herbert Spencer's writings.[40]

In South Australia, the rhetoric used by Education Department officials reflected their trust in the ameliorative powers of education on society.[41] It was generally assumed, in public statements and writings concerning girls and women, that they would marry and become mothers. With few exceptions, their education was officially stated to be designed mainly for these ends.

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38. *Ibid.*, p. 197

39. Watson, George, *op. cit.*, p. 251

40. See Spencer, Herbert, *Principles of Sociology*, London, 1876, Part III, 'Domestic Relations'

41. Such rhetoric appears frequently in the annual 'Reports of the Minister Controlling Education' throughout the period and in the *Education Gazette* from its foundation in 1885.

However, an examination of the actual situation of women in South Australia reveals not only a significant number of single women, including spinsters, widows and deserted wives, but also an appreciable proportion of women who were in the work force, either before or after marriage. And the desire to marry was by no means universal among young women in South Australia, in spite of the expectations of society. An example is the case of Annie Duncan, born in Adelaide in 1858, who stated:

> At no time during my youth was I much attracted to the idea of marriage. I was much more excited by the thought of being an artist or of following out some career by which I could earn my own living. 42

Again, sometimes parents viewed their daughters in a similar light to their sons. Mrs Mary Jacob, a school teacher whose husband was Clerk of the Mount Gambier Court, wrote to her daughter Caroline, aged 23, also a teacher, in 1884:

> With regard to your money troubles, one thing you have to consider, is, that you have nothing to depend upon but your own exertions, you have no independent friends to fall back upon when you may be disabled to any extent from working - and you may live to see your parents somewhat dependent on their children. 43

Such situations frequently did arise, and the proportion of female breadwinners in South Australia was substantial, as demonstrated by the following percentages, extracted from the Census reports of 1881, 1891 and 1901: the percentages of female to male breadwinners were

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42. Duncan, Annie, 'Reminiscences', Book 1, p. 143, 1337 SASA. She became an Inspector of Factories in London and in Sydney.

43. Letter from Mary Jacob to Caroline Jacob, June 20, 1884. In possession of Miss Nora Jacob. The Jacob family included both sons and daughters.

1881, 15%; 1891, 19%; 1901, 21%. Not all were single, although some of these female breadwinners remained unmarried. The table below indicates the relatively high and generally increasing proportions of women who did not marry.

Table IV: Percentages Never Married in Selected Age Groups, South Australia[44]

| Year | 20-24 | 25-29 | 45-49 |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1876 | 57.5 | 23.4 | 2.2 |
| 1881 | 56.2 | 22.8 | 4.1 |
| 1891 | 70.5 | 35.1 | 5.9 |
| 1901 | 71.8 | 43.3 | 14.3 |

Peter McDonald, in analysing statistics on Australian marriage for the years 1891 to 1921, stated that: 'By international standards, the proportions ultimately never marrying in Australia at this time were remarkably high'.[45] The causes of this situation were complex; they were sometimes related to depression periods and partly to distribution of population.[46] The causes need not be investigated here, but the existence of high proportions of unmarried women is relevant to this study, for it provides

44. McDonald, Peter F., Marriage in Australia Age at First Marriage and Proportions Marrying, 1860-1971, Australian Family Formation Project Monograph number 2, Canberra, 1975. Extracted from Table 30, p. 96 and Table 40, p. 134

45. Ibid., p. 133

46. McDonald states, for example, that in Melbourne and Adelaide from 1891 to 1921, there were between 70 and 80 females per 100 males in the 'marriage market' while in the country there were 100 to 130 females per 100 males. Ibid., p. 144

a sharp contrast to contemporary assumptions and it raises questions about the occupations of single women and others, usually widowed or deserted, who frequently had to earn a living. It also raises doubts about the accuracy of contemporary official knowledge concerning the probable future careers of schoolgirls.

In an analysis of women's participation in the urban workforce in Adelaide, A.W. Sinclair has presented the following information:[47]

Table V: Participation of women in the urban workforce in Adelaide (women in workforce as a percentage of women aged 15-60)

| Year | Percentage |
|---|---|
| 1871 | 24.9 |
| 1881 | 28.4 |
| 1891 | 32.9 |
| 1901 | 31.2 |
| 1911 | 28.7 |

Table VI: Participation of unmarried women in the urban workforce in Adelaide (unmarried women in workforce as a percentage of unmarried women aged 15-60)

| Year | Percentage |
|---|---|
| 1871 | 47.8 |
| 1881 | 61.1 |
| 1891 | 64.4 |
| 1901 | 54.2 |
| 1911 | 49.7 |

Table V shows not less than 28% of all women aged 15 to 60 years participating in the urban workforce during the period under review.

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47. Tables V and VI (omitting similar information from Melbourne) are part of a paper entitled 'Do the Economic Historians Have Anything to Offer? The Case of Women in Australian History', presented to the Working Group in Social History, Adelaide, by Professor A.W. Sinclair, 28 June, 1978.

That is, more than a quarter of all such women residing in urban South Australia were in paid occupations, and when the number of unmarried women in the same category, shown in Table VI, is considered, there is an appreciable increase, reaching a minimum of nearly 50% in 1901, and a maximum of more than 64% in 1891. These are very high proportions of women earning money through their own work.[48] No similar study has been made of women in rural areas, but the figures suggest that the ideal of the woman married and efficiently managing her home might have applied to less than 75% of the total, and that the rhetoric associated with women's supposed universal role was not consistent with the actual situation. This was bound to have a bearing on the practical aspects of women's education.

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48. These proportions may be used as a broad indicator. It is difficult, according to geographer Michael Williams, to determine the basis for rural and urban measurement of the South Australian population and such enquiries are outside the scope of this study. See Williams, Michael, The Making of the South Australian Landscape A Study in the Historical Geography of Australia, London, 1974, p. 420

## 2. Domestic Economy in Schools

The South Australian education authorities theoretically endorsed domestic economy as early as 1876, when the first Education Regulations listed 'Domestic Economy (for females only)' as an examination subject for the Teachers' Certificate, Class II.[49] But in spite of these Regulations no student teachers were examined in this subject until 1901.

The introduction of domestic economy in South Australian state schools was a piecemeal process occurring in several stages. The first was tentative, and ended in 1900. The second brief stage began in 1900 but this was abruptly terminated less than two years later. The third stage began, not in the Education Department, but in the School of Mines, in 1904; domestic economy was transferred to the Education Department in 1910 under a strong Director, Alfred Williams, and by the 1915 Education Act it was firmly established.

The earliest domestic-based subject taught in schools was needlework, which was included in the curriculum for girls from the outset of compulsory education. South Australian schools, following the British practice,[50] used the term 'needlework', which meant more than simply 'sewing', for it included plain and fancy stitches and knitting. A centuries' old traditionally female skill, it was practised in various forms in many countries[51] and had both utilitarian and leisure uses.

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49. Education Regulations, 1876, op. cit., p. 3

50. Prior to the 1870 English Education Act, the English Code of 1862 had permitted grants to be distributed to schools conditional on the three Rs being taught to all children, and girls being taught plain needlework. Selleck, R.J.W., The New Education, Melbourne, 1968, pp. 33-4

51. Costelow, Mary, A World of Embroidery, London, 1975, passim. Mawson, Paquita, 'No Idle Fingers', in Brown, L. et al. eds., A Book of South Australia Women in the First Hundred Years, Adelaide, 1936, pp. 151-7.

Domestic economy will be examined here first as it was the more important curriculum subject. Its introduction into schools in the later nineteenth century was a new departure and one which reflected the wider social aims and anxieties involving women and girls.

At first, domestic economy was included among the Teachers' Certificate subjects probably in response to inter-colonial precedent, for it was very similar to the New South Wales provision for the Class II Teachers' Certificate examination,[52] and British influence almost certainly stimulated the New South Wales decision. An example of these British influences on Australian educators is provided by the reprinting, in the widely-distributed Australian Journal of Education, of a British article linking the requirements of female education with the well-being of the family and the state.[53] It discussed the failure of women to cook well, use fuel economically, sew, wash, iron and mend clothes capably, ascribing all shortcomings to the lack of a 'good technical education'.[54]

Despite such urgings, neither the New South Wales nor the Victorian education authorities moved from theoretical to practical domestic

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52. Griffiths, D.C. Documents on the Establishment of Education in New South Wales 1789-1880, Melbourne, 1957, p. 142. The 1868 New South Wales examination paper included four questions to be answered in three hours. The first was 'How may a good wife render her home attractive to her husband?' Ibid.

53. 'An Englishman's Education', reproduced from Systematic Technical Education for the English People, by J. Scott Russell in Australian Journal of Education, 3 (1870) 282-8

54. Ibid., p. 284

economy before the 1890s.[55] In South Australia, translating the rhetoric of national efficiency into the practical organisation of domestic science classes was a complex process, made particularly difficult as South Australia suffered periodically from economic near-disasters, the result of poor seasons;[56] South Australia is the driest part of the driest continent. In all South Australian educational decisions enthusiasm for overseas ideas had to be reconciled with the actual situation of vast distances, the necessity to build from practically nothing, and a reluctance by the Parliament to see more than a minimum spent on education. Initially, enormous leeway had to be made up on essentials, particularly on buildings.[57] However, the view that English institutions could be established remained very strong among legislators and officials. Education was seen as a direct means of transmitting desirable values through institutional forms.

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55. New South Wales first introduced cookery into a few primary schools in 1890, under Mrs Fawcett Storey, an Englishwoman trained at the South Kensington School of Domestic Economy. NSW PP 1891-2, 3, Report of Minister of Public Instruction, p. 182; New Idea, 6 June 1903, pp. 51-3. In 1899 Mrs Storey was recruited to Victoria to lecture to student teachers and organize cookery for schools. VPP 1899-1900, 3. Report of Minister of Public Instruction, p. 182; Biddington, Judith, 'The Role of Women in the Victorian Education Department', M.Ed. Thesis, University of Melbourne, 1977, p. 76

56. In a major study of South Australia's geography and population, Dr Charles Fenner wrote that

    > the greatest of all the antagonistic geographical controls influencing this state is that of a season, or a series of seasons, of low rainfall or 'drought'.

    Fenner, Charles, 'A Geographical Enquiry into the Growth, Distribution and Movement of Population in South Australia, 1836-1927'. Royal Society of South Australia, Transactions, 53 (1929) 94

57. For instance, in 1874, when the Central Board of Education was considering the possibility of a new Act, it recorded the fact that the following populous districts were without any public school buildings: the City of Adelaide (apart from the newly-opened Model Schools), and the municipalities of Port Adelaide, Kensington and Norwood, Gawler and Kadina and Moonta. Central Board of Education, Minutes, 1874/1929, GRG 50 SASA

For some years sewing remained the only domestically-oriented subject actually practised in the South Australian schools. The first move towards domestic economy occurred in 1885 when the Adelaide School Board of Advice wrote to the Minister of Education 'respecting the formation of cookery classes in connection with the schools' and suggesting that the Minister should obtain information about cookery classes conducted under the London and Liverpool School Boards.[58] The wording of the question indicated that the Board already had some information. This would have been obtained through their chairman, Mr J. Langdon Bonython, whose interest in technical education had been aroused by the reports of the British Commission on Technical Education, released in 1882 and 1884.[59] Bonython, editor of the Adelaide Advertiser, was 'the confidant of many men in political affairs at home, interstate and abroad',[60] and therefore a valuable person to have as chairman of the Board. The Minister sought and gained the required information for the Adelaide School Board of Advice, but did not act on it.

In 1886 Bonython was appointed to a South Australian Board of Enquiry into Technical Education. The Board's report resulted in the foundation of the South Australian School of Mines and Industries in 1888, with which Bonython was associated until his death in 1939, being president of its council for fifty years.[61] An advocate of national efficiency, his interest in technical education was to prove important

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58. SAPP, 1886, 44, Report of the Minister Controlling Education, p. 21

59. As a result of these Reports the British government increased grants for technical education to enable British workers to be more competitive with foreign workers.

60. Australian Dictionary of Biography, v. 7, Melbourne, 1979, p. 340.

61. Ibid.

in the introduction and development of domestic economy; among the first classes at the School of Mines was one in cookery and another in dress-making.[62]

In 1888, the Adelaide Board of Advice, under Bonython's chairmanship, made further approaches to the Minister of Education concerning cookery classes. The Minister replied that he was 'considering the matter'.[63] A tentative move towards the teaching of domestic economy was made officially in 1890, when new Education Regulations included 'Special lessons'. These were introduced in response to increasing awareness in the Education Department of the value of practical training and manual work. The Regulations suggested that the Special lessons could include paper cutting, cardboard modelling, carpentry, gardening and scientific talks with illustrations, all being dependent on the teacher's skills. A notable inclusion was the provision that 'In girls' schools cookery may be taken'.[64]

By its nature cooking had to be taught practically, and therefore it required certain capital equipment, the minimum being a stove, a table, a storage cupboard, availability of fuel and water, together with certain utensils such as saucepans, scales, bowls, spoons, knives and other implements. While costs for 1890-91 are not available, in 1901 when price levels were similar, capital costs were calculated at approximately £6 per school for 'cooking apparatus, apart from the stove, store and tables'; a suitable oil stove would have cost £3.10.0, while gas stoves could be hired by the year for between £3 and £4.10.0.[65] Thus

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62. S.A. School of Mines, Annual Report, 1889, p. 11

63. Education Department Correspondence file, 1889/374, GRG 18/2, SASA

64. Education Gazette, 6, 50 (July 1890) 70.

65. Education Department, CF 1901/2096, 12 November, 1901, Alice Hills to Lionel Stanton GRG 18/2 SASA

a minimum of £9 per school, plus the cost of a store cupboard and tables was necessary, apart from the materials, which could be recouped from sales to students, and of course the employment of a suitably qualified teacher with both practical and theoretical knowledge. This would have added considerably to Education Department costs and it is not surprising that the earliest cookery classes in South Australia were conducted in small country schools with few pupils and a master's wife willing voluntarily to undertake the lessons in her own kitchen. At Halbury School, for example, in 1891, Class III and IV girls made cakes, bread, jellies, jams and marmalade under the tuition of the master's wife, herself a former teacher,[66] although not in cookery.

Such a move might appear to have been the precursor of further domestic economy classes in South Australian schools. But various reasons, mainly economic, prevented this. In 1890, the maritime strike which affected all colonies began in Adelaide and brought business 'almost to a standstill',[67] while 1891 was a year of severe drought, leading to serious unemployment. The colony's depression was exacerbated by effects of the prolonged Broken Hill strike of 1892 and the 1893 crisis in the eastern colonies also affected South Australia, leading to reduced wages and further unemployment.[68]

At the same time, the South Australian Education Department had to deal with the Government's decision to abolish fees for the compulsory years of education. This led to a substantial movement of children from the small, cheap private schools to the state schools and caused subsequent pressure on accommodation and staff. Between 1875 and 1892 the

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66. Education Gazette, 7: 60 (September 1891) 94, 101

67. Coghlan, T.A., Labour and Industry in Australia, Vol. III, Melbourne, 1969, p. 1556.

68. Ibid., pp. 1561-3

total number of state schools had increased from 268 to 552, including an increase of 27 to 579 in 1891-2.[69] The number of scholars in the same year rose by 6,363 to 53,457, while total costs of the Education Department between 1891 and 1892 increased by £22,820, from £108,794 to £131,614. At the same time revenue fell by approximately £8,400 with the abolition of fees.[70]

An added reason for hesitation in introducing domestic economy classes was the fact that the subject required skilled teachers, both to organize and to conduct classes. The Department employed no-one qualified to undertake such work.[71]

The earliest South Australian formal classes in cookery were organized by the School of Mines and Industries and were designed not for school girls, but for the woman in comfortable circumstances, to enable her 'to order any dinner she may require, or, in an emergency to provide the same herself'.[72] As the chairman of the School, Bonython, became more interested in national efficiency, he supported further domestic economy classes. In 1894 he referred to Lord Rosebery's fear of Germany, based on her superior science and industry - a theme which had been raised in the South Australian Parliament as early as 1875.[73] Bonython urged the development of South Australia's 'bread and butter' arts and sciences 'to enable full utilization of natural resources'.[74] His influence was partly responsible for the introduction of domestic economy classes for school girls, mainly through a report made by a

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69. SAPP, 1893, 3, Statistical Register of South Australia, Table 5, 'Dicennial Return Giving Particulars of Public Education', p. 7

70. Ibid.

71. When the Department later made serious efforts to find a suitable teacher locally they met with no success. Education Department, CF 1900/1148. Director of Education to Minister of Education, 26 May, 1900. GRG 18/1 SASA

72. SA School of Mines, Annual Report, 1891, p. 34

73. SAPD (LC) 1875, c. 1017. The Hon. A. Hay referred to the superior Prussian education system enabling military advantage.

74. SA School of Mines, Annual Report, 1896, p. 26

member of his Council, W.H. Bragg, who was Professor of Mathematics and Physics at the University of Adelaide. During a year's leave in England in 1898, accompanied by his wife, he enquired extensively into the teaching of domestic economy in that country. Bragg was intrigued at the co-ordination of various domestic studies in the one institution, an idea he thought worthy 'of our earnest imitation'. He applauded the object of 'training good housewives' who would make homes 'healthier and thriftier, brighter and more attractive'.[75] He and his wife spent 'hours' in the 'very efficient' domestic economy school at the Battersea Polytechnic,[76] an institution which was later to provide South Australia with two organizers of domestic economy courses.[77]

During the 1890s the Battersea Polytechnic was one of several institutions in England which set up training courses for teachers of domestic science and domestic economy.[78] Recognized by the English Education Department, the establishment of these courses acknowledged that:

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75. Ibid.
76. Ibid., p. 187
77. They were Mrs Alice Hills, B.Sc., and Miss Edith Devitt.
78. Crow, Duncan, The Edwardian Woman, London, 1978, p. 167. The titles which have been used to designate domestic studies in South Australia in the period under review are 'Domestic Economy' and 'Domestic Arts'. The latter name was adopted by the South Australian Education Department only in 1909. In first adopting the title 'Domestic Economy' the South Australian Education Department was following the English practice, although a new subject, Domestic Science, was introduced into the English Education Code of 1887-8. 'Domestic Economy Teaching in England', op. cit., p. 170. In the United States in 1903 an English observer noted that 'Domestic Science' had been introduced in the mid-nineteenth century. Other titles in use after 1899 were Home Science, Household Economics and Home Economics. These subjects were taught at college level, whereas 'Domestic Economy' was the title used for younger pupils, and 'Domestic Science' for high schools. Great Britain Board of Education, Special Reports on Educational Subjects, v. 15, 'School Training for the Home Duties of Women. Part I, The Teaching of "Domestic Science" in the United States of America' by Alice Ravenhill, London, 1905

> domestic service as a career for gentlewomen should not be the last resort for the untrained but a recognized profession for which a thorough, practical and scientific training was required. 79

The training emphasized managerial skills.

In 1899, after Bragg's report, and possibly because school cookery was being organized in Victoria, the Education Department sent Inspector Whitham to New South Wales to enquire into its teaching. He subsequently reported on the training of teachers and organization of classes, noting that the food cooked was sold to the students 'for their dinner', thus helping to defray costs.[80]

The Education Department moved very slowly towards practical action, for in addition to economic restraints and lack of personnel, the death of Hartley in 1896 resulted in indecisive leadership by the Board of Inspectors. Their hesitancy was partly due to the fact that between 1898 and 1905 ten different Ministers held the portfolio of Education. The Department lacked not only finance, but also strength and stability.

However, one original move was made. Because the Inspectorate required further staff following the loss of Hartley, and partly because the all-male Inspectors had to devote considerable time to examining needlework, in 1897 a female Inspector, the first in Australia, was appointed.[81] She was Miss Blanche McNamara who was well-trained in Education Department procedures and requirements, having entered as a pupil-teacher in the Rundle Street school in 1875, and who succeeded in becoming headmistress of the Port Adelaide girls' school in 1889.[82] Her appointment gave official recognition to Departmental concern with girls' education; it was her responsibility to inspect female students of the

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79. Crow, op. cit., p. 167.

80. Education Department, CF 1899/1216, GRG 18/1 SASA

81. SAPP, 1897, 44, Report of the Minister Controlling Education, p. 12. Her salary was £250 per annum; Education Department, CF, 1898/660, GRG 18/1 SASA

82. Herald, 28 April, 1900, 3b

Training College, the Advanced School for Girls, and 25 of the largest city and suburban schools.[83] Her appointment reflected the public recognition of women's status as responsible administrators which had followed the granting of female suffrage in South Australia in December, 1894.[84]

Blanche McNamara appears to have been involved in some work towards domestic economy classes. Her first report to the Minister includes a reference to girls' arithmetic, where she states:

> I think the time must come when, if the girls' curriculum be enlarged by the introduction of lessons on domestic economy, &c., some modification of the arithmetic standard will be needed. 85

Although she made no other references in her reports to domestic economy, there is evidence that in 1897-8 some classes were held 'in several of the larger schools',[86] including the Norwood school where in 1901 'just a few [utensils were] left from former lessons'.[87]

Blanche McNamara died in April, 1900,[88] and the Education Department, having been well satisfied with her work, sought another female Inspector. A month later, Lionel Stanton, Chairman of the Board of Inspectors, requested that the Minister appoint her replacement 'at the earliest possible date'.[89] The Board had ten applicants, none of

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83. SAPP, 1897, 44 , Report of the Minister Controlling Education, op. cit. She made no particular report on the Advanced School.

84. This topic is discussed in Chapter VI.

85. SAPP, 1898-9, 44, Report of the Minister Controlling Education, p. 20. The matter of the girls' arithmetic is discussed further below.

86. Great Britain Board of Education, 'Special Report on the System of Education in South Australia', London, 1901, p. 473. This report was written in 1897-8 by Inspector Whitham.

87. Education Department, CF 1901/1025, Alice Hills to Director of Education, n.d. GRG 18/2 SASA

88. Herald, 28 April, 1900, 3b, She died of 'consumption'.

89. Education Department, CF 1900/1148, Lionel Stanton to Minister of Education GRG 18/1 SASA

whom had any special qualifications. The choice fell on Miss Ann Cecilia Hunter, first assistant at the Parkside school.[90] The relevant file, which reached the Chief Secretary for Cabinet consideration on 26 May, 1900, indicates that there was no bar in the way of her appointment, but it was not made.[91]

Instead, a very highly qualified Englishwoman was appointed as Inspector of Schools and Instructor of Domestic Economy. She was Mrs Alice Hills, B.Sc., a graduate of the University of London who had also trained in domestic science at the Battersea Polytechnic.[92] The circumstances of her appointment are not known, the earliest evidence being a letter from Stanton to the Minister on 14 July, 1900, describing her conditions; she was appointed at a salary of £200 per annum, plus travelling expenses and an allowance of eight shillings a day when engaged away from headquarters.[93] Her arrival was an important event for the management of domestic economy in schools, and had social implications.

The Board of Inspectors viewed Alice Hills' appointment as a means of social control. Their first report on her tasks included a customary reference to the 'vast strides' made in technical education in European

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90. Stanton wrote:

> Her record is good, and she has kept herself abreast of the times by taking up University work, having recently passed the Higher Public Examination in French, and being now a student of Geology.

<u>Ibid</u>.

91. <u>Ibid</u>. The only further note on the file indicates that it was borrowed from the Chief Secretary on 23 August, 1900, by an unidentified official.

92. <u>SAPP</u>, 1901, 44, Report of the Minister Controlling Education, p. 13

93. <u>Education Department</u>, CF 1900/1415, Stanton to Minister of Education, 14 July, 1900. Her appointment was made in the first instance from 14 September 1900 to 13 September 1901. GRG 18/1 SASA

countries and the United States. In discussing Alice Hills' establishment of a 'Domestic Economy School', the Inspectors made a significant direct statement of their aims:

> This school will be the centre from which the teaching of such subjects as are needful for girls to know to make them expert in household matters will be extended, we hope, very shortly into localities remote from Adelaide ... A useful and practical training in household work obtained by girls in our schools will be of incalculable benefit to the community, as it should encourage and help to form habits of thrift, industry, cleanliness and regard for domestic comfort, which should add greatly to the pleasures and convenience of home life. At the same time it should also have the effect of providing recreations of a practical kind, thus doing away with that recognized form of amusement - an aimless perambulation of the village or city streets. 94

To the Board of Inspectors, the provision of household skills for girls held the key to the ordering of society. Just as the advocates of national efficiency in Britain looked to the woman at home as the economic saviour of society, so the Inspectors held an idealistic view of Alice Hills guiding girls towards domestic knowledge and also acting as a social moderator, inducing her pupils to occupy themselves with domestic tasks (and doubtless to entice perambulating young men into the stable atmosphere of the home). Their high hopes did not last long, for Alice Hills' appointment was not renewed beyond the end of her second year in September 1902; Stanton made no public explanation other than that 'The lady inspector, who was also Domestic Economy instructor, left the Department in September at the conclusion of her two years' engagement'.[95] In fact, her engagement in the first instance was for only one year, and must therefore have been reviewed at least once. It seems likely that her abilities and outspokenness may have led to her becoming a thorn in the side of the Education Department.[96]

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94. SAPP, 1901, 44, Report of the Minister Controlling Education, p. 13
95. SAPP, 1903, 44, Report of the Minister Controlling Education, p. 13
96. See SAPP, 1902, Ibid., Inspector Hills' report, pp. 26-7, and Education Department, CF 1901/1025, Alice Hills to Board of Inspectors, n.d. GRG 18/2 SASA

However, she stepped into her position confidently, instigating major changes quickly. Not only did she organise for the Education Department but she also quickly wrote a report on the current system at the School of Mines with suggestions for change. These led to the School setting up a department of Domestic Economy and introducing laundry work which was taught by a diplomate of the British National School of Cookery, who also taught cooking.[97]

Alice Hills had a daunting task. She inspected needlework in city and suburban schools and in some country schools; she also inspected infant departments and infant and girls' drill and taught needlework to the female students of the Pupil Teachers' School.[98] In December 1900 she opened a Domestic Economy Centre in Grote Street. This was established in 'a corrugated iron building 45 feet by 25 feet',[99] and was fitted up 'as a school of housewifery and laundry work'.[100] Two assistants were appointed to help Alice Hills and to learn to undertake the work themselves; they were Miss Jeannie Barron, an assistant teacher, and Miss Edith Darby who was a pupil teacher.[101]

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97. SA School of Mines, Annual Report, 1901, p. 35

98. SAPP, 1902, 44, Report of the Minister Controlling Education, p. 34

99. A structure of those dimensions appears on a Public Buildings Department plan of the Grote Street Education Department buildings dated 1902. Labelled 'Workshop', the shed is on the southern boundary of the property behind the fence of the Advanced School for Girls and adjacent to an Education Department store and book-room. Bierbaum, H.F., Adelaide Girls' High School History of Buildings, processed typescript and copied plans, Adelaide, 1976.

100. SAPP, 1902, 44, Report of the Minister Controlling Education, p. 26

101. Ibid.

They worked throughout the five week days, teaching classes of thirty each morning and also on Wednesday afternoons, teaching pupil teachers on Saturday mornings, and receiving instruction themselves on four afternoons.[102] Fortunately, it is possible to gain a clear understanding of these classes through examination of a student's domestic economy notebook of 1901 which has been marked by Edith Darby.[103] Contents of the notebook are analysed in Appendix A.

All work was demonstrated to the class before being repeated by the children. The notes which Alice Hills had prepared were straighforward and practical, and well-suited to girls of about thirteen years. Instruction covered three main areas: first aid, laundry work and cooking. Dates of the notebook and division into weeks show that first aid was taught for two to three weeks, laundry work for ten weeks and cooking for about thirteen weeks.

Some of the processes necessary in laundry work were long and laborious, involving the use of wood-fired coppers and fuel-heated irons. Alice Hills complained that: 'The work was greatly hampered by an unsuitable ironing stove and by the tar floor, from which a fine black powder rises'.[104] In spite of these drawbacks the students learned all laundry processes 'except that of getting up a man's shirt, though cuffs, collars, even blouses, laces and silks were done very creditably'.[105]

The domestic economy notebook shows that laundry work was done in March, April and May, an arrangement probably designed to avoid such heavy tasks during the hottest months in the corrugated iron shed. The

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102. _Ibid._

103. Domestic economy notebook. Handwritten school exercise book in my possession. HJ.

104. _SAPP_, 1902, 44, _op. cit._, p. 26

105. _Ibid._

students learned all basic processes of cooking, doing as much of the shopping as possible themselves in nearby shops or the city market in Grote Street. They made various dishes including soups, meat, fish, vegetables, salads and puddings, and then purchased the finished products. It is clear from the contents of the domestic economy note-book, and from Alice Hills' comments, that these students were being trained to manage their own homes.

While she was engaged in this teaching, Alice Hills also cast an experienced eye over girls' general education, and reported that: 'Either the boys have an absurdly easy time, or the girls are hard pressed.'[106] She found that girls attending her classes were expected to do the same amount of work as boys in five hours less a week, for two hours were devoted to sewing and three to domestic economy. She spoke critically of teachers who tried to keep girls back at school instead of allowing them to join her classes, and claimed that some part of their work should be proportionally reduced as it was in England.[107]

At the end of 1901, following instructions from Stanton, she began investigations and plans for further domestic economy classes. She possessed managerial skills and the capacity for close attention to detail, qualities which were required for organizing the classes in the larger suburban schools. She assessed the possibilities of eight schools - Norwood, Goodwood, Hindmarsh, Unley, Port Adelaide, Le Fevre Peninsula, East Adelaide and Parkside.[108]

In reporting to Stanton, Alice Hills recognized that both physical and financial limitations made it impossible to introduce the full range of domestic economy teaching, for the following reasons:

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106. Ibid., p. 27

107. Ibid. A lower standard in arithmetic for girls had become the practice, even as early as 1882. See SAPP, 1882, 27, Progress Report of Enquiry into Education, op. cit.; q 4740

108. Education Department, CF 1901/2096 12 November, 1901, Alice Hills to Lionel Stanton, GRG 18/2 SASA

> In view of storage difficulties, water carriage, and space I have thought it advisable to recommend cookery alone, laundry work requiring much more of the above facilities. 109

She calculated room required for tables and utensils for classes of sixteen practising pupils, listed equipment ranging from saucepans, scales, jugs and plates to dishcloths, brooms and dustpans, and recommended gas stoves for some schools and oil stoves for others. Availability of rooms, water and storage space, a detailed plan for each school and complete costing was included in her report.[110]

Alice Hills followed this enterprise, in January 1902, by proposing that she should write a book of recipes for the schools, to be sold 'at the price of 2d. or even 3d.', and a 'small laundry hand book', because 'There is only <u>one</u> in the colonies, for dozens of Cookery books.'[111] In order to do this she requested to be freed from the Saturday morning cookery class: 'It is the work which can best be spared.'[112]

Stanton agreed that she may submit her manuscripts to the Board which would consider the question of publishing and price, and he released her from the Saturday morning class to do the writing,[113] but there is no further record of her project. Some progress was made with the schools' domestic economy classes, for the facilities were used in later years, but they were not mentioned in the Board of Inspectors' next report to the Minister. Lack of evidence concerning the background of Alice Hills' appointment and its non-renewal in September, 1902, leaves open the question of Departmental motives. Possibly her withdrawal was voluntary, perhaps for personal reasons; or possibly the

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109. <u>Ibid</u>.

110. <u>Ibid</u>. See also pp. 29-30 above

111. <u>Ibid</u>., 1902/269, 30 January, 1902, GRG 18/2 SASA

112. <u>Ibid</u>.

113. <u>Ibid</u>.

financial strain of her commitments was too great for the Department in 1902, 'a disastrous drought year'.[114] It is likely, however, that her criticisms of a head teacher,[115] of class teachers whose work she inspected,[116] of some parents, and the attitude of some teachers to domestic economy classes may have made her unpopular and led to pressure on the Board of Inspectors.

Her outspoken criticisms include the following:

> The adverse influence exerted by class teachers in the schools, who feel inconvenienced by a pupil being absent one morning every week and urge her to give up such 'home' work. It is certainly to be regretted that such teachers may in time become head teachers, and although out of sympathy with modern requirements, be responsible for girls' education. [117]

In the small community of South Australian teachers, it would not be surprising if such comments aroused hostility. Yet she was by no means all acerbity. She showed sympathy for her younger pupils, commenting that some had to travel long distances to the Domestic Economy Centre and that particularly those under twelve years of age became tired for their afternoon work.[118]

Alice Hills' parting remarks in her last report for the Department included a plea for more intelligent approaches to girls' practical education. This was a sorely-needed goal, she believed, for 'The feminine educated parrot is as common in Australia as in the old country.'[119] She was a significant figure in South Australian education;

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114. Fenner, op. cit., p. 95. She and her husband J.F. Hills, MA later ran the Semaphore Collegiate School in an Adelaide suburb. Directory of South Australia, 1903.

115. Education Department, CF 1901/1025, Alice Hills to Board of Inspectors, n.d. GRG 18/2 SASA. She criticized the headmaster of the Currie Street School for persistently preventing girls from attending the Domestic Economy Centre regularly.

116. For example, she described aspects of infants' and girls' drill as 'slipshod'. SAPP, 1902, 44, Report of the Minister Controlling Education, p. 26

117. Ibid., p. 27 118. Ibid. 119. Ibid.

she pioneered domestic economy classes under difficult conditions and established a basis of sound standards for later teachers to follow, while retaining an independent stance.

When she left, the School of Mines extended their classes. In February 1903, a major donation to the School was used for a new building to house technical classes; half of its first floor was devoted to space 'for the ladies' for laundry and cooking.[120] Alice Hills' former assistant, Jeannie Barron, joined the staff of the School of Mines and at the 1905 opening ceremony Bonython was able to report that in 1904 only the School was teaching domestic economy; all such classes within the Education Department had ceased, and all staff had been transferred to the School of Mines. The domestic economy centres recently planned for eight suburban schools were now to be staffed by visiting School of Mines teachers. Furthermore, city and inner suburban schoolgirls were to visit the School of Mines for domestic economy classes. It was to be the only major centre for domestic economy teaching in the State.[121]

Bonython visualised a great transformation being wrought in the ordinary homes of Adelaide, hoping that adult women as well as schoolgirls would attend classes which included dressmaking (practical and theoretical), cookery, laundry work, millinery, hygiene, housewifery and home nursing. 'Such a course,' Bonython claimed, 'ought to appeal to the people.'[122] He expected crowded classes, but in succeeding years he was forced to admit that they were not popular, not having 'caught on' and that the attendance register was a 'very disheartening document'.[123]

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120. S.A. School of Mines, Annual Report, 1903, p. 53

121. Ibid., 1905, p. 49

122. Ibid.

123. Ibid., 1907, p. 57

What, he wondered, was the reason? He explained that:

> There is efficient teaching, and the rooms are properly equipped. The department provides instruction of a kind which ought to be in demand, but the public manifests extraordinary indifference, in spite of the fact that a knowledge of domestic economy would in many houses mean health, happiness, and money. 124

Bonython expressed contemporary beliefs in progress and national efficiency while assuming that people were aware of their deficiencies and were eager to correct them. In fact, there is no evidence that he had any direct knowledge of the domestic arrangements of Adelaide's homes; he attempted to gain students merely by informing the public that they would benefit from the classes. A similar, related situation arose among the visiting school girls.

The arrangements for school children involved girls from seven city and near-city schools attending the School of Mines in classes of thirty for a half day weekly. In 1908, after a dining room was furnished, the pupils remained longer, until 3 p.m.[125] Bonython claimed that the work with the state school children was 'eminently satisfactory' and looked to its extension so that 'In this way we might get much useful knowledge into the houses of the people.'[126] But here again his optimistic forecasts were not to be realized. A curious situation is revealed on examination of both School of Mines and Education Department records, relating to the numbers of school students who attended the School of Mines for domestic economy classes. Bonython cited numbers in his Reports which were much higher than those contained in the monthly School of Mines returns to the Education Department[127] and

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124. Ibid.

125. Ibid., 1908, p. 61

126. Ibid.

127. Education Department, CF 1909/610; 1910/1341, School of Mines Secretary to Director of Education, GRG 18/2 SASA

which were included in the Director of Education's Report in the year 1908.[128] Bonython's figures were in fact impossible, given the number of students using the School at one time, i.e. thirty. With one visit for half a day each week the maximum number would be 150 throughout the year, for the visits were made only in the mornings, and this was not changed with the longer time spent from 1908, whereas Bonython claimed numbers ranging from 343 in 1908 and 347 in 1911 down to 214 in 1914.[129] It is likely that he had included numbers of adults attending similar classes in addition to the school girls.

His adoption of the Education Department classes appears to have been contrived in late 1904 through personal discussion with the Minister of Education, Mr R. Homburg.[130] When the new Director of Education, Alfred Williams, appointed in 1906, explored the history of School of Mines classes for Education Department school girls he reacted angrily. Williams had 'serious objections' to the usurping of the Education Department's control over teachers and curriculum and he also wanted to see domestic economy extended to more students. He recommended that Departmental teachers should be sent to Melbourne and Sydney to study methods; on their return the Grote Street Centre should be reinstated, and the ablest teacher should be appointed 'to take general and complete charge of the development of Cooking and Domestic subjects throughout the schools of the State.'[131]

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128. SAPP, 1909, 44, Report of Minister Controlling Education, p. 16

129. S.A. School of Mines, Annual reports, 1908, p. 61; 1911, p. 9; 1914, p. 9

130. Education Department, CF 1908/2993, Director of Education to Minister of Education, 26 December, 1908, GRG 18/1 SASA

131. Ibid. This course was apparently not followed.

Williams' interest in domestic economy was based firmly on grounds of national efficiency. In 1907 he travelled abroad; his Report for 1908 included a special section, 'Domestic subjects for girls',[132] in which he argued for the raising of domestic duties above the level of low grade drudgery to 'a higher plane'. He stated that many girls went straight from school to factories and shops and therefore domestic training in schools was important; he stressed the 'tragic results' that arose from insufficiently trained 'home-makers', for 'The school-girls of today will be the "home-makers" of tomorrow'.[133] He planned that arrangements should be made to provide every girl of Class V standard with elements of the domestic subjects he had mentioned which would prove of 'incalculable value' to her when she became 'the mistress of a home'. In view of this he recommended that the work of Class V girls should be reduced in some way.[134]

Williams and Bonython, both holding powerful positions, were unanimous in their views of girls' education; their difference lay in the means by which the ideal education should be imparted; through the independent technical education centre or through the conventional educational channels controlled by the Education Department.

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132. SAPP, 1909, 44, op. cit., p. 16

133. Ibid. Williams asserted again in 1912 that many thirteen year old girls went into factories before gaining domestic skills. Girls' training, be believed, should 'bear directly' upon such subjects as cookery, needlework, dressmaking, millinery, laundry, housewifery (including the purchase of commodities), elements of domestic and personal hygiene (including house sanitation), and care of young children. SAPP, 1912, 44, Report of the Minister Controlling Education, p 21

134. Ibid., 1909, 44, op. cit., p. 16

Williams informed the Minister of Education that South Australia was lagging behind Britain and America in attention to 'Manual Training' for boys and 'Domestic Science' for girls.[135] With typical painstaking attention to detail he investigated the question of controlling and extending domestic subjects for girls; initially he enquired into how many were receiving instruction at the School of Mines. He soon discovered that there were discrepancies between the numbers on the rolls and those actually attending.[136] The schools were unable to compel the the students to attend, although for city and close suburban schools the classes were compulsory for Fifth Class girls. The correspondence with headmasters regarding reasons for absences from School of Mines classes reveals dislike of the classes among some students, whereas Williams and the headmasters saw the classes as only beneficial, in spite of the fact that they might occupy a whole day, in addition to the half day which girls devoted to sewing. In his letter of enquiry to the headmasters of Unley, Thebarton, Flinders Street, Sturt Street, Gilles Street, North Adelaide and the Observation Schools, Williams stressed the value of the domestic economy training, and asked 'why the girls were unwilling to attend the doms (sic) economy class?'[137]

This question produced a wide range of reasons. The headmaster of Gilles Street school 'elicited' the following from twelve Fifth Class girls who had formerly attended the classes:[138]

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135. Education Department, CF 1908/2991, Director to Minister of Education. GRG 18/1 SASA

136. Education Department, CF 1909/610. This file contains attendance returns for Domestic Economy classes attended by school girls at the School of Mines, November 1908 - November 1909, and correspondence between Williams and headmasters on the issue. GRG 18/2 SASA

137. Ibid.

138. Ibid.

(1) One had already attended for two years.

(2) Two had already attended for one year.

(3) One mother did not wish her daughter 'to miss the School lessons here'.

(4) One mother 'does not wish her daughter to continue'.

(5) One thinks it is too far from Parkside (to the School of Mines on North Terrace).

(6) One is required by her mother in the mornings.

(7) One mother objects to her going to 'those lessons'.

(8) One 'finds the work of washing up, scrubbing and dusting, and generally attending on students too much and too irksome'.

The headmaster added after the last reason, 'This appears to me to be the chief cause of withdrawing'.[139]

The North Adelaide headmaster submitted a similar list of reasons after commenting that he found 'considerable unwillingness' on the part of Fifth Class girls to attend the School of Mines cookery lessons. An added reason he gave was that some parents said they could teach all that was necessary themselves.[140] This surely must have been a cogent reason in a number of cases, in spite of the official Departmental view that the mothers were incompetent.

The North Adelaide headmaster continued:

> Some of the girls say that they do not like the washing up, others assert that the distance is too great; some say that it makes their head ache, some that they do not want to miss the school lessons and others simply say that (sic) do not want to go.
>
> I am aware that the attitude is altogether a wrong one and I am trying to lay the matter before them in its true light. I think the lesson might be popular if we could have it in schools. 141

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139. Ibid.

140. Ibid.

141. Ibid.

This was what Williams wished to hear. He sent his second in command, Inspector Maughan, to the Le Fevre Peninsula School accompanied by the Registrar of the School of Mines to investigate the possibility of establishing a 'Domestic Economy Centre'.[142] He also set other plans in motion.

On February 1st, 1910, the South Australian Education Department appointed Miss Edith Margaret Devitt as Organising Instructress in Domestic Subjects.[143] An Englishwoman, Edith Devitt, like her predecessor, had trained in London at the Battersea Polytechnic Domestic Economy Training School. She also had some Australian experience,[144] having organized the teaching of domestic subjects in Western Australia in 1901 at the invitation of Mr Cyril Jackson, Inspector-General of Schools in that state.[145] In 1904 she had returned to London where she gained 'up to date knowledge'.[146] Incomplete surviving Education Department records include no further background to her appointment. Edith Devitt's first task was to give a preparatory course of lessons at the District High Schools in elementary hygiene, while suitable premises were prepared for her main work. This was a new Departmental venture in the new High Schools. She planned for a two or three year

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142. Ibid., 1908/1861, Registrar of School of Mines to Director of Education. GRG 18/2 SASA

143. Education Gazette, 26: 284 (June 1910) 137

144. SAPP, 1911, 44, Report of the Minister Controlling Education, p. 137

145. Ibid. Jackson, an Englishman, had been appointed in 1897. Hyams, B.K. 'Cyril Jackson', in Pioneers of Australian Education, V. 2, ed. C. Turney, Sydney, 1972, pp. 242-3

146. SAPP, 1911, 44, op. cit., p. 15

course of practical instruction 'in every branch of domestic subjects'.[147] While these plans were being prepared, with the construction and finishing of premises, Williams was criticized by Bonython for 'wasting money' by duplicating the School of Mines services.[148] But the principle of development in local schools had Minsterial approval and Williams reported that it was proposed to extend 'this important branch of our work as quickly as possible'.[149] His report to the Minister for 1910 included three photographs taken at the new Norwood Domestic Arts Centre, showing the large kitchen, the dining room with three tables set ready for a meal and a model bedroom. All was prepared, at least at Norwood, not only for primary school students but also for female students from the newly opened high schools.

The move to open local domestic economy centres was timely in view of the continued unwillingness of some girls to attend the School of Mines classes. Williams, maintaining his survey of attendances, found continuing problems, and similar excuses were given by apologetic headmasters, including a novel reason from parents of a Rose Park school girl: 'The increased danger from electric trams in going to and fro.'[150] The Rose Park headmaster found that the only pupils whose parents wanted them to attend were those who were not intellectually suited to the classes but who welcomed a trip to the city and the escape from 'ordinary work'.

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147. SAPP, 1911, 27, First Progress Report of the Royal Commission on the Adelaide University and Higher Education, paras 610-614

148. Ibid.

149. SAPP, 1911-12, 44, Report of the Minister Controlling Education, p. 3. Williams acknowledged that South Australia had been somewhat tardy in recognizing the importance to the community of 'teaching our girls those things which they need if they are to become capable homemakers'. Ibid.

150. Education Department, CF 1910/1341, Correspondence relating to Domestic Economy classes. GRG 18/2 SASA

Although it appears clear from Williams' correspondence that the classes were unpopular, an interview with a student who attended the Fifth Class at Currie Street Observation School in 1910 places the matter in a different perspective. She believed that all the girls in her class, like herself, enjoyed going to the weekly lessons at the School of Mines, saying, 'They probably regarded it as a treat - although the girls from the East End might not have liked it.'[151] The Observation School, Currie Street, in Adelaide's poorer western area, was attended mainly by pupils living in small city cottages. The walk through the city to the imposing School of Mines building on North Terrace and the day spent in the well-appointed, large cookery room equipped with gas stoves, where the girls cooked dishes which they could then eat for lunch (for a small fee), was a complete break from the normal routine and surroundings. There were, however, some drawbacks. The quarter (i.e. the term used for the quarter of the school year) which was spent in the laundry, where girls brought clothes from their homes to wash, was not liked, and in the cooking class there was an 'almost military' attention to detail:

> When we had finished we put all the clean utensils in a cupboard and a drawer - we each had a separate one - then we stood beside the open cupboard in our white caps and aprons for inspection. All had to be just so ... 152

Some of the students who disliked attending the classes may already have learned a substantial amount of the domestic skills at home - and possibly in circumstances where there was a servant to help clean up after them. But some who enjoyed the classes had also gained home training.[153]

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151. Interview with Mrs Myrtle Cashmore (née Grubb)

152. *Ibid.*

153. *Ibid.*

The official attitude towards mothers assumed their incompetence. Williams stated in his report to the Minister for 1911, 'Many mothers are untrained and incapable of imparting instruction of any value.'[154] School Inspector Charlton believed that the majority of mothers did not teach their daughters domestic skills because

> the mother's hands are so tied and her time is so occupied that she has not the time to do it, and if she were to make the time she would have to steal it out of her rest. [155]

Although the official views must have had some validity, it is impossible to establish the extent of domestic incompetence.[156] The traditional handing on of domestic knowledge from one generation to the next had not ceased with the formation of theories of national efficiency. However, there had been a rise in expectations of cleanliness, hygiene and nutrition with the introduction of such amenities as running water, gas, sewerage and electricity[157] and with the emergence of nutrition as a branch of science. It is not clear how technical and scientific changes

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154. SAPP, 1912, 44, Report of the Minister Controlling Education, p. 21

155. SAPP, 1912, 27, Royal Commission on Education, Third Progress Report, para 4922. Similar views were expressed by the New South Wales Director of Education in 1912 when he wrote '... the girls of the primary school have been left to their own devices, or to such perfunctory teaching as their mothers find time to give in the busy round of family life'. NSW PP. Legislative Assembly, 1912, 'Report of the Minister of Public Instruction' for the year 1912, p. 7

156. As early as 1875 similar arguments were queried by a lone member of Conigrave's audience who stated that he 'combated the idea that because a young woman earned her living at her needle in a factory she was unable to cook a beefsteak.' Conigrave, *op. cit.*, p. 20

157. These were all established in Adelaide before the turn of the century. Williams, *op. cit.*, pp. 428-34.

had affected the application of traditional domestic practices; there is not sufficient evidence to draw a conclusion.

Williams worked for increased domestic studies for girls until the end of his life. In his last report, in 1912, he acknowledged explicitly the dichotomy which he aimed for in the education of girls and boys, saying,

> We provide almost the same curriculum for girls as for boys, train them both for industrial and professional duties, forgetting or ignoring the fact that education is a means to an end; and the great end and aim of a woman's life is to be the honoured mistress of her own home and mother of healthy and vigorous children ... 158

He linked this aim directly with the good of the state:

> We owe it to the state to make an earnest effort to make the next generation more efficient and capable than the present one, and in order to realise this ideal we should pursue a more vigorous policy and give girls such special training as will assist in making them happier women and more capable and efficient home makers. 159

Williams died, at the age of 49, in February, 1913. But the initiatives he had begun were continued; his post was filled by one of his Inspectors, Milton Maughan, who backed the expansion of domestic economy centres.

In his second Report as Director, Maughan noted that:

> The interests and needs of the boy have been studied and aimed at for centuries, but his sister has always been somewhat in the educational background. 160

Now the sisters were being provided for; by 1915 suburban domestic economy centres were opened in Woodville, Norwood and Unley and country centres at Mount Gambier and Port Pirie. Domestic economy lessons were resumed at Le Fevre Peninsula and Hindmarsh High School. Teachers were being trained, and girls from the Fourth Class were spending half a day weekly at the centres.[161] Although the financial effects of

158. SAPP, 1912, 44, Report of the Minister Controlling Education, p. 21

159. Ibid.

160. SAPP, 1915, 44, Report of the Minister Controlling Education, p. 16

161. Ibid., 1916, 43

drought and war conditions made expansion more difficult, in 1915 an average of 602 primary school students attended the centres, compared with the 137 who attended the School of Mines classes in 1908.[162] Alice Hills had planned in 1901 for 308 students to attend the Adelaide and suburban domestic economy centres,[163] with the possibility of about 500 more when staff permitted. In fact, there had been no great advance from her initial planning.

Support for extension of such services came from the Royal Commission on Education which, having technical education as one of its main subjects, began in 1911.[164] The Queensland Deputy Superintendent of Technical Education, two South Australian male Inspectors, Charlton and Pavia, Dr Ramsay Smith, Head of the Public Health Department, and Bonython all gave evidence on the subject of domestic economy education. All applauded it and advocated its extension. Ironically, no woman was called to speak on the issue. Of the 49 witnesses before the Commission only two were female, and neither were connected with the Education Department or the School of Mines.[165]

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162. SAPP, 1916, 44, Report of the Minister Controlling Education, pp. 43-4, 'Domestic Arts Training and Other Centres'. In 1909 Williams stated that there were 1156 girls in the Fifth Classes of the city and suburban schools. Thus a large number were not provided for. SAPP, 1909, 44, op. cit., p. 16

163. SAPP, 1902, 44, Ibid., p. 27. She calculated on the basis of 30 students in six lessons at the Domestic Economy Centre and 16 students at each of the eight suburban centres. Her calculations were limited by available staff in the latter instance.

164. SAPP, 1911, 27, Royal Commission on Education, First Progress Report.

165. They were Director of the Kindergarten Union (who was also Principal of the Kindergarten Training College) and the Matron of the Redruth Reformatory. Support for the men's view was given by a woman, Mrs A. Scott Broad, in a lecture favouring women's traditional domestic role, delivered to an audience including representatives from various educational institutions in September 1912. Broad, Mrs A. Scott, An Address on the Necessary Reform in the Education of Girls, Adelaide, 1912

The final Report of the Royal Commission included the following recommendation:

> That it be compulsory on all girls who have left primary schools, and who are not going to high schools, to attend a domestic arts school ... until they are 14 years of age ... 166

The Report was presented to Parliament in August, 1913, but the new Act arising out of its recommendations was not passed until late in 1915,[167] largely on account of the Great War. Although the recommendation cited above was not implemented, greatly enlarged provisions for girls' domestic education were made, with plans for girls' technical Central Schools. These were not to be implemented until 1925, and therefore the position remained unchanged for some years.

## 3. Needlework in the Schools

Needlework, the earliest domestic-based school subject, was part of the curriculum for girls in South Australian state schools from their foundation.[168] Within the schools the teaching of needlework involved the school mistress herself, or the hiring of sewing mistresses when there was only a master available, and the time of male Inspectors in examining the subject. In spite of recurring financial strains on the Department, needlework classes were not reduced throughout the period reviewed. Although some criticism of details occurred, the actual principle of teaching girls needlework was not questioned either before or after the 1875 Act. There appears to be no evidence remaining as to how decisions regarding needlework were made, but probably senior female teachers advised the Inspectors of requirements.

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166. SAPP, 1913, 75, Royal Commission on Education Final Report, p. 54

167. South Australia, Education Act, No. 1223, 1915

168. In private schools the situation was somewhat different, for it was usual to teach such skills as 'woolwork and crochet and embroidery' rather than plain sewing. Doudy, Mrs Henry A., Growing Towards the Light, Melbourne, 1909, p. 12. The author was a teacher in the Girls' Model School from 1874-1879, and headmistress of the Advanced School for Girls in 1879.

There were difficulties in the examination of needlework by male Inspectors who had no first-hand knowledge of the skill, and in 1890 the Education Department appointed an 'honorary inspectress' of needlework.[170] This action by Hartley in choosing an experienced and well-qualified woman, although unpaid, paved the way for the later appointment of Blanche McNamara in 1897.

In 1876 the needlework which the Inspectors examined began with Class I girls, aged about eight years. These children were required to do simple hemming, while increasingly diverse knowledge was required of each succeeding class. At the average age of twelve and a half years, in Class IV, girls were examined in all that they had learned to the standard of Class III, with the addition of darning, making buttonholes and knitting, while cutting out was to be taught if practicable.[171]

In succeeding years, the tasks were made more complex. By 1885 the course of instruction and examination included for Class I 'Simple hemming with coloured cottons showing the joining of threads', while Class IV pupils were required to demonstrate all previous tasks learned, but 'with greater skill'. In addition they were to knit, darn and patch, and

> to stitch gathers into a band, to make buttonholes and to sew on buttons and tapes. To show a plain nightshirt, night-gown, petticoat or other garment which can be completed by the above stitches. [172]

The reason for the increase in complexity was probably related to the 1884 directive to teachers that, 'The special object of the course in needlework is to teach the children to make clothes for themselves.'[173] Dolls' clothes were not permitted.

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170. SAPP, 1891, No. 43, Report of the Minister Controlling Education, p. 17. She was Mrs Ruth Gill, formerly head mistress of the North Adelaide girls' school which was a section of the large North Adelaide public school.

171. SAGG, Gazette Extraordinary, 7 January, 1876, p. 44

172. SAGG, 15 January, 1885, p. 120

173. Education Gazette, 2: 11 (April 1886) 19. This publication was sent by the Education Department to all schools.

Needlework occupied one half a day of the five days' school week for all girl pupils (usually Friday afternoons), and since the same time for boys was devoted almost without exception to arithmetic, different levels of ability developed between the sexes. An Education Gazette of 1889 included the comment that, 'Except in arithmetic, the pupils of our girls' schools came out better at examination than the boys.'[174] Blanche McNamara observed the same tendency in her first report, although she did not regret the time spent by girls on sewing. Her attitude is shown by the question mark in her report:

> the difference in the mental arithmetic of girls and boys, taught together, is generally credited to the time lost (?) [sic] - so the teachers will often say - by the girls while sewing, the boys generally devoting that time to arithmetic. 175

Possibly another factor may have been the different levels of expectation directed towards either sex in this subject, although in some of its aspects, needlework included not dissimilar skills of logic and reasoning, as Alice Hills observed.

On her examination of needlework in both city and country schools, she concluded that South Australian girls did not learn sewing from a rational basis, as most had no idea of how to translate scale drawings into patterns. Her expectations for primary schoolgirls were not unrealistic. She explained that:

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174. Education Gazette, 5: 44 (December 1889) 111

175. SAPP, 1898-9, 44, Report of the Minister Controlling Education, p. 19. The practice of boys doing arithmetic during girls' sewing time and of the consequent inequality in their skills is confirmed by two interviews with pupils of the period. They are Mrs Catherine J. Strapps (née Riddaford, b. 1882) who attended Manoora school and Mrs Myrtle Cashmore, who attended the Grote Street and the Currie Street Schools, loc. cit.

> There is not a line nor a curve in a pattern nor a process in the making of a garment which cannot be discussed and reasoned about so as to develop foresight and good sense, while nicety of touch and skill are increased by the actual sewing. 176

It was her view that

> Girls have no need to complain of having to do needlework, but boys might complain of not receiving equally valuable practical training in some other direction. 177

She also made some pertinent comments on the fact that girls were expected to do the same amount of work as boys of the same class with less time available.

But no response was made to her comments, and the burdens of needlework were further increased when the Education Department began emphasizing handwork as part of its drive towards technical education. Regulations of 1907 included even more detailed instruction, such as the following for Class V:

> (c) Calico patch. Specimen: Five inches square; patch, three inches square; selvedge way to be fixed parallel to selvedge way ... Any children may be called upon to do coral or gather stitching. 178

However, the intricacies of such fancy stitches as coral stitch were possibly balanced by the Department's tardy recognition of the existence of the sewing machine, for Class V pupils were now permitted to use a machine for long seams, provided they were done 'by the girls to whom the garment belongs'.[179] Some schools had been supplied with one sewing machine each, and girls were also permitted to use machines at home.[180]

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176. SAPP, 1902, 44, Report of the Minister Controlling Education, p. 27

177. Ibid.

178. Education Gazette, 23: 244 (February 1907) 86

179. Ibid. In 1904 Inspector Smyth had pleaded for machines to be used for long seams to avoid drudgery and eye strain. SAPP, 1905, 44, Report of the Minister Controlling Education, p. 18

180. Education Department, CF 1903/2015, 2283. Letter from Singer and Wertheim agents to Director of Education. GRG 18/2 SASA

In seeking responses and opinions concerning Education Department needlework there is little material to draw upon. The limited number of scattered references at official level indicate that on the whole the teaching of sewing was accepted. It is possible to ascertain the children's views only from the opinions of women who were once state school pupils, for there appears to be no recorded evidence. It is likely that the majority of girls were accustomed to seeing sewing tasks performed at home, and to have helped or played with sewing materials. One woman, who was a pupil of the Manoora school from about 1889 to 1893 said in an interview:

> I could sew from when I was seven years old. Mother had a machine and I used to stand up and sew [treadle]. Of course, I was good at sewing ... 181

She took a pride in her school sewing, pleased to be able to make 'shimmies, underwear - drawers they used to call them', even though she worked under a disability, being left-handed. The sewing mistress, who was the master's wife, forced the pupil to unpick anything she saw her do left-handed.[182]

The child's home background and natural abilities must at times have acted as a counter to the school regimentation. And, as another past pupil of the first decade stated, 'Children accepted things in those days. We did as we were told.'[183] This pupil attended Grote Street School until 1908 when it became part of the Adelaide High School, when she went to Currie Street Observation School where the high quality of the teaching made the learning of sewing, even the complexities of making buttonholes, 'a pleasure'.[184]

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181. Interview with Mrs C.J. Strapps, loc. cit.

182. Ibid. In spite of this she continued sewing and later chose voluntarily to become a dressmaker's apprentice.

183. Interview with Mrs Myrtle Cashmore, loc. cit.

184. Ibid.

However, there were cases when the standards required were seen by some adults as too demanding. The headmistress of the large Norwood school, Mrs Francis, told a meeting of teachers in 1888 that 'Girls having so much more to do than boys it is unfair to expect them to pass equally in other subjects.'[185] Her remarks had no effect, and in 1896 she again spoke out, saying that some girls felt a distaste for needlework, and that some mothers kept girls at home from sewing lessons, while children doing sewing often said, 'I cannot see the threads, they jump before my eyes.'[186]

Inspector Whitham, in 1890, criticised the fine needlework which girls at the Norwood school were doing in preparation for an exhibition, working four hours daily for three weeks. The Inspector-General made a note of Whitham's complaint to look into the matter when the exhibition was over, but there is no record of this having happened.[187] Mrs Francis apparently did not apply her principles when the question of a competitive exhibition arose.

Catherine Helen Spence, social reformer with a keen interest in education, questioned the effect of such fine work on children's eyesight and stimulated a sympathetic editorial in the Education Gazette,[188] but no change resulted. In 1903, the general committee of the South Australian Public Teachers Union showed concern not so much with the children's eyesight, as with the principle that they should not be required to do sewing homework.[189] Their protest went to the Inspector-General, but with no immediate effect. However, in 1907 teachers were directed towards moderation:

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185. Education Gazette, 4: 34 (October 1888) 80

186. Register, 24 June, 1896, 7g

187. Education Department, CF 1890/1711, Special report on Norwood school from Inspector Whitham, 10 October, 1890. GRG 18/2 SASA

188. Education Gazette, 7: 62 (December 1891) 127

189. Education Department, CF 1903/1000, Secretary S.A. Public Teachers' Union to Inspector-General, 8 May, 1903. GRG 18/3 SASA

> The absolute completion of a garment will not be insisted on in any class, but the work must have been entirely fixed and tacked by the child, and a reasonable portion of each kind of stitch required must have been done. 190

In 1910 and 1911 Inspector Martin, applying the principles of the child-centred New Education, devoted some of his annual reports to needlework, claiming that stitches were too fine - 'eyestraining' - and that children were being made to produce tiny stitches 'before they had control over the muscles of their fingers'. He echoed Alice Hills' earlier comments, stating that insufficient reasoning was applied to sewing. Why, for instance, should a hemming stitch be used in preference to others in certain circumstances?[191] He renewed his criticism in 1911, describing a Class I girl, aged about eight, who had made twenty stitches to an inch when eight would have sufficed.[192] 'The finer the stitch the better the sewing' was a motto he abhorred. But no regulation was changed.

It was not until 1911 that the unwritten assumption which had supported and sustained development of needlework in schools was officially made explicit. In that year the requirements for Fifth Class girls included the statement:

> The girls should become thoroughly acquainted with every kind of necessary stitch, and at the same time receive instruction concerning the proper uses of each and every stitch as applied to suitable garments. Each girl should be well equipped for any use of the needle in after life. [sic] 193

The last sentence has very important implications which are explored in the chapter on working women, for it relates not only to domestic sewing but to sewing as an occupation. In addition to the domestic role of sewing, an occupational role was now implied. All girls were to be

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190. SAPP, 1910, 44, Report of the Minister Controlling Education, p. 25

191. Education Gazette, 23: 244 (February 1907) 86

192. Ibid., 1911, p. 43

193. Education Gazette, 27: 292 (February 1911) 71

equipped to sew well enough to use a variety of stitches and to apply them to making clothes. This statement was repeated in the Regulations in 1912, 1913 and 1914.[194]

Inspector Martin's earlier criticisms were heeded in 1915 in a directive addressed to teachers of the eight year old pupils. It stated:

> Teachers of Sewing are requested to note that the stitches in the First Class must be not less than 1/8" (one-eighth of an inch) in length. Stitches smaller than this will not be accepted. 195

The children may well have found it beyond their powers to carry this out accurately.

The training of teachers of needlework reflects the nineteenth century belief that sewing was something in which every woman should be competent. In order to teach their pupils compulsory sewing, all female teachers were assumed to have the necessary knowledge, and indeed the Training College timetable as early as 1881 allotted thirty minutes weekly to sewing for females. Women also studied other subjects separately from men, as shown below.[196]

| Male | Female |
|---|---|
| Drill | Sewing |
| Algebra | Arithmetic |
| Geometry | Arithmetic |
| Geometry | Kindergarten[197] |
| Algebra | Calisthenics |

This presentation of subjects reveals how the female disadvantage in mathematics, begun at school because of the time being devoted instead to sewing, was perpetuated in the training of female teachers.

194. Ibid., 28: 304 (February 1912) 25; 29: 318 (April 1913) 157; 30: 330 (February 1914) 100

195. Ibid., 31: 348 (August 1915) 157

196. SAPP, 1881, 122, Progress Report of the Select Committee of the House of Assembly on Education, p. 81

197. A short-lived experiment, dropped within a year or two.

In the Teachers' Certificate Examination for 1885 the Arithmetic paper specified: 'Male candidates can only obtain full marks by correctly answering every question', whereas female candidates were permitted to omit three questions which related to teaching arithmetic to a class.[198] This policy followed the claim by the Principal of the Training College, Colonel Lewis Madley, that female pupil teachers had broken down because the equal standard demanded in arithmetic and science for men and women was too high.[199] Hartley rejected Madley's claim, maintaining that any difference in ability resulted from generations of bad teaching of girls.[200] When asked if the higher branches of arithmetic were as necessary to females as to males, having regard to 'their particular walk of life', Hartley replied succinctly:

> Their particular walk of life is school teaching: if they were simply housekeepers or dressmakers the question might be different. 201

In fact they were school teachers who had to acquire many of the skills of dressmakers in addition to other knowledge. In 1891 when their sewing was examined by Ruth Gill she soundly criticized the standard and refused to accept seams sewed by machine. Her detailed comments demonstrate the very high standard demanded, and the serious attitude taken towards the subject.[202] It was not until Ruth Gill's appointment as

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198. Education Gazette, 2: 1 (January 1886) 3

199. Education Department, CF Inspector-General 1883/1191, GRG 18/3 SASA. The vexed question of the work load of pupil teachers, especially females, raged inconclusively into the twentieth century.

200. SAPP, 1882, 27, Progress Report of the Commission on the Working of the Education Acts, para 6526

201. Ibid., para 6528. In the results of the Teachers' Certificate examinations for 1885 and 1886 women's and men's results differed little, although only one woman and five men passed Mathematics as an optional subject. (She was Marie Tuck, later an exceptional artist who had attended the Advanced School.) No men passed in Chemistry, Advanced Physiology, French or German which women passed. In 1889 among the women teachers who took University examinations two passed Pure Mathematics Part I and one passed Organic and Practical Chemistry. Education Gazette 6: (January 1890) 4

202. Ruth Gill noted that the buttonholes were in most cases 'indifferently worked', the drawers 'disproportionately shaped' and the herringbone 'decidedly weak'. Education Gazette, 7: 61 (October 1891) 106

Honorary Inspectress of Needlework in 1891 that doubts on the lack of training began to emerge. She recommended a book on pattern-making, saying that, 'the pupil teachers who find difficulty with boy's [sic] shirts and nightdress yokes would here meet with a solution'.[203] The pupil teachers had not, five years later, found solutions to these problems, for in 1896 Ruth Gill's complaints remained similar:

> Buttonholes ... are still lamentably weak, and the cutting-out of nightgown yoke and sleeve was surprisingly worthless, considering the attention which is now supposed to be given to scale-drawing. 204

Blanche McNamara advocated a change in methods of teaching needlework. She said that it was 'not properly taught in the majority of schools' and described her observation of teachers

> calling up one child at a time, and giving instructions in an undertone, as though a profound secret were being imparted, instead of giving the same instruction simultaneously to the class. 205

She advised the practical method of using demonstration lessons by means of 'a large needle, coloured crewel silk, and a square of canvas ... aided by chalk and blackboard'.[206] Her succeeding report noted a great improvement in the standard of sewing in schools where collective teaching based on her advice had been adopted.[207]

But the student teachers had little if any instruction in needlework, although Alice Hills had taught sewing to the pupil teachers in 1901.[208] The South Australian Public Teachers' Union in 1905 took up

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203. Ibid., 7: 60 (September 1891) 95. Ruth Gill referred to a book entitled Pattern Making by Paper Folding by Miss F. Heath, Senior Examiner to the London School Board.

204. Examiner's Report on December Examinations in needlework, Education Gazette, 12: 112 (January 1896) 21

205. SAPP, 1898-9, 44, Report of the Minister Controlling Education, p. 20

206. Ibid.

207. Ibid., 1899, p. 21

208. SAPP, 1902, 44, Report of the Minister Controlling Education, p. 33

the matter, stimulating the Inspector-General to write to the Minister: 'The want of complete instruction in needlework for our female students is a blot in their training ...'[209] Having established that the expense of a teacher would not be great, the Inspector-General turned to Alice Hills, who was still in Adelaide, and who with characteristic efficiency set about planning a course for '38 young women'. With 'great concentration' she believed that she could teach them the syllabus for schools in ten hours.[210] Obviously, they all had some basic knowledge for this to be achieved so quickly.

Alice Hills approached her task at the Pupil Teachers' School with competence, finding a serious need for her instruction. It appears that there was a female tradition which took pride in the complexity of sewing and allied tasks. This is demonstrated by Alice Hills' letter to Inspector-General Stanton in 1905 concerning 'Needlework Teaching to be given to the Pupil Teachers':

> I have not thought it necessary to put down many details, beyond a few which might impress a masculine mind with the really difficult and numerous points a teacher ought to bear in mind while preparing the hundreds of garments she is called upon to deal with. A yoke is an abominable thing to cut if one does not know the trick of it. [211]

The inspectors were not in a position to plan the sewing courses. Their role was to perpetuate the sewing skills among the school girls and hence in the homes of the future by means of regulation, examination and inspection.

In 1915, for the first time, the term 'Sewing' was used in place of 'Needlework' when the following announcement appeared in the Education Gazette:

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209. Education Department, CF 1905/1894, Secretary, S.A. Public Teachers' Union to Lionel Stanton, GRG 18/2 SASA

210. Ibid.

211. Education Department, CF 1905/1894, Alice Hills to Lionel Stanton, 7 November 1905, GRG 18/2 SASA

> Sewing
> Red Cross work may be substituted for the ordinary garments or specimens in sewing. Knitting will also be accepted. 212

Knitting was now much more important. As Inspector Fairweather wrote in his 1915 Report:

> For girls, the war has done something in the suggestion of practical application of their manual lessons; while, in ante-war times many girls could knit, the girl who could make a comfortable pair of socks was rare; now the bulk of the girls in our schools can and do send knitted socks regularly to the Red Cross Society or some soldier friend or relative. 213

Needlework skills were to be turned to the practical uses of sewing and knitting for soldiers; what had begun as a traditional home skill was, by 1915, officially acknowledged to be useful in assisting the war effort, and an economic asset for the students' future use.

4. Assumptions Established

By 1915, South Australian enthusiasm for national efficiency had been used as the basis for re-organizing the curriculum for primary school girls. This was done in such a way that girls, while benefiting to some unknown extent from their extra classes, were forced to lose time in the routine school lessons, notably arithmetic. Some girls lost a full day at school, when attending School of Mines classes; later this became a half day, when Domestic Economy Centres were established within schools. In addition, all primary school girls devoted a half day each week to sewing. Many were thus cut off from other lessons for a full day, i.e. from one fifth of the school week. They were therefore placed at an academic disadvantage compared with boys.

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212. Education Gazette, 21: 348 (August 1915) 157

213. SAPP, 1916, 44, Report of the Minister Controlling Education, p. 28

It is difficult to assess the benefits and disadvantages of this policy. Obviously, as Williams discovered at the School of Mines, its application did not match the theories and plans of officials, for many girls refused to co-operate. However, some learned and enjoyed the skills they were taught. It has been argued by research student Jillian Matthews that the Education Department's motives in introducing 'Domestic Arts' classes were to produce a supply of domestic servants and seamstresses and thus to preserve the traditional gender-order of South Australia.[214]

While there may be some element of truth in her premise, this chapter has demonstrated that the overwhelming motivation towards domestic subjects in schools is found in aspirationsfor national efficiency,which wereincapable of objective analysis. The history of needlework teaching does not indicate a campaign to train seamstresses; for example, there was little formal instruction of student teachers in sewing. The evidence provided by the domestic economy notebook shows that the subject was designed to prepare girls to work in and manage their own homes, to plan meals and to purchase food, to attend to emergencies requiring first aid and to arrange laundry work as far as possible in a logical and labour-saving way. Students were not being trained in house-cleaning, the domestic servant's main task. There is no evidence to link the planning of domestic economy classes with preparation for domestic service.

The question arises: did the teaching of needlework and domestic economy work as the officials of the Education Department expected? There is no absolute standard by which to measure results and the

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214. Matthews, Jillian M. 'Good and Mad Women A Study of the Gender-order in South Australia 1920-1970' Ph.D. thesis, University of Adelaide, 1978. Ch. I. passim; p. 170. In this work the author includes an examination of official policies from the 1875 Act and earlier. She refers throughout the period 1875-1914 to Domestic Arts, a term not used until 1909.

effectiveness or otherwise of the tuition. Some fragmentary evidence indicates marginal dissatisfaction; for example, a small protest by parents was recorded in 1900, when the headmaster of the Goodwood school put in a plea to the Board of Inspectors, not for less sewing, but for more practical sewing tasks: 'They [the parents] say that calico night-dresses or combinations are not used in their homes.'[215]

Pertinent comments were made by Mrs Eliza Kelsey, headmistress of Dryburgh House School in Adelaide, in a paper entitled 'The Education of Australian Girls' which she presented to the Australasian Association for the Advancement of Science in 1893.[216] She said:

> As to 'darning stockings' and 'sewing on buttons' those points evidently of such paramount importance in men's estimation of women - after marriage! - I have proved that they could be learned in three months ... are they [girls] to spend the whole of their early vigorous energies in learning what may be acquired in three months, if they have previously by discipline, and the study of other subjects, learned application. [217]

There is no record of the effect of her advice.. Education Department officials appear to have been complacent about their curricula for girls.

Differentiation between girls' and boys' education which had begun by 1875 developed strongly during the forty years between the two Acts. Starting as rarely-stated assumptions, the beliefs relating to the role of girls and women in society received strong reinforcement from the persuasive theories of national efficiency which flowed from the authority of British sources. With few questions from within the schools or from outside, pressure built up which separated girls for a considerable part of each week from sharing the academic work of boys,

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215. Education Department, CF 1900/1264. The Board merely noted that the letter should 'stand over'. GRG 18/2 SASA

216. The Education of Australian Girls A Paper Read by Mrs Kelsey at the Adelaide Meeting of the Australasian Association for the Advancement of Science, September 1893, Adelaide, 1893, pp. 4-5

217. Ibid., p. 5

and which caused their energies to be devoted to learning domestic skills.

In 1915, at the annual conference of the South Australian Public Teachers' Union, Adelaide industrialist, Mr A.A. Simpson called for separate schooling at upper levels for girls and boys, saying: 'Surely cube roots are of less importance to 99 girls out of every 100, than an extended domestic utility course.'[218] The Union's president, in his presidential address on the same occasion, gave his full support. He said, 'Woman's place is largely to brighten, to refine, and to add comfort to the home ...'[219] Therefore, he believed that women teachers should all be trained in 'the domestic arts and sciences; and in all that should equip them for the special training of the girls in our schools'.[220] These were important statements, accepted unhesitatingly by the Teachers' Union.

Between 1875 and 1915 the Education Department and its staff had accepted and reinforced societal attitudes concerning women, even though these attitudes were not consistent with the actual roles and occupations of large numbers of South Australian women. The Department gradually built a strong basis of 'girls' subjects', translating into practice the beliefs that the female teacher's role included the transmission of domestic knowledge, and that every girl's education should bear directly on her own future domestic role.

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218. Education Gazette, 21: 347 (July 1915) 137

219. Ibid., p. 142

220. Ibid.

## Chapter II

## 'Pinnacle of the State-School System': The Advanced School for Girls

Just as the pattern of primary education for girls in South Australia was largely influenced from Britain, so British influences also prevailed in state secondary education, leading to the establishment of the Advanced School for Girls in Adelaide in 1879. This school, in turn, exerted a strong impact on both public and private education in South Australia. During its twenty-nine years of existence the school carried the imprint of British influence in its aims, curriculum and standards. Its foundation reflected the increasing concern with the higher education of women which developed in Britain and reached Australia in the later nineteenth century.

The leaders of changes in women's education in both Britain and Australia frequently came from cultured families which provided a stimulating intellectual environment for their sons and daughters.[1] In South Australia various non-conformist families in particular fostered learning within their own households, in a similar way to that described by Catherine Helen Spence in writing of her childhood.[2] She emphasized the habit of reading, and reading aloud, which was part of her family life, a habit which has been mentioned in interviews by South Australian women who recalled their own childhood or that of their parents. In such families there was little intellectual differentiation made between girls and boys, and the parents in some cases sought a similar formal education for their children of both sexes. By the time compulsory

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1. See, for example, The North London Collegiate School 1850-1950 A Hundred Years of Girls' Education Essays in Honour of the Frances Mary Buss Foundation, London, 1950, p. 64. Such families are described here as 'self-educating' communities.

2. Spence, Catherine Helen, An Autobiography, Adelaide, 1910, pp. 7-12, 16, 20

primary education was introduced in South Australia there were men and women who were also seeking higher education for their daughters.

## 1. The Advanced School for Girls Takes Shape

In South Australia there were compelling reasons why the first state secondary school should be for girls. The contemporary belief that girls and boys should be separated at primary school level was practised wherever possible.[3] This belief was even stronger in relation to secondary education, based largely on ideas of sexual propriety and also on assumptions concerning male and female intellectual capacities. Although the ideal of co-education had been broached even before the end of the eighteenth century by Mary Wollstonecraft,[4] before such a revolutionary idea could be put into practice the standard of girls' education had to be raised, and it was during the long struggle to achieve this that South Australia was colonised and its own state education system founded. Therefore it is not surprising that little evidence of moves towards co-education at secondary level exists in South Australian records of the nineteenth century.

By the 1870s in the colony several boys' schools of reasonable academic standards had been established, notably St Peter's Collegiate School and Prince Alfred College, both modelled on British public schools.[5] For girls, there were numerous small private schools, mainly

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3. In the City Model Schools, opened in 1874, the girls' and boys sections were separated by a fence, a practice continued in larger schools built later, i.e. in the 'eight or ten' Model Schools. SA Central Board of Education, Minutes, 2923, 27 April, 1874, GRG 50 SASA; SAPP, 1882, 27, Progress report of the Commission on the working of the Education Acts, paras 6087-8. Evidence of Catherine Helen Spence.

4. Wollstonecraft, Mary, A Vindication of the Rights of Women, London, 1970 (1792) p. 183

5. Bean, C.E.W., Here, My Son, Sydney, 1950, p. 1

of indifferent academic standards, like that attended by Lucy Spence who was born in 1860 and who described it as:

> the most absurd educational establishment where the girls of the first families learnt to read, write and do sums. The school books were Dr Brewer's Guides to Knowledge - questions and answers to be memorised. 6

She contrasted this school with another she attended, run by Miss Annie Montgomerie Martin: 'just a small establishment which was a really wonderful place with the most intelligent teaching of English and French'.[7] Miss Martin's school remained uninfluential, for, as Lucy Morice, niece of Catherine Helen Spence, wrote, 'Miss Martin was a Unitarian and so her school never became fashionable'.[8] Miss Martin herself had been taught within her own family where girls and boys were treated similarly intellectually,[9] and she made use of visiting teachers with special knowledge, e.g. in languages. Hers was an unusual venture among the many girls' schools preoccupied with 'accomplishments' in Adelaide.

However, the deficiencies of girls' secondary education in the colony were recognized among some members of the Central Board of Education. A minute of the Board for 2 November, 1874 gives the comment of one of its members, Dr Allan Campbell, a physician who was active in public life in South Australia.[10] He

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6. This was Miss Forsyth's school at Glenelg, where the Spence family retired to the seaside each summer. For the remainder of the year they lived in the city and Lucy attended Miss Martin's School. Morice, Lucy Spence, 'Auntie Kate', typescript, p.1. A1051/A5, SASA The British Education Inquiry had found in girls' schools a similar 'slavish dependence on the question and answer method of the popular teaching manuals'. Kamm, Josephine, <u>Hope Deferred Girls' Education in English History</u>, London, p. 210

7. <u>Ibid</u>.

8. <u>Ibid</u>.

9. Interview with Mrs K. Beckwith (née Katie Clark) a teacher at Miss Martin's school whose mother also taught there.

10. See <u>Australian Dictionary of Biography</u>, v. 7, <u>op. cit</u>., p. 542. In this publication Campbell's membership of the Board of Education is not mentioned. He was to become a member of the new Council of Education after the 1875 Act.

> called attention to the absence in this colony of a high school for girls. The subject was one of such importance and the want of a superior school for girls was so much felt that he thought the Board would do well to take the matter up. [11]

The Board resolved to apply to the Minister of Industry and Education for information 'concerning the working of such schools in other places'. The Board's minutes indicate that discussion ranged over the need for an academic high school. However, an account of the same Board meeting in the Register amplifies the minutes, describing Campbell's proposal for a 'High Class Female School' on the model of those in other colonies, having as one of its leading principles the teaching of domestic economy.[12] It is not known why this aspect was not included in the official minutes; the press report states that the Board considered the idea of the school a good one but thought that the inclusion of domestic economy was not in keeping with a 'high class' school.

Hartley, who had been instrumental in introducing domestic subjects to schools, interested himself also in the higher education of girls in South Australia. He was present when Campbell made his suggestion and also when the Secretary of the Board later reported that he had been unable to obtain any information regarding 'the operation of schools for advanced female education' in the neighbouring colonies. There were no such schools.[13]

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11. Central Board of Education, Minutes, 1874/3451, GRG 50 SASA

12. Register, 3 November, 1874, 7d. Possibly Campbell's desire to include domestic economy in a girls' secondary school was allied to his professional concern with public health.

13. Central Board of Education, Minutes, 16 November, 1874/3580. In New South Wales the earliest girls' high schools opened in 1883; two of the first three soon closed. Smith, S.H. and Spaull, G.T., History of Education in New South Wales, Sydney, 1925, pp. 244-5. Victorian high schools began only after 1901. Victoria, Education Department, A History of State Education in Victoria, Melbourne, 1922, p. 235

Campbell's assertion that the lack of a 'superior' school for girls was 'so much felt' was apparently accepted by the Government, for the 1875 Act provided for the establishment of advanced schools:

> for continuing the education of scholars who have obtained prizes at public schools or otherwise proved themselves qualified for admission: Provided that the course of training in all such schools shall be secular. [14]

Regulations of 1876 under the Act made specific mention of advanced schools for girls.[15]

An examination of the minutes of the Council of Education indicates that it was Allan Campbell in June, 1877, who took the next official action when he moved successfully that Mr J. Langdon Parsons, the Council's president, and he should form a committee 'to report on the establishing of an Advanced Girls' School in Adelaide'.[16] The next recorded news of an advanced school came from the prosperous country town, Gambierton [Mount Gambier]. A deputation in August of the same year requested that the Council should take over the Mount Gambier Grammar School. On being questioned, the deputation said that

> they personally would have no objection to boys and girls being taught in the same classes, but that they could not answer for the people generally. [17]

Such an interesting venture into secondary co-education did not eventuate, as four months later it was reported that residents of Gambierton were unable to guarantee the attendance of forty children above the age of twelve years.[18]

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14. SAPP, 1876, 21, Education Regulations, XVI - Advanced Schools, B. Teachers: F. Course of Study.
15. South Australia, Education Act, No. 11, 1875, Clause 11.
16. South Australian Council of Education, Minutes, 1877/2479
17. Ibid., 1877/2843
18. Ibid., 1877/4448

A stimulus to advanced education for girls in Adelaide may have been the foundation of the Victorian Presbyterian Ladies' College in 1875, as Charles Pearson, the headmaster had formerly lived in South Australia and was well known in the colony.[19] Some public interest in girls' higher education was evident in 1878 when the Adelaide Young Men's Association took up the issue in a mock Parliamentary debate: 'That in the opinion of this House the Government should provide the means of higher and improved education for women'.[20] In the same year Inspector Dewhirst, in his report to the Minister of Education, recommended an advanced girls' school, claiming:

> Already this, which for the completeness and symmetry of our Public School system appears desirable, is becoming an obvious necessity. [21]

Dewhirst saw it as a matter of necessity because of the crowded fifth (highest) class in the girls' department at the Grote Street Model School and the possibility of similar difficulties at the other large schools such as Flinders Street, Norwood, Hindmarsh and North Adelaide. He pleaded for an advanced girls' school on the grounds of educational need:

> Without such an institution, the mental culture and development of the female portion of the community will be checked at a point where its expansion would be most rapid, most conspicuous, and most productive of beneficial results ... [22]

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19. Tregenza, John, Professor of Democracy The Life of Charles Henry Pearson, 1830-1894 Oxford Don and Australian Radical, Melbourne, 1968, pp. 38-9, 57-9. Pearson was a friend of Catherine Helen Spence. See her Autobiography, op. cit., p. 65. See also Pearson, Charles H., The Higher Culture of Women A Lecture Delivered at St George's Hall, February 11 1875 on the Opening of the Ladies' College in Connection with the Presbyterian Church of Victoria, Melbourne, 1875, p. 14

20. The leader of the affirmative in the debate was Cornelius Proud. Journal of the Adelaide Young Men's Society, 1878, p. 3. More than 25 years later Proud's three daughters attended the Advanced School.

21. SAPP, 1878, 35, Report of the Minister Controlling Education, p. 19

22. Ibid. No girls' schools were approved for state scholarships.

There was no move whatever to open an advanced boys' school. Certainly, it was possible for six boys annually to win scholarships to one of the four approved boys' secondary schools so that the ablest state school boys could continue their education at no cost. At this time the primary compulsory schooling was not free, and there was no suggestion that an advanced school should not charge fees. Except for the scholarship winners it was neither expected by the public nor was it discussed officially that secondary education should be free and thus available to more children.

Dewhirst's proposal was made at a time when there was some local public interest in girls' higher education, not only through press reports of British endeavours and news of Victoria's Presbyterian Ladies' College, but also because the University of Adelaide had begun classes in 1876 and opened them from the first to women. More than half of the earliest students were women, although a lengthy process of petitioning the Queen, at first unsuccessfully, had to be undertaken before they were admitted to degrees, from 1880.[23]

In response to Dewhirst's report, the Minister of Education sent a minute to the Council of Education requesting that: 'steps to establish an Advanced School for girls in Adelaide should be taken without delay'.[24] This was in August, 1878, and the planning and organization took more than a year to implement. From the sequence of events described so far, there is little evidence of Hartley's direct initiative. However, the project had his support at every stage, and Miss Madeline Rees George who worked closely with him for ten years, said later:

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23. South Australia, University Amendment Act, No. 172, 1880. Section 2, Admission of Women to Degrees. This topic is further discussed in Chapter 3.

24. Council of Education, Minutes, 1878/5828

> It [the Advanced School] owed its foundation to the new impulse that had been given to the movement for the better education of girls in the home country, and which found a response even in the far away world of South Australia, and in the ready mind of our late revered chief, Mr Hartley. To him we owe the establishment of the school. It was he who conceived the idea, presided over its beginnings, and for many years guided its destinies with a wise and kindly hand. 25

It is likely that Hartley had advised Dewhirst to include recommendations for an advanced school for girls in his report. Hartley, having been headmaster of Prince Alfred College from 1871 to 1875,[26] was well aware that the education available for boys at a higher level was much more satisfactory than that for girls. His later deep interest in the school and his position as head of the Education Department also lent weight to Madeline Rees George's claim, for the school could be founded only with strong official backing.

It was necessary for Parliament to be convinced of the need for the school, once the Council of Education had made its preliminary investigations into requirements and costs, and also public response, which involved advertising the proposed school.[27] This advertisement, in October, 1878, resulted in 33 applications from parents who wished their daughters to attend an advanced school.[28] As a result, the Council resolved:

> That in pursuance of the wish of the Minister an Advanced School for girls be established in or near Adelaide and that accommodation be provided for 100 students. 29

The proposal did not come before Parliament until it was included in consideration of the next Estimates when, in September, 1879, a line for £1200 was included in Supply. The Minister of Education, Mr T. King, justified the expense thus:

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25. Register, 22 December, 1904, p. 6h
26. Australian Dictionary of Biography, V. 4, 1972, p. 356
27. Council of Education, Minutes, 1878/5930, 5931, 6108
28. Ibid., 1878/6201
29. Ibid.

> The line £1200 for an advanced school for girls was a new one. The Government proposed to make the school self-supporting, and calculated on having 100 girls who would be charged twelve guineas a year which meant £1200. The Government meant in any case to make it self-supporting and all the expense they would be at would be to provide a building. 30

The Minister's reassurance on the project's cost was characteristic of the contemporary South Australian political preoccupation with education as a book-keeping cost to be pared to the lowest possible level.

The ensuing Parliamentary debate involved not only the cost, but also matters of principle. The Hon. J. Carr proposed to vote against the measure on the grounds that the state should go only as far as

> giving every boy and girl in the colony a moderately good education to fit them for the actual pursuits of life. 31

Another member refused to vote for the measure 'in these days of retrenchment'; the euphoria of the early seventies was subsiding with bad seasons. He asserted that Parliament should strike off the line for 'fancy Education'.[32] Others feared that the livelihood of existing 'ladies' schools' would be threatened.

J.W. Downer mounted a scathing attack on the same lines as Carr. If, he claimed, St Peter's and Prince Alfred Colleges belonged to the state, then there might be some reason to establish the girls' school which he referred to as a school 'almost entirely of an ornamental character'.[33] Downer's main line of argument, however, was based on the threat which he perceived to the natural order of society:

> There could be no greater misfortune than to give to the girls of the poorer classes these accomplishments as they were called - to teach girls who, in the ordinary nature of things, would be content to remain respectable domestic servants all their lives, French and German, drawing and class singing, elementary science and mathematics, and render them absolutely unfit for menial duties. To

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30. SAPD (HA), 1879, c. 950
31. Ibid., c. 987
32. Ibid., c. 988
33. Ibid., c. 989

> provide that the inmates of the Destitute Asylum should have supplied to them raspberry jam tarts after every meal would be no more a luxury than to provide this higher education for people who had no business with it. 34

Downer's conservative view of society was apparently shared by other Members, for his next statement drew applause:

> It was interfering with the very laws of nature; some must be higher and some lower, but this was trying to make an average of the whole and to turn a great number of first rate laborers into indifferent scholars. 35

His arguments and those of other Parliamentary speakers were not against higher education for women. Their case was based on their perception of class differences, not on sex differences.

One member, however, introduced a different argument when he said that

> It was well that they who would be the mothers of the nation should have cultivated minds. 36

He did not believe that educating girls would prevent them from working; his ideals were characteristic of many influential South Australians.

The line was carried and the money made available, in spite of the opposition, which was carefully refuted in a letter which Catherine Helen Spence wrote to the Register.[37] This letter showed her close knowledge of the girls' higher education movement in Britain and of a demand for improved schools for their daughters by South Australia's salaried and professional people who could already give their sons a good education on their 'moderate' incomes. Advanced schooling for girls, she wrote, would not entice young women away from domestic service, for

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34. Ibid., c. 990
35. Ibid.
36. Ibid., c. 991
37. Register, 18 September, 1879, 6e,f

> those parents who keep their children long enough at any school to fit them for higher education are those who, for other reasons, would not allow their girls to enter domestic service. And the second-rate private schools to which such parents sent their girls before the good State schools were established had an atmosphere far more inimical to manual labour than is found in our common schools now, or is likely to exist in the proposed advanced schools. [38]

She discounted Downer's claims that education would make girls unfit for work, saying, 'It is the most ignorant and the most idle who despise honest work and love fine clothes'.

Catherine Helen Spence drew attention to the advantage of having an advanced school for girls subject to inspection, unlike private schools, and she prophesied that this would in time affect the instruction given 'in all other schools in the province'. The school would, she believed, provide for those 'who care less for fashion than for substance'.[39] Her views of the school's influence were to be proved correct.

Outside Parliament, there was opposition from a Register columnist whose jocular disbelief at the prospect of the Advanced School for Girls was expressed in a six verse satirical poem.[40] But patronising ridicule did not stop the project, and the school opened in October, 1879.

## 2. The Foundation Years: the First Two Headmistresses, 1879-1885

The organization of the Advanced School for Girls was carefully arranged with a minimum of expenditure. Unlike the later venture into domestic economy when on two occasions English Inspectors were appointed, staff for the school were South Australian residents and the first head-

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38. Ibid.

39. Ibid.

40. Ibid., 23 September, 1879, 6a. The poem may be found in Appendix B.

mistress and her assistant were appointed from within the Education Department, being transferred from the Grote Street Model School. Miss Jane Stanes, headmistress from 1879 to 1880, had been headmistress of the Grote Street girls' department; she was formerly the first Infant School Mistress for the same school from its inception in 1874.[41] She was one of the first students of the University of Adelaide,[42] and before taking up her Advanced School post she became the only teacher in South Australia to gain a first class certificate.[43] Her assistant, Miss Edith Cook, a Unitarian who was educated at Miss Martin's School,[44] had been appointed as a pupil teacher at the Model Schools in April, 1874[45] and in 1877 was promoted to the position of second assistant in the girls' department,[46] and later to head of the infant department. She also studied part time at the University,[47] and was to become second headmistress of the Advanced School.

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41. Central Board of Education, Minutes, 1873/2540, 2571

42. University of Adelaide, Calendar, 1877, p. 10. In 1903 Mrs H.A. Doudy, née Jane Stanes, wrote to the University of Adelaide (Docket 465/03) concerning a prize which she stated had been awarded to her in 1876 by Professor Davidson. The Education Committee considered the matter and instructed the Registrar to advise Mrs Doudy that the records showed that she had attended Professor Davidson's lectures but that there was no official record of the award of a prize. University of Adelaide, Education Committee, Minutes, 12 June, 1903

43. SAPP, 1881, 122, Progress Report of the Select Committee of the House of Assembly on Education, q, 1595-6

44. Information from Mrs M. Caw, née Hübbe, daughter of Edith Cook, 1974

45. Central Board of Education, Minutes, 1874/2920

46. Education Department, Teachers Records, 1876-87, Tsf456/6, GRG 18 SASA

47. Information from Mrs M. Caw, loc. cit., and University of Adelaide Calendars, 1878-1886

These two women were similar in their background to some of the early headmistresses of girls' secondary schools in England; they both had an earnest desire to improve their own education, they had considerable intellectual ability and also the capacity to organize and to control pupils, proved by their successful work at the Grote Street Model Schools. Both were keen believers in the higher education of girls and were much influenced by Hartley.

Jane Stanes, after leaving the Education Department and marrying, wrote a pamphlet on women's higher education. She wrote fluently, combining idealism with practical matters. It is significant, with her South Australian background, that she believed in a practical foundation being laid before higher education was begun. She wrote:

> ... in speaking of the higher education of women in its ideal sense, we presuppose that the foundation stone of knowledge of all household works and ways has been well and truly laid. That being done, we look for a raising of the superstructure ... 48

To Jane Stanes, women were capable of immense influence through their homes, which, when run efficiently in every detail, would provide the background for education of children and for partnership with men. '_Together_ the man and woman rise or fall'.[49] The ideal would be achieved, she believed, through the stimulus of serious study sensibly balanced by physical activity. The educated woman would strive for social justice through the improvement of various conditions, whereas

> A mind only occupied with petty things, incapable of grasping thoughts that bear on the wider issues of life, is a travesty of what a woman should be, a great and far-reaching influence for good. 50

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48. Doudy, Mrs Henry A., _The Higher Education of Women Is it of Benefit to the Human Race?_ Adelaide, n.d. [1908], p. 6

49. _Ibid._, p. 29

50. _Ibid._, p. 8

Jane Stanes exemplifies the conventional feminism of many South Australian women of the period. She later wrote two novels, both set in South Australia, in which the same feminist theme appears.[51]

Edith Cook, the Advanced School's second headmistress, also held similar views and was personally remarkable in that she continued as headmistress of the Advanced School after her marriage, and with Hartley's approval, until the seventh month of her pregnancy.[52]

Both women, who remained close friends, knew Hartley well. He was their mentor and remained in touch with them after they left the Advanced School. In his correspondence with Jane Doudy, one can find a motive for his interest in women's education. He wrote, for example, a lengthy letter to her dated 9 October, 1889, in which he discussed women's mental and physical capacity to teach. He even trusted her enough to assess the qualities of a number of South Australian female teachers. Among them was Edith Hübbe of whom he wrote admiringly, saying:

> She behaved splendidly as a daughter: but it can't be expected that a woman can live two lives of work and escape unharmed ... The Dr. you say said it was 'overwork' - in the school or house? 53

Hartley himself apparently had an unhappy home life which may have made him take an interest in girls' education. He wrote to Jane Doudy:

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51. Doudy, Mrs Henry A., Growing Towards the Light, op. cit.; Magic of Dawn a Story of Sturt's Explorations, 3rd ed., London, n.d. (?1930). Both novels are the subject of critical review by Paul Depasquale in A Critical History of South Australian Literature 1836-1930, Warradale, 1978, pp. 240-1. The writer notes Jane Doudy's moral didacticism but fails to recognise her significance as a feminist, a trait which emerges clearly in the novels.

52. Information from Mrs M. Caw; Edith Cook was married to Ulrich Hübbe a surveyor, on 6 January, 1885. She attended physiology classes at the University during that year, resigning as headmistress on 30 September. (Education Department, Teachers records, op. cit.) Her daughter Ulrica was born on 10 December, 1885, and later she had three more children. On her husband's death (as a member of the Bushmen's Contingent in the Boer War) she began her own school, Mrs Hübbe's Knightsbridge School, which she continued until 1915.

53. Education Department, Inspector-General of Schools, Confidential letterbook, 1880-1914 GRG 18/75 SASA

> Put it thus - had I been able to go to school happy, to work there, and to return to a quiet home for rest in the evenings, what would have been the nature of my joy. 54

His correspondence reveals him as a man who was sensitive to women's needs and problems. Each headmistress of the Advanced School benefited from his advice.

The links between the school's three headmistresses were not confined to the first two, for it was Edith Hübbe who recommended Madeline Rees George as her successor, and who remained her friend. In 1913 these two women, in company with several others, travelled in Italy. During their stay in Florence, Annie Montgomerie Martin, who had retired from Adelaide to live in Viturbo, visited them daily.[55] There were thus not only common interests but also great sympathy and friendship connecting the three headmistresses.

From the early stages of planning, it had been decided by the Council of Education that the Advanced School should be 'in or near Adelaide'.[56] Throughout its existence it was in the city itself, the first site being a two-storied house of nine rooms in Franklin Street, originally built for a doctor, and leased by the Education Department. It included accommodation for a caretaker.[57]

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54. Ibid. His only child was an adopted daughter. It is an indication of the way in which women's history has been ignored by some writers that Hartley's biographer has omitted to explore these aspects of his character and influence, and has made only passing references to the Advanced School. See Saunders, G.E., 'John Anderson Hartley and Education in South Australia', BA Hons thesis, University of Adelaide, 1958; 'Public Education in South Australia in the Nineteenth Century', MA thesis, University of Adelaide, 1968; entry on John Anderson Hartley, Australian Dictionary of Biography, op. cit.

55. Information from Mrs Caw who was one of the party, accompanying her mother, Edith Hübbe.

56. Council of Education, Minutes, 1878/6201.

57. She was designated 'Keeper of Advanced School for Girls' at a salary of 15 shillings a week from 6 October, 1879. Education Department, CF 1879/2225 GRG 18/2 SASA

Opening in the last quarter of the year, the school began with 29 pupils who had either passed the Fourth Class in a model or public school or who had taken an examination in reading, writing and arithmetic. The fees were £3.3.0 per quarter, payable in advance, with a quarterly charge of 2/6 for pens, ink and paper. All books had to be purchased by the pupils. No pupil was permitted to commence a quarter without producing a receipt for the quarter's fees. Six three-year bursaries were to be offered for competitive examination to girls under 14 years who were attending public schools,[58] thus giving girls similar opportunities to boys for free secondary education.

In attempting to reconstruct the life of the Advanced School for Girls, there are limited but valuable sources available. Two school admission registers survive, but unfortunately the registers begin only in January, 1894 and continue until February, 1908. The 1894 volume starts at student number 797,[59] and the second volume ends at student number 1608. The Advanced School, therefore, had a total enrolment of about 1600 students during the 29 years of its existence. These students were all subject to remarkably similar influences, owing to the traditions of continuity in the school, and their own influence in the wider community on leaving school is an important question which is discussed briefly below.[60]

A further source is the 'Terminal record book', dating from 1881 to 1894, in which school examination results for each student are entered quarterly.[61] Therefore the names of all students are known

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58. Education Department, Minister of Education, 26 May, 1880. Copy under seal of Regulations. GRG 18/1 SASA

59. Advanced School for Girls, Registers (1) 29 January 1894-30 January 1905, nos. 979-1480 (2) 30 January 1905-17 February 1908, nos. 1481-1608. Seen at Adelaide Girls' High School, December, 1977.

60. This matter is worthy of further enquiry. As far as this study is concerned it has not been possible to make more than general investigations; a formidable difficulty is the changes of names on marriage.

61. Advanced School for Girls, Terminal Examination Results, 1881-1894, 1422 SASA

from 1881, and their backgrounds and their subsequent careers can sometimes be traced. From 1879 to 1887, the bursary winners are also known, their names being included in the Education Department's annual reports to the Minister. They were entitled to three years' free tuition. The first five winners, in 1879, came from state Model schools, four being from the Central Model School and one from the North Adelaide Model School.[62] The first name is that of Edith Emma Dornwell who was to have a distinguished academic career.

In contrast to these five students the twenty four others who enrolled in 1879 probably came mainly from private primary schools, as this was the initial trend.[63] The pattern of enrolment figures during the school's 29 years of existence is set out in Figure I (p. 86) and analysed later in this chapter. In each annual report of the Education Department the student numbers for the last quarter of each year were given, and also the financial balance for the preceding year. Both numbers and finance, which of course were inextricably linked, were of the utmost importance for the school's continuing viability.

Jane Stanes and Edith Cook were the only full-time teachers for 1879, but they were assisted by a part-time teacher of French, M. René Martin.[64] Within two months Janes Stanes' health broke down. She was given leave of absence, resigned in June, 1880,[65] and did not return to the Advanced School. Her influence on the school should not be discounted, although it was so brief, for she established sound standards and set the basic pattern for future development. From the time that

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62. SAPP, 1881, 44, Report of the Minister Controlling Education, p. 9

63. SAPP, 1882, 27, Commission on the Working of the Education Act, op. cit., q 5726

64. George, M. Rees, 'The Advanced School for Girls 1879-1908' typescript p. 1. A706/B2 SASA. The hours of the school were initially from 9.30 a.m. to 3 p.m. with half an hour for lunch. Later, ten minutes' recess was introduced in the morning, and next in the afternoon. Lunch time was then extended to one hour. Ibid.

65. Ibid., 'Forty Years a Teacher, Reminiscences of Edith Hübbe', Register, 16 February, 1915, 6f, Jane Doudy cast herself as the model, to some extent, of the heroine Ann Cassells in Growing Towards the Light; Ann Cassels was an ambitious young school teacher who suffered a breakdown.

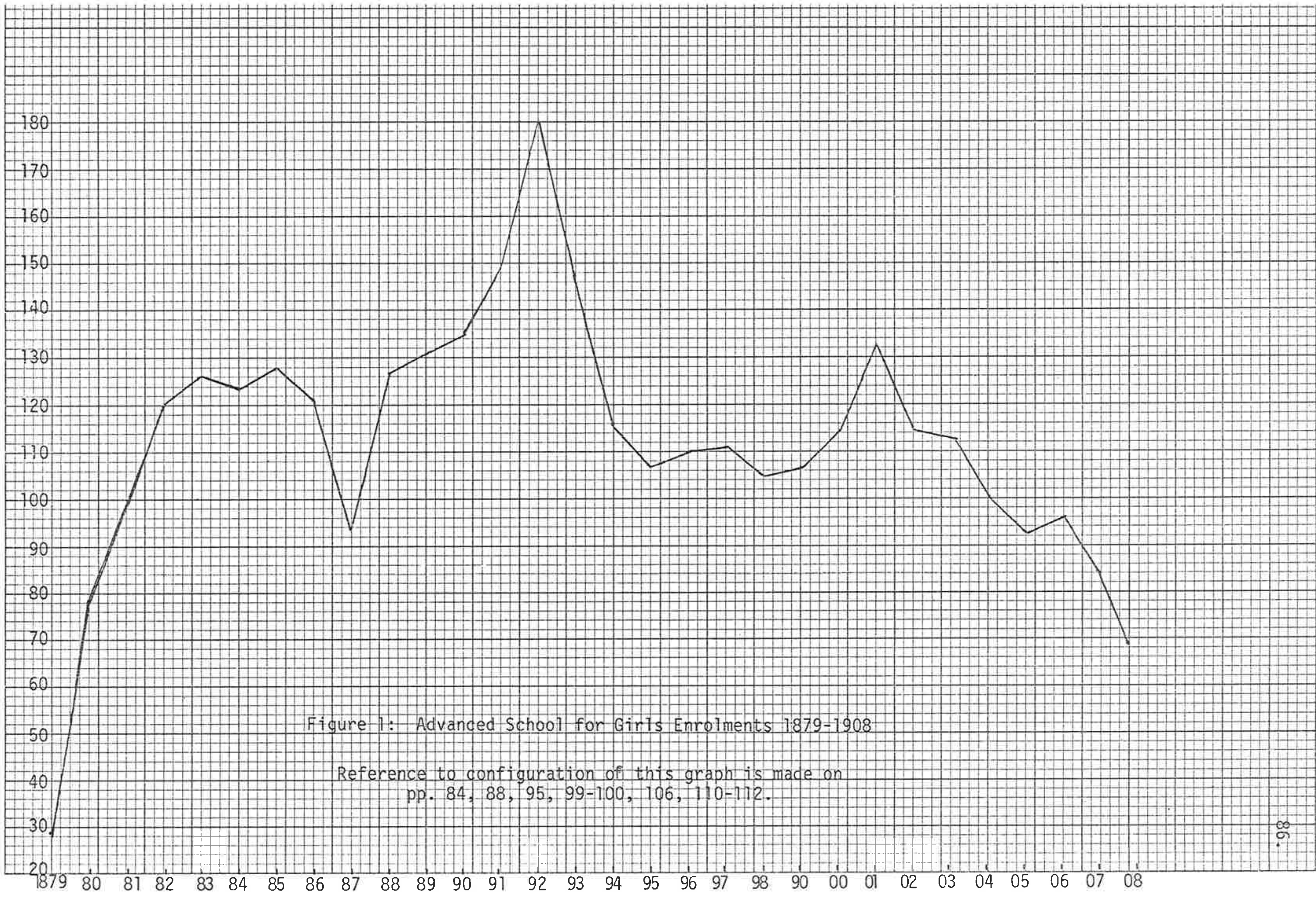


Figure 1: Advanced School for Girls Enrolments 1879-1908

Reference to configuration of this graph is made on pp. 84, 88, 95, 99-100, 106, 110-112.

she left, in December, 1880, Edith Cook was acting headmistress, in charge of a school some of whose pupils were older than she. Some girls were twenty years old, and Edith Cook, who was born in 1860, was slightly younger than several. Under the Education Department Regulations no person under 25 years could become principal of an advanced school.[66] At the beginning of 1880 Edith Cook became acting headmistress, and the position was advertised, but neither of the two most suitable applicants was able to take it up, and in October 1880, as Edith Cook later wrote,

> The Minister of Education ... Mr J. Langdon Parsons ... decided that regulations or no regulations, as I was doing the work, I should have the position of headmistress, and the appointment was made. In October of 1880, a year after the school was opened, I began work in that capacity ... 67

The subjects which were taught in the first years of the school included English, French, German and drawing; and in the upper classes Latin, algebra and Euclid; physiology was taught within the school to the three upper classes by Edith Cook, while some of the 'further advanced' girls attended Dr E.C. Stirling's lectures at the University;[68] several of them won the Thomas Elder prize for top place in the University matriculation examination.[69] The drawing mistress, Mrs Kelsey, visited the school three afternoons a week and the calisthenics master, Herr Adolf Leschen, also taught on a visiting basis.[70]

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66. SAPP, 1876, 21, Education Regulations, XVI Advanced Schools

67. Register, 16 February, 1915, p. 6. op. cit. In fact Education Department records show that she took up the position officially on 17 October, 1881. Teachers Records, 1876-87, op. cit.

68. Progress Report of the Commission on the Working of the Education Act, op. cit., q 5727, 5729. The North London School students similarly attended physiology lectures at the University of London.

69. University of Adelaide, Calendar, 1882, 1884, 1885. In 1882 both first and second places in the University of Adelaide Physiology examinations went to Advanced School students, the prize winner being Edith Dornwell.

70. Rees George, op. cit., p. 2. Mrs Kelsey was probably the teacher from Dryburgh House School. See Chapter III below.

As no precedent for an Australian state secondary school had previously been set down in any regulations, Hartley's inspection and guidance therefore remained important.[71]

For Hartley, the school was the showcase of the state education system and a personal triumph, especially as it began to attract increasing numbers, while its students acquitted themselves well in public examinations. From 1879 to 1885, numbers rose steadily to reach 128, a severe strain on the capacity of the nine-roomed house.[72] At the first public prizegiving in December 1883, Hartley mentioned the 'character of the building ... which was never meant for a school' as the one drawback to progress.[73] But it was to be another eight years before a new building was provided.

In the meantime, the school's academic work was given encouragement by both the Education Department and the University authorities.[74] The University public examinations, which had been instituted largely under Hartley's influence, were, he stated, 'a great incentive to thorough methodical work' in the Advanced School.[75] In 1880 six girls from the the school sat for the matriculation examination, of whom five passed; none reached first class. In 1881 when four sat, all attained first class and the two girls who attended Stirling's physiology lectures shared the Sir Thomas Elder prize for physiology at the matriculation examination.[76]

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71. SAPP, 1882, 27, Commission on the Working of the Education Acts, op. cit. q 5763-5. A student of 1891 has described how Hartley visited the school, giving Latin students special teaching in that year in the Aeneid Book VI. Interview with Miss Ida Heyne (b. 1878), student at the Advanced School, 1891-4.

72. SAPP, 1882, 27, op. cit. q 5708-5723. The headmistress wished to have a limit of 20 students in each of the six classrooms which were about sixteen by fifteen feet. In the first quarter of 1882 she had to increase the numbers to 23 or 24. See also Education Department, CF, Inspector-General, 1884/8177 concerning new closets. Hartley corresponded on this matter with F.W. Bullock, executor of the estate from which the house was leased for £180 per year.

73. Register, 22 December, 1883, 7a

74. Ibid. 75. Ibid. 76. Ibid.

In a similar way to the North London Collegiate School, the Advanced School was demonstrating that girls were intellectually able and that many, with the strong support of their parents, were eager to extend their education. J. Langdon Parsons, speaking in his capacity as Minister of Education at the 1883 prizegiving acknowledged both these aspects:

> he was anxious to say that he recognized the Advanced School as an expression of the determination on the part of the generation in the midst of which they lived that girls and women should have a fair chance of being educated to do the work they could do, and have the wages which they could win. 77

He recognized the social problems which would arise from such education, when women would intrude in certain fields in competition for jobs with men. He praised the girls for their capacity, citing such names as Elizabeth Barrett Browning, George Eliot and Harriet Martineau as examples of women who had exerted their faculties to the full. In Adelaide, he had witnessed the demand for the Advanced School, saying:

> since he had occupied the position of Minister of Education he had been again and again, and over and over again, stopped in the streets of the city by parents of girls attending the Advanced School, who in the warmest terms had expressed their approval of the work that was being done, and their hope that no Parliamentary pressure of any kind would be allowed to imperil its existence for a single moment. 78

Certainly, there was no political interference to imperil the school until 1903, but on the other hand there was no generosity to enable a fuller flowering of the talents of staff and students. Support was based on pragmatic grounds almost entirely, although the school filled a distinct need in South Australia.

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77. *Ibid.*

78. *Ibid.*

What was the background of the girls attending the school and what were their aspirations? There is no precise early evidence of these matters, although in giving evidence to the 1882 Commission of Enquiry into education, Edith Cook said that more girls came from private than public schools,[79] a statement indicating that the economic circumstances of the parents were comfortable. In an earlier study of the school the present writer stated that:

> With one exception all those traced were daughters of business and professional men, civil servants, clergymen, shopkeepers, school teachers, skilled craftsmen and farmers. The exception was a teamster. 80

In short, they were mainly the daughters of South Australia's middle-income citizens, those British independent settlers who had chosen, or whose parents had chosen, to live in that planned, free society. A subsequent computer-based study of the contents of the surviving school registers has confirmed these conclusions.[81]

There was a wide age range at the school, from eleven to twenty years; it is likely that some of the older girls were seizing an opportunity to extend their education in the newly-opened school, and that possibly some families who moved from the country sent their daughters to the Advanced School in spite of their age. Some students were country girls who stayed with relatives in the city or lived in a boarding house especially for Advanced School pupils; Hartley and Edith Cook had

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79. SAPP, 1882, 27. Commission on the Working of the Education Acts, 1882, op. cit., q 5726

80. Jones, Helen, '"Pinnacle of the State-School System" The Advanced School for Girls, Adelaide', Journal of the Australian and New Zealand History of Education Society, 4: 1 (Autumn 1975) 9

81. McKinnon, Alison, 'Deciphering Women's History with an Empirical Eye', Papers Presented to the Ninth Annual ANZHES Conference Melbourne 1979, n.p. The author states that analysis of parents' occupations reveals that they were 'overwhelmingly middle-class'.

inspected and approved the accommodation in Wakefield Street, Adelaide.[82] Apart from city-dwellers, girls came from as far as 'the Bay [Glenelg], from the Semaphore, from Magill and from Glen Osmond'.[83] Both Campbell and Hartley sent their daughters to the school as did Thomas Price, Premier of South Australia from 1905-9. Campbell's wife was the sister of the influential Samuel Way, Chancellor of the University of Adelaide. Ethel Holder, daughter of F.W. Holder, South Australia's premier on two occasions and the first Federal treasurer, was also a student. Florence Way Campbell won the earliest Mus. Bac. degree awarded in Australia, from the Adelaide University,[84] and later taught music. Muriel Hartley became a clerk in the Education Department after her father's death,[85] while Ethel Holder gained an MA in classics from the University of Adelaide and returned to teach at the Advanced School.[86] These brief examples of student background and subsequent careers, and others, indicate that in a number of cases, the education provided by the Advanced School formed the basis for further studies and employment.

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82. SAPP, 1882, 27. Commission on the Working of Education Acts, op. cit., q 5745. In 1902 the question of boarding accommodation was raised in a proposal from a Mrs Jaunay at Norton Summit. Madeline Rees George said that all attempts to that date had foundered, owing, she thought, to 'faulty management'. Education Department, CF, Director of Education 1902/755.

83. Ibid., q 5744. These suburbs ranged from approximately six to eight miles from the school. As horse tramways to Glenelg and Magill began only in 1883, and as no routes were opened to either Semaphore or Glen Osmond, some students would have made the journey by private horse-drawn vehicles or by cabs or public omnibuses. See Kingsborough, L.S., The Horse Tramways of Adelaide and its Suburbs 1875-1907. Adelaide, 1967, pp. 1, 28, 43

84. Register, 13 December, 1897, 4g

85. Information from Miss Ida Heyne, loc. cit.

86. University of Adelaide, Calendar, 1903, p. 30; SAPP, 1907, 44, Report of the Minister Controlling Education, p. 32

Not only that, but it also brought interest into the lives of families. One former student who lived for many years after her marriage in an isolated country area said, 'We received enough education to make life interesting'.[87]

The influence of the school extended from individuals to families. As the present writer observed in a former study:

> It is not possible to measure such intangibles as family influence. Nevertheless, from numerous examples it is clear that a pattern of high educational aspirations from families of many Advanced School old scholars emerges. In some cases the school influence acted as a reinforcement to the family's existing values; in other cases the school introduced a fresh, strong influence on the students. 88.

With its serious attitude to study, the school was different, in its early years, from most private girls' schools in Adelaide. Edith Cook emphasized that the classes were smaller, enabling more individual attention and that:

> The responsible supervision and trained teachers are advantages that private girls' schools do not as a rule possess. 89

The Education Commission did not enquire into the aims of the students on leaving school, being more concerned with its impact on the private schools, its fee structure and costs, and the subjects taught. Personal and documentary evidence suggests that although their Advanced School education was used by only a minority of students as a precursor to any career, a significant number did in fact become teachers.[90] It is very likely that Hartley had such a possibility in mind when

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87. Interview with Mrs Marjorie Oldham (née Anderson), b. 1893, who attended the Advanced School from 1907. She and other old scholars agree with this assessment, made by one of her old school friends.

88. Jones, op. cit., p. 9

89. Progress Report of the Commission on the Working of the Education Acts, 1882, op. cit., q 5768-9

90. This topic is discussed later in the chapter. See below, pp. 109, 110, 113.

recommending the school's foundation, but it is also clear that his motives were not only related to supplying a well-trained stock of female, and thus cheap, labour to the Education Department. There is much evidence which shows a genuine demand for improved education for girls in South Australia. Overall, Hartley, Campbell and others had moved in a disinterested manner which accords with their public statements. The demand was evident when the school began, and the success of the students stimulated further demand. Another factor was the word-of-mouth recommendations which occurred in the small community and which were implicit in Langdon Parsons' description of parents talking to him about the school informally in the street. There is little doubt that many students at the school enjoyed the experience and took pride in their achievements; an examination of the annual reports of the prize-giving show glimpses of this aspect. Although necessarily biased accounts, they give an impression of vitality and liveliness in the school.[91]

With increasing numbers, from 1880 further staff had been engaged. In that year Kate Brown began as a pupil teacher and Miss Ellen Thornber as English teacher, while Madeline Rees George was engaged to teach German and French.[92] In 1884, the assistant master at the Training College, Andrew Scott, was released for 'the necessary time' to teach mathematics at the Advanced School. Hartley as Inspector-General recommended this and explained to the Minister of Education that:

> As comparatively little attention has hitherto been given to Mathematics by ladies the teachers are not well able to deal with this branch, with the exception of the Head-mistress whose time is fully occupied with other duties. 93

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91. From 1883 the occasions were reported in the Register. Speech day reports, Advanced School for Girls, 1883-1908, various dates and pages.

92. Teachers' Records, 1876-7, op. cit.

93. Education Department, CF, Inspector-General, 1884/1087, 18 February, 1884. Scott was paid £25 per annum for this task. He had taught as junior master at Prince Alfred College from 1869 to 1874.

Andrew Scott's appointment indicated the growing competitiveness of the girls' school with boys' schools in the public examinations, where the girls were hampered by inferior arithmetical knowledge when they reached secondary school. If they had come from a private school it was unlikely that they had gained a sound basic knowledge, and those coming from the state schools had been deprived of at least half a day each week of arithmetic in favour of needlework. No needlework was included in the Advanced School curriculum, and neither was cookery taught, in spite of the fact that Edith Cook replied 'Decidedly' when asked if she thought it desirable that it should be taught at the school.[94] The school remained an academic institution, although including singing and drawing which later became class subjects.

The staff played a very influential part in South Australia's education history, both through their direct influence in the Advanced School, and also in a broader context. When Edith Hübbe resigned in September, 1885, the chain of influence begun with Jane Stanes continued, for Ellen Thornber became acting headmistress until Madeline Rees George (who had, for 1885, left the Advanced School to teach in a private school) returned as headmistress at the beginning of 1886.[95] Each headmistress after the first had been connected with the school before attaining her position, and this thread of continuity was a factor in maintaining standards, in developing a 'community spirit' in the school, and in consolidating the school as a centre of higher education.

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94. SAPP, 1882, 27, Commission on the Working of the Education Acts, op. cit., q 5731. It is perhaps relevant that Edith Cook's daughter has stated on several occasions that her mother was quite ignorant of the skills of cooking. (Interviews with Mrs M. Caw, 1974-1979.)

95. Education Gazette, 2: 1 (January 1886) 1. Her sister Marian Rees George was appointed French mistress in that year. George, op. cit. p. 3

## 3. Consolidation and Decline: The Third Headmistress, 1886-1908

Madeline Rees George, whose impact on the Advanced School was to be sustained and significant, took up her post at the age of 35, at a time of economic uncertainty in South Australia. In her first year there was a fall in numbers due to the increase in unemployment and lapse in the prosperity of the early 80s. With worsening economic conditions in the following year, enrolment fell steeply, to rise again in 1888 when some indication of prosperity was emerging with rising copper prices.[96] The pattern of enrolment in the eighties and the nineties is closely tied to general economic trends. The other marked influence in 1891-2 was the opening of the new building which indicated official confidence in the school.

Before the change of site occurred, Madeline Rees George worked consistently to maintain and improve the school. At the end of 1885, an important achievement was recorded at the school prizegiving. Edith Dornwell had just become the University of Adelaide's first woman graduate as well as its first science graduate.[97] With two Sydney women, she was among the second female graduates in Australia.[98] Not only were Advanced School old scholars the majority of women students at the University, but also its staff often studied alongside these old scholars - a similar situation to that of the North London School and the University of London. For example, in 1880, Madeline Rees George enrolled as a non-graduating student, and in 1884, both she and her headmistress Edith Cook were University students.[99] They were listed

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96. Coghlan, T.A., Labour and Industry in Australia, V. 3, Melbourne 1969 (1918), pp. 1550-1.
97. Advertiser, 17 December, 1885, 8d
98. Kirby, J.C., 'Women and the Australian Universities', Englishwoman's Review 20: 7 (July 1889) 292-5
99. University of Adelaide, Calendar, 1885, p. 50

as 'not studying for a degree' even though Edith Cook had matriculated. Neither woman completed her degree, although Madeline Rees George's name appeared as a student in this category as late as 1902.[100] Other headmistresses studied part-time also; for example, in 1879, Annie Montgomerie Martin who ran her own school, and Caroline Jacob of the Advanced School staff who was later to become head of Tormore House, a private girls' school in Adelaide, both gained credits in chemistry, while Ellen Thornber, another Advanced School staff member, was also a University student in that year.[101] There was a serious community of interest among staff and students at the Advanced School. The students were attending voluntarily, most being beyond the age and standard of compulsion, the decision to attend being closely related to family aspirations.

That both staff and parents were in sympathy with these aspirations has been strongly expressed in interviews with former students who attended the school between 1891 and 1908.[102] The recurring statement among these old scholars was that their parents wanted them to have a good education, both for their daughters' personal development and in order to provide them with a means to earn a living. Madeline Rees George herself identified with these aims. An Englishwoman, she had taught as a governess in Germany and in Adelaide.[103] Her standards were similar to those of her predecessors; she was meticulous in carrying out her duties, as correspondence with certain parents demonstrates.[104]

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100. Ibid., 1903, p. 45

101. Ibid., 1880, p. 31

102. Interviews with Miss Ida Heyne, Mrs Mercy Bennett, Mrs Katherine Magarey, Mrs Anne Dawkins, Miss Marjorie Harley, Miss Gisela Siebert and Mrs Marjorie Oldham.

103. Education Department, CF, Inspector-General, 1879/2861; 1879/2822. GRG 18/3 SASA

104. Ibid., 1894/1251. Her students remember her as being 'very correct'.

Until the end of the century the Advanced School had no serious opposition in South Australia. No comparable private school was to be founded until 1898.[105] Within a few years of its establishment the Advanced School was an accepted institution, its existence questioned only occasionally, and mainly on the basis of the threat it supposedly posed to private schools and its potential cost to the state. However, for many years the balance of expenses and receipts remained favourable.[106] The earliest cash profit was £34.3.8 in 1880, the first loss was £23.5.10 in 1906, and between these years the highest profit was £459.5.11 in 1892.[107]

Thus there was little that members of Parliament or others could find to criticize about the school, for it was managed to the satisfaction of parents and students except for its crowded temporary premises. Apart from the supposed threat to private schools, the only other vulnerable point was the reputation which the school gained for overemphasis on examinations. These matters were lumped together by the Register in 1889 in an editorial following the school's speech day:

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105. This was Tormore House School. The Methodist Church had made tentative plans for a 'Ladies' College since 1852, but they did not eventuate until 1902. Twynam, P.M., To Grow in Wisdom The Story of the First Seventy-five Years of the Methodist Ladies College 1902-1977, Adelaide, p. 12

106. SAPP, Reports of the Minister Controlling Education, 1880-1909

107. Ibid. The term 'profit' was used in the official reports.

> The Advanced School for Girls has done much good work, but, we repeat, it pays too great attention to the art of cramming, and we may add it is an unnecessary and an uncalled-for interference on behalf of the State with private enterprise. 108

This view of examination 'cramming' although common, was not correct.[109] Edith Cook had encouraged the atmosphere of 'zeal and cheerfulness' [110] in the school which resulted from the girls' enthusiasm for study, a quality unfamiliar to many outsiders. In her annual reports Madeline Rees George frequently referred to the students' conscientious and enthusiastic work. The few surviving critical comments relating to over-work were made by those outside the school and were generalizations unsupported by evidence.

It is possible, however, that the supporters of private-enterprise schools caused delay in the greatly needed physical expansion of the Advanced School. W.C. Grasby, in 1891 had this to say:

> Notwithstanding the splendid work it has done in raising the standard of education in Adelaide, and the fact that the fees are sufficient to carry on the work without cost to the country, the opposition it has met with has prevented the extension of the experiment. 111

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108. Register, 20 December, 1889, 4g. The editorial was in response to an earlier letter to the Register.

109. For example, J.M. Black, a reporter on the Register, wrote of his plans for his daughter, in January, 1895,
   Clara is going to Miss Martin's School ... As she's not very bright we thought it preferable to the Adv. [sic] School for Girls, where there is much cramming.
   Clara did, however, go to the Advanced School later. She passed the Junior examination, and joined the Old Scholars' Association in 1899. Diaries of John McConnell Black, 1895-99, held by Miss M.W. Andrew, Adelaide.

110. Register, 18 December, 1885, 7f

111. Grasby, W. Catton, Education in Three Continents Personal Notes on the Education Systems of the World, London, 1891, p. 45.

He believed that the opposition stemmed from the 'friends of the private establishments', but that the state should provide secondary as well as primary education so that the whole community could benefit.[112] A step towards this ideal was the provision of a suitable building for the Advanced School.

In 1890, when the school's enrolment stood at more than 130 and good seasons had improved the economy, Hartley moved strongly to get Ministerial agreement for improved premises, at first asking for a move to the Training College building in Grote Street which was about to gain some free room when its Practising School students moved to the new Currie Street school.[113] This was not proceeded with, for enrolments continued to increase and Hartley acknowledged that 'We have had so many direct & indirect complaints from parents that we feel we must make a change'.[114] Plans were drawn up for a building adjacent to the Training College in Grote Street, making use of the vacant space on its eastern side.

The architect, G.E. Owen-Smyth, designed a two-storey brick building standing on a bluestone base and having eleven rooms, of which six were classrooms. Owen-Smyth moved away from the standard nineteenth century school architecture in the Neo-Gothic style to produce instead

> a double gable building strongly influenced by the character of an English country house. Essentially, it is a functional building, with high windows, lead glazed in upper sections, nicely surrounded in stone reveals, sills and corbel stones. 115

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112. Ibid.

113. Education Department, CF Inspector-General 1890/1706, GRG 18/3 SASA

114. Ibid.

115. Bierbaum, H.F. 'Adelaide Girls' High School History of Buildings 1876-1891', typescript, Adelaide, 1976, p. 22. The author claims that the building's kitchen was 'for lessons in home duties'. In fact the kitchen was used by the resident caretaker and a cook who cooked the midday dinner which girls and staff could buy for sixpence. George, op. cit., p. 3.

The building cost £2533 and was completed in September, 1891, not long before the beginning of a serious economic slump. The provision of 'lofty, well-ventilated classrooms and the many conveniences hitherto lacking'[116] attracted a record number of students in 1892. One hundred and eighty three girls were enrolled, and had for the first time the benefit of a 'large asphalted playground' on which a tennis court was marked out.[117] The large dining room, on the ground floor, was used for drawing lessons. Drawing was regarded as an important subject and embraced 'copying, model drawing, perspective, crayon drawing', the best examples being displayed at the end of year speech days.[118] A room for music lessons was also provided, and a visiting teacher (who was Edith Hübbe's sister) taught pianoforte. As one former student explained, 'There was a lot of emphasis on academic work, but a lot of nice graces as well'.[119] The Advanced School now had the facilities to extend student numbers and to move further towards the model of English girls' education.

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116. Observer, 26 December, 1891, 5d

117. Ibid. There was a great competition for the tennis court. Interview, Mrs Marjorie Oldham, loc. cit.

118. Interview with Miss I. Heyne, loc. cit. Students entered for both School of Design examinations and those of the South Kensington Art School. A photograph of the drawing class in 1903 shows twenty students in a circle, at desks, working on a still life subject. Critic, 9 May, 1903, p. 14

119. Interview with Mrs Mercy Bennett, loc. cit. Academic work was extended in 1901 with the introduction of chemistry which proved a popular subject. Register, 19 December 1901, 4c

In 1888, Professor Edward C. Stirling of Adelaide University stated that 'in no school in South Australia was there better teaching than at the Advanced School for Girls'.[120] Stirling said that he was speaking from his practical experience which included teaching some of the students and marking their examinations. As Edith Cook had told the Education Commission, and as Hartley had earlier reported:

> One of the best guarantees the public can have is that all the work of the school is subject to periodical inspection, and that when a defect is discovered, steps are at once taken to make the necessary improvements. [121]

Hartley had both a professional and a strong personal interest in the school, its staff and students.[122] In addition, Hartley's patronage could extend beyond the school as he had been one of the founders of the University and held office on the senate and the council, becoming Vice-chancellor from 1893 until his death in 1896.[123]

Through his position of influence at the University, Hartley was able to persuade the Senate to make regulations for the matriculation examination which suited the educational background of girls. Traditionally, girls' schools did not teach Latin or Greek; the latter was regarded as particularly unsuitable on account of the sexual content of some of the conventional texts. In 1881 the Regulations for Matriculation were modified, including the provision that 'candidates are required to pass in Latin, except in the case of females who may substitute French'.[124] Hartley defended this decision, pointing out that if the Senate insisted upon every girl taking Latin it would mean 'the practical exclusion of the girls'.[125]

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120. Register, 22 December, 1888, 7d

121. SAPP, 1881, 44, Report of the Minister Controlling Education, p. 15

122. In 1889 his adopted adopted daughter Muriel entered the school. Terminal Examination Results, op. cit., and information from Miss I. Heyne.

123. Australian Dictionary of Biography, V. 4, op. cit.

124. University of Adelaide, Calendar, 1881, p. 41

125. Register, 7 December, 1882, 6f

Although in theory girls were disadvantaged by the matriculation requirements, in fact they succeeded in performing well in the examinations, an Advanced School student, Charlotte Wright, gaining top place in the first class matriculation list in 1884, while another girl from the school came second, gaining a credit in Latin.[126] A full analysis of the results of examinations is outside the scope of this study. It is apparent that those girls who sat for public examinations had strong motivation to succeed, and that the school and the University authorities showered praises on those who did so.[127] The first woman graduates in science and arts and the earliest women Masters of Arts and Bachelors of Music were all old scholars of the Advanced School.[128] These and other graduates were honoured by having their photographs hung in the large dining/drawing room where assemblies were held. By 1905 there were sufficient to form 'a gallery of honour' to which Madeline Rees George referred,

> forming, as it were, a link to bind the present to the past, and serving as an inspiration to those younger ones still working within our walls. 129

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126. University of Adelaide, Calendar, 1885, p. 90. By 1900 the school was 'making headway' in Greek. Register, 21 December, 1900, 2g

127. See, for example, the remarks of the Chancellor, Chief Justice Way, at the University Commemoration of 1883. Register, 18 December 1883, 6a. In 1882 an editorial in the same newspaper had placed the school 'among our higher educational institutions'. Register, 18 December, 1882, 5a

128. See below, pp. 156-8

129. Register, 21 December, 1905, 3e

By no means all students aspired to such academic heights, but many took the early public examinations, the entire fifth form 'rising as one' to receive the Junior Public examination certificates in 1885.[130]

The school continued to produce outstanding scholars, one being Agnes Heyne who won first place in the University scholarship examination in 1889, 'nothwithstanding the fact that the other candidates took Greek and she did not'.[131] Although there is ample evidence in the speech day reports and the reports to the Minister of Education that the crowning achievement of an Advanced School student was to become a University graduate, nevertheless past students interviewed have emphasized that Madeline Rees George did a great deal to help them excel at what they could do best, not necessarily academic work.[132] In Parliament the Minister of Education, in 1889, reiterated Stirling's words of a year earlier, stating that 'there was not a school where a girl could get a better secondary education'.[133] Not all Ministers of Education saw the school in such a light. Mr T.H. Brooker who, as Minister, presided in 1901 at the annual speech day, said that the school's role was to produce noble women to strengthen the nation. After listening

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130. Ibid. 19 December, 1885, 7f

131. Ibid., 20 December, 1889, 7c. She studied mathematics at the University and was later employed by the Observatory to undertake astronomical calculations. She tutored the children of several South Australian governors, and after her marriage, as Agnes Dorsch, she taught at Tormore House School and at Concordia College. Information from her daughter Mrs B.J. Kearney.

132. Mrs Ann Dawkins, for example, credited her headmistress with having given her encouragement to carry on with music; she became a music teacher until her marriage.

133. SAPD (HA) 1899, c. 435

to the headmistress describe students' successes at public examinations and at the University, he concluded his remarks inappropriately by quoting Charles Kingsley's popular stanza 'Be good, sweet maid, and let who will be clever ...'[134]

Madeline Rees George was a member, and for a time councillor, of the prestigious Teachers' Guild and Collegiate Schools' Association which included University, private school and senior Education Department staff. Following the opening of the new building some meetings of the Guild were held at the school. In July, 1892, under the chairmanship of Professor Bragg, she read a paper on teaching botany, which had been introduced to the Advanced School in that year. She illustrated her talk with models, illustrations, plants and flowers and held the audience's attention with her 'lucid explanation of her methods of teaching the subject'.[135] Her ability reflected the school's status, and her enterprise in teaching botany for the first time indicated her serious purpose, which was apparently respected among Adelaide's scholars.

Madeline Rees George maintained an active interest in wider aspects of education. For example, she became a member of the Australasian Association for the Advancement of Science on the occasion of meetings held in Adelaide in 1893 and 1907. She and her staff set various teachers' and University public examination papers; in 1886 she set both French and German papers for Teachers' Certificate examinations.[136] Madeline Rees George also set bursary examination papers in German, and

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134. Register, 19 December, 1901, 4c

135. Teachers' Guild and Collegiate Schools' Association, 'Minutes', 29 July, 1892, 1224, SASA. She had gained a credit in Botany in the University examinations of 1887.

136. Education Gazette, 3: 18 (January 1887) 5

Caroline Jacob did so in English,[137] while the former set Senior and Higher Public examinations in French and German.[138] Ethel Holder, in spite of earlier strictures on women learning Greek, was appointed examiner in Junior Greek in 1905.[139]

Madeline Rees George had a strong desire to make the Advanced School more like English girls' schools. She made the annual speech days highlights of the school year for those who succeeded academically; she herself donated a generous number of prizes.[140] In 1889 she encouraged the students leaving school to form an old scholars' assocation,[141] a successful organization which kept in touch with the school and among its own activities formed circles of the Australian Home Reading Union.[142] In 1900 she travelled to England, being granted leave of absence, and having been requested by the South Australian Government to report on girls' secondary education in that country. Following logical lines of argument, and making use of English official enquiries and her own visits to numerous schools and colleges, she wrote a

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137. Ibid., 5: 40 (June 1889) 47; 7: 60 (September 1891) 87

138. University of Adelaide, Education Committee, Minutes, 12 April, 13 September, 1901.

139. Papers of Ethel Roby Harry, PRG 169, SASA

140. See for example, Register, 23 December, 1897, 6f. She donated prizes on this occasion for mapping, botanical designs, specimens and collections, as well as for diligence and examination marks.

141. Register, 20 December, 1889, 7c. The Association flourished for many years, as a re-union in 1928 demonstrates. This was arranged by Madeline Rees George, patron of the Association, to farewell her successor, Caroline Sells, the girls' headmistress of Adelaide High School. Held in the Elder Park kiosk, the re-union attracted 107 old scholars and six staff members, including Edith Hübbe, who were all photographed together. Advertiser, 9 July, 1928, 14; photograph and newspaper cuttings, 22243 SASA

142. Register, 22 December, 1893, 4f

wide-ranging report which succinctly presented many issues relevant to South Australian education.[143]

She saw similar problems in England to those in Australian girls' schools:

> how best to fit them for home life; how to make the best of those of minor ability; how to make them love learning for its own sake ... 144

She found the 'externals' of English girls' schools far ahead of her own:

> As far as methods of teaching and discipline go, from what I have seen in England in the schools I have visited, ours compare very favourably with theirs, but ... the visitors can have nought but admiration for the fine school buildings, the class rooms with their tiled walls and smooth floors, the splendid Science Rooms, and Music Rooms, and the spacious Playgrounds. 145

She wrote wistfully of the smaller classes, larger staff, and 'greater freedom' of the headmistress who was able to attend more efficiently to the general interest of the school and students. Her return coincided with a rise of prosperity in South Australia, and she may have had high hopes for some of the improvements she desired, but in fact, although 1901 was a year of increased enrolments, other factors, which are considered in the final section of this chapter, were to prevent such changes.

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143. The matters she discussed included: questions of public and private education; the necessity for better education for girls; scholarships; registration of teachers; teacher training facilities and university education for teachers; school holidays and divisions of the year; fees; examination and inspection (including medical); buildings, curriculum and timetable; teaching methods; teaching of languages and drawing; staff; role of the headmistress; Froebel in education; effects of higher education on girls and boys; technical education for girls; problems in girls' education; comparisons between British and Australian education. George, 'Secondary Education of Girls in England'. The report consists of 39 typewritten foolscap pages. Education Department, CF 1909/2398, GRG18/1 SASA

144. Ibid., p. 37

145. Ibid., p. 38

Several innovations were introduced after her visit abroad. In addition to the continuation of the Shakespeare circle which had met for several years and which now performed for old scholars' gatherings, tennis matches were begun with other girls' schools and girls began working through small fêtes and stalls to buy a piano. The major change though, was a reflection of Madeline Rees George's vigorous patriotism. She encouraged imperial sentiments and gladly accepted the Education Department's issue of a flag pole and Union Jack in 1901 which was

> run up and floated proudly from our own newly erected flagstaff as we celebrated the opening of the Federal Parliament simultaneously with the schools of federated Australia. [146]

In 1901 also the girls stood in the 'shadow of the flag that braved a thousand years, the battle and the breeze' to mourn Queen Victoria.[147] On such foundations, and with her own strong British connections and past associations and her recent visit, she became foundation local secretary of the South Australian branch of the League of the Empire which was formed by the Teachers' Guild and Collegiate Schools' Association in March, 1904.[148] The Advanced School was to provide a large number of the League's members for several years, and the headmistress encouraged links with other parts of the Empire through correspondence between her students and students in Britain and Africa.[149] She rallied support within the Education Department, and was granted four months' leave of absence in 1907 to attend the first Imperial Conference on

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146. Register, 19 December, 1901, 4c

147. Ibid.

148. Teachers' Guild and Collegiate Schools Association, op. cit., Minutes, 12 March, 1904. Madeline Rees George was on the council of the Association and remained a very active member.

149. In 1904, there were 900 South Australian members of the League, of whom 105 were Advanced School students - five more than the total last quarter's enrolled number. Probably all students would have joined in the foundation year, Register, 19 December, 1906, 8g

Education, held under the auspices of the League of the Empire, in London.[150] From this she returned with two pictures presented by the Central Council of the League and hung in the Advanced School, and two prizes for the school, while she visited schools with which her students had corresponded.[151] She hoped for interchange of teachers internationally, but this did not occur at the Advanced School.

The prizes, two copper trays, were inscribed with the words 'Containing Victory copper from the Lords of Admiralty', with other messages commemorating the centenary of Nelson's Trafalgar victory, and with nautical motifs. They were given to the two students who had written the best essays on Captain Cook, and were fittingly presented, at the 1909 Speech night, by the Governor, Admiral Sir Day Hort Bosanquet.[152] The patriotic theme was therefore carried on through the Advanced School to its successor, the Adelaide High School.

The energies and emotions which were poured into the League of the Empire, by both Madeline Rees George and her students, may be compared to similar enthusiasm and dedication which was directed towards religion in British schools, and in some Australian private schools. The rhetoric

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150. Education Department, CF, 1907/916, GRG 18/2 SASA

151. Ibid.; Education Gazette, 24: 259 (May 1908) 105

152. The two winners were Gwen Williams and Marjorie Anderson. The latter, now Mrs Oldham, has retained the tray as a cherished possession for more than 70 years. It is not known why the prizes were not given at the 1908 Speech night; however, that was a year of many changes in the school which may account for the delay; in 1908 the Advanced School became part of the new Adelaide High School. Through the League of the Empire Madeline Rees George hoped that her pupils were learning 'to take wider views of their responsibilities, and to become better citizens of the great empire to which we belong'. SAPP, 1906, 44, Report of the Minister Controlling Education, p. 30

associated with bonds of Empire, and the ceremonial attached to assemblies by the flag, were acceptable in the social context of the times in South Australia. Such sentiments were reinforced by the school motto, Non scholae sed vitae, adopted on Madeline Rees George's return from England in 1900.[153]

The turn of the century saw a change in the fortunes of the Advanced School. Although Hartley's death in 1896 meant the removal of powerful support,[154] the staff, organization and traditions of the school were strong and able to continue uninterrupted under the Board of Inspectors. The seeds of the school's end lay within itself; the Advanced School educated women who went out into private schools and caused immediate improvements in girls' education, while the yardstick of public examinations began to be demanded by more parents in these schools.[155]

Not only students but staff left the school to build up their own enterprises. As early as 1896 Madeline Rees George spoke of Advanced School old scholars holding positions in 'most, if not all, the private schools in and around Adelaide', and in the Education Department.[156] By 1904, twenty five years after the school's foundation, at least three Advanced School former students had become headmistresses of South Australian private schools, 'thus widening even more and more the sphere of influence of which the Advanced School is the centre'.[157] Ellen

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153. Register, 21 December, 1900, 2g

154. In 1890 the Minister of Education at the school's speech day had gone as far as comparing Hartley's influence on the Advanced School to that of Thomas Arnold on Rugby, Register, 19 December, 1890, 7h

155. Register, 16 December, 1896, 5a. This editorial referred particularly to the 'striking change' in girls' schools' attitudes to public examinations.

156. Register, 17 December, 1896, 10d

157. SAPP, 1905, 44, Report of the Minister Controlling Education, p. 34

Thornber for example, had joined her family in their Unley Park private school in 1886, making it into a more academically-oriented school. Caroline Jacob, one of the Advanced School's most capable teachers from 1885 to 1897, took over Tormore House School in 1898 and quickly built it into an institution which was to be a direct challenge to the Advanced School and which is considered in the following chapter. Some of her staff members came from the Advanced School, being either former students or staff. Various other schools also benefited from the pool of educated women who tended to turn to teaching as an acceptable, stimulating profession. Some of them went into the Education Department; through that means several returned to teach at their old school, notably Caroline Sells who was to become headmistress of Adelaide High School, following her former headmistress in that position.

Apart from Tormore, the greatest challenge to the Advanced School was the foundation, in 1902, of the Methodist Ladies' College. Centrally situated in an imposing building and fine grounds, the school had a strong council and a capable English headmistress.[158] Its religious basis held great appeal among South Australia's strong Methodist community, and old scholars of the Advanced School have described how their younger sisters were sent to Methodist Ladies' College, and in some cases, to Tormore.[159] From 1901, when Tormore had moved to new buildings and was attracting greater numbers with an academic programme not unlike that of the Advanced School, the latter's numbers steadily fell.[160]

Another influence was the growing demand among parents and girls for commercial education; numbers attending business colleges were

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158. The present building was not occupied until 1904. See Twynam, <u>op. cit</u>., p. 28.

159. Interviews with Mrs K. Geytenbeek, Miss Lyndall Morris, Miss Gisela Siebert.

160 See Figure I, p. 86

rising steadily, and girls were beginning to compete in a formerly male area.[161] The Advanced School provided a short-lived class in shorthand with a visiting teacher in 1900,[162] but remained academically-oriented.

A further factor outside the control of the Advanced School was the new climate of political opinion, coinciding with the election of Thomas Price's Labor Government in 1905. Price was determined not only to improve technical education but to institute free secondary education, and appointed Alfred Williams as Director of Education to implement many changes. When Williams returned from a tour overseas in 1907 he pushed for immediate action.[163] The numbers at the Advanced School were falling; Williams pointed out in a letter dated 5 March, 1908, that this was

> partly on account of the establishment of such schools as Methodist Ladies College and partly because of the unattractive position of the school itself. 164

The latter reason referred to the increasing number of industrial premises being built near the school. The lawns and trees of Tormore and Methodist Ladies College, where fees were similar,[165] had much more appeal to parents.

Although a state secondary school for girls had proved attractive to South Australian parents for twenty years while little alternative existed, the provision of private secondary education with a sound academic basis had social appeal to some. A further factor in parents' decisions to send daughters to private schools may have been the increasing number of bursary winners, usually from state schools, who

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161. See Jones, Helen, 'The History of Commercial Education in South Australia with Special Reference to Women'. MA thesis, University of Adelaide, 1967, pp. 238, 424; passim.

162. Education Department, CF 1899/1063 GRG 18/2 SASA

163. See Chapter I above for further comments on Williams' overseas trip.

164. Education Department, CF 1908/638 Director of Education to Minister of Education, GRG 18/1 SASA

165. During the poor seasonal conditions of 1895-6 it was suggested that fees should be reduced for younger pupils and a 10% discount allowed in the case of one or more sisters. Ibid., 1896/12. Hartley to Minister of Education, 6 January, 1896. Nothing was done until 1900. Ibid., 1900/2348, Madeline Rees George to Minister of Education, 17 December, 1900. GRG 18/1 SASA

were being admitted to the Advanced School, thus altering the former predominantly private school intake.[166]

Very quickly, the future of the Advanced School was resolved, firstly by amalgamating it with the adjoining Continuation School which had been founded in 1908 in the former Pupil Teachers' building (until 1900 the Training College). The amalgamation occurred following Williams' argument that it was anomalous to have a free Continuation School alongside a fee-paying Advanced School.[167] From March 28, 1908, the Advanced School ceased to use its name and the new institution was called the Adelaide Continuation School.[168] In September of the same year the name was changed to Adelaide High School. It took the motto of the Advanced School, Non scholae sed vitae, used its building as the girls' section of the High School, and retained the Advanced School staff. The new school was based very largely on Advanced School practices.[169] A headmaster was appointed above Madeline Rees George who remained headmistress of the girls' section of the school until 1913, when Caroline Sells replaced her. Her attempts to keep the Advanced School flourishing are clearly visible in her last annual reports when numbers were declining but pride in the achievements of present and past students remained.

The Advanced School for Girls had enabled some 1600 South Australian girls to extend their education beyond primary level, under the guidance of efficient and enthusiastic teachers. Based on contemporary societal values of orderly, disciplined work, directed often to the publicly-acknowledged goals of public examinations, the school reinforced concepts

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166. George, op. cit., p. 3
167. Education Department, 1908/638. GRG 18/1 SASA
168. Ibid.
169. Adelaide High Schools Jubilee Magazine, p. 10. The headmaster, W.J. Adey, acknowledged Madeline Rees George's 'untiring energy and zeal, her sound judgement ...' SAPP 1910, 44. Report of the Minister Controlling Education, p. 37

of patriotism and obedience, while raising educational and social expectations for many women. It is not known what proportion took up a career, only that approximately fifty students became pupil teachers, student teachers or teachers in the Education Department between 1888 and 1898.[170] An average of five per year is not many, but it must be remembered that in addition an unknown number of Advanced School students became teachers in private schools. Teaching was therefore of importance as a career for these students, while some individuals took up other specialist careers.[171] The school had maintained a particular standard and a reputation for excellence while there was little competition from private schools.

It had been founded, not primarily as a basis for women's careers, but to open up extended opportunities for their children by an influential group of citizens. Through sympathetic politicians, they provided the kind of education for their daughters which they would doubtless have sought at a school like the North London Collegiate School had they remained in England. The social climate of South Australia led to ready acceptance of such innovation, provided that the cost was negligible. South Australia was the first colony in Australia to found such a school, and the only one to maintain a state school of such high calibre for girls, reflecting the nature of the stable, Protestant society where the demand was evident and persistent.

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170. McKinnon, op. cit., p. 8. A list of the most notable old scholars is included in Madeline Rees George's obituary. See Advertiser, 17 June, 1931, 14b

171. Among these women several doctors, a Lecturer in Botany, and several artists may be cited as representative of the variety of careers which Advanced School students entered. The doctors and lecturer will be mentioned in Chapter III. One artist, Miss Bessie Davidson, who attended the school in 1892 and 1893, studied at the Adelaide School of Design, worked in Europe, and was awarded the French Legion d'Honneur for her contribution to Art and Humanity. Advanced School for Girls, Terminal examination results, 1881-1894; Professor J.G. Cornell, speaking at the opening of a posthumous exhibition of Bessie Davidson's paintings, Adelaide, 30 May, 1967; Biven, Rachel, Some Forgotten, Some Remembered Women Artists of South Australia, Adelaide, 1976, n.p.

Although this higher learning could lead to a career, of those past students who went to the University or the Conservatorium of Music, many did not graduate. Nevertheless,

> their studies were to influence their lives and those of their families if they married. Those who did no tertiary study also had strong influence in families by their attitudes and aims for their children. 172

Both for those students who took up careers, and for those who married and stayed at home, the impact was significant for individual South Australians and, beyond that, for the educational institutions of the state.

The Advanced School could thus be seen by many as a valuable ornament of the state. This view was summed up pithily by the Minister of Education in 1899 when he took credit for the good examination results:

> The Advanced School for Girls was the pinnacle of the State school system in South Australia and it very worthily occupied that position. The total receipts of the past twenty years amounted to £30,670, and the total expenditure during that time to £30,272, leaving a credit balance to the school of £398.9.9. That, of course, included payment of the building. 173

The twin virtues, conspicuous success in examinations and the ability to show a profit, ensured its continued acceptance for almost thirty years. When private schools of some stature were founded, and politicians sought free state secondary education,[174] the Advanced School became redundant.

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172. Jones, op. cit., p. 9

173. Register, 21 December, 1899, 4g

174. See SAPD (HA) 1908, c. 760-1, 1763-4 for debate on the issue of extending secondary and technical education.

The only school of its kind in South Australia, it provided both a starting point and a guide for the expansion of secondary education. Once the pinnacle of the state-school system, the Advanced School for Girls ended as a foundation stone of the state secondary system.

## Chapter III

## Further Aspects of Higher Education

Formal education for women was provided not only within the state school system. Including the University of Adelaide, there were a number of educational institutions which dealt with specific areas. They are of varying importance, but all were part of women's education in South Australia. Each had a function and some will be examined.

Women attended the University, the state teachers' college, the Kindergarten Training College, business colleges and a variety of private schools. The Teachers' College and the Pupil Teachers' School performed a mainly vocational function, although wider education of women occurred in the former, in addition to teacher training.[1]

The Kindergarten Training College had a minor but significant role in South Australian education. Outside the control of the state, the College was a small institution under the aegis of the Kindergarten Union. It opened in 1907 in a cottage in Franklin Street, next to the first kindergarten. Its young Principal, Lillian de Lissa from Sydney, was to shape its course and to provide an alternative education, apart from the state institution, for women who wished to teach young children.[2] Both Lillian de Lissa and Lucy Morice, who was secretary of the Kindergarten Union, battled successfully to preserve the Kindergarten Training College from being absorbed into the state teachers' college.[3]

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1. For a study of the training of teachers see:
Hyams, B.K., 'State School Teachers in South Australia 1847-1950 A Study of Their Training, Employment and Voluntary Organization'. Ph.D. thesis, Flinders University, 1972.
The author does not discuss the training of female student teachers in needlework or domestic economy.

2. Jones, Helen, 'The Acceptable Crusader: Lillian de Lissa and Pre-School Education in South Australia', Melbourne Studies in Education 1975, Melbourne, 1975, p. 134. See Chapter VI below concerning the relationship of the Kindergarten Union and the College to wider issues of female education.

3. Ibid., pp. 140-2

Their aim was to prevent it being 'crushed under departmental routine and red tape'.[4] By their stand they enabled the development of an individual educational institution for women which is the subject of detailed investigation elsewhere.[5]

Commercial education, mainly through the medium of business colleges, attracted increasing numbers of women from the late nineteenth century. Their training and subsequent careers have implications for women's education and status which have been examined in another study.[6] These educational openings indicate something of the scope available to South Australian women in formal education. The part played by the most significant post-secondary institution, the University of Adelaide, in women's education will be discussed later.

Of the private schools which were rivalling the Advanced School for Girls, the most important was Tormore House School which was similar, in some respects, to Methodist Ladies' College, established in 1902. Within two years the latter had enrolments of 103 students, and it played an important part also.[7] The only other secondary school run by a non-Catholic religious organization was the small St Peter's Collegiate Girls' School begun in 1894 under the Sisters of the Church of England.[8]

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4. Ibid., p. 141. These are Lillian de Lissa's words.

5. Dowd, Christopher, 'The Adelaide Kindergarten Teachers' College 1907-1974', MA thesis in progress, 1980, Flinders University. (Title tentative)

6. See Jones, Helen, 'The History of Commercial Education in South Australia with Special Reference to Women', op. cit., passim.

7. An exhaustive study of this school has been written by P. Twynam, op. cit.

8. See Frost, Mary, St. Peters Collegiate Girls' School 1894-1968 A History of the Sisters' School in Adelaide During 74 Years. Stonyfell, 1972. This school was initially called the Collegiate High School. Church of England Year Book Diocese of Adelaide, 1898, p. 148

Catholic girls' education, a major area, was divided between the small parochial schools, such as those established by the Sisters of St Joseph,[9] and the larger institutions founded by various Orders and including Convents of Mercy and Dominican Convents.[10] The emphasis in the Catholic girls' schools appears to have been mainly on the accomplishments, with music and needlework, together with Christian doctrine, featuring largely in the end of year prize lists.[11] Nevertheless, towards the end of the century some of these schools began encouraging their students to take public examinations.[12] By 1914 the Archbishop of Adelaide at the Dominican Convents' prize-giving was urging parents to allow their children to remain at school as long as possible 'and thereby enable them to be fitted for high stations in life'.[13] It can be seen from the variety of institutions that Catholic girls' education is a large and complex subject and one which merits a separate study.

Among the non-Catholic girls' schools there were several of individual character, apart from the two major ones, which flourished contemporaneously with the Advanced School and which should be mentioned. Each carried the stamp of its headmistress, indicating the influential capacity of the women who held such positions. Whereas in other colonies masters were appointed to head some girls' private schools, in South Australia it was clearly considered appropriate for women to be in

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9. See 'McKillop, Mary Helen', Australian Dictionary of Biography, v. 5, 1974, p. 174, and Sheedy, H.M., 'The Sisters of Saint Joseph and Catholic Education in South Australia 1867-1874', BA Honours Thesis, University of Adelaide, 1969.

10. Cyclopedia of South Australia, v. 2, Adelaide, 1909, p. 38. The convents in 1909 included eight boarding schools for girls.

11. Register, Speech day reports, 1875-1915. Prizes at Saint Aloysius, for example, in 1898 included one for darning and another for amiability. Register, 17 December, 1898, 4d

12. See, for example, University of Adelaide, Calendar, 1897, Junior Public Examination results. Included are four students of the Convent of Mercy who passed in the Third Class.

13. Register, 19 December, 1914, 19d

charge of girls' education, although masters were sometimes employed both in private schools and in the Advanced School. In South Australia, the common acceptance of female authority was demonstrated clearly when Edith Cook, a woman of only twenty one years, was appointed to the highest state school position.[14] This indicates something of the educated woman's standing in the society.

Under the control of headmistresses, the number of girls' schools operating between 1875 and 1915 was substantial, even though their quality was uneven. Nothing is to be gained by attempting to survey each one, as several exemplify well the aims and characteristics of many others. It is therefore proposed to discuss briefly several private schools, in addition to Tormore House, which are worthy of note; they are the Unley Park School and Miss Martin's School, both of which have been mentioned already, and Hardwicke College and Dryburgh House School.[15] In each case the schools were started either as a family venture or in the family home. Throughout the period under review there was nothing, apart from public health regulations, to prevent any persons opening private schools, unlike the tighter controls which existed, for example, in Victoria.[16] Because of this lack of official control, there

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14. See Chapter II, above, p. 87 and f.n. 67

15. Other important girls' schools of the period were the Medindie High School and Kindergarten run by the four Misses Brown, which became known as The Wilderness in about 1915, and the Collegiate School for Girls, Malvern, renamed Walford in 1912, shortly before Ellen Benham took over from Miss Lydia Adamson as headmistress. See George, Elisabeth, The Wilderness Book, Adelaide, 1945; Jones, Helen and Morrison, Nina, Walford A History of the School A Memorial to Mabel Jewell Baker, Adelaide, 1968. Mrs Hübbe's School at Knightsbridge, which opened in 1900, was small but also influential.

16. In Victoria the registration of schools and teachers was required from 1906. The complete list of such schools was published in the Victorian Government Gazette, January-April, 1907, pp. 297-538.

were no official records of private schools and indeed very few records of any kind remain. In some cases there are none; in others records are fragmentary. There are, therefore, limitations on the extent of examination of such schools.[17]

## 1. Four Adelaide Girls' Schools

The earliest established, the Unley Park School, was opened by a Mrs Thornber following her husband's death in 1855. She was later assisted by her daughter, Catherine, who subsequently became headmistress and in 1886 by a second daughter, Ellen, who had been teaching at the Advanced School.[18]

She helped to raise the school's academic standards, having herself passed several University subjects[19] and urging her students to aim for higher study if they were capable. By the late 1880s Unley Park School students' names were appearing in the public examination lists alongside those of the Advanced School, and in 1898 Miss Catherine Thornber announced at the annual prize-giving that an old scholar had come top of the first year medical course at the University. In that year the school had 125 on the roll, including 25 boarders.[20] None of the schools went much beyond these numbers even in their best years, and some were even smaller.

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17. An attempt to describe all South Australian girls' schools has been made in R.J. Nicholas' 'Private and Denominational Secondary Schools of South Australia Their Growth and Development'. M.Ed. thesis, University of Melbourne, 1953

18. Observer, 6 December 1924, 19d. Ellen Thornber was appointed to the Advanced School direct from the Training College in January 1880, resigning in April, 1886. Teachers' Records, op. cit. Edith Hübbe's daughter, Mrs M. Caw, has described how Ellen Thornber applied for the headmistresship of the Advanced School when her mother resigned, telling Hartley, 'Mrs Hübbe says that I'm a very valuable teacher'. Hartley replied, 'Ah, but Mrs Hübbe is invaluable'. Madeline Rees George was appointed on Edith Hübbe's recommendation, according to Mrs Caw.

19. University of Adelaide, Calendar, 1880, 1885, 1886

20. Register, 15 December, 1898, 6b

In 1897 the Misses Thornber founded a scholarship in honour of Queen Victoria's Jubilee, for competition among 'the daughters of Parochial Clergymen holding the License of the Bishop'.[21] The holder was entitled to free tuition and board at Unley Park School for two years. The school was the only private school for girls to be included in an official British government report on education in South Australia. It was listed under 'Secondary education by voluntary effort and private venture schools'. Inspector Whitham had assembled the material for the report in 1898; the Unley Park School's stature then was above that of any other private girls' school.[22]

In the case of this school, and through the British report, it is possible to establish some important facts, viz. that there were a total of 134 students and that the cost of buildings and equipment had reached the substantial sum of £4,000. The fees were £2.2.0 per quarter for day girls, while boarders paid from £10 to £13 per quarter.[23] These figures establish the position of a leading girls' school in relation to one of the best boys' schools, St Peter's Collegiate Grammar School, where the fees were quoted in annual figures of fifteen guineas for day boys and fifty guineas for boarders.[24] Thus the Unley Park School charged about half the fees of the boys' school, and less for day girls than the Advanced School; it may have been economically managed because of family members on the staff. The report also includes the following information on curriculum. The ordinary curriculum consisted of:

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21. Year Book of the Church of England Diocese of Adelaide, 1901-2, p. 99

22. Great Britain Board of Education, Special Report on the System of Education in South Australia, op. cit., pp. 492-3. The only other private establishments listed were six boys' schools and the Adelaide Shorthand and Business Training Academy.

23. Ibid., p. 492

24. Ibid., p. 490

> English in all its branches, French, mathematics, drill, class singing, drawing, science (geology, physiology, botany). The extra subjects for which extra fees are charged are music, Latin, German, painting, etc. 25

The school branched out into non-academic areas, for example into commercial education in 1897, with the inclusion of shorthand and typewriting,[26] and in 1902 boarders attended Saturday morning cookery classes at the School of Mines.[27] All senior students went on botanical and geological excursions, and boarders had the advantage of pleasant accommodation set in a large garden surrounded by open country; they played both tennis and cricket.[28]

Unley Park School, whose headmistress visited England in 1896, included a number of the characteristics of English girls' high schools, among them the employment of some well-qualified staff, including old scholars;[29] but its intrinsic weakness, in spite of its considerable capital investment, was that of all private schools, for it depended on the health and strength of its principals, and on its ability to withstand competition, which affected it after 1902 when nearby Methodist Ladies' College was opened. In 1906, when the principals retired, the

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25. Ibid., p. 493

26. Register, 13 November, 1897, 2e. It is not clear whether these were 'extra' subjects.

27. Ibid., 19 December, 1902, 8f

28. A boarder who attended from Jamestown at the age of thirteen, in 1894, has described the fruit garden, the Sunday visits by horse-tram to St Michael's Church of England at Mitcham, the walk through open fields to Sunday school, and weekly Saturday morning excursions to swim in the Glenelg baths during the summer. Mrs J. Welsh (née Boucaut), Senior Citizens' News, (June 1974) 17; Register, 15 December, 1897, 9g

29. Staff included Miss Stella Howchin, B.Sc. who specialised in Geology. She was an old scholar of the Advanced School, appointed in 1894, and Miss May Burgess, B.Sc. who began teaching at the school in 1900.

goodwill of the Unley Park School was sold to Ellen Thornber's friend, Caroline Jacob, the headmistress of Tormore House School. The remaining years of the Unley Park School's history are considered with that of Tormore House School.[30]

Miss Martin's School was opened in about 1865 as a governess-style venture in Annie Montgomerie Martin's family home at Norwood, where she taught both sons and daughters of fellow Unitarians.[31] Her own formal education had been gained in England, where she probably attended the school kept by her father.[32] Her school, as a secondary establishment only, moved to Rundle Street, Adelaide, in the early 1890s; this was the first of three city addresses it was to have.[33] In each case the premises were city buildings without grounds; no sport of any kind was offered to students, and in this Miss Martin's school was unusual. Annie Montgomerie Martin was concerned with a range of cultural and intellectual activities which she provided in response to students' interest.[34] One student who remained for only 'a term' in about 1892 has described it as 'one of the "Do it yourself" schools'.[35] Nevertheless, some students did sit for University public examinations, much of their work being achieved by self-discipline at home, for classes ended at 2.15 p.m. daily and no home lessons were set.[36]

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30. See below, p. 145

31. Interviews with Mrs Katie Beckwith, loc. cit., and Mrs E.M. Brummitt (née Kay) whose mother attended Miss Martin's Norwood school. Edith Cook was one of her earliest pupils. Mrs M. Caw, loc. cit.

32. Mrs K. Beckwith, loc. cit.

33. Ibid.; Directory of South Australia, 1880-1917

34. See above, Chapter II, p. 71

35. Mayo, Helen, 'Autobiographical Record', typescript, p. 2. Mayo papers PRG 127/6, SASA. Helen Mayo left Miss Martin's because she 'felt the need for discipline'; she then attended the Advanced School which filled her needs.

36. Mrs K. Beckwith, loc. cit. Some students apparently sat only for particular subjects in public examinations. In 1901, for example, one student's only pass was to gain second place in the Greek examination at the Higher Public examination. Register, 17 December, 1901, 8h

The school's advertisement for the last quarter of 1897 illustrates something of the headmistress' eclectic approach:

> Miss Martin's School in the Assembly Rooms Towers Court, Victoria Square. University and art courses. Mrs. Annell Wing's Class for Figure Drawing and Painting.
> Miss Lindsay's for Calisthenics
> Music Miss Isabel Clark
> School reopens Tuesday Oct. 4. 37

When Miss Martin retired to Italy, in about 1902, her niece Miss Caroline Clark, MA, and another past student, Miss Edith Collison, BSc., took over the school. The first headmistress continued to send photographs of classical subjects from Italy to girls who passed examinations, until the school closed in 1918,[38] the victim of economic pressures and of the dominance of larger, better-situated competitors. Also, the later headmistresses proved less effective than Annie Montgomerie Martin.

Two sisters, the Misses L.A. and F.M. Tilly, arrived in South Australia in about 1879, holding diplomas of the Oxford College of Preceptors, a well-recognized English teaching qualification.[39] They joined the staff of Mrs Shuttleworth's Young Ladies' College, in a building called Hardwicke House at Kent Town. On the headmistress' retirement in 1882 they opened their own school, bearing the name Hardwicke College, and moved to large, specially constructed buildings at St Peter's in 1882. With accommodation for about 120 students, including 40 boarders, they specialised in teaching music.[40]

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37. Register, 13 November, 1897, 2e

38. Interview with Miss Marthe Wait who attended Miss Martin's School, leaving in 1917. Annie Montgomerie Martin never gained a degree although she passed several University subjects, studying while she ran her school. She spoke and taught French, German, and Italian, as well as Greek and Latin.

39. See Kamm, Josephine, Hope Deferred Girls' Education in English History, London, 1965, p. 281

40. Register, 16 December, 1902, 3i

This school enjoyed the patronage of many Methodists, and in 1890 opened an extension day school at Laura in the lower north, and proposed a further extension at Port Pirie in 1891.[41] Nothing more is known of these ventures. The school began sending girls to the public examinations in the late 1880s, apparently in response to the stimulus of the Advanced School. Hardwicke College's popularity began to decline with the opening of Methodist Ladies' College, and it closed shortly after the marriage and retirement of one of the Misses Tilly, in 1910. It was unusual in its academically-qualified headmistresses, its substantial premises built for the purpose, and for its special emphasis on music, with students gaining high honours in music examinations.

Musical education for girls was a highly desired attribute in South Australia in the later nineteenth century, and effective music teachers were much sought after. Their pupils often took music examinations, which were conducted by the University from 1885 and by representatives of Trinity College, London, from about 1890. The importance of music teaching is demonstrated by the increased numbers of female music teachers in South Australia, which rose from 118 in the 1881 Census, to 223 in 1891, and to 451 in 1901.[42] The increases are in no way proportional to the population increase, nor to the growing concentration of population in towns and the city. They may be partly related to prosperity, although this claim would require further examination; the period of deep depression in the 1890's fell between Censuses. It is clear, however, that the aspirations of middle class parents for their children had extended beyond the acquisition of basic literacy, and for

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41. Christian Weekly and Methodist Journal, 39 (December 1888) 7. This journal refers to the 'liberal education' under the guidance of 'certified principals and governesses' enjoyed by many Methodist daughters who were 'Surrounded by Christian influences' in Hardwicke College. Ibid.

42. SAPP, 1883-4, 74, Census Report, Occupations of the People, Part VI; 1894, 74, Table XXV; 1902, 74, Table XIV.

girls in particular the ability to play the piano was viewed in some families as essential.[43]

Results of the 1898 University music examinations, held in conjunction with the Associated Board of the Royal Academy of Music and the Royal College of Music, London, illustrate the comparatively strong emphasis placed on them for girls.

Table VII: Male and female passes, University of Adelaide Music Examinations 1898[44]

| | Male | Female |
|---|---|---|
| Primary Theory of Music Examination | 6 | 71 |
| Primary Practice of Music | 3 | 177 |
| Violin Playing | - | 4 |
| Singing | - | 3 |
| Junior Public Theory of Music | 5 | 99 |
| Junior Public Practice of Music | 2 | 55 |
| Singing | - | 4 |
| Organ | 1 | 1 |
| Violin Playing | 1 | 3 |
| Total numbers | 18 | 417 |

This trend of female musical interest and achievement was carried through to tertiary level. In the list of Conservatorium of Music students for 1902 a total of 286 names appeared: of these 248 can be identified definitely as female.[45] In the same year the seven graduates awarded the Mus.Bac. degree at the University of Adelaide were all women.[46]

The girls' schools responded to this demand and no doubt also increased it; many of the music teachers taught in their own homes or visited their pupils' homes to give lessons, but most girls' schools

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43. Interviews with Mrs M.Caw, Mrs K. Beckwith, loc. cit.
44. University of Adelaide, Calendar, 1899, pp. 424-9. Extracted from music examination results for 1898.
45. Ibid., 1903, pp. 88-94
46. Register, 20 December, 1902, 4b

employed their own teachers. With the particular emphasis on music in the Catholic girls' schools, long lists of music prizes were given, and musical items were a dominant feature of their prize-giving ceremonies.[47] All schools appear to have taught class singing; the Advanced School did so from its inception. Throughout the period under review music remained a subject which was popular both for personal accomplishment and enjoyment and as a pre-requisite for a career.

Music was one of the subjects included in the curriculum of Dryburgh House, a school which merits some consideration not only because it was representative of others, but also because of the distinctive qualities of its headmistress. It was begun in a small way by Mrs Eliza Harcus, in the inner suburb of Hackney, after the death of her husband William Harcus in 1876; he had been a Congregational minister and then a skilled journalist, and Eliza Harcus herself was well educated, probably by governesses in England.[48] After one of their daughters, Eliza Oliver Kelsey, had separated from her husband, she joined the school enterprise and it was she who was the dominant influence.[49] Eliza Kelsey was, like her counterparts in the other better schools,

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47. For example, the distribution of prizes for the Dominican Convents, Cabra and Franklin Street in 1902, included presentation of a drama in three acts with music and choruses, 'The Knight of Wharley'. Following the presentation of prizes for the year's work, mainly in Christian doctrine and music, the audience moved to a separate room to inspect the pupils' 'beautiful art needlework and lacework, for which the Dominican nuns are so renowned'. Register, 17 December, 1902, 9d

48. Australian Dictionary of Biography, v. 4, op. cit., pp. 340-1; information from Mr L.A.R. Evans, her great-grandson.

49. She was born in South Australia, married in 1870, aged 19, lived in England with her husband and children and returned to Adelaide in 1875. It may have been she who was the first drawing mistress at the Advanced School.

well-read;[50] strong determination and high intellectual standards enabled her to build a well-patronized school in spite of the social disability she suffered as a separated woman.

She took boarders, and until 1897 accepted small boys in the lower classes, as most girls' schools did. By 1897 she had begun sending students to public examinations, and recorded seven passes in the Preliminary and one in the Senior Public for that year.[51] In 1898 she travelled to Europe and England, visiting many schools, ranging from kindergartens to private boarding schools and high schools, including the North London Collegiate School.[52] She claimed, as Madeline Rees George did two years later, that South Australian schools in some ways compared favourably with English girls' schools, especially in the senior classes. And like Madeline Rees George she noticed that while the English practice was for girls to remain at school until the age of nineteen or twenty, in the colonies girls left at the age of sixteen to eighteen.[53]

By 1902 her pupils numbered 100 and she provided some variety in her curriculum to allow for different capabilities and interests. Students who did not wish to sit for public examinations went to the School of Mines for dressmaking and cooking classes on one day weekly. Herr Leschen visited for calisthenics lessons, and painting, drawing and needlework were available as extras. Those students who remained at school to reach the sixth form all sat, in 1902, for the Senior examination.[54] The headmistress stated at that year's speech day that

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50. See her papers which include hand-written talks to various groups and societies, for example 'Cultivation of the Fine Arts: as an Aid to the Study of Literature. An Address Delivered at a Meeting of the Art Teachers Association, School of Design 11 Oct. (1892) by Mrs Kelsey.' PRG 304/4 SASA
51. Register, 18 December, 1897, 4g
52. Ibid., 17 December, 1898, 4e
53. Ibid.
54. Register, 17 December, 1902, 9e

she aimed at three-fold training: mental, physical and technical, thus demonstrating her awareness of current educational thought.

In an important paper presented to the Adelaide meeting of the Australasian Association for the Advancement of Science in 1893, Eliza Kelsey allied the views and experience of her years of teaching with her wider philosophy.[55] Her paper on 'The Education of Australian Girls' gives a balanced view of the education of girls in South Australia, set in the context of theoretical ideals and practical objectives. She regarded the girls she taught with both admiration and exasperation. Although she noted 'a splendid capability, courage and energy about them',[56] and she referred to the innumerable Australian pioneer women who braved dangers beside their men

> with equally fearless courage, thus laying the foundation of that fine capability which is a strong characteristic of Australian women, [57]

nevertheless, she deplored the 'want of reverence and veneration with which strangers are invariably struck', and a certain defiance of authority, 'combined in many cases with a restless love of change and pleasure'.[58] The want of reverence and veneration she linked with the absence of ancient tradition and buildings in Australia and thought it was possibly also due to 'the absence of historical and Scriptural teaching in our public schools'.[59] To prove this conjecture would require detailed investigation.

She warned against the danger and immorality of teachers seeing 'money-making' as the chief end of their work, and pushing their students

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55. Kelsey, op. cit. At the same conference Annie Montgomerie Martin presented a paper in the section 'Sanitary Science and Hygiene' which demonstrated her versatility. Her topic was: 'Reasons for Connecting the High Death Rate of Adelaide and the Increasing Unhealthiness of some of the Suburbs with Sewers and Sewer Gas'. Australasian Association for the Advancement of Science, Report of fifth meeting, 1893, p. 642.

56. Kelsey, op. cit.

57. Ibid., p. 8

58. Ibid., p. 10

59. Ibid.

into examinations in an 'unholy rivalry'.[60] Instead, her view was that girls should be taught how to learn and to think; this she believed could be largely achieved through balance of subjects, not only intellectual, but also physical and artistic, with special emphasis on literature and history, which she, like Matthew Arnold, regarded as those 'humanising and civilising parts of instruction'.[61] Her view was a reflection of her readings in philosophy, education and literature, and of her practical experience.

The mother of four children herself, Eliza Kelsey recognized that school was only one part of education, and that

> long before we school teachers have anything to do with the children, the parents and nurses have laid the foundation.[62]

She regarded school teachers not as complete educators, but

> simply units in a great and complex system; we can guide and, by constant perseverance in our course, give a certain bias to children's minds.[63]

She had a wider, more intelligent and more humane view than the Education Department and its officials who expected to mould the children into a conformist pattern.

It is unfortunate that the records of Dryburgh House, which closed with Eliza Kelsey's retirement in 1908, like those of innumerable other schools, do not survive. It is not possible to reconstruct their curricula,[64] nor to investigate their finances. There are extant only

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60. Ibid.
61. Ibid.
62. Ibid., p. 5
63. Ibid.
64. Some information concerning curriculum may be found in Speech Day reports. See, for example, Register, 17 December, 1902, 9d, e.

several certificates which were presented at Dryburgh House, and which had no connection with the public examinations, and some blank account forms which indicate that the following subjects were charged as extras: music, theory of music, singing, painting, dancing and calisthenics and 'extra languages'.[65] There is no evidence to show that Eliza Kelsey or any other headmistress became wealthy from their labours. It appears that the usual charges for extra subjects were essential to keep the schools running and to employ the required specialist teachers. Parents demanded such subjects as drawing, painting and music and were prepared to pay for them.

By the late 1890s there was a growing awareness in South Australia of new possibilities in girls' education. The Advanced School was fully established, and its bias was academic, but its numbers were necessarily limited by accommodation and by its central city location. In the suburbs, girls whose parents wished them to continue beyond primary level and who could afford the fees,[66] had the choice of travelling to the Advanced School or attending a closer school. Among these, the standard of education varied considerably, but certainly at the Unley Park School, Hardwicke House and Dryburgh House there were opportunities for varied and sometimes stimulating education, the quality of this depending on the individual headmistress concerned and her own background, training, abilities and capacity for management.[67]

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65. Dryburgh House School D6183 (Misc.), SASA; Papers of Eliza Kelsey, PRG 304/3, SASA. No actual charges are shown on the forms.

66. Dryburgh House, for example, attracted the daughters of merchants, businessmen and doctors, among others. See Bonython, C. Warren ed., I'm No Lady The Reminiscences of Constance Jean, Lady Bonython, Adelaide, 1976 - pp. 22-3

67. The importance of the latter is demonstrated by the history of Dryburgh House School after Eliza Kelsey retired in 1908. She sold it to Mr and Mrs Murray Coghill who, under the aegis of the Presbyterian Church, moved to other premises in St Peter's and renamed the school Presbyterian Ladies' College. Three former students of this school, each interviewed separately, concur in their account of its decline. The standard of teaching deteriorated under the 'pleasure-loving' Mrs Coghill who gave English lessons 'when she

## 2. Tormore House School

These factors are all relevant to consideration of Tormore House School which epitomized the new academically-orientated girls' private schools of the twentieth century in South Australia. Tormore was a school in which a number of issues emerged as significant: the expressed aim of high academic standards; the place of religion in a girls' private school; the importance of a boarding facility; the status of sport and games, including provision of a gymnasium; the significance of a well-qualified and stable staff, and the benefits of a complex of buildings designed especially for a school are some of these.

Caroline Jacob herself attended her mother's school, Winald House, at Mount Gambier; she spent her last year of school as a boarder at Mrs Woodcock's North Adelaide school in 1877, when she was sixteen.[68] While there, she resolved to succeed Mrs Woodcock in due course as head-mistress,[69] and she proceeded to qualify herself, first passing the South Australian Institute examination in 1877.[70] She returned to Winald House as a teacher before entering the Training College in 1879. Her first teaching appointment was at the Port Adelaide school,[71] and while

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felt like it'. Parents removed their daughters and the school closed when Murray Coghill enlisted in the army in 1914. See Register, 16 December, 1909, 7d. Information from Miss Evelyn Ayliffe, Mrs G. Millhouse (née Ayliffe) and Mrs Marian Spinkston (née Dobbs).

68. Letters from Mary Jacob to her daughter Caroline, 1877, op. cit.

69. Register, 20 December, 1898, 10g

70. South Australian Institute, Annual Report, 1877-8

71. Teachers' Records, op. cit.

there she began her part-time University studies.[72] In June, 1885, she was appointed as assistant at the Advanced School where she remained until 1897.[73] During that time she became a friend of Madeline Rees George; apart from their educational interests both women had in common a strong devotion to the Church of England.[74]

Caroline Jacob later described how the school she had wished to direct changed hands and then disappeared, to her 'very great regret'. However, she said that 'Tormore House School in North Adelaide became the object of my ambition', and she was ready to take it up when the owners, the Misses McMinn, relinquished it.[75] The name Tormore commemorated their father's Irish birthplace.

Tormore House under Caroline Jacob began on the following stated principles:

> We endeavour from the very beginning to cultivate habits of observation, steady application, and thoroughness, while teaching our young people to acquire in as pleasant a way as possible the elementary knowledge which opens to them the doors of the enchanted palace ... Within the limits of their school career we look for the time when the University primary, junior and senior examinations will be passed by the fourth, fifth and sixth classes respectively as the natural termination of the year's work. [76]

This statement, from an early Speech Day report, should be set in the context of the advertised aims of the school, which in fact was managed by both Caroline Jacob and her sister Annie, formerly a teacher at the Unley Park School who specialised in French.[77] However, Caroline Jacob

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72. University of Adelaide, Calendar, 1879, pp.lxxvii, 31. Caroline Jacob gained a credit in each of the four University subjects for which she sat, the first being chemistry in 1879.

73. Teachers' records, op. cit.

74. Report of Bishop's Home Mission Society, List of subscriptions and donations, Year Book of the Church of England Diocese of Adelaide 1897-1904 inclusive, 1913-14. Both women gave regular subscriptions.

75. Register, 20 December, 1898, 10g. The Misses McMinn had the school for fourteen years. Formerly a Miss Hammond had kept it.

76. Register, 21 December, 1900, 3a

77. Register, 18 December, 1897, 4g

was dominant, Annie Jacob being more like a trusted assistant. Their initial advertisement for the school contained promise of nothing but academic work for students. It was repeated at least eight times, mainly in Saturday editions of the Register, as follows:

> Tormore House
>
> Boarding and Day School
>
> At Christmas the Misses McMinn will resign Tormore House to the Misses JACOB who have had more than ten years' successful experience in preparing candidates for the University Examinations - Miss C. Jacob at the Advanced School, Miss A. Jacob in private schools.
>
> Address Miss Jacob 183, Archer-street, (sic) North Adelaide. [78]

Making no concessions to non-academic attractions, the two sisters began building up a successful school, initially in the house used by their predecessors. At their first speech day it was clear that a variety of subjects were taught, and not only those for University examinations; prizes were also given in music, singing and painting, together with essay prizes, for which Madeline Rees George and two other Advanced School mistresses judged the winners,[79] illustrating the friendship and co-operation between the women teachers. By 1900 the advertisement for the school had been reduced to the following:

> Tormore House Childers Street North Adelaide
> Principals the Misses Jacob
> Classes preparing for the University examinations
> Preparatory class for boys under eight. [80]

There was no necessity for detail, as the school had become well known.

A serious attitude to academic work characterized Tormore throughout its existence. Caroline Jacob was 37 when she took over the school. Her philosophy of education had been shaped by her own background and training and her experience at the Advanced School where Madeline Rees

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78. Ibid., 13, 20, 27 November, 4, 11, 18, 21, 23 December, 1897

79. Ibid., 20 December, 1898, 10g

80. Ibid., 18 December, 1900, 10d

George's dedicated, well-organized approach influenced many teachers and students who went on to other schools. As Caroline Jacob herself said at the end of her 1900 report:

> I desire to express my gratitude to Miss George and Miss Maughan, my former chief and comrade in the school where I taught for many years. I learned so much from them that I have been able to put into practice since I came to Tormore School. 81

The influences of the older school on Tormore are clearly evident in a number of areas.

It is fortunate that some records of Tormore survive. These include copies of the school magazine, The Tormorean, from 1900 to 1917,[82] minute books and papers of the Tormore Old Scholars Association from its foundation in 1900 to its close in 1977,[83] and some fragmentary official school papers, as well as Jacob family papers.[84] It has also been possible to obtain information in interviews with a number of old scholars [85] and in conversation with others.

Tormore was a private venture concentrated into 22 years; it is not proposed to look beyond 1915, five years before the school closed in 1920. In 1898 the initial enrolment was 44; by Easter of the same year

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81. Ibid., 21 December, 1900, 3b
82. Deposited in South Australian Collection, SLSA
83. Deposited in SASA;SRG196. Seen while in possession of Tormore Old Scholars' Association (1976)
84. In possession of Miss Nora Jacob, Adelaide
85. Of these, three are nieces of Caroline Jacob, two of whom were at Tormore as students and teachers. Mrs Caroline Durdin (née Williams) and Mrs Katherine Geytenbeek (née Jacob) both nieces of Caroline Jacob and teachers at Tormore, Miss Lyndall Morris, Miss Norah Bleechmore, Miss Amy Humphris, Mrs Muriel Brown (née Day), Mrs Marjorie Trott (née Eyre), Mrs Dorothy Angove (née Clare), Miss Nora Jacob, niece of Caroline Jacob. These interviews took place between 1971 and 1979. Some people were seen several times, and the writer attended the final Old Scholars' meeting in October, 1977 and spoke informally to other old scholars.

there were 60 students and by June 80 girls were enrolled.[86] By the end of the first year the numbers had outgrown the buildings. Caroline Jacob purchased an acre of land in Childers Street, North Adelaide, where a single-storey classroom building and two-storied boarding house were erected, designed for 100 pupils and 20 boarders.[87] These numbers were exceeded, and at various times nearby houses were rented to cope with extra boarders, kindergarten children, and middle school girls. A third Jacob sister, Nellie, acted as housekeeper, while their widowed father Mr Jacob lived at the school and planted trees and flowers, making a pleasant garden.[88] A tennis court was laid out in the grounds.

Some evidence exists regarding the social background of students attending Tormore. A few loose pages of an admission register contain some entries for 1902, 1904 and 1914, and all entries for 1903.[89] In that year there were 49 new enrolments, including sixteen girls from South Australian country centres. New students included girls from as far afield as Kooringa, in the north of the state, and Norfolk Island. Among the 1903 intake were Phyllis McGlew, who later became professionally well known as a doctor under her married name Lady Cilento,[90] and

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86. Register, 20 December, 1898, 10g
87. Ibid., 21 December, 1900, 3a
88. Information from Miss N. Jacob and Mrs K. Geytenbeek (née Jacob) 1977. The importance attributed to a school's physical surroundings is illustrated by an advertisement for the girls' school 'Yoothamurra' at Glenelg which, it was claimed, was in a 'healthy situation', had grounds of five acres, and offered the possibility of sea bathing. Register, 19 December, 1914, 26b
89. The register is set out almost exactly as that of the Advanced School, except that parents' occupations are not included; those mentioned here are known from various other sources. In possession of Miss Nora Jacob.
90. She began her medical course in 1912.

Paquita Delprat, daughter of Guillaume Delprat, general manager of the Broken Hill Proprietary Company. She married geologist and Antarctic explorer Douglas Mawson in 1914.[91]

Tormore, then, appealed to families of some financial and social standing whose daughters might earlier have attended the Advanced School, or might possibly, in some cases, have been taught by governesses, like those Adelaide children

> who were escorted everywhere by nurses in grey uniforms, children who were ... educated by governesses and tutors. [92]

Some students can be identified as daughters of farmers, doctors, public servants and merchants.

The school offered scholarships to girls attending Church of England primary schools; one was offered in 1906, and two from 1907 onwards. These were each tenable for three years and acknowledged gratefully by the Church.[93] In building up a close relationship with the Church, Caroline Jacob not only followed her own faith but hoped to strengthen the school's basis. At the first speech day the Bishop of Adelaide commended her work[94] and daily prayers, weekly scripture lessons and visits from the rector of Christ Church, North Adelaide became established parts of the school's routine. Boarders worshipped at Christ Church, and extra-curricular activity was frequently concerned with fund-raising for Church missions, both home and foreign, in which the headmistress had an intense interest.[95] The Bishop of Adelaide, on

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91. Two of her sisters were also students at Tormore.

92. McGuire, Frances Margaret, Bright Morning The Story of an Australian Family Before 1914, Adelaide, 1975, p. 85. In 1896 a Governesses' Institute existed in Victoria Square, Adelaide, South Australian Directory, 1896.

93. Year Book of the Church of England, op. cit., 1906-7, p. 257, and succeeding years to 1915-16.

94. Register, 20 December, 1898, 10g

95. Caroline Jacob was appointed to the Council of the Adelaide Diocesan Missionary Association in 1913. Year Book of the Church of England, op. cit., 1913-14, p. 194

his country visits, recommended Tormore to families with daughters,[96] and in at least one advertisement Tormore was described as 'a Church of England girls' school'.[97]

The religious aspect of the school showed some similarity to English girls' schools, and Caroline Jacob hoped for much firmer bonds with the Church, speaking on several occasions of her wish for Tormore to be perpetuated as an incorporated school,

> with an enthusiastic board of Governors able to find the funds necessary to develop the School and to place it on a permanent footing making it as Mrs Harmer wife of the Bishop of Adelaide once kindly said 'the Cheltenham of South Australia'. 98

This never eventuated, and the school had to continue as a private venture where all the financial risk lay with the headmistress. She hoped for gifts and endowments, but there is no evidence of these, and it is obvious that practically all her resources were ploughed back into the school.[99]

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96. Information from Miss Lyndall Morris.

97. Register, 16 December, 1911, 18b. When the Tormore Old Scholars' Association disbanded in 1977, remaining funds were used to erect a plaque in Christ Church to commemorate the boarders' weekly worship there.

98. Caroline Jacob, Presidential address to Old Scholars' Association, 1913. Jacob papers, op. cit., p. 15. Mrs Harmer herself attended Cheltenham and was a friend of Miss Beale. Chivers, R.R. The Benham Family in Australia, Black Forest, 1970, p. 22. Caroline Jacob's approaches to the Diocese of Adelaide to take over the school ended in stalemate. Dr A. Grenfell Price wrote in 1962,
    > No-one today can or should allot the blame, but it was a tragedy for South Australia, and for later generations of Adelaide women, that a strong minded prelate and a strong minded headmistress failed to come to terms, and sent to the stake, a grand and successful enterprise.

    Angove, D., Tormore A Tribute to Caroline Jacob from the Tormore Old Scholars' Association, Adelaide, 1962, p. 5. Enquiries to old scholars and to the Church of England Diocesan office have failed to identify the difficulties between Caroline Jacob and Bishop Nutter Thomas.

99. She told her old scholars,
    > Much can be done for a School by a careful management of the fees paid for the pupils but public schools [in England] owe much to gifts from sympathising friends, to ancient or modern endowments and to shareholders who lend money at a low rate of interest.

    Presidential address, 1913, op. cit., p. 17

The school's creation was the work of a single woman, who with her family's moral and physical support, had the driving motive of improving girls' education and making it similar to that of English girls' high schools.[100] Like many of these, Caroline Jacob opened her school to girls of all ages, and in the junior years to boys, so that children of a family could begin at the same school. She also opened a kindergarten class and encouraged at least one of her students on leaving school to become a foundation student of the Adelaide Kindergarten Training College in 1907.[101]

Her over-riding interest was in higher education, in guiding students to extend themselves intellectually so that they could leave Tormore prepared to enter the University, and thus her efforts at the junior levels were directed towards forming a foundation for this purpose. She was not unrealistic, however, and this aim was frequently tempered by the capacity of students and aspirations of the parents. She pioneered co-operation in Adelaide between school and parents by introducing school diaries, in which a record of homework set, time spent on it, and fortnightly marks were entered and signed weekly by the student's parents. Through examination of several surviving diaries, it is possible to see the classroom organization.[102] These diaries belonged to a student at the level of second and third year secondary school in the lower fifth and fifth classes. The subjects taught included no 'extras', i.e. none which were optional and charged for. The subjects were: English, French, Latin, arithmetic, history, geometry, botany,

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100. In 1910 when addressing the Old Scholars' Association, Caroline Jacob referred to the 'forging [of] fresh links in the chain which connects us with the famous High Schools of England'. Ibid., 1910, p. 2

101. Interview with Mrs Marjorie Trott, loc. cit.

102. 'Fortnightly Report of Marks Gained and Record of Lessons Set', three diaries of Mary Adams, 1910-11, Jacob papers, op. cit.

physiology, drawing, singing, physical culture and scripture. These twelve subjects were divided among 30 class periods, of which the first for the day occupied an hour, and the remainder were of either 30 or 40 minutes' duration. In addition to the 30 class periods weekly, homework set at both fifth form levels was expected to occupy two hours on five nights weekly, four or five subjects being covered each night.[103]

It is clear that at Tormore House academic work was regarded very seriously. The school filled a need in this regard, and although it was achieving similar standards at public examinations to the Advanced School, it did not duplicate that school. Instead, it was a complementary institution, offering a similar academic syllabus but in addition providing aspects which were outside the scope of the Advanced School; for example, physical culture and scripture. Again, considerable emphasis was placed on French at Tormore, for it was a fashionable language, in keeping with European and English practice and in some families was regarded as a necessary part of education. While all Tormore students learned a verse of the Bible daily, the sixth form learned theirs in French.[104]

Within the curriculum another difference, in addition to scripture, was the inclusion of physical culture, which became a strong feature of Tormore from late 1908. Until then Tormore, like the Advanced School, had used the peripatetic Herr Hugo Leschen to teach calisthenics;[105] his father before him had also taught at a number of schools including the Advanced School. At Tormore however, the change to the new physical

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103. Ibid.

104. Both Caroline Jacob and her sister Annie were competent French teachers. Their mother had been a governess in France and had taught her children the language. Information from Miss Nora Jacob, loc. cit. The time allotted to French exceeded that for any other subject in the diaries of Mary Adams, op. cit.

105. Hugo Leschen was engaged in 1903 'to come over once a week before breakfast' to conduct a calisthenics class for boarders. Tormore report, 1903, held by Miss Nora Jacob.

culture lessons resulted from a personal decision of the headmistress, which she did not have to justify to any other authority. The considerable expense involved in the construction of a gymnasium hall fitted out with suitable equipment was covered by a gift from Caroline Jacob's aged father. Opened in December, 1909, it was a handsome building containing all the necessary gymnastic apparatus and 'finished with electric light of which we are all very proud'.[106]

The calisthenics master was not required after 1908, because an English physical education mistress, Miss Loxdale, was engaged. She introduced the new Swedish method of physical culture,[107] an innovation which, with the hall, added to Tormore's stature, making it more comparable to the South Australian vision of English schools, especially as sport was also encouraged. Whereas the Advanced School was limited to tennis, Tormore not only played that game, competing for the first time against the former school in 1900, but also began hockey in 1901, cricket soon after, and later, rowing in fours and eights on the Torrens.[108] Boarders had all to take a brisk daily walk, as Caroline Jacob regarded physical fitness as essential.

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106. Ibid. A photograph of about 1910 shows girls in gym tunics and bloomers spreadeagled on the rib-stalls around the walls and exercising with horizontal bars. Original held by Miss N. Jacob.

107. Tormorean, May 1908. The new mistress,'a fair-haired, rosy-cheeked Amazon' introduced 'many innovations, including the bean bag'. 'Talk Given by Mrs Milne Gibson (Ethelwyn Scammell)', typescript, n.d., Tormore papers, op. cit., p. 2

108. Ibid. Cricket had been played first by school girls at the Unley Park school as early as 1897, when the headmistress commented on the boarders:

> 'the girls are well and happy, enjoying cricket and tennis and their studies as healthy girls should'.

Register, 15 December, 1897, 9g

Although the curriculum at Tormore was not unlike that of the Advanced School at secondary level in the majority of subjects taught, the class sizes were different. It is possible to make some comparison of the two schools in this regard. In 1903, a photograph of the Advanced School's sixth class in French shows 29 students, while a reading lesson to the combined second and third classes shows 28 students.[109] In both classrooms accommodation appears to have been for about 30 students. The staff numbered seven, apart from the headmistress, and there were 113 students enrolled.[110] At Tormore, on the other hand, where the enrolments were 150, the proportion of staff to students in 1910 averaged one to fifteen.[111] Caroline Jacob described this as 'an allowance generally considered extravagant', and disclosed that at the Unley Park School, which she still ran, the proportion was even higher, being one to seven, with a total of 50 pupils.[112] She had employed a larger number of staff, 'owing to my having been unable to undertake any regular teaching myself'.[113] Madeline Rees George also did little or no teaching in the latter years of the Advanced School, being concerned with administration.[114]

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109. The Critic, 9 May, 1903, p. 14

110. SAPP, 1904, 44, Report of the Minister Controlling Education, p. 32

111. Tormore House Report, 1910, op. cit., p. 1

112. Ibid.

113. Ibid. Caroline Jacob noted in 1914 that a proportion of one to ten was 'a delightful but wholly unbusiness-like state of affairs'. Tormorean, December, 1914

114. Interview with Mrs Marjorie Oldham, loc. cit.

Therefore parents who sent their daughters to Tormore found a number of advantages, including smaller class sizes. In addition, a child could spend her entire school life at the one institution, entering at primary or even kindergarten level; the curriculum was designed to ensure continuity, and the traditional behaviour and learning patterns built up during the student's school life strengthened the corporate spirit which became a feature of Tormore. One scholar who began there at seven years of age has described how

> ... my whole interests for the next 10 years were absorbed in school - its learning, sports and my school friends ... I have the fondest memories of my old school. All I have done and learnt since was based on those 10 formative years. 115

The advantages of a primary and secondary school combined were necessarily outside the scope of the Advanced School.

Similarly, the latter had no boarding house, even though certain provisions were made for a small number of country girls.[116] But such arrangements lacked the stability and educational possibilities of the Tormore boarding house, with its specially-built accommodation set in a pleasant garden. The house-mistress supervised home lessons in addition to taking boarders on field excursions and to plays, concerts and lectures.[117] The following Table shows numbers of Tormore boarders who were present for group photographs:[118]

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115. Lady Cilento, in National Times, January 31 - February 5, 1977, 36a. The writer, in 1977 still a practising doctor at the age of 81, has devoted much of her life to practical and research work in medicine and social welfare.

116. For example, in 1899 the Misses Merrett in Angas Street, Adelaide, boarded about twelve Advanced School girls who were closely supervised and who walked to school together and to either a Methodist or Church of England service on Sundays. Interview, Mrs Mercy Bennett, loc. cit. See also Chapter II, pp. 89-90 above

117. Angove, D., op. cit., p. 12

118. Photographs held by Miss Nora Jacob, loc. cit.

Table VIII: Tormore boarders photographed

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1903 | 20 | 1907 | 28 |
| 1905 | 21 | 1909 | 37 |
| 1906 | 15 | 1910 | 33 |

The boarders were given particular consideration academically at Tormore, for in 1909 a special class was formed for about twenty of them who had not been able 'to obtain the same advantage of education as girls living in town'. Instead of taking all the usual class subjects some boarders devoted time to dressmaking, cookery, painting and elocution, subjects that would be of use to them 'in their after career', which was usually a return to their country homes, followed by marriage.[119] In 1914, boarders were doubtless studying similar subjects, but they were called 'domestic science' by then in an advertisement for the school.[120]

Field excursions were part of the routine of those day students who studied botany and geology; and sometimes these coincided with those arranged for boarders.[121] One of the characteristics of Caroline Jacob's approach, her ability to select good teachers who remained for long periods, is demonstrated by her choice of a teacher of botany and physiology. This woman, Ellen Benham, B.Sc., who had begun her education at the Kapunda model school, was a former student of the Advanced School and the University of Adelaide and had taught at her old school and at Dryburgh House. She joined the Tormore staff in 1900, and while on her second tour abroad in 1909 she gained the Oxford Diploma of Education, taught at Winchester High School, and visited other schools.[122] Her

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119. Tormorean, August, 1909

120. Register, 19 December, 1914, 26h

121. Angove, op. cit., p. 12

122. Jones and Morrison, Walford, op. cit., pp. 14-15; Tormorean, passim.

appointment also demonstrates the network of influence which spread from the Advanced School to private schools in Adelaide.[123] In addition to her school employment Ellen Benham was Lecturer in Botany in the University of Adelaide from 1901 to 1912, and an acknowledged authority on Australian plants.[124] At all girls' schools, both state and private, there was considerable emphasis on various art subjects. At Tormore, drawing and painting were taught to pupils at all levels by visiting mistresses. The two best remembered by past students were Miss Overbury, who also visited the Unley Park school, and Miss Rosa Fiveash, an outstanding botanical illustrator.[125]

By using well-qualified staff, and by its Church of England emphasis, Tormore was able to hold its own against Methodist Ladies' College; in fact there was room for both schools as the benefits of sound academic education became more widely recognized and an increasing number of parents were attracted to the newer schools. Caroline Jacob found it impossible to continue with the Unley Park school after 1910. For three years she had managed both schools, having closed the Unley Park school boarding house, by the expedient of riding a bicycle the four and a half miles between the two schools several times weekly.[126] Her effective control is described by a student who attended at Unley Park, and in 1910 at the age of thirteen moved to Tormore.

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123. In 1912 Ellen Benham purchased Walford School, formerly the Collegiate School for Girls, Malvern, South Australia. She proceeded to build this up on similar but smaller lines to Tormore, making use of her English experience. She died in 1917. Jones and Morrison, op. cit., pp. 14-17

124. University of Adelaide, Education Committee, Minutes, 1901-1912, and Registry files for Ellen Benham 1901-1912. See also Australian Dictionary of Biography, v. 7, op. cit., p. 261.

125. Information from Miss N. Bleechmore, Miss L. Morris and Miss N. Jacob, loc. cit.

126. Information from old scholars and Scammell, op. cit. The physical education mistress also rode her bicycle between the two schools 'in her gym tunic! - which we considered very odd'. Ibid.

She wrote:

> My own most outstanding recollection of the 3 years in which Miss Jacob held Unley Park School, was of a class-room door quietly opening, and the august figure with its halo of white hair, standing framed in the doorway, motionless, but for her eyes, which took in every movement of the class. 127

Her methods of control had been learned over many years. As a younger woman she described her technique in an article on Sunday school teaching for the Church of England Review.[128] Caroline Jacob recognized the necessity for teacher training, a feature which was often absent from the qualifications of private school teachers. With the co-operation of Alfred Williams and the Principal of the University Training College, Adolf Schulz, she began a practical training programme for her teachers, who learned their theoretical subjects at the Training College. She gave her staff both individual tuition and regular group tutorials in the art of teaching and encouraged them to study at the University. Several also went abroad to study in their special subjects.[129]

It was not until 1912 that Caroline Jacob herself was able to take an educational tour, when she consolidated her links with the English Head Mistresses' Association to which she had been admitted as a Correspondent in 1910.[130] She met many leaders in English girls' education and visited a number of schools, Cheltenham Ladies' College having a special impact on her as being close to her ideal.[131] Both before and after this visit she adopted certain English girls' school practices at Tormore including a motto, Aspice Finem and a schoolbadge and hat

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127. Ibid.

128. C. Jacob, 'Practical Teaching', The Review, 1 March, 1891, pp. 6-7. Cutting in Jacob papers, op. cit.

129. Angove, op. cit., p. 10; Tormore House report, 1910, op. cit., p. 5

130. Ibid., p. 2

131. Angove, op. cit., p. 13

band, in 1910.[132] On her return she abolished afternoon lessons in order to give her teachers more leisure and to eliminate the necessity of evening homework, which instead was undertaken as preparation at school in the afternoon.[133]

Before Caroline Jacob's visit to England, and probably as a result of her admission as Correspondent to the Head Mistresses' Association, she had initiated a similar body in Adelaide. The minute book of the Adelaide Head Mistresses' Union between 1910 and 1915 indicates that she played a major role in its activities.[134] For the first few years the meetings were held at Tormore, and Caroline Jacob became foundation president. The secretary was Edith Hübbe, and there were approximately twelve members. The earliest business dealt with was representation of the Union on the Public Examination Board.[135]

It is significant that at the first meeting papers were read on Miss Buss and Miss Beale, as pioneers of higher education for English women, and that the secretary read the 1910 presidential address of the sister English association, by Miss Sara Burstall. A minute notes that

> It was most interesting and helpful, for many of the difficulties in Educational matters in England are similar to those we have to deal with in Adelaide. 136

The Head Mistresses' Union mainly devoted its efforts to discussion of University examinations and to drawing up recommendations concerning these.[137] Another matter was a proposed plan for travel-study under the

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132. Tormorean, August, 1910. Navy blue and white were adopted as the only colours to be worn at Tormore in 1911, making it the earliest Adelaide school to prescribe uniformity of dress. Angove, op. cit., p. 10

133. Ibid., May, 1913

134. Headmistresses' Union, Minute book 1910-15. In possession of Headmistresses' Association of South Australia.

135. Ibid., 29 November, 1910. The Union carried on some of the functions of the defunct Teachers' Guild and Collegiate Schools' Association.

136. Ibid.

137. Ibid. Also, 2 June, 1912, 2 June, 1913, 17 June, 1915

League of the Empire. It is possible that Madeline Rees George, who belonged to the Union, introduced this proposal; it does not appear to have led to anything practical.

At Tormore the active patriotism popular at the Advanced School was also practised. Empire Day was celebrated on Queen Victoria's birthday, 24 May. It began with Tormore students in the early morning bedecking Queen Victoria's statue in Victoria Square, Adelaide, with wreaths and ivy; students were 'taught to believe passionately in the honour and integrity of the British Empire'.[138] The day's programme at the school included songs, talks and recitations on patriotic themes.[139] It is perhaps not surprising that when Caroline Jacob tendered her resignation from the Head Mistresses' Union in 1915 she included as one reason, 'As an Association we have done nothing in connection with the War'.[140]

In 1915 there were signs of the beginning of Tormore's decline. Caroline Jacob wrote sadly in her resignation to the Headmistresses' Union,

> Times are altered, and my hopes, so often deferred, of being able to be of real use to the association have now expired.[141]

Her hopes of building a strong association on English lines were impossible of realisation in a city where there were few schools of high

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138. Information from Miss Norah Bleechmore, loc. cit., and quotation from Lady Cilento, op. cit., 36b

139. Tormorean, passim. In 1906 the occasion included a duet, 'Ye Mariners of England', an address on the Empire, and a reading of 'The Charge of the Light Brigade', Ibid., November, 1906

140. Head Mistresses' Union, Minute book, op. cit. Letter dated 13 September, 1915.

141. Ibid.

quality for girls. In 1915 a further blow was the opening in Adelaide of Girton school, whose headmistress wrote to parents of Tormore girls inviting them to enjoy the greater social benefits of her school. In some cases she succeeded, and the fashion for the new school led to reduced numbers at Tormore.[142] Without strong institutional backing its position was then weak.

Throughout the school's existence a high academic standard had been maintained, as public examinations results testify.[143] The prestige of of the school and its popularity depended largely on these results, as well as on the lack of effective opposition and on the stability of the school's organization and the headmistress' reputation, which induced parents to entrust their daughters to Caroline Jacob.

A list of distinguished old scholars compiled by the Tormore Old Scholars' Association reveals the values which the members placed on public examinations.[144] This list was never completed because members had doubts about the comparative elements introduced, and because it omitted many who had been influential in ways impossible to count.[145] Among those included as distinguished are five headmistresses of girls' private schools, five doctors, three artists, three musicians, a social scientist, eight nurses who enlisted in World War I, three missionaries and a deaconess of the Church of England. These women became eminent in three areas: academic, artistic, and patriotic and religious service. Each of these areas was strongly emphasized at Tormore.

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142. Information from Miss Lyndall Morris and Miss Nora Jacob, loc. cit. The Tormorean, May 1915, included the statement that it was 'painful to us to think that any of our girls should prefer to leave Tormore in order to attend a more fashionable school'.

143. University of Adelaide, Calendars, 1900-1916

144. 'Tormore old scholars who achieved distinguished careers', Tormore Old Scholars' Association. In possession of Tormore Old Scholars' Association. (1976)

145. Information from Miss Lyndall Morris, loc. cit.

It is not coincidental that four of the schools considered here, including Tormore, have had their names, or those of their headmistresses, commemorated by their old scholars' associations through the medium of University of Adelaide prizes. These are the Thornber bursary, the Hardwicke prize, the Annie Montgomerie Martin prize and medal and the Tormore prize.[146] Madeline Rees George's name is also given to a University prize in French. Links with universities were seen by old scholars in South Australia, as in England, 'as the natural form of all that is highest and best in education'.[147] This attitude permeated the Advanced School, and through staff and students who entered private schools it was spread more widely. Nevertheless, it was not fully accepted by all schools, and certainly not by all scholars. Even as late as 1910 the headmistress of a private school in the country town of Angaston wrote to the Minister of Education concerning the possibility of a high school for the town, and admitted that although she had entered girls for the Primary and Junior examinations 'whenever possible' in fact 'the parents are generally averse to their entering for it'.[148]

At the same time the schools considered here had other aims for all students, including those not suited to higher academic education as well as for the more able scholars. These aims were both practical and idealistic. As the influential Sara Burstall of Manchester High School wrote:

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146. University of Adelaide, Calendar, 1936. Tormore Old Scholars' Association, Minute book, September, 1921. In possession of Old Scholars' Association Secretary (1977).

147. Burstall, Sara, A., English High Schools for Girls Their Aims, Organisation and Management. London, 1907, p. 11

148. Education Department, CF 1910/348. Annie F. Loutit to the Minister. She was headmistress of Caithness School. GRG 18/1 SASA

> ... the schools prepare girls for work in the world, paid or unpaid, and urge on them the duty of service to the community. 149

Similar sentiments occur frequently in the Tormore records, both those of the school and of the old scholars. Such aims had practical implications in South Australia where a strong tradition of service to the community flourished; some of these implications are discussed in later chapters. Community service was practical, but more intangible was the ever-present and yet often unacknowledged aim, that of 'formation of character'.[150] In the better South Australian schools this was frequently taken for granted and referred to only occasionally. It was the attempted implementation of such an aim, allied with some sound educational practices, which led to the private girls' schools forming a powerful network of social influence. Their impact increased as more women undertook higher education and then moved outside their homes into the wider community.

Because of the paucity of records, it is not possible to establish the numbers who were educated in the private schools at secondary level. Neither is it possible to gauge educational standards exactly. Nevertheless, general assessments of their influence may be made. Those schools discussed above, and especially Tormore, provided opportunities for girls to reach standards of academic excellence, as judged by University examinations at secondary and tertiary levels. Such opportunities were open otherwise only at the state Advanced School until 1908, and after then at a small number of high schools.

The private girls' schools, in addition, gave varied scope for those who did not excel academically and offered sport, music, art and physical education as well as encouraging social responsibility. Their

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149. Burstall, op. cit., p. 11

150. Ibid., pp. 11, 12

highest aim, however, was to educate girls to achieve academic excellence. Caroline Jacob, as one of her most distinguished old scholars said, was the 'strong advocate of advanced education for women'.[151] Other headmistresses were, like her, instrumental in changing the lives of many women. A further means by which their aims were achieved was through the University.

3. The University of Adelaide

In the later nineteenth century the peak of women's hopes in higher education was entry to universities. By the time the University of Adelaide began its classes in 1876 some precedents for the admission of women to British and colonial universities had been established.[152] In some cases women had been admitted to classes, as in the University of London in 1868, and to examinations, but not to degrees, and it was not until the University of London opened degrees to women in 1878 that an influential precedent was set. In Britain it has been claimed that the opening of universities to women was at first 'desired by but few women and was dreaded by most men'.[153]

In South Australia, by contrast, while the former may have been true, there is no evidence of the latter, nor indeed of any but the most amicable male sentiments towards the plan of opening the University of Adelaide to women from its inception. In the debate preceding the

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151. Cilento, op. cit., 36a

152. Women had never been excluded 'with the same rigour' from Continental as from British universities. White, H.M. 'The Position of Women in Universities', paper read at the Congress of the Universities of the Empire, 1912. Report of Proceedings, London, 1912, p. 324. See also Gardner, W.J. Colonial Cap and Gown Studies in the Mid-Victorian Universities of Australasia, Christchurch, 1979, in particular for a study of New Zealand women in universities, where links between girls' high schools and the universities were strong.

153. White, op. cit., p. 324

passing of the University of Adelaide Act in 1874 no discussion occurred on women's admission, and women were not specifically mentioned in the Act.[154]

When University of Adelaide classes opened, in temporary premises in the Training College at the beginning of 1876, there were thirty-three women students among a total of fifty-two. The women, and all but eight of the men, were non-matriculated and therefore ineligible for degrees.[155] The question of degrees for women and of the University's capacity to confer science degrees has been partially discussed in the University of Adelaide centenary history.[156] This account describes the intention of those who framed the University Act to gain both powers, and the warning by the Secretary of State for the Colonies in 1875 to the Governor of South Australia

> of the fate likely to befall any Petition from colonists presumptuous enough to pray for power to confer those two Science Degrees and to confer Degrees on women. [157]

The members of Parliament who had passed the University Act were not opposed to these requests, and the University Council petitioned the Queen in July 1878 to that effect.[158] The Council's composition is significant in this regard, for its members included Hartley, Campbell and Samuel Way, a member of the 1874 Board of Education, a sympathiser

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154. South Australia, Act No. 20 of 1874, 'An Act to Incorporate and Endow the University of Adelaide'.

155. Six of the men had matriculated in Melbourne and two were admitted with *ad eundum* status. *University of Adelaide*, Calendar, 1877, pp. 10, 62

156. Duncan, W.G.K. and Leonard, R.A., *The University of Adelaide 1874-1974*, Adelaide, 1973, pp. 13-14

157. *Ibid.*, p. 14

158. 'The University of Adelaide Centenary', Adelaide, 1974, p. 13a

with Hartley and Campbell, and one who was to be instrumental in founding Methodist Ladies' College. Another Council member was George Hawker, a wealthy pastoralist with a large family of sons and daughters who held an MA from Cambridge and who was to present a petition with 11,600 signatures in favour of women's suffrage to Parliament in 1894.[159]

The University's 1878 petition was not granted, but the Colonial Secretary in a dispatch to the South Australian Government advised that:

> If hereafter there should be a clear and general demand on the part of female students for admission to the degrees of this University, and if in the opinion of the Legislature and the colony it is deemed desirable, taking all things into consideration, that the University of Adelaide should extend the grant of its degrees to women, it will apparently be practicable to meet such requirement by further letters patent. 160

The British Government had withheld immediate consent in order to ascertain the strength of South Australian demand for these innovations which

> contain(s)so considerable a departure from the principles and procedure of the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge, in conformity with which the degrees to be recognized in the Universities of Sydney, Melbourne and New Zealand have been determined. 161

The South Australian Minister of Education who introduced the University Bill in 1879 was Thomas King, the man who was also responsible for advocating the opening of the Advanced School for Girls.

In 1880, when the Adelaide University Degrees Bills was debated it was King who moved its second reading. The Bill was designed to give effect to 'that part of Act no 20 of 1874 which was repealed last session'[162] relating to science degrees, and it was also designed to

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159. See below, Chapter VI, p. 260

160. SAPD (HA) 1879, c. 824

161. Ibid., c. 821

162. Ibid., 1880, 22 June, c. 194

confer degrees on women. By this time the Colonial Secretary was willing to recognize the force of demand for both provisions. King mentioned his own dispatch to the Colonial Secretary whose response includes evidence that the Registrar of the University of Adelaide had drawn his attention to 'the proposed constitution of the two new Universities of Ireland and the north of England'.[163]

King was able, in Parliament, to read the satisfactory response to his request which included a significant reference to 'the strong feeling entertained in the colony and to your recommendations in favour of this renewed application'.[164] Thus the scope of the Letters Patent of the University were to be amended

> so that the Adelaide University may be authorized to confer degrees on women, and that degrees in science granted by that body may be duly recognized. 165

The appropriate legislation met with no Parliamentary dissent and the Bill passed its second reading without amendment. The University of Adelaide Degrees Act of 1880 included provision to admit

> Women who shall have fulfilled all the conditions prescribed by 'The Adelaide University Act', and by the Statutes and Regulations of The University of Adelaide for any Degree at a meeting of the Council and Senate of the said University. 166

It also included the specific injunction:

> In the 'University of Adelaide Act' words importing the masculine gender shall be construed to include the feminine. 167

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163. Ibid.

164. Ibid.

165. Ibid.

166. South Australia, Act No. 172 of 1880, 'University of Adelaide Amendment Act'.

167. Ibid.

The Letters Patent accepting the Act were granted on 22 March 1881, from which date women were admitted to degrees on the same basis as men. Adelaide was then the first University in Australia to provide for the granting of degrees to women.

Thus, with opposition stemming not from local men or women, but only from the British government, South Australia had moved quietly into full acceptance of women at the University. The situation was unlike that of Victoria, where both the University of Melbourne Council and the Parliament, largely on the grounds of propriety, blocked persistent requests for similar equality for women throughout the years 1872 to 1880, until the University Constitution Amendment Act was passed.[168] The relatively smooth passage of the South Australian legislation was due to the sympathetic attitude of members of Parliament and the University Councillors, similar in part to the attitude towards the foundation of the Advanced School; doubtless it reflected something of the standard of education of those involved, their non-conformity and their attitude towards women in South Australian society.

Of those women who entered classes as non-graduating students in 1876, nine passed in English Literature and ten in Mental and Moral Philosophy.[169] Although the first matriculated woman student enrolled in 1881 she did not take a degree.[170] The first woman graduate was Edith Dornwell, who received her degree in Science, the first to be

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168. For discussion of this topic see Zainu'ddin, Ailsa, 'The Admission of Women to the University of Melbourne, 1869-1903', Melbourne Studies in Education, 1973, pp. 50-106. In an earlier study Ernest Scott mistakenly claimed: 'Melbourne was the pioneer Australian University in respect to the admission of women to Matriculation and Arts degrees'. Scott, Ernest, A History of the University of Melbourne, Melbourne, 1936, p. 102

169. University of Adelaide, Calendar, 1877, p. 63

170. Letter from M. Wesley Smith, Academic Secretary, University of Adelaide to Dr Helen Mayo, 4 August, 1960. In records of Australian Federation of University Women - South Australia.

granted, in December, 1885 at the age of 21. At the Commemoration ceremony the Chancellor said to her:

> In your distinguished undergraduate career, and in the manner in which you have taken this degree, you have not only done honour to this University, but have vindicated the right of your sex to compete on equal terms with the other graduates for the honours and distinctions of the University. 171

The Chancellor was Samuel Way, advocate of women's higher education, and he congratulated Edith Dornwell fulsomely, saying that 'No graduate of this University has ever taken a more distinguished degree';[172] she had passed not only her matriculation, but all her subjects, in the first class. Way presented her with tangible proof of his admiration, as the University's annual report for 1885 records:

> In recognition of the satisfactory manner in which Miss Dornwell passed her examinations, the Chancellor presented her with a special prize of twenty guineas. 173

Edith Dornwell's scholastic achievement exemplifies the possibilities for women which could be attained through South Australian state primary and secondary schooling.

She had been advised to begin her course in science by Professor E.C. Stirling who helped and encouraged her throughout. She found no prejudice against her among either professors or students, who, she said,

> '... evinced no objection to the presence of a woman among them, and without exception did their best to make my position easy and comfortable'. 174

Her success, which reflected credit on the Advanced School, doubtless stimulated other women to attempt University work.

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171. Advertiser, 17 December, 1885, 8d

172. Ibid.

173. University of Adelaide, Calendar, 1886, p. 197

174. Hübbe, Rica, 'South Australian Women in Medicine, Law, Arts and Science', in Brown, Louise, et al., op. cit., p. 148

The earliest female graduates in other areas, before 1915, were Charlotte Wright, BA, 1888, Laura Fowler MB, 1891, Florence Campbell Mus. Bac., 1897, Caroline Clark and Ethel Holder MA in 1901.[175] All but Caroline Clark and Laura Fowler, who had attended Miss Martin's school, were former students of the Advanced School. In his address at the Advanced School Speech Day in 1898 the Minister of Education said that fourteen past students of the school had graduated at the University.[176] There was a slow but sure increase in numbers of women graduates.[177]

In 1888 the Reverend J.C. Kirby of Port Adelaide made a survey of women in Australian universities on behalf of the South Australian Women's Suffrage League, which was subsequently published in the English Woman's Review.[178] In answer to one of his questions regarding the standard of women's work, the Registrar of the University of Adelaide replied:

> It is impossible to answer this question accurately without analysing all the class lists from the commencement of the University in 1876, but as a general statement it may be said that they have held their own with the men with whom they have competed. 179

The pass lists certainly confirm his opinion. Kirby's concluding remarks were that:

> The Australian experience favours the belief in the mental equality of the sexes, and that a fair start has been made in the higher education of women. 180

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175. University of Adelaide, Calendar, 1885-1915
176. Register, 23 December, 1898, 6b. In fact thirteen had graduated.
177. Some comments on early women graduates and their subsequent careers are to be found in South Australia's women's centenary history. Brown, L. et al., op. cit., pp. 147-150
178. Kirby, J.C. 'Women and the Australian Universities', English Woman's Review, 20: 7 (July 1889) 292-5. The name 'Dornwell' in this article has been misprinted as 'Domwell'. Kirby read this paper at a meeting held under the auspices of the Women's Suffrage League in May 1889.
179. Ibid., p. 293. The Registrar referred to Edith Dornwell as 'the most brilliant student in the science course up to the present'.
180. Ibid., p. 295

His conclusions in relation to South Australia are relevant to the suffrage campaign for which he was working, and which is the subject of Chapter V below. Increasing numbers of graduates confirm his findings.

Table IX: Women graduates of the University of Adelaide.[181]

| | 1898 | 1902 | 1915 |
|---|---|---|---|
| BA | 4 | 4 | 61 |
| MA | - | 2* | 10* |
| B.Sc. | 8 | 16 | 21 |
| MB BS | 1 | 5 | 14 |
| Mus.Bac. | 1 | 4 | 10 |
| | 14 | 31 | 116 |

* Had been awarded BA as primary degree (not included in BA numbers)

In 1902 there were seven female Associates in Music; in 1915 there were 36. Between the year 1901, when the Honors Degree of Arts and of Science was instituted, and 1915, ten women took that degree in Arts and three in Science, all of the latter taking physiology. In Arts all women graduated in Classics or in Philosophy. The disproportionate increase in numbers of Arts and Science graduates to 1915 is probably related to the lifting of the Regulations which had made Greek a compulsory subject for the Arts degree.[182] Until this occurred, Science was more easily entered by girls, who needed to have special coaching in Greek which was usually not taught in girls' schools.[183] After the change in Regulations, the appeal of the Arts course, which lay partly in women's familiarity with subjects such as English and History that were emphasized in the girls' schools, became dominant.

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181. Extracted from University of Adelaide Calendars.

182. Register, 16 December, 1899, 5a

183. Miss Mabel Hardy described to the writer her struggle to find a coach in Greek. She took her degree two years later than the completion of her University subjects, in 1912, because she had not passed Senior Public Greek until then.

Only one woman, in the period under review, gained the Diploma of Associate in Commerce of the University of Adelaide. She was Katherine Lily Proud, daughter of Cornelius Proud, and a former student of the Advanced School and of Muirden College, a business school. She gained a University scholarship to undertake the course, which was presented only in night classes, and won her Diploma in 1910, meanwhile working at a paid commercial job during the day.[184]

An examination of names of women graduates shows that many became school teachers in the girls' private schools, while a considerable proportion married and may never have taken up a career, as did many who took individual University subjects without graduating. Among the more outstanding women graduates, Ellen Benham has already been briefly mentioned (p. 144 above). She was the first female academic staff member of the University of Adelaide, being appointed Lecturer in Botany in 1902[185] to replace Professor Tate, for whom she had acted as Botany lecturer in 1901 during his final illness.[186] She reorganized the curriculum, introducing field visits, similar to those she conducted at Tormore, and extending the study of native plants.[187] She was an authority on the identification of plants, and was appointed to classify a major collection presented to the University herbarium by the South Australian Government.[188] Her term as lecturer was not extended when a new Professor was appointed at the end of 1912, and she did not apply for the position.

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184. Interview with Mrs Katherine Magarey (nêe Proud).
185. University of Adelaide, Education Committee, Minutes, 14 February, 1902, letter from E.C. Stirling. Ellen Benham appears in a University staff photograph in 1906. The Critic, 11 July, 1906, University of Adelaide Supplement. She is not mentioned in the University's centenary history by Duncan and Leonard, op. cit.
186. University of Adelaide, Docket 1032/1901
187. University of Adelaide, Calendar, 1900-1912.
188. University of Adelaide, Calendar, 1907, p. 333

Another graduate who was appointed to the University staff was Dr Helen Mayo, who became an honorary demonstrator in Anatomy in 1911.[189] She had graduated MBBS with honors, coming top of her year, in 1902. Her distinguished professional career included much work for children in Adelaide, and she was elected to the University of Adelaide Council in 1914, the first woman in Australia to hold such a position, for which she stood at the suggestion of the Women's Non-Party Political Association.[190] She remained Councillor for 46 years.

Helen Mayo was able to build on professional foundations laid by the earliest Adelaide woman medical graduate, Laura Fowler. No barrier had existed in the University of Adelaide, as in so many other places, against women studying medicine. When Laura Fowler gained her degree in 1891, Dr A.A. Lendon, the secretary of the South Australian Branch of the British Medical Association, advised her to apply for membership of the Association.[191] Her application stimulated a campaign to alter the rules which forbade female membership. The battle was fought in both England and Adelaide, and the rules were altered in 1892. Dr Lendon commented that:

> Miss Fowler ... was the immediate cause of women being admitted ... the South Australian Branch may not have been the first Branch to agitate for the admission of women, but it was undoubtedly the strong case made out by our Branch that induced the General Meeting of members at Nottingham to alter their Constitution. [192]

It is clear that there was acceptance of women's status as professionals in the University and in the medical profession. This did not, however, mean that there was full acceptance in every sense.

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189. University of Adelaide, Education Committee, Minutes, May 19, 1914, p. 44

190. Papers of Helen Mayo, PRG 127/6, SASA

191. Lendon, A.A. 'British Medical Association South Australian Branch', n.d. (?1930), p. 6.Typescript A859/A1, SASA

192. *Ibid.*, p. 8

Women at the University shared classes with men but socially there was a conventional separation of the sexes. Some nineteenth-century evidence of formal social co-operation appears in the records of the Adelaide University Lawn Tennis Club. Edith Dornwell was a member of the initial sub-committee appointed in April 1885 to draw up the rules, but was not elected to the subsequent all-male committee. Women became playing members only in 1889 when on their first match the Club minutes noted 'we may indeed be proud of them'.[193] No 'ladies', however, were admitted as full members. In 1899 the University of Adelaide Union elected one woman, Miss Violet Plummer, a medical student, from three female nominees to the committee. Violet Plummer was the sole female among the thirteen men on the committee.[194]

There was apparently a widely-held assumption that men and women students should maintain separate activities outside the lecture rooms.[195] By 1888 the women students had been provided with a room including a fireplace; in the following year the Registrar agreed to their petition for pegs to hang up their cloaks.[196] Gradually, they built up their own social clubs and societies and sought their own accommodation from the University authorities, so successfully that in 1902 the University Council sacrificed its boardroom for the use of women students. A somewhat querulous note in the University Calendar refers to this episode:

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193. Adelaide University Lawn Tennis Club, Minute Book 1885-1891, Warden's office, University of Adelaide Union.

194. University of Adelaide Union, Minute Book, 9 May 1895, p. 10. Warden's office, University of Adelaide Union.

195. Within the lecture rooms, photographs taken at the University in 1906 show the women students seated together. The Critic, 11 July, 1906

196. Finnis, Margaret M., The Lower Level A Discursive History of the Adelaide University Union, Adelaide, 1975, pp. 9, 10

> In consequence of the large increase in the number of women students, great difficulty has been experienced in providing them with a private room ... the Council found it necessary to give up their Boardroom for the use of these students. Even with this, however, the available accommodation is inadequate, and the Council trust that the provision may be made before very long. 197

This separation of the sexes was to be further consolidated by later developments. The foundation of the Women Students' Club in 1909[198] and the Women Graduates' Club in 1914[199] confirm the fact that segregation persisted; this was both a reflection of the separate schooling which had been customary and of contemporary social mores.

In fact, there was also a continuation of the ésprit de corps which had been fostered in some of the girls' schools. This has been demonstrated by the reminiscences of three women students of the years between 1909 and 1914. Miss Mabel Hardy referred to concerts for women only,[200] to the women's common-room 'Sausage teas' and to the co-operative refurbishing of their accommodation. Mrs Millicent Furrer (née Proud) wrote in a similar vein about 'jolly parties' and of being admitted to the 'sacred precincts' of the 'men's Sports Committee' when she became women's representative.[201]

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197. University of Adelaide, Calendar, 1903, p. 313

198. Women Students' Club records. In possession of AFUW-SA. 'Rules' include the Object: 'to promote the common interests of, and form a bond of union between the present and past women students'.

199. Women Graduates' Club, Minute Book, July 1914-1922. In possession of AFUW-SA.

200. She wrote: '... in these we satirized, more or less wittily, the follies of the day, especially those of our contemporaries among the men students. For this performers had to don male attire, hence the "women only" rule'. 'Reminiscences of Mabel Hardy BA - John Howard Clark Scholar, Tinline Scholar', n.d. Typescript p. 4. Copy in possession of writer.

201. 'From Millicent Furrer Proud of Switzerland, "good old Adelaide Varsity"' n.d. Typescript p. 1. She wrote, 'I still treasure my hockey blue and the photos of our team'. Copy in possession of writer.

The third writer, Dr Ruth Mocatta (née Gault), wryly described geology excursions with the lecturer, Mr Walter Howchin, who held the theory

> that men should walk on one side of the road and the women on the other side and that he should be the one to assist the women over the numerous fences. 202

She also made a comment which has wider application to women's higher education in South Australia, saying:

> There were few enough students for one to know nearly everyone, especially the women ... The accommodation was not luxurious but the friendships were very real. 203

In spite of some school and undergraduate segregation, Adelaide's relatively small community of teachers, scholars and others interested in education worked together co-operatively to make provisions for women's higher education.

The intellectual competence of women had been accepted by the founders of the University of Adelaide, and their expectations had in many cases been raised by improved secondary education. Within the span of forty years from the introduction of compulsory education in South Australia, women's education had been greatly altered in breadth and depth. It had been stimulated by individuals and schools in the private sector, while the legislators had supported both secondary and University education for women. Changes had been made by co-operation between men and women, leading to greater equality between the sexes and to a number of wider opportunities. South Australia had opened the University to women from its foundation largely because of the relatively close-knit community which held high aspirations not only for its young men but also for its women.

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202. 'Ruth Mocatta', n.d. Typescript, p. 1. Copy in possession of writer.

203. *Ibid.*

Doubtless many South Australians were indifferent to the issue. That there was not unanimity everywhere is shown by an editorial entitled 'Why Don't the Girls Marry?' in a country newspaper. It stated, in part:

> The higher education of women and their admission and recognition in pursuits of arts and sciences and in higher branches of commercial life, have a tendency towards making girls content with single life, by depriving them of that fear of being burdens to parents that inspires them with the desire of having a home of their own. 204

The writer accepted that little could be done to stem this supposed tendency. Such public comments were, however, rare.

The outlook which had facilitated the higher education of women in South Australia had been expressed as early as April, 1875 by the Chief Justice, Samuel Way. At a conversazione to celebrate the opening of a new term at Union College[205] he spoke of the need, in South Australia, to look beyond economic matters and material prosperity and

> to awaken intellectual activity upon the part of the young, and to do something to train men and women for the fair inheritance which we shall leave for our successors. 206

By 1902 Way had been knighted and was Chancellor of the University of Adelaide; he was also South Australia's Lieutenant Governor and Chief Justice. In that year, at the opening of Methodist Ladies' College, he said:

> I have often thought it one of the most barbarous customs in the world, considering us as a civilized and Christian community, that we deny the advantages of learning to women ... To such whose genius would lead them to it, I would deny no sort of learning. 207

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204. Kapunda Herald, 13 January, 1893, n.p.

205. Union College was the predecessor of the University of Adelaide.

207. Register, 20 December, 1902, 4b

206. Register, 6 April, 1875, 5f

At the time he spoke, the University of Adelaide had awarded degrees to 260 graduates. Of these, only 34, or thirteen per cent had been bestowed on women.[208] But although relatively few had attained this peak of achievement, many had studied at the University without completing a degree, and more had benefited at secondary level from improved higher education. Tentatively, but on a firm institutional basis, the philosophy which Samuel Way expressed was being put into practice in South Australia. By 1915, when 116 women had graduated, the acceptance of women at the University was even more firmly established.

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208. Ibid., Way said that the women graduating were 'always an increasing number'.

# Chapter IV

## Educating Working Women

In South Australia in the later nineteenth and early twentieth century certain groups and individuals adopted educational measures to improve the conditions of working women. These campaigners, like similar people in other countries, succeeded to only a limited extent, but their efforts were important as part of South Australian women's history.

In the context of this chapter working women are taken to be those who worked for payment and do not include women who worked without wages within their homes, on farms or in family businesses. There were several main areas where non-institutional education of working women was attempted. The majority of these women were employed as domestic servants. However, there were only isolated attempts at their education. //
More direct and sustained efforts were made among female clothing workers, beginning with concerted anti-sweating campaigns in 1889. These were directly linked with the establishment of the first women's trade union, the introduction of a female factory inspector and the formation of a further trade union. Finally, the education of working women included that carried out through the organization of girls' clubs and women's self-help schemes, notably the establishment of a women's co-operative clothing factory.

Most education for change among working women was by informal means, and when institutions were concerned their involvement tended to be sporadic. On the whole there was little continuity and few opportunities for structured teaching and learning. Nevertheless, the means by which working women were made aware of their disabilities and potential rights were in fact educative processes.[1]

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1. See above, Introduction, p. 3

As in any wider social movement, the effects of informal education touched not only one section, in this case, the working women. The impact on them cannot be neatly separated from the influence of the educational campaigns on other women and on men in South Australia. There were, however, certain identifiable educational processes which directly involved working women.

1. Domestic Servants

The largest number of female employees in South Australia in the period under review worked in domestic service.[2] The percentage of working women employed in domestic service between 1871 and 1891 remained almost constant, having reached a peak in 1881. By 1911, numbers had fallen to almost half those of 1881.[3] The increase and subsequent decline after 1881 in employment of domestic servants was related both to South Australian seasonal conditions, and thus to the general state of the economy,[4] and also to changing patterns of female employment. These changes involved greater opportunities in manufacturing and commerce which were contemporaneous with increasing disinclination on the part of young women to entering domestic service, for reasons given below.

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2. In 1876 the total number of female domestic servants in South Australia was 6364. SAPP, 1879, 89, South Australian Census, 1876, Part VI, Table III, p. 8

3. Extracted from reports of Census of 1876, 1881, 1891, 1911

4. Fenner, op. cit., p. 95; Coghlan, op. cit., pp. 1548-1562. In 1881 there was a 'land boom' in Adelaide, Ibid., p. 1548.

Domestic service was 'a largely unknown occupation'. Unlike the female industrial occupations, where various enquiries exposed working conditions, domestic service in South Australia, as in Britain, was not officially investigated:

> No Royal Commission investigated it or suggested legislative protection of the worker; no outburst of trade union activity called attention to the lot of servants. 5

Although some beginnings of historical examination into Australian domestic servants' lives and conditions have been made by Beverley Kingston, it has been found a difficult subject because of lack of documentation. It is significant that she called her study of the topic 'The Servant Problem';[6] in fact employers frequently regarded their servants, and their inability to find suitable servants, as a problem. In all Australian colonies newspapers published complaints on the difficulty of obtaining and keeping efficient servants.

Only occasionally did anyone present the servants' viewpoint, although a writer in 1893 who did so referred not to the 'servant problem' but to the 'mistress problem'.[7] The personality, managerial skills and domestic knowledge of the mistress of the house were only some of the factors determining conditions of domestic servants. Others included such factors as geographical location, size and convenience of the house, number of other servants (if any), number in family including number and ages of children, and physical provision for the servant's meals and accommodation. Such conditions varied from reasonable to poor.

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5. Burnett, John, ed., Useful Toil Autobiographies of Working People from the 1820's to the 1920's, London, 1974, p. 135. See also McBride, Theresa M., The Domestic Revolution The Modernisation of Household Service in England and France 1820-1920, London, 1976, pp. 9-10

6. Kingston, Beverley, My Wife, My Daughter and Poor Mary Ann, Melbourne, 1975, Ch. 3. 'The Servant Problem', pp. 29-55.

7. In 1893 the matter was discussed by a clergyman's wife who had employed servants in Australia for 30 years and who had considerable experience both in finding servants for friends and acquaintances of the 'upper class' and also 'in finding places for friends and acquaintances among the lower class'. She concluded that 'good mistresses make good servants'. Evans, Mary Sanger, Domestic Servants in Australia A Rejoinder, 1893, p. 46, 647E ML

Not least in the domestic servant's conditions were the risks inherent in the position of a single woman working in relative isolation. As a Melbourne writer put it in 1902:

> I have always considered this [domestic service] a most dangerous occupation for any but a woman of mature years to follow. It is recorded that eighty percent, or four out of every five, of mothers of illegitimate children are of that class. [8]

In South Australia by the 1880s domestic servants were being 'mainly recruited by immigration'.[9] In 1891 Mary Lee wrote of the colony having 'imported domestic servants in shiploads', these being girls who were 'Inexperienced, untrained, easily led or misled ...'[10] A few days after her comments, Parliament debated a Bill to resume assisted immigration and to 'introduce a considerable number of female domestic servants forthwith'.[11] However, this practice was no longer accepted by South Australia's legislators, one of whom, the Hon. A.A. Kirkpatrick, presented the following picture of the possible fate awaiting such immigrant servant girls:

> In some houses the accommodation provided domestic servants was not so good as was given to a pet dog. He knew a case where a galvanized iron verandah was turned into a bedroom for servant girls. [12]

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8. Blackham, George, Equal Opportunity, Melbourne, 1902, p. 73; Catherine Helen Spence acknowledged a similar tendency in South Australia. Register, 9 November, 1883, 4f
9. Register, 8 November, 1883, 4f
10. Observer, 1 August, 1891, 8d. Mary Lee, born in Ireland in 1821, married George Lee, vicar-choral and organist of Armagh Cathedral, had seven children, was widowed and came to South Australia in 1879 to nurse her son, a barrister, who subsequently died. She remained, throwing her considerable energies into public work, especially the reform of women's conditions. Her first work was with the Social Purity League, then with the Women's Suffrage League and contemporaneously with the Working Women's Trades Union. She became the first female official visitor to the Lunatic Asylums at the age of 76 in 1897 and continued until two years before her death in 1909. Her work with the Women's Suffrage League is considered in Chapter V. Advertiser, 20 September, 1909, 6h; Adelaide Lunatic Asylums, Copy of Minutes from Visitors' Books, 1897-1907, GRG 34, 72, SASA
11. SAPD (LC) 1891, c. 612
12. Ibid., c. 613

The Bill was withdrawn after further debate.

Apart from official immigration arrangements, some interested bodies did their own recruiting. One of these was the Salvation Army which advertised for fifty 'Blood and Fire Lasses' who were cooks, housemaids and in general service, to apply for free passage to South Australia. The advertisement appeared in the English War Cry, on 7 October, 1882. A 'considerable number' of girls reached Adelaide early in 1883 and found domestic situations at once.[13]

The need for such an advertisement may be found in the reluctance of South Australian-born girls to enter domestic service. This is affirmed in 1889 by a Naracoorte man whose household was probably suffering from the strong disinclination of servant girls to take country posts. He maintained that 'colonial girls will rather starve than go out to service'.[14] The weekly Observer newspaper in the following year made a survey of 'leading registry offices' i.e. employment agencies, which confirmed the great demand for domestic servants and the scarcity of girls willing to enter service.[15] All agents agreed that wages had nothing to do with the problem. In discussing various reasons for the situation one agent made the following comment:

> ... girls do not like service, they are getting more independent ideas. I have reason to think that the climate is against them. You see the work is hard as a rule and the climate trying. I have found so many girls failing in health. 16

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13. Sandall, Robert, A History of the Salvation Army, v. 2, 1878-1886, London, 1950, p. 246
14. Register, 18 October, 1889, 6e; an editorial of the same year stated that 'Many a factory girl would be better off in domestic service, but the factory work is thought to be more genteel'. Observer, 21 December, 1889, 17a
15. Observer, 21 June, 1890, 6a, b
16. Ibid., 6a

This practical reason, which does not appear to have been considered by others in public discussion, is undoubtedly valid. South Australia's hot, dry summers would at times have caused almost intolerable conditions for doing tasks such as laundry and kitchen work where hot water and fuel coppers and stoves were used. The geographer D.W. Meinig has described South Australia's heat in these words:

> The long summer drought with its brilliant sunshine and temperatures which soared well past 100°F were a searing experience ... fresh food quickly spoiled ... water vanished into the air, and a spark was a fearful agent of destruction in the brittle-dry countryside. 17

There is in fact scant evidence of girls eager to take up domestic service in South Australia, and the contrary appears to have been the case. Girls and women in the Australian colonies generally showed similar antipathy to the work.[18]

In South Australia, Mary Lee identified the following factors which she believed made domestic service unpopular:

> The spread of education makes the coarse and unreasonable orders given by a mistress extremely objectionable. The hours of work are without end and rest nil. The servant in many cases is treated like an animal. 19

Another South Australian woman, Mrs Agnes Milne, a shirtmaker, gave more specific reasons for the common dislike of domestic service, stating to

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17. Meinig, D.W., op. cit., p. 16
18. A Melbourne factory girl in 1903 wrote:

    > for a girl there are only two things open, either to go out to service or work in a factory. Her ideas of service are of the drudgery type. She has only seen the unmethodical style of housework as done in her own home, and she has heard tales of tyrannical mistresses ... Therefore, of the two evils she chooses what seems to her mind to be the lesser.

    Jennie Thomson (One of the Toilers), 'A Letter from a Factory Girl', New Idea, 1 March, 1903, p. 621
19. Observer, 1 August, 1891, 8d

a Royal Commission in 1892 that she would not recommend any girls to go into domestic service, for they 'suffered grievances' including the fact that

> the food is all locked away except at certain hours. Then they have no time for recreation except one Sunday every fortnight and one evening after 8 o'clock. 20

The voice of the servants themselves was seldom heard. One Adelaide domestic servant, though, who signed herself 'A sufferer' wrote a letter to the Labor newspaper the Herald in 1899, in which she pleaded,

> Is there no one in this city of churches Christian enough to take up the cause of servants? ...
> The cause of shop girls is before the public and why not servant girls? Because the domestic comfort must not be interfered with ... 21

No correspondent replied to her. However, there were some who interested themselves in the cause of servants. One solution to poor conditions was believed to be training for service and a consequent up-grading of status. In 1883 Catherine Helen Spence made a reference to an earlier suggestion for a 'training school for Servants'.[22] Mary Lee, however, believed that the word 'servant' was 'objectionable' and should be replaced by 'help' or 'assistant', and that the 'golden rule' should apply between mistresses and servants.[23] Similar idealistic themes were taken up by Jane Doudy in her novel Growing Towards the Light, which was set in Adelaide of the 1870s. She advocated a domestic training institute for servants to qualify them to work in 'day brigades' when they would be known by the title 'maid'.[24] Her ideas led to no action.

A solitary practical move towards training domestic servants was begun by the Young Women's Christian Association in 1905. Mrs Rose Birks, the president, set up a house at the seaside suburb of Semaphore

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20. SAPP. 1893, 37, 'Report of the Shops and Factories Commission Together with Minutes of Proceedings, Evidence and Appendices', para 4306.
21. Herald, 23 September, 1899, 7c
22. Register, 28 February, 1883, 6a. Nothing more is known of this.
23. Observer, 15 August, 1891, 8d. She referred to the principle 'Do as you would be done by'. Concise Oxford Dictionary, 6th Ed., 1976.
24. Doudy, op. cit., p. 298

where business girls and women could take holidays, and domestic servants from the age of fourteen years would be trained while waiting on them.[25] The venture appears to have failed, as no mention of it is made in reports of the Young Women's Christian Association.

Edith Devitt, the Education Department's Domestic Economy instructor, also had an idealistic solution. She told the Women's Non-Party Political Association in 1911 that domestic servants' conditions would be righted if 'instead of learning domestic work haphazard women would learn it by long training'.[26] The desire for such training, as the Education Department and School of Mines results showed (see Chapter I above), was certainly not evident among many South Australian girls and women.

Some girls, however, had little choice but to enter domestic service. These were the wards of the state who came under the control of the Boarding-Out Society and its successor, the State Children's Department. Having been brought up in foster homes, i.e. 'boarded-out', they left school at the compulsory level, when they were usually thirteen or fourteen years old, and they were then sent by the Society or Department into service. Their knowledge of domestic work was what they might have gained in their foster homes. It was expected that employers would train them further.

Their foundation knowledge appears to have been sketchy in many cases, for a frequent complaint was that

> the girls do not receive the training for domestic service in the little houses in which they are boarded out. [27]

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25. Rose Birks had planned the venture for twelve years, since the time she had been closely associated with Mary Lee in the suffrage campaign. Australian Woman's Sphere, 3: 31 (March 1905) 290b

26. Women's Non-Party Political Association, Minutes, 19 July, 1911 SRG 116 SASA

27. Spence, Catherine Helen, State Children in Australia A History of Boarding Out and its Development, Adelaide, 1907, p. 42

Although some foster mothers performed in many instances 'more than their bond', a problem lay in their own facilities, for 'the cottage homes could scarcely train for service in a well-to-do household'.[28] In spite of the fact that there were a significant number of female state wards entering service,[29] and that at least on one occasion 'a considerable number' were re-admitted to the Industrial School for some 'slight and absolutely necessary training',[30] no organized attempt was made to impart training to the girls before they began their new jobs.

Apparently the state rested on the achievement of the more efficient foster mothers and those who, as employers, trained 'hundreds of girls' who became

> first rate cooks, housemaids, laundresses, and, perhaps, still more, that fine product of Australian conditions, good 'generals'. 31

The 'general' was praised in 1908 as a 'wonderfully capable' maid of all work by Catherine Helen Spence when she addressed women workers at a Trades Hall meeting.[32] The traditional method of in-service training was effective when capably and humanely carried out; as Catherine Helen Spence warned:

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28. Ibid.
29. In 1894, for example, there were 118. SAPP 1894, 94, 'Report of the State Children's Council for the Year ending June 30, 1894', p. 6
30. Ibid., p. 5. Catherine Helen Spence explained that the term 'Industrial School' was a misnomer, for it meant only 'the receiving house or depot'. Spence, State Children, op. cit., p. 101
31. Ibid., p. 43
32. Spence, Catherine Helen, 'Papers', n.d., p. 255, MSS202/4, ML

> if ladies want to keep girls out of factories, where they have definite hours, free evenings, Saturday afternoon and all Sundays, they need to do something more than talk and declaim. They must try to make the 'place' as much of a home as possible. 33

She asked the impossible, for the solution depended on many individuals and there was no institution to work on the servant's behalf.[34] The isolation of these workers and their very close personal contact with employers made improvement difficult.

Problems relating to domestic servants were never approached in an organized manner in South Australia, and partly for this reason they remained intractable. No union was formed, and thus when isolated instances of poor conditions came to light, no organization was responsible for their improvement. Indeed, as late as 1908, a South Australian member of Parliament, W.D. Ponder, claimed that domestic servants were in some cases 'treated worse than slaves'.[35] In 1910 similar words were used by the Premier, Mr John Verran, who held an ambivalent attitude towards the welfare of domestic servants. On the one hand, he claimed to have seen women 'practically slaves as servants', while on the same occasion he said that 'we would have better womanhood if we had less factory women and more domestic servants'.[36] Verran's confused view was commonly held. There was an expressed desire among many people for an ideal situation where the majority of women, suitably adept and efficient, would be happily occupied at domestic tasks in their own or in other

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33. Ibid.

34. Attempts were made, unsuccessfully, to organize domestic servants in Victoria and New South Wales, Kingston, op. cit., pp 51-3

35. Newspaper cutting, n.d. UTLC Minutes, 1 May, 1908. Microfilm SRG1 SASA

36. Verran was receiving a 'large deputation of ladies' requesting a supply of domestic servants from Europe when he made these remarks. Register, 15 December, 1910, 5f

people's homes. Such a situation did not occur, and by 1912 the scarcity of domestic servants was affecting daughters of families who would normally employ servants. This fact was apparently the cause of some students leaving the Kindergarten Training College in 1912, when the College annual report explained that

> The dearth of maids means that so many girls have to give up their ideal of a career and help with the housework. 37

It is in this context that the educational campaign to improve conditions of women in industry should be seen, for it was widely believed, firstly, that they should not be working outside their homes, and secondly, that tasks undertaken within their homes should not be subject to any kind of regulation. There was in fact reluctance at official level to accept their paid non-domestic service occupations and to come to terms with their needs.

## 2. Women in Industry: Conditions and Reforms

The area of women's work which stimulated the most intense educational campaigns was that of clothing manufacture. With the introduction of machinery into the clothing industry in South Australia in the late 1870s and 1880s larger-scale market forces became dominant over the older small-scale manufacture and trade. 'The women's industry',[38] clothing manufacture, moved largely from home to factory as in all industrialized countries,[39] these shifts of workers coinciding with a breakdown of the old apprenticeship system and of the 'one man one

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37. Kindergarten Union of South Australia, Annual Report, 1912-13, p. 10

38. Stearns, Peter N., Lives of Labour Work in a Maturing Industrial Society, London, 1975, p. 36

39. Ibid., p. 59

garment' principle.[40] The production processes in factories and workshops, where labour conditions were frequently poor, became very specialized.

Although women in South Australia were also employed in bootmaking, printing, tobacco-making and other factory trades, this study is directed towards women in clothing manufacture for two reasons. Not only were the majority of women in industry employed there,[41] but also important legislative changes, following several educational campaigns, first occurred in connection with clothing trades. The legislation, involving regulation of wages, was the earliest of its kind in South Australia and was later extended to other industries. The conditions of women in the clothing industry are therefore to be considered in conjunction with educational campaigns for their improvement, for these conditions were crucial to the campaigns and to the subsequent reforms.

In 1875 the earliest survey of South Australian manufactures and industry was published, when J. Conigrave, using the Town Clerk's report, listed 576 women among the 2139 people employed in factories in Adelaide.[42] He did not differentiate by sex those employed in particular industries, but later evidence suggests that women would have been found mainly among the 1048 people involved in making clothing, boots, and shoes.[43] This assumption is supported by Harcus, who wrote of Adelaide in 1876 that

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40. Cadbury, Edward *et al.*, *Women's Work and Wages*, London, 1908, p. 88. Women working in tailoring, for example, were not permitted to cut out garments. Most were employed at buttonholing and at felling, which included all work put in by hand after machining. *Ibid.*, p. 101.

41. This is substantiated by Reports of Factory Inspectors from 1895, following the appointment of a female Factory Inspector. See *SAPP*, 'Reports of Factory Inspectors', 1895-1915.

42. Conigrave, J., *op. cit.*, p. 5. Conigrave was chairman of the South Australian Chamber of Commerce. Figures are not available for those employed outside Adelaide. There was at least one woollen mill, at Lobethal, employing women outside the metropolitan area. Harcus, *op. cit.*, p. 123

43. *Ibid.*

> The manufacture of slop goods[44] has also become an important industry of late years, employing great numbers of young women. 45

Absolute numbers of women in the factories were not high; the 576 mentioned by Conigrave comprised only .5 percent of the total South Australian female population in the 1876 Census when the number in domestic service comprised 6.2 percent of all females.[46] By 1891, however, the number of women in factories had increased to 9,423 or 1.5 percent of the total South Australian women. While the proportion in domestic service had altered little, moving only to 6.1 percent in 1891, those in factories had trebled.[47] Together with the unknown numbers of women employed as out-workers in their homes they formed an increasingly large group which was industrially very significant.

Although women had become established in industry and were employed in factories by 1875, many remained only briefly, and this situation complicated any attempts at organization for improving their conditions. The female worker's often-transitory commitment to her trade may have been for only a year or even a few months; and as in England the South Australian working woman was frequently 'a bird of passage', leaving her job on marriage.[48] In South Australia, another factor hindering organization was the overcrowding of the market.

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44. 'Slop' is ready-made or cheap clothing. Concise Oxford Dictionary, op. cit.

45. Harcus, op. cit., p. 123

46. SAPP, 1879, 89, South Australian Census, 1876, 'Occupations of the People'

47. SAPP, 1894, 74, Ibid.

48. Routledge, Florence (with Lady Dilke) 'Trades Unionism Among Women', The Fortnightly Review, 189, New series (1891) 749. See also Observer, 21 December, 1888, 17a for an editorial which refers to the many women in South Australia working with their needles 'to tide over a temporary difficulty'.

Many women worked at home, doing sewing tasks for payment; there were also small home workshops where one woman employed others in a room of her house. Some women worked individually or as a family, usually on piece-work for factory owners or middle-men. Another large group was the dressmakers who operated on differing scales, ranging from individuals to large establishments with various grades of employees. The ready supply of women able and willing to sew, especially in times of depression, led to low rates of pay, for most women had the basic skills necessary for sewing tasks. It is not clear, until surveys began in the early twentieth century, how many women worked in their homes as outworkers.[49] They were, however, a very significant group, for they became the centre of public attention from about 1889 when their sweated conditions were exposed.

The problem of 'sweating' attracted attention in South Australia as it did in various industrial countries.[50] It is important in this study because it was through campaigns against sweating that women workers, in addition to the general public, were educated to recognize possibilities for improving their status and conditions. Exact

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49. Factory Inspectors' Reports from 1889 give some statistics based on numbers actually known to the Inspectors; these refer to females working in a place where fewer than six people were employed. In 1901 they were designated 'outworkers', and counted officially.

| Female outworkers | |
|---|---|
| 1898 | 1900 |
| 374 | 678 |

They were employed in dressmaking, tailoring and shirtmaking. SAPP, 1899, 96, p. 6; 1901, 69, p. 6. Reports of Inspectors of Factories.

50. See, for example, PP, 1890, 'Select Committee of the House of Lords on the Sweating System', Fifth report, 1890. For comparative British and Australian conditions see Rickard, John, 'The Anti-Sweating Movement in Britain and Victoria The Politics of Empire and Social Reform', Historical Studies, 18: 73 (October 1979) 582-597.

definition of the term 'sweating' as used in the later nineteenth century is difficult, for its meaning appears to vary, and it was often used as a catch-cry to cover various industrial ills. In South Australia, the clearest exposition of sweating is to be found in the Chief Factory Inspector's Report of 1899. He wrote:

> ... sweating refers to persons who undertake to perform certain services for a stated sum, but in reality get a third person to do the work at a much less amount, and pocket the difference without doing anything towards earning it. 51

The Report added that sweating seemed to cover a very wide field as applied to poorly paid workers:

> Generally speaking ... the term 'Sweating' is applied to all work performed at such a poorly paid rate that the amount which can be earned by reasonable effort is not sufficient to support the worker decently. 52

This general summary appears to include most uses of the term in South Australia and is that accepted in this study.[53] Sweating was not confined to women, for men and boys, particularly in the boot-making and furniture trades, were also involved. But it arose especially in the South Australian clothing trades, in which most workers were women,

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51. SAPP, 1899, 96, 'Report of Inspector of Factories', p. 5

52. Ibid.; Coghlan emphasized in relation to a Royal Commission in Victoria in 1873 that no distinction was made 'between sweating and homework', op. cit., p. 2088

53. In the same Report the Factory Inspector gave an interesting historical explanation of the term:

    > It [sweating] appears to have been borrowed from the practices of the money-sweaters of bygone times, who, by shaking gold pieces in a leathern bag, managed to rub off a portion of the metal, and were still able to pass off the pieces at full value.

    A modern definition of sweating is 'To employ (labour, workers) at starvation wages for long hours under poor conditions'. Concise Oxford Dictionary, op. cit.

following the imposition of an increased protective tariff on raw materials and imported clothing in 1887.[54] This led to intense competition between clothing manufacturers to cut prices of locally-made garments, and the competitiveness was made keener by the use of powered sewing machines in factories and workshops. In order to increase output, some factory owners gave out work, in the form of cut-out garments, either to their own employees to complete at home or to a middleman who then contracted with home workers to complete the garments. The rates of payment in the latter case lay entirely in the middleman's hands. These rates declined between 1887 and about 1905,[55] until there was no incentive for any but the most desperate to accept outwork. The cause of the lowered wages lay not only in the particular years of general depression throughout much of this period, and continued competition between merchants who attempted to cut back costs, but also in 'bargain-hunting' by shoppers.[56]

The dressmakers and milliners who worked at home usually employed assistants who were frequently exploited. Young girls were taken on as 'learners', often receiving no wages, and assisted with various tasks ranging from running messages, sweeping floors and sewing on buttons, to fine hand-sewing and machining of seams. These girls were often dismissed after several months, even after as long as a year, as 'unsatisfactory'.[57] For example, a girl who was employed in 1896 in Miss Lynch's

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54. In August, 1887, a 25% ad valorem duty was imposed on 'Apparel and slops', Shops and Factories Commission, op. cit., paras 5040, 5782-3

55. In this year wage regulation was beginning and the introduction of electric machines in factories made the home work no longer competitive. See below, pp. 195-6

56. See for example, SAPP, 1897, 54, 'Report of the Inspector of Factories', p. 4

57. The practice of not paying learners was an established one. In examining women's work in London from 1820-50, an historian described the custom of respectable dressmaking and millinery houses charging a premium of £30-£50 for girls to become apprenticed for two to five years, and then to be 'improved' at a further fee in a better quality establishment. Alexander, Sally, 'Women's Work in Nineteenth-Century London A Study of the Years 1820-50', in Mitchell, Juliet and Oakley Ann, eds, The Rights and Wrongs of Women, Harmondsworth, 1976, pp. 84-5

dressmaking establishment in Flinders Street, Adelaide, has described her experiences in an interview in her old age. Catherine Riddaford, aged fifteen, went to work of her own volition, being an orphan with a small annuity who wished to learn dressmaking. She was one of seven apprentices who ran messages, oiled and cleaned sewing machines and tacked seams. These girls were taken on for eighteen months and not paid during that time. At the conclusion, only the best were kept on to be 'improvers', the remainder being dismissed.[58]

Although their abilities varied, most women could use needle and thread and had at least some knowledge of the various kinds of stitches and seams.[59] This common background ensured a constant supply of labour, varied in skill and in specialized knowledge. The garments made at home, for payment by factory owners or middle men, were usually shirts, trousers, coats and vests and 'white work', which included women's and children's underwear.[60] Most garments required the use of a sewing machine and women often bought machines on weekly terms which added to their pressing need of gaining regular wages.[61] Some women worked only for pocket-money, adding to the competition.

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58. Information from Mrs Catherine Strapps, loc. cit.

59. In the 1904 Legislative Council enquiry into the 'Alleged Sweating Evil' a clothing manufacturer stated that he paid 4/- per week at the start of a girl's employment. He said, 'It is all very well to say they have to learn. They have learned to sew at school and the sewing they do for you is work for you'. SAPP, 1904, 71. Report of the Select Committee of the Legislative Council on the Alleged Sweating Evil Together with minutes of Proceedings and Evidence, para 1602

60. SAPP, 1889, 96, Report of Inspectors of Factories, p. 5.

61. Shops and Factories Commission, op. cit., p. V, para 3h

The actual conditions under which some women worked in the clothing trades emerged at public meetings and in commissions of enquiry. These are important as they disclose the background against which educational campaigns were mounted. Sweating conditions have been investigated in Victoria, in England and the United States and other countries; South Australian material provides confirmatory evidence. A substantial body of source material exists, containing evidence of conditions, including 'sweating' in the clothing industry, and of means by which these conditions were improved. This evidence is found in the following:

(1) Royal Commission into Shops and Factories, 1892[62]

(2) Report of the Select Committee of the Legislative Council on the Alleged Sweating Evil, 1904[63]

(3) South Australian Parliamentary Debates[64]

(4) Annual Report of South Australian Factory Inspectors from 1895[65]

(5) Records of the United Trades and Labor Council[66]

(6) Newspapers and other sources.

Conditions among women workers and the responses of public-spirited citizens, through campaigns mounted to overcome the injustices, ran on a similar pattern to those in other places. Because much of the sweated outwork was performed on informal bases within private houses by individuals, very sustained effort was required to bring any kind of regulation to the procedures and to legislate for these. Many barriers were raised by merchant interests and the proponents of laissez-faire within the South Australian Parliament, and the legislation was delayed by these forces, especially in the Upper House, the Legislative Council.

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62. SAPP, 1893, 37 Report of the Shops and Factories Commission, op. cit.

63. SAPP, 1904, 71 Report of the Select Committee of the Legislative Council on the Alleged Sweating Evil, op. cit.

64. SAPD, 1899-1915

65. SAPP, Reports of Inspectors of Factories, 1895-1915

66. UTLC Minutes, 1889-1915, op. cit.

The earliest occasion on which working conditions of women in the clothing trades were publicly discussed was a meeting in the Adelaide Town Hall, supported by the Mayor, and arranged by a committee which was working to found a women's trade union. The meeting, held on 13 December, 1889, was designed to discuss the 'sweating system' and to further the cause of a women's union.[67]

Among the speakers who addressed the large audience were a clergyman, a member of Parliament, a clothing manufacturer, a tailor, and other members of the public.[68] The significance of the meeting lay in the publicity which it accorded the issues, in the wholehearted support the meeting gave to women workers, and in the successful motion to found a women's trade union which will be considered later. Most of the speakers were men, their concern clearly illustrating the strong social awareness which some Adelaide people frequently displayed.[69] Two speakers in particular supplied evidence based on careful observation. The Reverend J. Haslam, a Methodist, had undertaken what he described as an 'honest, straightforward, methodical investigation', taking particular care not to go about his enquiries 'clandestinely', but visiting factories, workshops, city shops and private houses where sewing work was done.[70] He summarized the various kinds of clothing manufacture in Adelaide, dividing them into three main groups:

(1) Large factories which engaged in wholesale manufacture and gave out some work. Here he had examined wages books and established that apprentices usually began at 2/6 per week, progressing to 10/- and

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67. UTLC Minutes, 29 November, 1889. See below, p. 197, concerning the union.
68. Observer, 14 December, 1889, 31a, b, c, d
69. See for example, Barbalet, M., The Adelaide Children's Hospital 1876-1976, Adelaide, 1975 p. 23, and Hirst, J.B., Adelaide and the Country 1870-1917 Their Social and Political Relationship, Melbourne, 1973, p. 46
70. Observer, 14 December, 1889, 31b

on completing their apprenticeship earning from 12/- to 35/- per week working 'the regular hours'. Overtime was not encouraged, and if work was let out from these factories, it was, he claimed, generally from kindly motives, and if the wages earned were smaller than in the factory it was because the workers had not the advantages of the factory or were inferior workers.[71]

(2) Large establishments where the proprietors worked up the whole material to a certain extent but let it out to workmen[72] in the subsequent stages. This was the main area of abuse. Haslam pointed out that one woman might accept more work than she herself could do and she might then give it out to assistants who received a rate of wages which enabled the first woman to make a profit. This rate to third parties averaged 10/- a week 'which was abnormally low'. Haslam had been told by a woman who accepted work from a workshop that 'the workers have themselves to thank for the low rates'.

(3) Small establishments where the work was done in its entirety, the material being supplied by those for whom the work was undertaken. A small quantity was given out to the workers themselves to complete at home. This could also provide opportunities for abuse.

Valuable corroborative evidence was supplied at the meeting by Dr Allan Campbell who was then a member of the Legislative Council. In the course of his medical practice he visited patients' homes, where he noticed the effects of sweated labour. He cited a case he had seen the same day, describing in some detail the work done in the household where

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71. Ibid.

72. He almost certainly is referring to women, for he comments that women who received such work 'did not occupy their whole time working for the shops but did their housework in addition'. Ibid.

several members of the family 'were trying to earn a living'.[73] A young woman who had been at work 'for several years' made flannel shirts from nine o'clock in the morning until one or two a.m. next morning, earning 2/6 for the dozen shirts she could complete in that time - less the cost of the sewing cotton, which she had to find. The information which Campbell presented in his speech is set out below.

Table XI: Home Workers' Wages, 1889[74]

| | Cost of material | Workers' Wage | Wholesale Price |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Flannel shirts - per dozen | 1s. 6d | 2s 6d | 24s 9d |
| 2. Flannel pants - per dozen | 4s 6d - 5s 0d | 3s 0d | 27s 6d |
| 3. White shirts - per dozen | not stated | 3s 6d | 21s 0d |

Campbell did not state retail prices. The flannel pants took twice as long to make as flannel shirts, and white shirts took three times as long, involving double seams and greater care in ironing and folding. The family which Campbell described had 'known better days' when they themselves had given out shirts, paying 8/- a dozen for flannel and 12/- a dozen for cotton shirts.[75] Here lay one of the chief problems with outwork - the forcing down of prices, apparently through competition among outworkers for jobs at any price.

The 1889 meeting, which was reported in the daily newspapers, served to publicize formerly unknown conditions. A tailor described how

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73. Campbell's evidence has been published in Jones, Helen, 'Women at work in South Australia, 1889-1906', Journal of the Historical Society of South Australia, 2 (1976) 10, 11

74. Extracted from Campbell's evidence, Observer, 14 December, 1889, op.cit.

75. Observer, 14 December, 1889, 31b

his employer gave him more work than he could do alone and he was 'made to have little girls to help him' - this presumably was in the master's premises. He claimed that:

> The larger establishments were killing girls before they came to maturity. Some of the Rundle-Street people had put little girls to work in cellars under gas light and only that day two had to be carried away home. 76

While not refuting the tailor's evidence, a manufacturer claimed that competition between manufacturers was the cause of sweating and that 'The majority of them to save sixpence would walk up and down Rundle-street to get it'. On the other hand, a spokesman for the large retail firm, J. Marshall and Company, maintained that his firm 'did everything to avoid anything approaching sweating'. They did not believe in over-time and neither did they pay starvation wages; they would 'gladly pay a higher wage if possible but could not provide work for all who came for it'.[77]

Both causes canvassed probably lay at the root of sweating - as did the mechanization of sewing at home with machines, and the general state of the economy where widespread unemployment existed and where women

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76. Ibid., 31d

77. Ibid. This speaker blamed tariffs on raw materials for unemployment, believing that if these materials were admitted free 'the surplus labour could be employed making up these goods'. A retired manufacturer, Matthew Goode, had used a similar argument in a letter to the Register on the day preceding the meeting. He blamed protective tariffs for sweating and also bargain hunters 'beating the seller down in price'. Register, 13 December, 1889, 7g. This latter argument was raised again in the Report of the female Inspector of Factories for the year 1896 when she wrote:

> I am of the opinion that it [sweating] is in a great measure the fault of the workers themselves, who clamour for cheap bargains, not caring how little their fellow workers get for their work.

SAPP, 1897, 54, 'Report of the Inspector of Factories', p. 4

with young children preferred to work at home rather than in factories or at domestic work for others. The disputed causes were not, however, to be vanquished easily, and although a woman's trade union was formed (see below, pp. 197-8) no official action resulted for over a year, until July 1891, when Sir John Bray introduced a Shops and Factories Bill into the House of Assembly.[78] The Bill was modelled on the 1885 Victorian Factories Act (which in turn was basically similar to the British Factories Act of 1878, with some extended provisions). Bray's Bill stimulated extensive debate; some members became emotional when the issue of female labour was discussed, quoting Hood's Song of the Shirt[79] and Elizabeth Browning's Cry of the Children. One member claimed that girls should not be in factories at all, but 'in some more healthy

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78. SAPD, 1891 (HA) c.575, 691-6. Bray was present at the foundation of the women's trade union in January, 1890.

79. Thomas Hood's poem, The Song of the Shirt, was written in 1844 in England. It became very popular and was often quoted in relation to shirtmakers' conditions. The first verse ran:

    With fingers weary and worn,
        With eyelids heavy and red,
    A woman sat, in unwomanly rags,
        Plying her needle and thread, -
            Stitch! stitch! stitch!
    In poverty, hunger and dirt,
        And still ... with a voice of dolorous pitch,
    She sang the 'Song of the Shirt'.

    Imitations of the poem were published in the Adelaide paper the Weekly Herald twice in 1896 on December 18, 7a, and on October 30, 7a when a writer using the pseudonym 'Christian Evangel' published a melodramatic poem, 'The Widow Seamstress'. Elizabeth Barrett Browning's Cry of the Children expressed her indignant passion at the plight of child labourers; the first stanza includes the lines:

    Do you hear the children weeping, O my brothers ...
    They are weeping in the playtime of the others,
        In the country of the free.

calling',[80] an argument common in industrialized societies. Bray's Bill failed, but after intensive debates the Playford Government in 1892 appointed a Commission of Inquiry into Shops and Factories which confirmed the poor conditions under which many women laboured at sewing tasks.[81] Some evidence from the Commission is presented in Appendix C. Witnesses gave both factual information and their own emotional responses to the problem of sweated labour. For example, Agnes Milne, herself a shirtmaker, who was to become influential in women's industrial affairs, included the following statement in her evidence:

> ... a woman told me she was making a good thing, and had been for years. She takes work and sweats the flesh and blood off the girls. I saw them working in a little tin room in her back yard, 12 x 6 x 10 feet. There were four girls working there, and just above their heads was an iron roof. The girls told me they had been there all the summer. Every one looked as though they had just come from the grave. 82

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80. SAPD (HA) 1891, C. 696. This plea was repeated in South Australia in letters to newspapers and in Parliamentary debates for many years. The matter had been raised as early as 1878 in a debate of the Adelaide Young Men's Society when a speaker suggested:

    > that hours of labour in the factories should be shortened so as to give young women time and opportunity to qualify for wifehood &c.

    His opponent in the debate claimed, 'as a result of extended observation and experience' that young women in Adelaide factories 'making clothing &c'

    > are highly respectable; and that their moral and physical interests are most carefully guarded and secured by the management of factories in this colony'.

    Journal of the Adelaide Young Men's Society (1878) 6

81. SAPP, 1893, 37, Report of the Shops and Factories Commission, *op. cit.*

82. *Ibid.*, para 4071

Such evidence played a part in publicizing conditions and in educating women workers to recognize conditions like these as intolerable; much of the Commission's proceedings were reported in the newspapers.

In making their Report, the Commission was divided on the issue of sweating. Three Commissioners filed dissenting Reports; however, the majority Report included this statement:

> Women are chiefly the victims of sweating. Factory work with its greater liberty, attracts many, and is generally preferred to domestic service. It is in connection with the work given out that sweating chiefly exists. [83]

This problem of female sweated labour continued for some years in spite of public alarm at the disclosures. Some benefits for women workers flowed from the much-delayed Factory Act in 1894 which eventually followed the Commissioners' Report.[84] Under the Act all workshops employing six or more had to be registered, and a female factory inspector was to be appointed to inspect all registered premises where women and young people under sixteen years were employed in the city and metropolitan areas (see below pp. 204-5). There was no regulation of wages; however, hours were set at 48 per week for women and young people. The many female outworkers employed in groups of less than six, or working individually, gained no benefits from the Act, and individuals and groups continued working to publicize their conditions and to educate both the working women and the general public to press for reforms.

In 1896, Lucy Morice addressed the newly-formed Woman's League[85] on sweating among women clothing workers, and her evidence was cited in

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83. 'Report of the Shops and Factories Commission', op. cit., 6

84. South Australia No. 603, 1894 Factories Act, and 'Regulations under the Factories Act 1894', ordered to be printed June 6, 1895.

85. See below, Chapter VI

Parliament by Labor member Thomas Price.[86] The substance of Price's speech concerned declining prices paid during the previous three years for Government uniforms and men's clothing. The information he gave is tabulated below, indicating appreciable lessening of wages in the clothing industry.

Table XII: Wages paid for Government uniforms[87]

| | 1894<br>1st Year of contract | 1895<br>2nd Year of contract | 1896<br>3rd Year of contract |
|---|---|---|---|
| Railway frock coat | 12s 7d | 11s 1d | 10s 8d |
| Double-breasted coat | 6s 4d | n.a. | 5s 6d |
| Sac coat | 3s 11d | 3s 3d | n.a. |
| Railway vest and trousers | 1s 9d | n.a. | 1s 6d |

Table XIII: Wages paid for clothing at David Murray's factory[88]

| | Former price (n.d.) | 1896 price |
|---|---|---|
| Tweed trousers | 1s 5d | 1s 0½d |
| Vests | 1s 7½d | 1s 3½d |
| Sack (sic) coat | 3s 4d | 2s 11d |

There was little hope of improvement in the competitive trade conditions without regulation of wages; the only other hope of some control was through public knowledge and discussion of the inadequate wages. Periodically, this occurred when newspapers took up an anti-sweating stance.

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86. She had quoted the price paid in Adelaide for making a coat with five pockets as two shillings, and the fact that a seamstress was paid only one shilling and six pence for the complicated task of making a pair of police trousers, striped, with a hip pocket. SAPD (HA) 11 November, 1896, c. 717

87. Ibid., c. 716

88. Ibid., c. 717

While factory conditions had begun improving as a result of the appointment in 1894 of a female Factory Inspector (see below pp. 204-5 ) the outworkers' situation remained weak and often desperate. Those interested in their plight ranged from churchmen and unionists to such an influential figure as Lady Tennyson, the Governor's wife, who discussed 'the terrible sweating situation' with the Premier, Charles Kingston, and with the female Factory Inspector, Agnes Milne, in July 1899.[89]

Members of the public took further educational measures when an Anti-Sweating League was formed in July 1900.[90] The League was initiated by the United Trades and Labor Council, with clergy and members of Parliament co-operating. The President was the Methodist Reverend Brian Wibberley, and the objects of the League included the following:

> To eradicate and prevent the evil known as sweating, by the education of the public mind and conscience in relation to a just and equitable payment of labour, and by advocating and securing effectual legislation. [91]

Men and women of varied backgrounds and political opinions enrolled as members.[92] This body, together with unionists and the Kingston government, publicized examples of sweating in order to instruct the public in abuses which were occurring, as a basis for reform. A Factories Act Amendment Bill introduced by Kingston in the House of Assembly in 1900 met opposition in the Legislative Council, where the conservative majority caused it to be altered in important details, confining its provisions to the city, and depriving Wages Boards, to be introduced for four classes of workers only, of the powers of regulating hours of labour.[93]

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89. See below, Appendix C
90. UTLC, Minutes, 23 November 1899, 30 March, 6 July 1900
91. Herald, 23 June 1900, p. 9c
92. Ibid.
93. UTLC, Minutes, 21 December, 1900

Legislative improvement did occur for shop assistants who were also exploited, and whose long hours led to accusations of sweating against employers. The Early Closing Act was passed in December, 1900, but again the Legislative Council restricted its provisions, failing to agree to modifications protecting women and children, although the Act did grant a weekly half-holiday and most businesses chose Saturday for this break.[94] Kingston's Labor government had thus begun restrictions on the 'free enterprise' economy, but the most unfortunate, ill-paid and susceptible group, female outworkers, were still not subject to legislative control. The sporadic educational campaigns designed to asssist them were inadequate.

Opposition to industrial control continued; the Chamber of Manufactures, for example, urged suspension of the Factories Act and withdrawal of the regulations 'to allow the whole question of Factory legislation being referred to the Commonwealth Parliament', hoping that this new body would be more lenient towards them.[95] The Legislative Council continued to block regulations made under the Factories Amendment Act, and this action stimulated the United Trades and Labor Council to set up a 'Standing Deputation to Religious Bodies' which campaigned vigorously.[96] Each Deputation member tried to obtain information from girls employed in clothing factories; when successful they passed this on to the major church organizations[97] including the Anglican Synod, the Congregational

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94. The shop assistants 'celebrated their first taste of freedom on Saturday afternoon by a monster picnic to National Park. The procession of drays, wagonettes and other vehicles was the largest and most imposing ever seen in Adelaide'. Ibid.

95. Ibid., 10 August, 1901. It had not then become clear whether, under the Constitution,the Commonwealth had power to act in such an area.

96. Ibid., 24 April, 1903. The aim was 'to wait on the religious denominations at their annual gatherings to bring under their notice the grievances of the working classes'.

97. Ibid., 25 June, 1903

Union, the Methodist Conference and the Presbyterian Assembly, which all responded sympathetically. In 1904, the Congregational Union began a series of winter addresses in the Stow Lecture Hall on 'The Church and the Sweating Evil'.[98] And such bodies as Adelaide literary societies discussed the issue.[99]

It was extremely difficult for unionists and churchmen to gain evidence of sweating, but under Parliamentary pressure, the Legislative Council appointed its own 'Committee of Enquiry into the Alleged Sweating Evil' in August, 1904, and this body was able to extract sufficient evidence to conclude that

> sweating ... exists to a considerable extent, particularly in regard to female labour in the manufacture of wearing apparel. [100]

Their findings were strongly supported by the 1904 Report of the female Inspector of Factories, Agnes Milne, who voiced exasperation at the delay in wage control.[101]

Eventual relief for the tense situation came when the Legislative Council accepted its own Committee's Report in 1905. Subsequent regulations applied to all workers including workshop, factory and outworkers in certain industries. These regulations were applied through elected Boards, the first being the Clothing Board,[102] followed in 1906 by 'Shirtmaking and Whitework' and 'Dressmaking and Millinery'.[103]

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98. Ibid., 17 June, 1904
99. Ibid., 29 July, 1904
100. SAPP, 1904, 71, Report of the Select Committee of the Legislative Council on the Alleged Sweating Evil, op. cit., p. 5
101. SAPP, 1905, 89, Report of the Chief Inspector of Factories, p. 2
102. UTLC, Minutes, April 7, 1905; UTLC Half Yearly Report and Balance Sheet to January 31, 1906, p. 6. Four representatives of employers and four employees were on each Board. UTLC, Minutes, October 1889-December 1915
103. Ibid., and UTLC, Minutes, June 15, 1906

The Boards set about their work on determining wage structures, and although they did not cause the immediate elimination of sweating,[104] they provided the official basis for changes in rates paid. Almost simultaneously, the introduction of electrically-powered sewing machines in clothing factories made home workers almost redundant, as the electric machines were much faster.[105] Thus technological changes added support to the halting educational campaigns which led finally to legislative changes. Wages regulation in South Australia had begun as a direct result of these educational moves.

3. Female Trade Unions and Factory Inspectors

Among working women, the women's union movement acted as a strong educational force, as did the appointment of female factory inspectors. Both of these provisions arose from the publicity surrounding sweating. The unions opened the opportunity for women to organize for their own ends, to learn what was possible and to teach other women outside the unions that short-term views of wage-earning were unlikely to result in improved standards. The earliest South Australian women's trade union began in 1890; the first female factory inspector was appointed in 1894. Women's industrial organization was a parallel development with the women's suffrage campaign, and it is significant that the person who first publicly moved that a women's union should be established was Mary Lee, secretary of the Women's Suffrage League.[106] The suffrage,

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104. The UTLC appointed a Sweating Evidence Committee in July, 1906 to keep watch on the matter. UTLC, 'Minutes', July 13, 1906

105. SAPP, 1904, 71. Select Committee on the Alleged Sweating Evil, op. cit., para 4099. The manager of G. & R. Wills clothing factory gave evidence of an electric machinist turning out 100 to 104 pairs of ordinary trousers per week. The earliest electrically-powered sewing machine was introduced in Adelaide in February 1903, in the Women's Co-operative Clothing Factory (see below, p. 220). Gas and steam powered machines had been used previously.

106. Observer, 14 December, 31d. See Appendix D for her letter, 'Why should women form trade unions?'

considered in the following chapter, was, like the unionization of women, central to the women's movement. Although women's unions were initially numerically weak in South Australia their significance lies not only in numbers, but in the very fact of their existence which symbolized hope for their members. Like their counterparts elsewhere, they worked actively to educate women and had some success in practical achievements.[107]

At the public meeting to consider sweating in December, 1889, Mary Lee proposed:

> That this meeting requests the United Trades and Labor Council of South Australia, in conjunction with a committee ... to take immediate steps to form female Trade Unions in all branches of industry where the sweating system exists. [108]

The resolution was accepted, the United Trades and Labor Council having at earlier meetings discussed such a proposal,[109] and the union was formed at a further meeting of about a hundred working women and thirty men, held under the chairmanship of the president of the United Trades and Labor Council in January 1890.[110] Here, the Reverend J. Haslam moved the formation of a 'Women's Trade Union'; this was seconded and passed unanimously. A provisional committee appointed to draft a code of rules consisted of Mrs Mary Lee, Mrs Augusta Zadow, Mrs Agnes Milne, Mrs Hitchens and Mrs Ellis, with Mr M.W. Green of the United Trades and Labour Council acting as secretary *pro tem*.[111] The union was named the

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107. In Britain, female delegates had been sent to the Trades Union Congress since 1875. Routledge, *op. cit.*, p. 747. In Victoria, the Tailoresses' Union had begun as *early* as 1882. Heagney, Muriel, Papers 1162/6 (b) p. 4, Latrobe Library. In New Zealand, a Tailoresses' Union began in 1889. Grimshaw, Patricia, *Women's Suffrage in New Zealand*, Wellington, 1972, p. 7

108. *Observer*, 14 December, 1889, 31d.

109. *UTLC*, Minutes, 4 October, 18 October, 15 November, 1889

110. *Observer*, 18 January, 1890, 35b

111. *Ibid.*, Green read a letter from the Secretary of the Victorian Tailoresses' Union concerning organization.

Working Women's Trades Union; its records have apparently not survived, and therefore details of its organization and history are fragmentary.

Beginning as a mutual enterprise by both men and women, the union had the unqualified support of the United Trades and Labor Council. Its members were women in the clothing trades; one or two men were involved initially in the executive and co-operation between male and female unionists is apparent from an examination of the Minutes of the United Trades and Labor Council, where the women were accepted as an integral part of the union structure of South Australia.[112] This friendly relationship appears to contrast with the Victorian situation; there, it is claimed, women's unions were weak, 'given their subordinate status and their accepted role as supportive and protective of the men's union'.[113] The strength of the women's union lay not always in numbers, but in the quality of the support which its faithful members gave and in the respect which it elicited in the community. Apart from some slighting remarks concerning the union made by a female witness before the 1892 Shops and Factories Commission,[114] there appears to be no evidence that the union caused antagonism among either employers or the general public. There is no evidence either that the women's union was subordinate to those of the men at the level of the Trades and Labor Council meetings and annual conferences. Again, there is no evidence of strike action or threats by the women unionists in the period under review, but substantial evidence exists of persistent pressure by the Working Women's Trade Union members and their executive to improve conditions by education and negotiation.[115] Possibly the stability and

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112. UTLC, Minutes, October 1889-December, 1915, op. cit.
113. Kingston, op. cit., p. 51. It is not clear which men's union is meant.
114. Shops and Factories Commission, op. cit., paras 5631, 5775, evidence of Mrs A.E. Larsen, owner of the shirtmaking workshop known as the 'Beehive' at Bowden.
115. UTLC, Minutes, op. cit.

acceptance of the union was related to the wider issue of women's comparatively secure legal status in South Australia, and after 1894 to their relatively advanced political status with the granting of the franchise. In the affairs of their union, women acted responsibly and their aims were accorded respect, although they had to fight for their implementation. Women in public life in South Australia appear to have been taken seriously; this was because of the essentially independent, voluntary settlement of the colony which attracted free-thinkers who respected women's intellectual capacity. For many years Catherine Helen Spence had provided a model of public involvement and leadership[116] which led to increasing acceptance of women in public affairs.

The leading members of the Working Women's Trades Union included Mary Lee, first vice-president, who was simultaneously secretary of the Women's Suffrage League, and Augusta Zadow, first treasurer, who later became first female Factory Inspector in South Australia. These two women exerted considerable personal influence on the union initially and their imprint appeared to guide the Working Women's Trade Union for a decade or more, even though they did not remain long in office. Both had wide influence in the community through their continuing public work, speeches and contacts with people of influence. Mary Lee wrote hopefully in September 1891, to Lady Windeyer in Sydney,

> You will be pleased to learn that our working woman's (sic) Trade Union is growing. It promises to prove a great educative force. 117

Her assessment of its future role was correct. The union made early and successful application for affiliation with the United Trades and

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116. See Spence, An Autobiography, op. cit., passim.

117. Windeyer Papers, MSS 186/13, p. 447, ML. Lady Windeyer, like Mary Lee, was active in many women's causes and was president of the New South Wales Womanhood Suffrage League.

Labor Council, and although its first intention was not to send 'lady delegates',[118] within two months three women delegates, including Agnes Milne, were attending.[119] Their attendance rate and that of later female delegates at the Council meetings was consistently high, and their presence was accepted without comment.

A variety of matters concerning the women's union arose in the Council; these were both specific issues and general problems. The earliest was the production of a log of prices recommended for sewing work done both within and outside factories, which was introduced on 1 July 1890.[120] Notice of the introduction was followed by active steps in implementing the new log, Mary Lee visiting clothing factories and warehouses, talking to employees and leaving the log which the union had formulated.[121] Both the manager of the large G. & R. Wills shirt and clothing factory[122] and the owner of a shirtmaking workshop acknowledged being guided by these prices[123] although the latter refused to increase wages, as she paid weekly and not piece-rates. These ranged from two shillings and sixpence weekly for the youngest girls of thirteen to four shillings for fourteen and fifteen-year-olds and up to seventeen shillings for the two highest paid adult women.[124]

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118. UTLC, Minutes, 2 April, 1980. The WWTU had followed the Victorian Tailoresses' Union in initially appointing a male president and secretary who were experienced in union affairs.
119. UTLC, Minutes, 13 June, 1890
120. Ibid.
121. Shops and Factories Commission, op. cit., para 5082, evidence of William John Hendry, and para 5816, evidence of Mrs A.E. Larsen.
122. Hendry said in evidence that he was guided in piece-work payments by a log formed by the WWTU.
123. Following Mary Lee's visits to her workshop, Larsen reduced her thirty employees' hours from fifty two to forty eight per week; paras 5776, 5777. Concerning her refusal to increase wages, see para 5816, Ibid.
124. Shops and Factories Commission, op. cit., paras 5425-5428, and information sent to the Commission by Larsen on 4 May, 1892

The next matter concerning the Working Women's Trades Union and the United Trades and Labor Council was participation in the Eight Hours' Demonstration in 1890, when it was decided in the Council that the women's union members were 'to be accommodated in cabs, the expense to be borne by Societies or private subscription'.[125] Thus the Working Women's Trades Union was publicly welcomed to the general body of trade unions, but, as women, were accorded the courtesies of the times.

One of the founders and main figures in the women's union until she was appointed first female Inspector of Factories in February, 1894, was Mrs Augusta Zadow. She had helped working women both in London,[126] and in Adelaide since she had arrived with her husband, a tailor, in 1877. Both the United Trades and Labor Council and the Working Women's Trades Union relied heavily on her experience. She became very well known through her efforts for distressed families in 1893, when she acted in her capacity as treasurer of the women's union to organize relief and self-help programmes.[127] Her major role in the union's industrial affairs is evident in the following summary of Working Women's Trades Union issues which were raised in the United Trades and Labor Council from 1890 until the beginning of 1894:

1. The Working Women's Trades Union subscribed to appeals for the Waterside Strike Fund[128] and the Memorial Fund for the Reverend Hugh Gilmore[129] who had spoken out on behalf of working people on various occasions.

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125. UTLC, Minutes, op. cit., 18 July, 1890. 'Societies' mentioned are trade unions or societies.
126. Advertiser, 9 July 1896, 7b
127. UTLC, Minutes, 9 June, 1893
128. Ibid., 24 November, 1890
129. Ibid., 8 January, 1892

2. The Council resolved, on Augusta Zadow's motion, that its officers should go to Moonta to take action concerning arrears of members.[130] Augusta Zadow followed this motion by a later enquiry concerning action taken.[131]
3. Agnes Milne, who was a member of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union, forwarded a temperance petition from the World's Woman's Temperance Union. It was tabled for individual signature as a matter of conscience.[132]
4. The question of women's suffrage was raised on several occasions, the earliest being in May, 1891, when Mary Lee in her capacity as secretary of the Women's Suffrage League, sought and was granted leave to address the Council.[133] The area of union involvement and attitudes to female suffrage is discussed in Chapter VI, which demonstrates the continuing support of the Council for the extension of suffrage to women and the co-operation between the Council and the Women's Suffrage League. Mary Lee, then vice-president of the Working Women's Trades Union, became a delegate to the United Trades and Labor Council, attending her first meeting, when she was greeted with a speech of welcome, in March 1893.[134]
5. The Council investigated an industrial matter concerning conditions of girls working at the South Australian Paper Bag Factory in June, 1892. This followed receipt of a letter to the Council from a woman complaining of 'the bad pay received and the long hours worked',[135] which included as many as four nights a week overtime.

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130. Ibid., 20 May, 1892
131. Ibid., 17 June, 1892
132. Ibid., 4 March 1892. The UTLC was not connected with any temperance platform. See UTLC, Minutes, 10 July, 1891
133. Ibid., 5 May, 1891
134. Ibid., 17 March, 1893
135. Ibid., 17 June, 1892

Two officers of the Council who investigated established that the proprietors had stopped girls' wages, giving as an excuse 'Bad Temper displayed by such'.[136] This situation and the matter of broken windows at the factory were brought to the notice of the Council with 'a view to further action'.[137]

6. Later closing of shops involved women as shop assistants and as customers; when the Council organized pickets to count the numbers of men and women seen shopping on Saturday nights and to see if unionists were among them, on two occasions Augusta Zadow and Miss Wood volunteered for duty.[138] Nothing concrete arose from their surveillance.

7. The matter of so-called 'apprentices' in dressmaking establishments was raised in the Council in 1893. These girls were paid nothing, but the Council was powerless to act in the situation.[139]

8. Conditions of laundry workers led to concern in Adelaide as in other industrial cities, because of the heavy nature of the work, the steamy atmosphere and often the exploitation of workers. The Eliza Street Steam Laundry was the centre of dispute when the manager's practice of holding back a week's wages from employees led to complaints to the Council.[140] When the secretary of the Working Women's Trades Union and Augusta Zadow visited his laundry the manager remarked 'that he ran his establishment on purely business and not on humanitarian lines'.[141]

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136. _Ibid._, 24 June, 1892
137. _Ibid._
138. _Ibid._, 1 July, 8 July, 1892
139. _Ibid._, 8 December, 1893
140. _Ibid._, 5 January, 1894
141. _Ibid._

The Council engaged a lawyer to determine the legality of keeping back wages; this was judged to be legal as it was part of the terms of engaging labour, although the manager had in one case exceeded his rights.[142] The woman involved, on receiving her withheld wages, wrote a grateful letter to the United Trades and Labor Council.[143]

Similar issues continued throughout the remainder of the Working Women's Trades Union existence, until 1905, most being related to industrial conditions. The union was also deeply involved in the community programme of giving of relief in the depression in 1893.[144] Therefore it is evident that union members not only worked to educate female workers but also participated in wider industrial issues. The women's union in its early years was a lively and influential body, and its influence became greater with the appointment of a female Factory Inspector.

Augusta Zadow, the first Inspector, was forthright and dedicated to righting social injustices affecting women; she approached her task conscientiously, in the first ten months working long hours as she inspected and re-inspected 120 factories employing women and young people under sixteen years. She wrote 320 reports, which apparently do not survive, but which were reduced to general statements included in the Report of the Inspector of Factories. Although many workshops and factory owners co-operated, she sometimes 'met with a good deal of opposition and rudeness'.[145] This did not deter her, and she was responsible for improving conditions for Adelaide's 'diligent army of

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142. Ibid., 12 January, 1894

143. Ibid., 26 January, 1894. The UTLC recorded the fact the Laundry workers were 'usually poor women who were sadly in want of the money to buy food and clothing'. UTLC, Minutes, 5 January, 1894.

144. This is considered in 4, below, among women's self-help schemes.

145. SAPP, 1896, 87, Report of the Inspector of Factories

factory girls'.[146] Her work was cut short by her death in July 1896,[147] but her pioneering influence set the pattern which her successor, Agnes Milne, followed.[148]

Agnes Milne's period as Inspector of Factories coincided with two major educational movements affecting South Australian working women. They were firstly, the continuing operation of the Working Women's Trades Union and also its change in 1905, by careful planning, to a re-organized union on a wider base, and secondly, the protracted struggle previously discussed, to overcome 'sweating' and to introduce a minimum wage in women's industries.

The two movements were linked in various ways. The Working Women's Trades Union, which began with high hopes in 1890, laboured under difficulties; one of these was the resignation of Augusta Zadow when she was appointed Factory Inspector, and then her death in 1896. She had acted as a pivotal force in the union's organization. Difficulties also arose which were common to women's unions in other countries, where many women workers did not join unions because they did not wish to attend

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146. Advertiser, 9 July, 1896, 7b

147. Something of Augusta Zadow's influence may be gauged by the obituaries on her death in: Advertiser, 9 July, 1896, 7; Observer, 11 July, 1896, 29; Weekly Herald, 18 July, 1896, 1; Clarion, 26 September, 1896, 312. The Clarion, an English newspaper, was edited by Robert Blatchford in Manchester; it was devoted largely to labour news and also to women's suffrage and feminist themes.

148. SAPP, 1897-1907, Reports of Inspectors of Factories. For example, Agnes Milne's 1896 Report recorded 'a marked improvement' during the year in comfort, cleanliness, light and ventilation' in factories where women worked. SAPP, 1896, 54, Reports of Inspectors of Factories, p. 3

the meetings, usually held at night.[149] The Working Women's Trades Union remained a viable body, consistently sending delegates to the United Trades and Labor Council and remaining in good standing financially, and close relationships continued between the two organizations. However, during the nineties the numerical strength of the union waned from 300 members in 1892, to only 80 in 1899.[150] The initial impetus had slackened; there appeared to be no immediate chance of wage regulation, and the granting of the suffrage had withdrawn one of the causes which women unionists had espoused. In fact, the success of the suffrage led to the union's decline in membership. Mary Lee had resigned her secretaryship in 1892 and Labor member of Parliament, Mr J.A. McPherson took the post until the end of 1897, followed by Miss J.A. Wilson.[151]

Throughout such changes in organization, the union's educational campaign to improve the position of women workers continued, at times subdued, but sometimes strengthened by the support of the Adelaide press, especially the Herald. Even the more conservative Observer gave space to

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149. The problem of tiredness was probably one reason for lack of interest in the WWTU. In 1893 Augusta Zadow pointed out 'that various attempts had been made by the WWTU to improve the position of female workers in the Shirtmaking trade, but the efforts had not been successful owing to the apathy of the workers themselves'. UTLC, Minutes, 21 April, 1893

150. UTLC, Minutes, List of affiliated union membership following Minutes of meeting 22 February, 1899. This is an isolated record; it has not been possible to trace consecutive records of membership numbers, although when members of the executive attended a meeting of the WWTU on 27 July, 1896, they reported that it was well attended and that membership was increasing. UTLC, Minutes, 7 August, 1896. Members had already dropped considerably from 1892. The numbers of members shown on the list of Societies included in the Minutes of a meeting of the UTLC's Special Finance Committee, 29 August, 1896, show that the WWTU had 100 members who paid subscriptions of 12s 6d. This was half the amount paid by the 100 members of the male Tobacco Twisters' Union and the 100 members of the male Tramways Employees' Union who paid 25s. Other unions at this time ranged in numbers from 80 of the Brickyards' Employes' Society to the 500 of the Bootmakers' Union.

151. UTLC, Report and Balance Sheet, Half Year Ending 31 January, 1899, p. 6

women's industrial problems and was notable in 1891 for publishing Mary Lee's clear statement of the need for women's unions.[152]

In 1896 the Herald ran articles under the nom de plume 'Isocrat' on women workers and unionism, discussing conditions in various industries, ranging from hospital employees to women at the Adelaide Telephone Exchange who were said to be 'the aristocracy of women workers' and who enjoyed pleasant conditions with reasonable arrangements for their comfort and good wages.[153] These were contrasted with the background of the girls who made the telephone employees' clothes:

> girls of tender age in small rooms, with the heat at 108°F, and by gaslight all day long ... 154

The Herald recognized the difficulties of organization which it saw as almost hopeless, among

> the ill-paid, over-worked and broken spirited creatures who toil in isolated rooms, trembling lest by any false step they should lose the 'home' work that, ill paid as it is, is often hard to get. 155

Many women workers, though not belonging to the Working Women's Trades Union, looked to it for support, some writing anonymous letters of complaint about their conditions which were then investigated by the union's secretary.[156] For the public, Agnes Milne wrote her Reports, and in 1899 she wrote three articles in the Journal of Agriculture and Industry of South Australia,[157] while bodies such as the Woman's League heard lectures on the problems.[158]

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152. See Appendix D below
153. Herald, 25 September, 1896, 3a
154. Ibid.
155. Ibid., 30 October, 1896, 2a
156. 'The girls write us anonymous letters and I go and see if it is really true'. Evidence of Emily Siemer, secretary WWTU to Legislative Council Committee on the Alleged Sweating Evil, para 809, op. cit.
157. Journal of Agriculture and Industry of South Australia, 2: 7 (February 1899) 610-11; 3: 1 (August 1899) 101-2; 3: 3 (October 1899) 342-3
158. Woman's League, Minute Book, 1896, 570M SASA

The Working Women's Trades Union secretary recognized that, as the union was composed 'almost exclusively' of workers in the clothing trade, many women workers were without a union. She proposed to bring others in to the union and then to extend its influence.[159] There was a great deal of organizational work to be done before this could be achieved, and this was delayed while campaigns against sweating and for Wages Boards continued. The next clear evidence of any action is not until August, 1905, after the battle for Wages Boards had succeeded, when arrangements began for Labor organizer Miss Lillian Locke of Victoria to visit Adelaide 'to endeavour to organize the working women'.[160] Detailed planning went ahead for arrangements and publicity, under the joint direction of the United Trades and Labor Council and the Working Women's Trades Union.[161] Lillian Locke had already undertaken organizing work at Broken Hill, apparently with great success.[162] On her arrival in Adelaide on 16 September, 1905, she was met by Labor Premier, Mr Thomas Price and executive officers of the union,[163] and from then on for three weeks she worked daily, addressing public meetings in city

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159. UTLC, Half Yearly Report and Balance Sheet to 31 January, 1899, p. 6

160. UTLC, Minutes, 11 August, 1905, a meeting of the Executive of the WWTU had approved of her being asked to come. By this time Miss Wilson was no longer secretary, although she attended the first planning meeting. The President of the WWTU was Heinrich Zadow and the secretary Emily Siemer who had given valuable evidence to the 1904 Legislative Council Enquiry.

161. At the first meeting to plan the visit, those present also included two non-unionists, Miss Tomkinson and Lucy Morice. Catherine Helen Spence to Rose Scott ML (uncat.)

162. UTLC, Minutes, 25 August, 1905. She had been presented with a gold watch and chain and a framed painting of herself in appreciation of her work at 'the Hill'.

163. Ibid., 22 September, 1905

and suburbs and attending meetings 'at the houses of ladies in sympathy with her work'. She stayed with Lucy Morice for one week of her visit,[164] thus demonstrating the practical links which existed in Adelaide between women who worked for common causes and who came from differing backgrounds and positions.

Lillian Locke travelled north in South Australia to publicize her message of women's industrial unity,[165] preparing women to accept the new union. This was to be the Women's Employment Mutual Association which was planned by the executive of the Working Women's Trades Union in consultation with Lillian Locke.[166] Once the organization had been framed, she addressed many groups, urging women to join the Association. These included meetings of women shop and factory employees, tailoresses, dressmakers and milliners, waitresses and laundry workers, and she also spoke to general audiences and at Democratic Clubs. Her topics ranged over a wide area, including, for example, 'Industrial Legislation' at the Hindmarsh Town Hall and 'Women's Part in the Labor Movement' at the Parkside and Eastwood Institute.[167] At a social held at the Trades Hall under the auspices of the United Trades and Labor Council and Working Women's Trades Union 'and friends', the Premier presided and spoke on the great need for organization among women workers.[168] Lillian Locke also appealed on this occasion to women to join the new union,[169] and

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164. Catherine Helen Spence to Rose Scott, 25 September [1905], op. cit.

165. She spoke at Clare and at the industrial town, Port Pirie. UTLC Minutes, 6 October 1905

166. Rules of the Women Employees Mutual Association of South Australia Including Provisions for the WEMA Provident Fund. 334.7/WML. There were 29 rules in all.

167. UTLC, Minutes, 6, 20 October, 1905

168. Ibid., 6 October, 1905

169. The union was not officially formed until 6 November, the date on which the WWTU wound up its affairs. UTLC, Half Yearly Report and Balance Sheet to 31 January, 1906, p. 5

encouraged them to friendly co-operation, requesting that they begin their meetings by singing 'Come, friends, the world wants mending'. This practice was adopted and continued for many years. The new union had strong male support; the president, one vice-president, and the secretary/treasurer were men, and one of the trustees was Heinrich Zadow, widower of Augusta Zadow. The second vice-president, the assistant secretary and two trustees were women.

It was believed that by including men who had experience in their own unions and in the Trades and Labor Council, the new venture, begun with high hopes, would be firmly based, for by the time of its conclusion the Working Women's Trades Union had become weak. These initial hopes were recorded in the formal Objects of the Women's Employment Mutual Association:

> 1. to improve the conditions of employment in the various classes of work engaged in by its members;
> 2. to amicably settle by conference or arbitration any dispute which may arise between employers and its members;
> 3. to promote the welfare of its members morally, socially and intellectually;
> 4. to co-operate with other organizations having similar objects and aims;
> 5. to carry out the provisions of the Provident Fund. 170

The membership was open to 'all female employees above the school-going age', and meetings were to be held fortnightly, while there was an interesting provision made for honorary members. 'Women who sympathise with the objects of the Association, but who may be ineligible to become ordinary members', could, on payment of two shillings and sixpence in

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170. WEMA Rules, op. cit., Other rules included the entrance fee, sixpence; contribution, sixpence every fourth week (except 'for complete periods of four weeks during which a member shall have been unemployed').

advance, join the Association.[171] Meetings were held fortnightly at night.

A provident fund was established by the Women's Employment Mutual Association 'to afford assistance to members who are unable to follow their occupations on account of illness'.[172] This insurance scheme was hedged about with provisos and did not prosper, only eight members contributing by the time of the first half-yearly meeting.[173] The fund was soon discontinued.[174]

At the time of its first meeting in May 1906, there were 82 members, including laundry workers, tailoresses and white-workers and sixteen honorary members of the new union.[175] Meetings were concerned with election of representatives to the newly-constituted Clothing Board, and with arranging meetings and entertainments and listening to speakers.[176] About 200 women at the second meeting heard a member of the Government express hopes of extending the Wages Board system.[177] But the Women's Employment Mutual Association was not a strong union; out of all the audiences which Lillian Locke had addressed, only a handful of women had

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171. Ibid., 3, 5. The contributions of honorary members were to be set apart 'to assist in defraying the expenses of social gatherings'. Lucy Morice was one of the honorary members. Herald, 28 April, 1906, 8d. In May she 'preside[d] at the piano' at a WEMA meeting, Ibid., 12 May, 1906, 5c

172. WEMA, Rules, 12, 13, 14

173. Herald, 12 May, 1906, 5c

174. Ibid., 9 June, 1906, 2c

175. UTLC, Half Yearly Report and Balance Sheet to 31 January, 1906, p.5

176. Herald, 12 May, 1906, 5c

177. Ibid., 2 June, 1906, 11c

elected to join the union. At the meeting of 5 June, 1906, only four new members were admitted and only one new application was read.[178] In October 1908, the first president of the new union, Mr R. Blundell, appealed in the United Trades and Labor Council for the appointment of a female organizer 'with a view to the proper organizing of the women workers in the metropolitan area'.[179] The early enthusiasm of the 1890s was not easily recaptured. Even a memorial service held on the tenth anniversary of Augusta Zadow's death, a well-attended occasion, at which Catherine Helen Spence was one of the speakers,[180] failed to stimulate further interest in the Mutual Association. One member of the United Trades and Labor Council referred to 'the disinclination of women for organization',[181] while another reproachfully reminded members of the cost of Lillian Locke's campaign (nearly £50) and explored the idea of separate craft unions for women, rather than one single union.[182] A long drawn-out campaign to appoint a 'Lady organizer' developed within the Council, while at the same time it gave encouragement to the Mutual Association,[183] which sent delegates to the United Labor Party from 1910.

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178. Ibid., 2 June, 1906, 11c

179. UTLC, Minutes, 19 September, 30 October, 1908

180. Herald, 14 July, 1906, 3a

181. UTLC, Minutes, 30 October, 1908. This accords with the view of a very experienced British factory inspector, Dame Adelaide Anderson (appointed in London in 1894 as Inspector of Factories) who wrote that in the late nineteenth century 'Trade Union organization for women was generally a small, young and fragile plant where it existed at all'. Anderson, Adelaide, Women in the Factory An Administrative Adventure 1893 to 1921, London, 1922, p. 3

182. UTLC, Minutes, 27 November, 1908

183. Ibid., 11 November, 1910

It was the Organizing Committee of the United Trades and Labor Council in 1911, and not the Women's Employment Mutual Association, which organized on behalf of laundry workers who were paid 'scandalously low' wages, ironing 144 collars per day for 7s 6d wages.[184] There were 400 to 500 employees in laundry work in Adelaide, and the Organizing Committee urged them to join the women's union to call for a Wages Board, and gain a better wage.[185] There is no record of any successful action.

The proposed appointment of a 'Lady organizer' was raised in June, 1912 and in July, 1913 in the Council.[186] In April, 1914 the United Labor Party appointed a female unionist as organizer for the Party,[187] but in spite of protracted discussions and proposals, by the end of 1915 no 'Lady organizer' had been appointed by the Council; the Women's Employment Mutual Association remained a small though persisting organization. By this time, however, some women had begun to join individual unions, e.g. the Clerks' Union, the Federated Hotel and Clubs Association,[188] and the Government Workers' Association, which was first recorded, but without detail, in the Council minutes of 14 July, 1910.[189]

The enormous pressure of the campaign to eliminate sweating had passed. By 1915, women's unionism had become established, but the early sense of urgency had vanished and the mainly social meetings of the Women's Employment Mutual Association were not adequate for a new generation of women workers, some of whom had begun looking not to an exclusively women's union, but to a union for their particular craft or occupation. The education of women workers in unionism was a protracted

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184. UTLC, Minutes, 10 November, 1911

185. Ibid.

186. Ibid., 7 June, 1912, 4 July, 1913

187. Ibid., 24 April, 1914, Letter dated 6 June, 1914

188. UTLC, Half Yearly Report and Balance Sheet, to 31 July, 1914

189. UTLC, Minutes, 14 July, 1914

struggle which by 1915 had led only to a small-scale and tentative organization. In the process, however, women had learned that they could be eligible for certain rights and conditions, and once they had learned, many of them taught others. Women's social education in industry proceeded mainly through individual contacts for which the framework of trade unions provided a basis.

## 4. Clubs and Co-operative Ventures

Further ways of educating women workers were through the medium of co-operative ventures and through girls' clubs.[190] Three clubs which were designed particularly for working girls began in Adelaide during the period under review, and before discussing the important women's self-help and co-operative ventures, these will be briefly considered.

In two cases the founders of the clubs were philanthropists; the third was begun by working women. The earliest was the Young Women's Institute, designed for factory and shop girls by a committee, mainly of women, under the presidency of Lady Jervois, the Governor's wife. This residential club which also held classes, was opened in Pirie Street, Adelaide in October 1881,[191] in the face of opposition which alleged that the Committee was holding out an inducement for young women to prefer factory work to domestic service 'which was much better for them'.[192] The committee was convinced that a need existed which should be met, and by the end of the first year seemed to be

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190. Girls' clubs had flourished in England since the middle of the nineteenth century, the best known being the Young Women's Christian Association. See Pratt, Edwin A., Pioneer Women in Victoria's Reign, London, 1897, pp. 60, 216-217

191. Young Women's Institute, First annual report, 1882, p. 7. The average number of residents in the first year was twelve.

192. Ibid., p. 5

successful, having 161 members and associates, with classes being held in English literature, singing, dressmaking and millinery. In addition, weekly Bible readings with 'a highly satisfactory attendance' were held.[193] By the end of the second year members had increased, a library of 400 volumes was well-used and the classes continued.[194] But by the third year public donations had fallen from the £790 of 1882 to only £25 in 1884. Fees alone were insufficient; classes were not well attended and the 'catastrophe' of abandoning the work was realised in 1885.[195] Public support was inadequate after the initial enthusiasm, and demand for residential places was weak, so that the voluntary committee was unable to run the club efficiently, and it was forced to close.

A much more successful venture was the Young Women's Christian Association which was developed out of a Methodist Bible class organized by Mrs Mary Colton in 1879; it was inaugurated as a Young Women's Christian Association in 1884, and by 1889, with public support, became residential and moved to specially-built premises in 1900.[196] It developed on lines similar to such associations in other places, the main aim being the extension of Christian education, and the strength of membership being viewed as 'inestimable in tearing down the strongholds of Satan'.[197] Various clubs and classes flourished within the organization, including a club for 'Physical recreation and health exercises' and classes in 'Domestic subjects', 'English subjects' and 'Womanhood subjects'. There were also classes for 'Engaged girls'.[198]

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193. Ibid., pp. 6, 7

194. Ibid., Second annual report, 1883, pp. 5-7

195. Ibid. Third annual report, 1884-5, p. 6; Register, 14 July, 1885, 5a. A somewhat similar club opened in Sydney in 1889, 'for the poorest factory girls and women', aiming at 'teaching them to help themselves'. It flourished for at least eight years. Miss Edwards, 'Working and Factory Girls' Club', Rose Scott papers A2274, ML

196. 'The Girls of Adelaide A Brief Statement of Facts of Twelve Months, Showing the Scope of the YWCA', Adelaide, 1913, p. 5; Observer, 6 December, 1884, 36a; Ibid., 21 July, 1900, 37b; Ibid., 1 December, 1900.

197. YWCA Annual Report, 1912, p. 14

198. Ibid., 1912, p. 6

In 1911 the Young Women's Christian Association organized and ran a Travellers' Aid society through which members met trains and boats to assist inexperienced girls and to safeguard them 'from the snares of unscrupulous people'.[199]

In 1913 the classes and clubs of the Young Women's Christian Association had an enrolment of 1150. Strongly based, internationally linked, and supported by Protestant women and girls, this association helped working girls with accommodation, provided some educational opportunities, and opened a variety of classes to girls other than residents. It continued to flourish.

The third club was established in 1901 by Agnes Milne as the culmination of many years' planning.[200] The Australian Working Girls' Club aimed to

> benefit the general body of female workers, independently of religious institutions or trades unionism. [201]

This was to be achieved by providing 'recreation and instruction to all working girls' and it was based on sound organization of rules and committees; membership charges were three pence for entrance and one penny per week. Meetings were held in a rented hall in Grote Street, Adelaide, one night weekly, with tea served from 6 p.m. to 7 p.m., followed by 'recreation and mutual benefit'.[202] However, little is known of its progress and no further record of its activities has been found; it appears to have been short-lived, possibly defeated by the same apathy and tiredness which hindered female trade unions.

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199. Ibid., p. 9

200. It is likely that she was aware of other similar ventures, such as that in Sydney (v.f.n.195) and the Club for South London Working Women, established in 1894 to give women workers a place for 'a pleasant evening's enjoyment' and to enable them to 'enjoy the opportunity of gaining fresh ideas'. Times, 6 November, 1894, 7e

201. Mrs Inspector Milne, 'Working Girls' Club', Journal of Agriculture and Industry of South Australia, 4: 12 (July 1901) 1039

202. Ibid.

More effective in drawing working women together and teaching them to cope with difficulties and to improve their conditions, were several self-help schemes which operated in the 1890s and the first decade of the twentieth century. The earliest was begun by Augusta Zadow in response to the unemployment and poverty of the 1893 depression.[203] The Working Women's Trades Union had rooms in Victoria Square between 1891 and 1895[204] and these were used as a depot for the Distressed Women's and Children's Fund which Augusta Zadow administered.[205] She had been elected to the United Trades and Labor Council organizing committee in 1892 and gained their co-operation in her venture.

She persuaded a draper to let her have some patterns and materials[206] and she also purchased more from Council funds. These she gave out to poor women to make up. They returned the garments to her for sale, some through the women's union rooms and to Council members; others were paid for through public subscriptions and given to needy people from depots operated by the Women's Distress Fund (a separate body) on which a group of philanthropic women led by Mrs L.M. Corbin worked, together with Mary Lee and Augusta Zadow.[207] This mutual enterprise foreshadowed similar co-operation with the formation of the Women's

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203. The failure of the National Bank of Australia on 1 May, 1893, was the 'culminating point' for South Australia in the bank crisis which was sweeping Australia. Coghlan, op. cit., p. 2066

204. South Australian Directory, 1890-1896

205. Herald, 21 December, 1894, 3b

206. UTLC, Minutes, 9 June, 1893

207. Observer, 29 July, 1893, 15e. Mrs Corbin had begun a crêche for Adelaide working mothers in 1888.

Employment Mutual Association (see above p.210 and f.n. 171) and the later women's co-operative clothing factory (see below pp. 218-225). Augusta Zadow administered the Distressed Women's and Children's Fund with common sense and compassion.[208] The women who benefited mainly did so through their own labours and this spirit of co-operation was later to form the basis of a new enterprise, in 1902, which was founded on truly co-operative principles.

The South Australian Co-operative Clothing Factory provides a unique example of co-operation between South Australian women of varying backgrounds. They joined in an ambitious yet practical enterprise which was designed to educate women in economic management and thereby improve their conditions and dignify their lives. The idea of producers' co-operatives exercised a great fascination over many able minds in the nineteenth century.[209] The ideal situation arising from co-operatives was seen to be that of labour and capital being supplied by the same people, so that 'the workman is his own master, and industrial democracy is achieved'.[210]

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208. In December, 1894, Augusta Zadow submitted her Report for the previous twelve months on the Fund to the WWTU. It read, in part:

> I have been enabled to provide work for a considerable number of women and children in distressed circumstances, as well as providing over 100 situations for persons as general servants, nurse girls, farm hands, &c. Out of 88 ladies who made application for domestic servants, 75 were suited free of charge. Over 800 families have been relieved.

Total receipts for the year were £452.3,0½, expenditure £448,3s. Weekly Herald, 21 December 1894, 3b

209. Birnie, Arthur, An Economic History of the British Isles, London, 8th ed., 1955, p. 363. Men of the calibre of John Stuart Mill and Benjamin Disraeli applauded the co-operative movement which was stimulated from 1890 in England by the Labor Co-partnership Association. Ibid., p. 365. The movement was known in South Australia. Spence, An Autobiography, op. cit., p. 9.

210. Ibid.

The proposal for a women's co-operative clothing factory in South Australia came first from Agnes Milne in 1901, when she discussed it with other working women.[211] She then approached Catherine Helen Spence who readily undertook to give her support, as she agreed with co-operative principles,[212] and she was concerned about the sweating problem.[213] The factory was named the South Australian Co-operative Clothing Company and was established in premises in Blyth Street, Adelaide, opening in 1902. Planned and run solely by women - a 'number of very practical level headed women',[214] it was, as Catherine Helen Spence, said, 'the result purely of a woman's movement', and was designed so that working women could 'ensure for themselves a degree of protection against oppression'.[215]

Although the Co-operative Clothing Company's records apparently survive only from its incorporation as a limited company in 1903, a year after its opening, some information is available about the period of its foundation. The factory appears to have been set up in premises already in existence, which were used as a clothing factory by one of the co-operative who had found it difficult to compete against very large firms.[216] At the opening ceremony in February, 1902, the manager of the factory, Miss Allison McGregor, described her own predicament as a home-worker:

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211. Herald, 1 March, 1902, 10c

212. Spence, An Autobiography, op. cit., p. 94

213. She wrote to Alice Henry, 'I am much exercised in my mind about sweating'. Catherine Helen Spence papers, letter to Alice Henry, 6 November, n.d. PRG/D2475/2 SASA

214. Australian Woman's Sphere, 7: 19 (March 1902) 155b

215. Advertiser, 25 February, 1902, 6h

216. Spence, An Autobiography, op. cit., p. 94. This part of the auto-biography was written after Catherine Helen Spence's death by Jeanne F. Young, a close friend, who relied on surviving papers and her own memory.

> Each year the competition had seemed keener and it was impossible for a worker with treadle machines to compete against power ... She had had to work during busy times from 4 o'clock in the morning until 9 and 10 at night to make anything like a profit ... 217

The factory was well-designed to compete against these steam and gas powered factories, for it was the first clothing factory in Adelaide to use electric power.[218]

Catherine Helen Spence became chairman of the board of the Company, which was financed by those planning the Company;[219] their composition will be discussed below (pp. 222-3). There were many during the planning period who had doubts about the co-operative's success,[220] and others who misunderstood the venture:

> There are still people who speak with contemptuous dislike of women who work for their living, but as many have no male relatives willing or able to provide for their needs, it is absolutely necessary that they shall enter the ranks of wage-earners if existence and self-respect are to be maintained. 221

These attitudes, in addition to working women's poor conditions, made the search for a solution to their difficulties an urgent matter.

The South Australian Co-operative Clothing Company was a Utopian enterprise designed to overcome such difficulties. It was opened in February, 1902, at a ceremony attended by 50 women, three members of Parliament, and male representatives of city clothing factories.[222]

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217. Herald, 1 March 1902, 10c

218. Ibid. See also Catherine Helen Spence papers. Letter to Alice Henry 21 February, n.d. (?1902), op. cit. She gave £5 towards the total cost of £61 for electrification of the plant. This, to her, was an appreciable sum which precluded her from giving more than ten shillings towards a travelling fund for Vida Goldstein, the Victorian suffragist.

219. Lucy Morice, 'Auntie Kate', op. cit., p. 5

220. Catherine Helen Spence said this at the factory's opening. Herald, 1 March, 1902, 10c

221. Australian Woman's Sphere, op. cit.

222. Herald, 1 March 1902, 10c

Hopes for the future prosperity of the Company were high, and Allison McGregor closed her speech with an idealistic poem, including the words 'gird your loins for the coming day'. Catherine Helen Spence switched on the electric power and the watchers marvelled at the buttonhole machine and the speed of sewing; one member of Parliament 'turned out yards of work in a twinkling'. The factory was well planned. For example, the cloth on the table of the sewing machine was protected from the belt by an 'ingenious contrivance' which Allison McGregor had suggested, and the capacious two-storied factory, capable of housing 20 machines and 48 employees on its two floors, was well-lit and 'scrupulously clean'.[223]

The Company's records show that its first Object was:

> To carry on the trade or business of Clothing Manufacture, and all trades and businesses incidental thereto for the mutual benefit of members who shall be women and girls only. 224

Thus its co-operative and exclusively female character was firmly stated, and the latter was re-affirmed in the Articles of Association:

> 4. The membership of the Company shall be limited to women and girls, and the names of women and girls only shall be registered upon the register book. 225

Through its shareholders, the Company realized its objects. All were women, and their names and occupations provide an illustration of widely-based co-operation.

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223. Ibid. When it opened only eight machines were installed. Full capacity was never reached.

224. South Australian Co-operative Clothing Factory Limited, Memorandum of Association, 7 April 1903, GRG 1/CB/3 - 1903/49, SASA

225. Ibid., Articles of Association, 4 April, 1903. Clause 6 covered the eventuality of shares falling into male hands through the death or insolvency of a shareholder. A woman or girl was then to be named as transferee of such shares.

Shareholders included five women who designated themselves 'Lady', including Catherine Helen Spence who held eight £1 shares, the largest single holding, and two titled women, Lady Holder and Lady Bonython.[226] The major occupation listed was 'housewife' or 'household duties'; in 1906, for example, 31 shareholders belonged to this category. In that year other occupations of shareholders included a grocer, who held four shares, a baker, a domestic servant, matron of a girls' club, a nurse at the Destitute Asylum and several school teachers, including Alice Hills who held a single share from 1904 to 1907.[227]

The Woman's Christian Temperance Union was represented by its president, Elizabeth Nicholls, a past president, Mrs Emily Hone, and its secretary, Miss Mary Lockwood. There were a number of women in the clothing trade, including a weaver, four machinists, two tailoresses, a dressmaker, an 'employee of the Company' and Allison McGregor, its secretary and manager who held four shares. Two women living in the same street as she did, at Hindmarsh, were among the clothing-worker shareholders.[228] Mrs Robert Barr Smith, wife of one of Australia's wealthiest men, had bought ten shares and presented them as 'bonuses' to workwomen of the factory.[229] Emily Siemer, secretary of the Working Women's Trades Union held three shares and Agnes Milne, Inspector of Factories, held five.

Among the 'housewife' members were Lucy Morice, whose husband was Parliamentary librarian, and Mrs Agnes Benham, a foundation board member. She and her husband were regarded by some of Adelaide society as 'a pair of radicals' for their political views and for her poems on sex and

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226. Ibid. Lists of shareholders, 1904-1913. Lady Holder was prominent in the Women's Suffrage League (see below Chapter V) and Lady Bonython was the first wife of Sir Lavington Bonython, editor of the Advertiser.

227. Ibid.

228. Ibid.

229. Advertiser, 25 February 1902, 6h. All operatives of the factory were shareholders.

love.[230] At the factory's opening she said, 'If capital can so successfully combine in its own interests, the people can do so also'.[231] There was a truly representative group of women included in this co-operative movement; they ranged from poor to rich, from ill-educated to those of high educational attainment and from sewing workers to women of influence and wealth. This small venture provided powerful evidence of the influence of informal education among women in industrial matters, and it provided the opportunity for further influence.

The finances of the Company were based on a capital of only £120 divided into shares of £1 each issued as fully paid up.[232] Until at least March 1904 only 100 shares were taken up.[233] At the end of the first year Catherine Helen Spence wrote, "I think it [the Company] is holding its own',[234] and a dividend of one shilling per share, or a total of £5 was paid to shareholders on 26 April, 1904.[235] Total liabilities and assets at the end of December 1904 balanced at only £143.19.11.[236]

The management remained stable. Monthly and annual meetings were held at the factory[237] and there was only one change in secretary/

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230. Chivers, R.R. The Benham Family in Australia, Black Forest, 1970, p. 35. Agnes Benham was Paris Nesbit's sister and the aunt by marriage of Ellen Benham.

231. Herald, 1 March, 1902, 10c

232. South Australian Co-operative Clothing Company Limited, Memorandum of Association, op. cit., clause 4

233. Ibid., Summary of Capital and Shares, 31 March, 1904

234. Catherine Helen Spence to Alice Henry, op. cit.

235. South Australian Co-operative Clothing Company Limited, op. cit., Balance sheet at 31 December, 1904, C.H. Spence's biographer claims that this dividend was paid 'at the close of the first year' when the merchants 'closed down' and reduced payments. Spence, An Autobiography, op. cit., p. 24. This date is certainly mistaken in view of the balance sheet, as only one dividend was ever paid. Evidence of Agnes Milne, Committee on Alleged Sweating Evil, op. cit., para 674.

236. Balance Sheet, South Australian Co-operative Clothing Company, op.cit.

237. Catherine Helen Spence to Rose Scott, 18 December, n.d. Rose Scott papers Uncat. 38, ML: Catherine Helen Spence to Alice Henry, 21 February (no year) Spence papers, op. cit.

manager, from Allison McGregor to Agnes Milne in 1907, and one change in chairman of the board; on Catherine Helen Spence's death in 1910 she was succeeded by her niece Lucy Morice. In 1904 the number of workers was '15 or 17'.[238] These women worked an eight-hour day, and none was taken on at less than four shillings weekly starting wage.[239] They made clothing for 'all the big wholesale places in town.[240] In 1904, they were judged by Agnes Milne to be getting on 'Just splendidly', and no sweating occurred.[241]

Increasing competition from bigger factories which also installed electricity led to the eventual decline and fall of the co-operative.[242] In February, 1913, notices of winding-up of the Company were given, and Lucy Morice was appointed liquidator.[243] The factory itself was 'absorbed in a going concern factory',[244] thus ending a brave experiment.

The Co-operative Clothing Company reflected some of the qualities of flexibility and humane concern which characterized many people in South Australian society. It also demonstrated the educational force of ideas on women of differing backgrounds, and their constructive

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238. Committee on Alleged Sweating Evil, op. cit. Evidence of Agnes Milne, para 444. She resigned as Inspector of Factories in 1907.

239. Ibid., paras 743, 679

240. Ibid. Evidence of Emily Siemer, para 731

241. Ibid. Evidence of Agnes Milne, paras 238-9

242. Morice, Lucy, 'Auntie Kate', op. cit., p. 5

243. South Australian Co-operative Clothing Factory, op. cit., Notice of winding up, 11 February, 1913

244. Morice, Lucy, 'Auntie Kate', op. cit., p. 5

response to social and economic problems, in which they built on earlier work of unionists and reformers. In responding to ideals of co-operation they in turn provided, through the establishment of their co-operative venture, an innovative means of education for working women and for the wider society.

## Chapter V

## Women's Suffrage: An Educational Campaign

South Australian women were the first in Australia to be enfranchised. The legislation enabling this reform was passed in December, 1894, the culmination of an educational campaign which had a single object. During the campaign some shifts of emphasis occurred concerning the proposed qualifications of the women who should receive the vote, but the issue itself was unambiguous.

Full male adult suffrage for the House of Assembly had applied since the South Australian Constitution Act of 1856. Thus, women's enfranchisement was a less momentous step than it appeared to be at the same time in Britain, where a limited male franchise still applied. The granting of the suffrage to women in 1894 was the result of two main factors. The first was the nature of the society which, through Parliament, agreed to the reform. The second was the educational campaign for the suffrage which apparently met little organized opposition but which nevertheless had to overcome prejudices, custom, and apathy among both men and women to achieve the desire for change.

Almost every writer who has considered women's suffrage in South Australia since 1894 has perpetuated the myth that women expended little effort in 'the fight to obtain this privilege' which was supposedly 'begun, directed and almost entirely waged by men'.[1] There is ample evidence, which this chapter demonstrates, that this was not the case. In Appendix F the historiography of women's suffrage in South Australia is considered.

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1. Reeves, William Pember, State Experiments in Australia and New Zealand, v. 1, Melbourne, 1969, p. 103

## 1. Background to the Women's Suffrage Campaign

The women's suffrage movement in South Australia was clearly linked with the English movement. South Australians maintained continuous and direct contact with Britain, which has already been demonstrated as important in regard to formal education and social usage. A constant flow of mail, newspapers, journals and books came to South Australia from Britain,[2] while travellers in both directions and new immigrants provided direct contacts and relayed news and opinions.[3]

There can be little doubt that news of John Stuart Mill's attempted amendment of the 1867 Reform Bill to include voting rights for women led to some discussion in South Australia, as did the publication of his *The Subjection of Women* in 1869.[4] Certainly, by 1871, the question of women's rights and the possibility of their enfranchisement had aroused

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2. Newspapers in the colony reported British Parliamentary affairs regularly. Bookshops stocked British books and journals, while some people in South Australia directly imported their own. The South Australian Institute and other local Institutes provided a lending service of similar material. Catherine Helen Spence wrote in her *Autobiography*, *op. cit.*, 'The South Australian Institute was a treasure to the family ... We were all omnivorous readers'. p. 20

3. The ease and frequency with which some families and individuals travelled to and fro has been explored by Eleanore Williams, 'Living in Two Worlds Mid-north Pastoralists and Their Families in the 1860's', *Journal of the Historical Society of South Australia*, 1 (1975) 18-32. Other evidence includes a letter concerning Edward Charles Stirling, from his grandson Edward Stirling Booth to the present writer, 1979. Booth writes, 'E.C. Stirling was often in England, the first occasion being when he was nine years old ... After his Cambridge years ... he returned to South Australia in 1875, but after his marriage in 1877 he returned again to England ... in January 1881 he returned to S. Australia, but continued to visit England at intervals'. Letter in possession of Helen Jones.

4. The earliest evidence of any written response in South Australia is indirect. E. Pariss Nesbit, for example, who was born in South Australia in 1852, wrote later: 'in the plenitude of wisdom of 18 years, I wrote a fervent, and it appeared to me, an unanswerable address in favour of Female Suffrage'. Nesbit, E. Pariss *Lecture on Woman Suffrage*, delivered November, 1895. Adelaide, 1896, p. 3 (Nesbit altered the spelling of his name in 1896 to 'Paris'. Loughlin, Graham, 'Paris Nesbit, Q.C. Lawyer, Libertine and Lunatic', *Journal of the Historical Society of South Australia*, 3 (1977) p. 51

the interest of the North Adelaide Young Men's Society which held a public debate on the topic 'Should the Electoral Franchise be Extended to Women?' Their monthly journal, the Eclectic, devoted space for several months to the issue. In July, 1871 an anonymous writer, possibly E. Pariss Nesbit, secretary and co-editor, who had opened the debate on the affirmative side, quoted Mill in support of his own argument in favour of women's greater equality, and stated:

> The provision of an improved education is also rendered incumbent by the probability of the suffrage being extended to women at no distant date ... For my own part, I am convinced that a period will arrive when it will be thought as absurd to dispute the right of a woman to vote, possess property, or follow any trade or profession suiting her capacity, as it would now be to call in question the right of a negro to his freedom. [5]

A rebuttal of this argument followed in the succeeding issue, raising the point which was to be used frequently by the opponents of women's suffrage: 'I assert that women - the general body of women - do not ask for this concession'.[6] The first writer, in replying, claimed that 'the impulse of progress originates with the few, not the many', and that in any case he had examined newspapers 'by the July mail' which revealed that twenty-two meetings where 'large numbers of ladies' were present had been held in various parts of England to press the suffrage claim.[7] He quoted Jacob Bright:

> The women who were asking for the suffrage were amongst the most gifted of their sex, and they were supported by the most gifted and intelligent of men. [8]

The arguments raised in this and ensuing discussion among the Young Men's Societies were those which would be presented many times over

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5. The Eclectic, 1: 2 (July 1871) 5

6. Ibid., 1: 3 (August 1871) 9

7. Ibid., 1: 4 (September 1871) 14

8. Ibid.

during the suffrage campaign and included that which claimed enfranchisement would 'defeminize' women and even lead young men to remain single.[9]

In May 1873 one of the parliamentary clubs of the Young Men's Societies debated the issue of extending the franchise 'to the ladies',[10] and in September, 1873, the Young Men's Magazine included an article on 'The Future of Women' which called for a 'powerful mind' to advocate women's suffrage in South Australia.[11] By 1880, when a debate on women's suffrage was reported, it was found necessary to end the report with an explanation:

> It is only fair to Mr. Hackett to mention that he undertook the negative purely to carry out the debate, and therefore argued against his convictions on the subject. [12]

The subjects debated in the lively meetings of the Young Men's Societies were those of popular interest. Journalist James Sadler, in recalling his youthful participation, places 'female franchise' as the second subject of concern in such debates.[13]

Debaters on these issues may well have used material from the English Women's Suffrage Journal to which the South Australian Institute subscribed for its popular lending library. Copies from volume 9, 1878 onwards remain extant.[14] They provide evidence that the main source of English suffrage news was readily available in South Australia even before any official move was made in the colony towards widening the suffrage.

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9. Ibid., 1: 7 (March 1872) 27.
10. Young Men's Magazine, 1: 8 (August 1873) 59
11. Ibid., 1: 5 (May 1873) 40
12. Journal of the Adelaide Young Men's Society (1880) 9. (This issue is bound with others, all lacking covers. No volume, number or month is given.)
13. The first was 'payment of members'. Others included 'Federation' and the 'continuation of King William Street through Victoria Square'. Sadler, James, 'A Famous Old Society', in Some Annals of Adelaide, Adelaide, 1933, p. 167
14. One issue, that of 1 May, 1879, still bears its address sticker, printed with the Manchester address of the publication, the note 'Registered for transmission abroad', and the forwarding address: M. South Australian Institute, Adelaide, South Australia.

In 1881, the Adelaide Young Men's Society held a 'Parliamentary Election' for a Model Parliament of 46 members.[15] As usual, the meeting included women, for the Young Men's Societies depended on their 'lady associates' frequently to form 'the larger part of the gatherings'.[16] On this occasion, the Society was the first

> to introduce into this colony the novel feature of allowing ladies not only to be present at an election meeting, but also of extending the franchise to them. [17]

By the 1880s there was then more familiarity among young men and women with the issues of female suffrage. Not only had women taken part in a mock election, but in August, 1883, the Adelaide Young Men's Society model Parliament afforded the opportunity for Cornelius Proud to introduce a Bill 'for the amendment of the Electoral Act for the purpose of extending the franchise to women.'[18] This led to a full-scale debate, in which Sadler participated. The debaters' arguments were to become familiar in the later campaign for women's suffrage. Many of the young men who began their debating careers in the Young Men's Societies later moved into public positions. Some became members of other societies also, particularly of the various Literary Societies,[19] and several became lawyers.

Other debates and discussions on women's franchise occurred before and after the earliest official move took place in Parliament in 1885. None of these public discussions and published reports has been considered by the writers on women's suffrage in South Australia, who

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15. Journal of the Adelaide Young Men's Society, 48 (August 1881) n.p.
16. Sadler, op. cit., p. 169. The women 'bore their full share of the work by writing essays and poems which were read by male members, and some of these efforts were of more than ordinary merit'. Ibid. The North Adelaide Young Men's Society, in April 1874, resolved 'That all meetings except those for business, be open to the public of both sexes'. Young Men's Magazine, 2: 4 (April 1874) 32
17. Journal of the Adelaide Young Men's Society 48 (August 1881) n.p.
18. Ibid., 73 (September 1883) 2. At this time the Society had 309 members and 188 associates. A note in the 1884 Report of the Society states that 'the number of visitors is often greater than the number of members'.
19. Ibid., 80 (April 1884) 5

invariably name the introduction of Dr Edward Charles Stirling's motion into the House of Assembly in July 1885, as the earliest indication of interest in women's suffrage in South Australia. With few exceptions there has been no explanation of Stirling's background or the reasons for his taking up the issue.[20]

Before entering the House of Assembly as member for North Adelaide in 1884, Stirling, who had gained the Cambridge degrees of MA, MB and MD,[21] had lived abroad for a number of years, although he was born and spent most of his childhood in South Australia. His father, Edward Stirling, had been appointed a member of the Legislative Council in 1855 and had helped to frame South Australia's Constitution. He 'always took the liberal side of arguments' and his family of eight children were influenced by 'a strong liberal tradition'.[22] He and his wife, the former Harriett Taylor, were very closely associated with her brother, John Taylor, both in family affairs and in business. Taylor was for a time editor of the Register and encouraged Catherine Helen Spence in her journalism and novel-writing.[23] The Stirling children were very friendly with their uncle John Taylor, and when in England made contacts with other like-minded family members and friends, including the Fawcett

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20. Notable exceptions are found in two accounts. The first is the only detailed study of women's suffrage in South Australia, Wadham, E.J. 'Women's Suffrage in South Australia, 1883-1894', Honours BA thesis, University of Adelaide 1952, which refers to Stirling's former residence in England and his friendship with Englishmen and women of reformist views, p. 53. The second is Mackenzie, Norman, Women in Australia, Melbourne, 1962, pp. 32-34. Mackenzie gained some of his information from Mr E.S. Booth, Stirling's grandson.
21. Australian Dictionary of Biography, op. cit., v. 6, 1976
22. Information from Mr E.S. Booth, op. cit.
23. Spence, An Autobiography, op. cit., p. 22

family. Edward Charles Stirling was scientist, politician, philanthropist and educator.[24]

Edward Charles Stirling's grandson sums up his motivation towards female suffrage thus:

> When one considers E.C. Stirling's family background and some of his friends and associates in England, nothing could seem more natural than that he should introduce a bill for women's suffrage. There may have been some particular event which acted as a spark, but it is not absolutely necessary to postulate it. 25

In fact, Stirling was representative of part of the intellectual climate in South Australia, where a marked liberal tradition prevailed, and where for some years there had been discussion of women's suffrage. Stirling's move came at a time when, although similar moves in England had suffered set-backs, there was considerable debate continuing, while in South Australia the English lead of a Married Women's Property Act had been followed in 1880. Stirling's motion on women's suffrage, in July, 1885, in the nature of a resolution, was presented to a House already familiar with the discussion of women's rights. His motion was:

> That in the opinion of this House, women, except while under coverture, who fulfill the conditions, and possess the qualifications on which the parliamentary franchise for the Legislative Council is granted to men, shall like them be admitted to the franchise for both Houses of Parliament. 26

This measure was limited in extent and was not in the nature of a Bill. Stirling outlined the history of attempts in the House of Commons to gain female suffrage, and said that he had corresponded with a Member of the British Parliament, Mr Woodall, who intended to bring in a Bill on the measure before long.

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24. The papers of Edward Charles Stirling, some of which have been deposited in the SASA by Mr E.S. Booth, show that Stirling kept press cuttings of various English political speeches, including one by a Mr Goschen of Edinburgh who argued against the franchise of women on the basis of difficulties between married couples arising from politics. _The Times Weekly Edition_, 16 October, 1885, 4b PRG 388, SASA

25. Letter from E.S. Booth, _op. cit._

26. _SAPD_ (HA), 1885, c. 319

Stirling's logical speech put forward arguments for female suffrage on the grounds of natural justice. He explained that he had reluctantly limited the provisions of his resolution, omitting married women and including a property qualification, in the belief that such a measure had a reasonable hope of success, whereas one based on full equality, he had been told, would have none.[27] His long speech included the main arguments, both pro and con, which would be used during the years until female suffrage was granted in 1894. He ended by appealing to his fellow-members' sense of justice and their pride in South Australia:

> It would be another creditable page in the record of South Australia if from the legislature of this distant colony there should proceed yet another measure based upon equity and justice which should serve as a precedent for the law-makers of other countries, whom we were usually accustomed to imitate rather than instruct. [28]

The debate was adjourned for two weeks, and on its resumption three members, including the Attorney-General, J.W. Downer spoke in its favour, while Robert Caldwell stated that he had intended 'to table a motion of similar character' but had been anticipated by Stirling.[29] It would appear from Caldwell's statement that when two members of Parliament independently of each other had similar ideas, they must have had some indication of popular support. The resolution was carried, but no Bill was introduced immediately.

When Stirling did bring in his Bill, in the same form as the resolution, in July, 1886, it failed. The Register castigated it as a watered-down Bill in which Stirling had 'sacrificed too much at the shrine of expediency',[30] by excluding married women. In terms of justice he had asked for 'the whole loaf'; in terms of expediency he had

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27. Ibid., c. 321
28. Ibid., c. 331
29. Ibid., 1886, c. 455
30. Register, 22 July, 1886, 4f

requested only half, which may have aroused suspicions about its worth.[31] The Bill, being an attempt to alter the Constitution, required an absolute majority, and this provision led to a number of defeats in future years.

The Register noted that women had not asked for the reform; so too did the English Women's Suffrage Journal[32] which was to report South Australian moves in some detail until it ceased publication in 1890.[33] The Register also stated that

> public opinion both in and out of Parliament needs to be a good deal enlightened before the change can be made ... 34

From many people, the idea of women voters led only to outraged and facetious comments, such as those of the correspondent to the editor of the Register, who envisaged Parliament House being furnished with 'suckling-rooms'.[35] The writer was among those who held a prejudice which was repeated as a reason throughout the coming campaign. This was that 'Manhood gives the right to vote, not maidenhood'.[36]

As soon as Stirling's Bill was debated the suffrage campaign was mounted, although not initially by any official body. However, some individuals, notably the Congregational minister J.C. Kirby, gave their support to the principle of women's suffrage. In the columns of a daily paper Kirby argued that men had failed, through Parliament, to protect women's interests, especially in the matter of divorce laws and provisions relating to guardianship of children. A wider measure of women's suffrage than that which Stirling had proposed was necessary to ensure social justice for women.[37]

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31. Ibid. He later said that he had made the limitations in order to get in 'the thin edge of the wedge', Register, 21 July, 1888, 6d
32. Women's Suffrage Journal, 17: 204 (December 1886) 188a
33. It closed following the death of its founder and editor, Lydia Becker.
34. Register, 14 October, 1886, 4f
35. Ibid., 28 July, 1886, 7f
36. Ibid.
37. Ibid., 29 July, 1886, 6e

Stirling had laid an official basis and provided a practical starting point for consideration of the suffrage by South Australians. The subsequent discussion which ranged over women's rights, women's place in the community and the intrinsic merits of the suffrage for women, demonstrated increasing public interest. In 1873, the Young Men's Magazine had called for a 'powerful mind' to advocate the cause, and such a person did emerge to guide the campaign for women's suffrage; she was Mary Lee. Others also worked consistently and devotedly in an educational undertaking for women which was to leave a deep impression on South Australia.

## 2. Educational Work of the Women's Suffrage League

The idea of women's suffrage was relatively new to South Australians when Stirling introduced his 1886 Bill. Yet in less than a decade, South Australian women had the vote on equal terms with men and also with provisions for postal voting. There had been a Parliamentary change of opinion, mainly in response to public demand for change. Political expediency played a part also in the final result, but an examination of the suffrage campaign and its effects reveals a build-up of pressure exerted on politicians in favour of the suffrage for women. This arose from an educational campaign, unco-ordinated to begin with, but from 1888 carefully guided by the strong Women's Suffrage League.

The earliest indication of any group's concern for the reform occurred when Mr J.T. Scherk, Member of the House of Assembly, presented a petition in favour of female suffrage in July, 1886. Signed by the president of the United Trades and Labor Council and 28 delegates who represented 3000 'artisans and mechanics of the colony', the petition prayed for the removal of property qualifications in Stirling's Bill.[38]

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38. SAPD (HA), 1886, c. 429, 761

This petition demonstrated an important aspect of the suffrage campaign, the public response, which gave those who worked for it encouragement to continue.

The most significant step following the failure of the 1886 Bill was the formation of the Women's Suffrage League on 21 July, 1888, shortly after Caldwell had tabled the second Women's Suffrage Bill in Parliament. The formation of the Suffrage League had first been proposed by Mary Lee in the course of her work for the Social Purity League which was primarily a women's reform body designed to counter a proposal for introduction of licensed brothels and to raise the age of consent.[39] The Social Purity League recognized that women would have more influence on legislation if they were voters, and therefore meetings were held to form a Women's Suffrage League.

Among those members of the Social Purity League who also became members of the Suffrage League were Miss Hannah Chewings, Mrs Mary Colton and Mary Lee, in addition to Kirby.[40] The League began on a strong basis, Stirling being chairman at the opening meeting of 'about eighty ladies, several members of Parliament, ministers of religion, and others'.[41] Stirling, who had lost his seat in Parliament in 1887, was elected president, Mary Lee and Mr Hector McLennan were honorary secretaries, and eleven women and ten men completed the committee. A

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39. McCorkindale, Isabel (ed.), Torch-Bearers The Women's Christian Temperance Union of South Australia, 1886-1948, Adelaide, 1949, p. 30. The Social Purity League was formed at J.C. Kirby's suggestion. He later claimed that the 'South Australian Social Purity Act' which raised the age of consent to sixteen years, in 1885, and which 'exerted an undoubted influence for improvement on the legislation of all the other Australian colonies', was achieved principally through Mary Lee's 'work and exertion'. Australian Woman's Sphere, 2: 21 (May 1902) 1676

40. McCorkindale, op. cit.; Register, 21 July, 1888, 6d

41. Ibid.

working body of twenty four members indicated that the new League was preparing for considerable activity.

Few of the records of the Women's Suffrage League survive. Reports of meetings, often made at length in the newspapers, provide a useful source of information. Two of the League's published Reports[42] and an 'Application for Membership' are extant. The other major sources of information are letters which Mary Lee wrote to Lady Windeyer and Miss Rose Scott, her suffrage friends in Sydney.[43] Mary Lee's role in the educational campaign was crucial to its success, for she orchestrated various aspects skilfully. She made public speeches and wrote letters to individuals and to newspapers; she also talked informally to many people. She effectively combined social idealism with practical politics in order to achieve women's rights in general and suffrage in particular. Others, women and men, followed her example.

Mary Lee's first letter to the Register following the formation of the Women's Suffrage League was in response to an earlier letter which opposed the reform by using Biblical texts. Her reply revealed a scholarly knowledge of the Bible,[44] a quality valued among South Australian Protestants. Her letter was written in masterly high Victorian prose, using rhetorical questions and closing with the following memorable words:

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42. That for 1891 is held in the Mitchell Library, and for 1894 in the State Library of South Australia.

43. Lady Windeyer was president and Rose Scott was secretary of the New South Wales Womanhood Suffrage League which began in 1891.

44. She had a close association in Ireland with the Church, her husband having been a Cathedral musician. (See above p. 170.) Since his death she had become Protestant. She described herself as 'a slip of a red-hot Tory stem, of the Anglican church for many generations I am a pervert [sic] of only a few years...' Mary Lee to Lady Windeyer, 2 October, 1892, A1 34, ML

> Sir, it is my fixed conviction that every question which concerns the highest interests of our race concerns the women of our race. Believing that I have the highest sanction for this conviction, I mean to live for this reform and if I die before it is achieved, like Mary Tudor and Calais, 'Women's enfranchisement' shall be found engraved upon my heart. [45]

Mary Lee's letter was one of five (four identifiable as women's) all strong and well-expressed, published on the same page and in favour of women's suffrage. Hers carried the stamp of intense conviction based on intellectual reasoning, characteristics which were to mark her years of work for the Women's Suffrage League. She combined her crusading zeal with an acute political awareness, revealed in her letters to Sydney, in which she gave advice based on her own experience of organization and knowledge of politicians' motives.[46]

When the Suffrage League was established in 1888 the movement towards political alignments based on interest groups or factions had begun in South Australia, although it was not until 1891 that the two main parties of the 1890s, the United Labor Party and the National Defence League, emerged. When payment for members was introduced in 1887, it became possible for trade unionists to enter Parliament.[47] Thus the campaign for women's suffrage occurred at a time of political mobility, when allegiances were often based more on personal than organizational ties. It was possible for Members of Parliament to change position on issues, which some did, for example, in the year between Stirling's first and second presentation of the suffrage issue. In the interval, some who had given it support in 1885 as a general principle

45. Register, 27 July,1888, 3f
46. This is exemplified in her description of a deputation to the Premier, F.W. Holder in 1892, asking him 'to make W.S. a measure this session. He replied stating that matters were too far advanced to do so but when formulating his "policy" for the hustings the matter would receive the attention which its importance deserves. This you will say is a very diplomatic answer. We here, who read between the lines read it thus - "The importance which the measure of its support at the hustings confers upon it" - so we must be active'. Mary Lee to Lady Windeyer, 23 September, 1892, MSS 186/13 ML
47. Jaensch, Dean H., 'Political Representation in Colonial South Australia 1857-1901', Ph.D. thesis, University of Adelaide, 1973,p.522

began to see the enfranchisement of propertied women as a threat to the nascent labor organization which was not yet a party, but which was taking some direction from the United Trades and Labor Council. However, as late as 1890 when the Council selected nineteen candidates, of whom fourteen were elected, none of these acknowledged that it had any authority after the elections, for 'the tenet of "independence" had not yet broken down'.[48] This relative fluidity of Parliamentarians was to favour the women's suffrage cause, for with party lines emerging only in 1891, and some members remaining independent, there was a lack of the later rigidity which characterized party platforms. The educational campaign for women's suffrage influenced politicians directly, as well as opening the issue among the general public.

Bills to amend the Constitution Act and introduce women's suffrage were brought before the Parliament on eight occasions; it is not proposed to comment on each one. That which Caldwell introduced unsuccessfully in July, 1888, while retaining Stirling's property qualifications, raised the age of women to be enfranchised to 25 years, and abolished the distinction between spinsters, married women and widows.[49]

The Women's Suffrage League meeting held on 20 July, 1888 had not endorsed Caldwell's Bill in its entirety, and before long the League moved even further from it. The League's principles, i.e. constitution, were originally as follows:

1. That the women of the country should have a voice in the choice of representatives to the Houses of Legislature;
2. That all women, whether married or unmarried, over the age of 25, should be entitled to the franchise;
3. That they be admitted on the same property and residential qualifications that presently apply to manhood suffrage;

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48. <u>Ibid</u>.
49. <u>Register</u>, 21 July, 1888 4g

4. That, while women suffrage is desired, no claim is put forward for women representatives. 50

The League was at variance with Caldwell in wishing to abolish the property qualifications for the House of Assembly. Within a week, doubts set in also about the age limit; these had been raised in the form of an amendment at the first meeting but withdrawn in the interests of unanimity.[51] However, at a League Council meeting held on 26 July it was resolved unanimously 'that the paragraph dealing with the question of age should be excised'.[52]

The 26 July meeting increased the Council to 29, including Annie Montgomerie Martin, Dr S.J. Magarey MLC, and Rose Birks, as Honorary Treasurer.[53] The latter, like Mary Lee, retained her position until the suffrage was gained. It was resolved that petitions should be prepared at once, that members of the executive should take steps to form branches in their own districts, and arrangements were made for the constitution and rules and cards of membership to be printed. The Council decided that the membership subscription should be one shilling annually, that the Executive Council should meet 'at least once a month',[54] and that the principles, or constitution, should be amended to the following:

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50. Ibid., 6c. In the 1891 WSL Annual Report, 'Women's Suffrage' has been altered to 'Woman's Suffrage'. 'Women's' was used on the Application for Membership, and in the 1894 Report.

51. Ibid., 6d

52. Ibid., 28 July, 1888, 5c

53. Ibid. Rose Birks also helped the WSL by 'tactfully making the reform popular in social circles'. WCTU, Minutes of Seventh Annual Convention, 1895, p. 31

54. Ibid.

1. That the women of the country should have a voice in the choice of representatives in the House of Legislature.
2. That the qualifications entitling women to vote should be the same as those which apply to men.
3. That while woman's suffrage is desired, no claim is put forward for the right to sit as representatives. 55

The principles, from that time on, remained unchanged. Some changes, however, occurred among office-holders. The co-secretary, H. McLennan, did not continue after about a year; in 1892 Stirling was unable to remain president[56] and the post fell to Mary Colton who was by then Lady Colton. She was also president of the Young Women's Christian Association, and had formerly been president of the Social Purity League.

Mary Lee took up the task of speaking publicly in 'this memorable campaign'.[57] For example, a newspaper report describes her speaking before 'the ladies of Magill and neighbourhood';[58] on another occasion she spoke at a public meeting in the Semaphore Wesleyan Lecture Hall, advocating the extension of the vote to women. On that occasion, in reviewing the 'rise and history of the agitation in the colony' she remarked,

> that she was very glad that the movement had not originated in what was termed 'society' but in the hearts of the people. 59

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55. Women's Suffrage League of South Australia, Application for Membership. Rose Scott correspondence, Uncat. 38, ML

56. With his activities as Professor of Physiology, as Director of the Museum and his scientific exploration and other interests, it is not surprising that Stirling relinquished the position and became a vice-president. See Australian Dictionary of Biography, v. 6. op. cit.

57. WSL Annual Report, 1891, p. 3

58. Register, 14 August, 1889, 5b

59. Ibid., 18 June, 1890, 5a

Mary Lee was more at home with people who were not concerned primarily with 'society', although she herself, like Catherine Helen Spence, was well-educated and had a gentle family background.[60] Catherine Helen Spence's role in the suffrage campaign will be considered later.

An influential association which backed the Women's Suffrage League was the Woman's Christian Temperance Union, founded in Adelaide in 1886 with 57 members.[61] Membership greatly increased in 1889 under the stimulus of a visiting American missionary, reaching 1112.[62] The Temperance Union was built on the basis of local groups or Unions each of which adopted Departments of work, e.g. public-house visiting, unfermented wine petitions (to churches), temperance and social purity.[63] In the second year, 1887, the Adelaide Union opened a Department of Legislation and Franchise.[64]

The structure of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union determined that the local Unions were largely independent, although the annual Colonial Conventions, meeting from 1889, gave considerable guidance in the form of resolutions. The network of country Unions, numbering 66 in early 1890,[65] formed a unique colonial organization and was of immense assistance in spreading suffrage literature and petitions.[66] Not

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60. Her father had owned an estate in County Monaghan. Observer, 25 September, 1909, 38a. Her husband was described as a 'gentleman' on her death certificate.

61. McCorkindale, op. cit., p. 51

62. 'Second and third years' report of the Women's [sic] Christian Temperance Union of South Australia', 1887, 1888. In possession of Woman's Christian Temperance Union, Adelaide (1979)

63. McCorkindale, op. cit., p. 55. The churches were requested to use unfermented wine for communion.

64. 'Second and third years' reports', op. cit.

65. McCorkindale, op. cit., p. 59. The numbers waned after the initial evangelical tours by two organizers.

66. The WCTU organized their own petitions until June, 1892 when the executive received assent from the WSL to the WCTU request that they might co-operate in gaining signatures to WSL petitions in circulation. WSL Report, 24 July, 1894, p. 2

every Union formed a suffrage Department, but most co-operated in distributing leaflets. The main work of the Temperance Union was the promotion of total abstinence. However, the organizers quickly recognized the suffrage as a means of gaining their temperance ends, and at the same time supported it on the grounds of social justice. This double motive of support continued throughout the campaign.

Two outstanding Temperance Union workers for the suffrage were Mrs Elizabeth Webb Nicholls and Mrs Serena Thorne Lake. In 1889 Elizabeth Nicholls became Colonial President of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union. Both she and Serena Lake were on the Council of the Women's Suffrage League and Serena Lake, as Colonial Superintendent of the Union's suffrage Department, made a rousing speech at the Union's second Convention in 1890, which epitomized their twin aims:

> This is my vision of the future - a world's womanhood enrolled beneath our flag, a given day and signal, a universal rising, every woman a crusader. We will mob the hotel, the brewery with or without the suffrage. Parliament shall hear us ... 67

She travelled to many country towns to organize suffrage Departments[68] and remained a keen suffrage worker until she left the colony in late 1891.[69] Elizabeth Nicholls became suffrage Superintendent in 1893. Serena Lake spoke in practical as well as inspirational terms, urging members to sign petitions in favour of women's suffrage and to get every woman in their district to do so, as '... nothing will impress our Houses of Legislature like such an assurance that the majority wish it'.[70] She urged contributions of at least five shillings from all members to help

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67. WCTU, Minutes of second annual convention, 1890, p. 48

68. Some of her travels were undertaken in bad weather against considerable physical odds.

69. WCTU Minutes of third annual convention, 1891, p. 34. The list of Superintendents included in the WCTU Executive Minute Book on 10 August 1892 does not include suffrage. A Mrs Francis was apparently appointed by the time of the convention a month later.

70. WCTU Minutes of third annual convention 1891, p. 84

with printing and postage. The actual outlay as shown on the 1891 balance sheet was very little, being only £2.19.2.[71] In the final year of the suffrage campaign the Union's suffrage Department spent a total of £5.2.6.[72] Most material was distributed by hand.

Serena Lake claimed that:

> the W.C.T.U. leads the reform [female suffrage] in South Australia with the exception - an honorable one - of the efforts of Mrs. Lee. 72

She was mistaken: the Temperance Union did not lead the reform but followed the lead of the Women's Suffrage League. Mary Lee in her capacity as the League's secretary directed the Union on a number of occasions. In August 1889, as a guest at a committee meeting of 28 Union members, she urged the women to show active interest; several joined the League at once, while others were already members. She pointed out

> ... that the labouring classes had gained great benefits by having the suffrage & that women may hope to gain many of their withheld rights when they also gain it. 73

In December, 1889 on the same platform as Serena Lake, Mary Lee spoke at a Temperance Union meeting of 50 people at Gawler, arguing in terms of natural justice:

> Was it right then that women should be taxed, judged, controlled, fined, imprisoned and even hanged without a word to say on their own part. 74

She addressed the annual conventions of the Union in 1890, 1893 and 1894 on the suffrage theme.[75]

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71. Ibid., p. 85
72. Ibid., 1892, p. 82
73. WCTU Minutes of executive committee, 6 August, 1889, p. 6
74. Bunyip, 13 December, 1889, n.p; WCTU Minutes of second annual convention 1890, p. 36
75. Ibid., p. 14; 1892, p. 13; 1894, p. 13

Mary Lee was not a member of the Union nor was she sympathetic with its aims.[76] She was a close friend of Mary Colton, who was a staunch Union member, and worked closely with her on the Women's Suffrage League, but Mary Lee merely used the Union as a vehicle for spreading suffrage views. She never supported temperance principles. The Union's position in relation to the Suffrage League was made clear in its 1890 Presidential report:

> While we do not desire to be regarded as a suffrage society, we realize the increased power against legalized sin which will come to us with the granting of womanhood suffrage. [77]

The part which the Woman's Christian Temperance Union played in the campaign was very important in view of its large membership and geographical spread. The fact that a temperance organization supported suffrage may have prejudiced some people against it. Such prejudice, however, might have been counter-balanced by the support of bodies such as the United Trades and Labor Council and Working Women's Trades Union which endorsed the Suffrage League's campaign.

The United Trades and Labor Council gave its backing from early in 1891, notifying a Women's Suffrage League meeting in March that 'the representatives of labour are ready to support adult suffrage'.[78] The Council also helped with petitions.[79] In May 1893, in reply to a letter from Mary Lee appealing for Council help with a suffrage petition, the secretary wrote:

> I am instructed to inform you that the members of the Council have been asked to render what assistance they can in the direction sought. [80]

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76. In a letter to Rose Scott, Mary Lee wrote, 'I am sorry that Miss George [secretary WCTU] has been so discourteous but as I know nothing of the movet^s [sic] of the W.C.T U. I can hardly be held responsible for their manners or their wa[illegible]t of them - We know the plane on w^h [sic] they live move and have their being & I am not in sympathy with them'. Mary Lee to Rose Scott, 25 March, 1897, A2271, 261 ML

77. WCTU Minutes of third annual convention, 1891, p. 30

78. Woman's Suffrage Journal, 1: 1 (June 1891) p. 3

79. UTLC Minutes 5 May, 1891, 18 August, 1893; Coghlan, op. cit., v.4,.p.19

80. UTLC Letter book, 22 May, 1893. J.A. McPherson to Mary Lee.

In March, 1893 Mary Lee became a delegate to the United Trades and Labor Council from the women's trade union,[81] was appointed to a Sweating Committee,[82] and for a short time in the same year acted as joint secretary of the Distressed Women's and Children's Fund.[83] She and her work were, therefore, well known among unionists, and she and Augusta Zadow co-operated in both trade union and suffrage affairs. Augusta Zadow spoke 'with simple eloquence' at a suffrage meeting during the Temperance Union's annual convention in 1893,[84] and she also addressed a public meeting of the Women's Suffrage League as a representative of the Working Women's Trade Union in March of that year. She said that

> She was there to represent the working women of South Australia, and maintained that all of her Majesty's subjects, irrespective of class, creed or sex, should have a vote, and it was an insult to women that they had not that privilege ... It was the unanimous opinion of the Women's Trade Union that the franchise should be granted to one and all. [85]

Her unequivocal statement clearly shows that working women backed the reform.

On that occasion, she and other speakers represented the League's wide and varied sources of support. They included Dr Magarey; the Methodist clergyman, J. Day Thompson; the independent reformer, Baptist share-broker Cornelius Proud, who was an associate member of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union; Elizabeth Nicholls, the Union's President; Mary Lee, and Catherine Helen Spence who was then vice-president of the Women's Suffrage League and a widely known and respected figure in various fields.[86]

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81. UTLC Minutes 17 March, 1893
82. Ibid., 5 May, 1893
83. Ibid., 7 July, 1893
84. WCTU Minutes of fifth annual convention, 1893, p. 16
85. Observer, 18 March, 1893, 36f; see also Register, 15 March, 1893, 6e
86. Ibid.

Catherine Helen Spence's role in the campaign for women's suffrage has been under-estimated in writings on the subject. She was not a foundation member of the Women's Suffrage League and later wrote modestly of her own efforts in that direction:

> For myself, I considered electoral reform on the Hare system [of proportional representation] of more value than the enfranchisement of women, and was not eager for the doubling of the electors in number, especially as the new voters would probably be more ignorant and more apathetic than the old. I was accounted a weak-kneed sister by those who worked primarily for women suffrage, although I was as much convinced as they were that I was entitled to a vote, and hoped that I might be able to exercise it before I was too feeble to hobble to the polls. [87]

By the time the Suffrage League began, she had developed a consuming interest in proportional representation which she believed was necessary to form a true democracy, and she demonstrated the system to many meetings. In addition, she supported the theorists of women's suffrage; she owned Mill's books, knew Mary Wollstonecraft's writings, and on meeting Mill in England heard his stepdaughter tell him that he should have asked in Parliament for the vote for women on the same terms as that for men.[88]

In spite of her diffidence, she did in fact become an advocate for women's suffrage, attending her first Women's Suffrage League meeting, over which she presided, in March, 1891,[89] and joining a deputation from the League to the Premier, Thomas Playford, in June, 1891. She told him that:

> as a colonist of fifty one years who had taken her full share in colonial life, to whom Australian politics were the very breath of her nostrils, and to whom this great country was dear to her as her very heart's blood, she thought that she had some right in agitating for freedom

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87. Spence, An Autobiography, op. cit., p. 41

88. Ibid. Mill subsequently wrote to Catherine Helen Spence saying that he thought the suffrage would be granted to women in England before the colonies. His letter was dated November 1869, Ibid., p. 42

89. Observer, 28 March, 1891, 35d

> from the disfranchisement from which she had suffered since she had attained her twenty-first year ... She had been a taxpayer all these years, done her share in the work of the colony, and she thought it was only fair, as the constitutional maxim said, that those who were taxed should be represented in the taxing body. 90

Playford was unmoved by her plea and those of others in the deputation.[91]

Catherine Helen Spence became vice-president of the Women's Suffrage League in 1892,[92] and in December of that year, on a long lecturing tour of South Australia promoting proportional representation, she was authorized to enrol Suffrage League members and collect subscriptions. It was her secondary aim, but nevertheless demonstrates her dedication to the suffrage. Whenever the subject arose on her tour she reported that it was 'well received'.[93] In 1893, when she undertook a lecture tour in the United States 'credentials from our W.S. Council unlocked for Miss Spence the doors of important opportunities'.[94] She met most of America's leading suffragists, and gave '14 paid lectures chiefly for Women's Clubs - Equal Suffrage mostly'.[95] Returning to Adelaide from her travels on the eve of the successful Act for women's suffrage she was fêted by the Women's Suffrage League at a crowded evening function in the 'large room of the Café de Paris', where she described meeting women suffragists in America and on the Continent.[96]

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90. Ibid., 6 June, 1891, 35d
91. He was later described at the WSL's annual meeting of 1892 as 'proof alike to eloquence and logic'. Register, 17 May, 1892, 7d
92. Observer, 21 May, 1892, 34a
93. WSL Report, July, 1894, p. 3
94. Ibid., p. 6
95. C.H. Spence to Rose Scott, 20 September, 1902, Scott papers, Uncat. 38, ML. She also addressed five major conferences at the Chicago World Fair. Australian Dictionary of Biography, v. 6, op. cit.
96. Observer, 22 December, 1894, 30e

On this occasion she stated that she 'had always been in favour of women's suffrage' and using the rhetoric of the suffragists, said that 'When women received the right to vote then work would only just begin'.[97] Following the successful passage of the Act she received a message of congratulations signed by leading American women reformers, many of whom she knew.[98] There is no doubt that Catherine Helen Spence played an important role in the campaign, and one independent of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union[99] for even though she was absent during the last crucial period, she had lent her full support, and undoubtedly her years of responsible experience in public affairs and political journalism added the weight of authority to her views, and had an impact on the public.

The support of major Protestant Churches also strengthened the Women's Suffrage League. The first body to respond to a petition from the League asking for sympathy 'in the effort to secure duly qualified women a vote in theelection of members of Parliament' was the Wesleyan Conference, in February, 1889.[100] When the Baptist Association and the

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97. Ibid.

98. The letter was dated 1 March, 1895, from the Office of the Secretary, National Council of Women, Washington. It began, 'We a few of your many American friends, assembled in our capital to attend the second triennial session of the National Council of women of the United States send you greeting and congratulate you, and the women of your country, upon having secured civil equality with men of South Australia'. Among the 30 signatories were Susan B. Anthony, Carrie Chapman Catt and Alice Stone Blackwell. PRG 88 A971/D1 SASA

99. Catherine Helen Spence, like Mary Lee, was unsympathetic to temperance ideals. Writing about sending delegates to an international conference of women suffragists in Washington, she commented on two possible women. One she said was 'earnest and capable and broader than most of the WCTU' while the other was described as 'an excellent person to go but I should like someone to go also that was not a member of the WCTU to represent the justice of political equality without having the prohibition Axe to grind'. C.H. Spence to Rose Scott, 20 September, 1902, Scott Papers, Uncat. 38, ML

100. Register, 4 February, 1889, 7a. The petition included a brief historical account of women's suffrage in the United States and listed prominent English women in favour of the reform. It was signed Mary Lee and Hector McLennan, Joint Secretaries.

Congregational Union held their annual conferences in October, 1889, they too supported the petition.[101] Some of the clergy had doubts on the grounds that it was a 'political question'[102] but the great majority voted in favour and swung the considerable moral and social power of their churches behind the suffrage. There is evidence in women's correspondence to an Adelaide Methodist journal that women themselves desired the vote. One woman's letter is representative of a number of others:

> How little do some people understand our pitiful, desperate demand to be put on a level with the poor agricultural labourers, and to be granted that little favour the Parliamentary vote! 103

While suffrage supporters fell into clearly defined groups or else spoke out as individuals, its opponents were less easily identifiable, except for the Parliamentarians who spoke against it and some of whom, like Kingston, changed position as the content of the various suffrage Bills altered. Outside Parliament, there were some anti-suffrage correspondents to the newspapers and a number of petitions, mainly small, to Parliament (see below, p. 252). Anti-suffrage sentiment was not channelled into any organization, but remained fragmented. It is by no means clear who the anti-suffragists were; their arguments were based on conventional grounds, sometimes religious, such as that of two correspondents to the Christian Weekly and Methodist Journal. The first, a woman, deplored the 'publicity and unwholesome atmosphere of the voting-place', fearing that

> for women to help in the choice of leaders ... will bring confusion upon the land and great spiritual loss ... 104

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101. Women's Suffrage Journal, 21: 241 (January 1890) 10a

102. Register, 4 February, 1889, 7a

103. Christian Weekly and Methodist Journal, 18 (August 1888) 9

104. Ibid., 17 (July 1888) 10

The second correspondent feared the political influence of priests on Roman Catholic women.[105]

Others argued on fundamentalist religious grounds, like the writer of a long letter, condensed by the *Register*, who signed himself "Whipster" and wrote that:

> '... man was made a little lower than the angels with domination over all other creatures', ... men are the masters of women, and in his opinion it follows that woman's will must either accord with or be subservient to that of men. 106

He continued with further arguments, including that for the better training of girls in domestic duties to fit them for their role in life as 'friend, counsellor, and helpmate to man ...' Woman's suffrage he 'regarded as ridiculous and wasteful excess' when man, under her loving influence 'better perform(s) his duties - as ruler of the world'.[107]

Another basis of anti-suffrage argument was the theme of the 'pedestal lady'. This paragon was described by a C.H. Hussey, who attacked Mary Lee in 1891 for her public speaking. He wrote:

> I have always looked upon a true woman as one of the loveliest things in creation, chaste, gentle, shy, retiring, unobtrusive, not given to clamour or wrangle, confiding, and consequently most lovable withal. 108

The writer maintained that a descent 'from the high and holy position assigned them by nature and by Providence' would result in the forfeit of their honour and the respect of the opposite sex. Mary Lee, and

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105. *Ibid.*, 19 (August 1888) 9. This argument was rebutted as 'unworthy' by *J.C.* Kirby who also pointed out that Roman Catholics formed only thirteen per cent of the population and that 'At present not more than 60 per cent of the male electors vote'. *Ibid.*, 37 (December 1888) 7

106. *Register*, 26 July, 1894, 5g

107. *Ibid.*

108. *Observer*, 15 August, 1891, 8e

others like her, were educating women by stating their own beliefs and position which opposed completely the view of women as lovely 'things', incapable of participating in politics. One correspondent expressed the opinion that:

> For women to mix in active politics, attend rowdy polling-booths and political meetings will soon knock all the poetry out of 'lovely women'.

Voting would 'greatly tend to destroy the tenderness, poetry, and beauty of their lives'.[109] Such views were, however, only infrequently printed.

The occasional letters and petitions by anti-suffragists were usually on an individual basis,[110] although the Woman's Christian Temperance Union asserted that liquor interests were behind the opposition, and that Sir Edwin Smith MLC 'who, it is said, holds mortgages to the amount of £100,000 on the public houses of the colony', was vehemently opposed in Parliament to the suffrage and was, by inference, linked with the largest anti-suffrage petition of 2000 names.[111] The wording of this was a slight adaptation of a petition 'promoted by a few millionaires' wives in New York', based on the 'pedestal lady' argument that Parliament had no right to 'force on' women a duty they did not desire and were not fitted by nature to perform.[112] One of the petitions opposed to female suffrage which had only 43 signatures used similar arguments to those above.[113]

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109. Observer, 8 September, 1894, 12a

110. Some anti-suffrage letters and editorials were published in country as well as city newspapers. See Millicent Times, 24 November, 1894. In the Kapunda Herald, 9 January 1894, a lukewarm editorial for female suffrage appeared.

111. Proud, Cornelius, 'The Story of How Woman's Suffrage was Won in South Australia', in McCorkindale, op. cit., p. 32. The petition 'against the Adult Suffrage Bill' was presented on 8 November, 1894. SAPD (HA) 1894, c. 2230

112. Ibid.

113. SAPP, 1894, 38, 'Petition Against Women's Suffrage'.

The Parliamentary history of women's suffrage Bills is complex and is related to the emerging parties. Caldwell's first attempt having failed, he put forward a second Bill in 1890, proposing that women be granted suffrage for the Upper House on the same basis as the existing men's suffrage, i.e. on a property basis. The Women's Suffrage League 'felt bound to support it', even though it was not for the Lower House, because 'as far as it went the Bill carried out the principle of electoral equality as between the sexes'.[114] But the League wished it to be known that the Bill, which also failed, a quorum not being present, 'was his [Caldwell's] and not ours'.[115]

In April, 1891 the League, after conferring with Caldwell, resolved that his proposal for dealing with the suffrage in the coming session

> was not calculated to propitiate the supporters of this reform, and that the Council pledged itself to adult suffrage in its integrity in accordance with the cardinal principle of the League. [116]

However, when Caldwell introduced the Suffrage League deputation to the Premier, Playford, in May, he fell out with the League by asking the Government to take up his own forthcoming Bill which included a property qualification. When this was reported in the press,[117] reaction from trade unionists caused Mary Lee to take the unprecedented step of attending a United Trades and Labor Council meeting in her capacity of

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114. Observer, 28 March, 1891, 35e

115. Ibid.

116. Register, 17 May, 1892, 7d

117. Observer, 6 June, 1891, 35c

secretary of the Women's Suffrage League. Standing orders were suspended in the Council while she made an explanatory statement. She said that:

> ... the League did not approve of Mr. Caldwell's Bill and still demanded women's suffrage without any property qualifications whatever. 118

Out of this meeting emerged a clear statement of support from the United Trades and Labor Council, a resolution re-affirming that while it was not opposed to women's suffrage 'pure and simple' it would 'oppose to the utmost' any Bill involving property qualifications.[119] Adult suffrage was already part of the new United Labor Party's platform.[120]

Caldwell's Bill was taken over by Mr J. Warren in the Legislative Council and gained a majority in both Houses, but not the required absolute majority.[121] No Bill was presented again until Kingston's Government took office in mid-1893. In the meantime, the Women's Suffrage League had undertaken a great deal of public activity and some lobbying. Mary Lee wrote:

> I have been very busy urging that the party which has placed this ministry in power shall insist that our W.S. shall be embodied in the Gov$^{\underline{t}}$ Policy ... If it is not I shall not keep very quiet. 122

She had, by this time, developed very strong confidence and had made contacts with many Parliamentarians.

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118. UTLC Minutes, 5 May, 1891

119. Ibid. Mary Lee discerned that some 'panic' had arisen among Labor supporters because of Caldwell's Bill and that they, 'recognizing the danger and unwisdom of holding aloof have pledged their entire support to Adult Suffrage'. Mary Lee to Lady Windeyer, 20 July, 1891, A134, ML

120. Wallis, F.S., 'History of the South Australian Labour Party 1882-1900', pp. 12, 14. Typescript, 1347M SASA

121. WSL Annual Report, 1891, p. 4

122. Mary Lee to Rose Scott, 27 June, 1893, Scott Papers, A2771, p. 58, ML

Kingston, while in opposition, had been against women's suffrage partly because of the property qualifications attached to the Bills. In government, as Premier, he saw its advantages in increasing the number of city voters who might be disposed to vote for abolition of the Legislative Council, and included it in his policy; when Cockburn presented his suffrage Bill in 1893, Kingston added a referendum qualification,[123] under which both male voters and unenfranchised women would indicate their wishes in a referendum.[124] This provision would have practically circumvented the need for Upper House approval, and the Referendum Bill and the Suffrage Bill failed on this basis. The Women's Suffrage League protested strongly and gained further support, so that Kingston and his Government came under pressure to bring in a satisfactory Bill. As Kingston's Government included two former Premiers, Cockburn and Holder,[125] both women's suffrage supporters, it was only a matter of time before he responded, and the final Bill was introduced in July, 1894.

Meanwhile, the educational campaign had increased its tempo, with press interest rising and petitions being circulated. From being regarded as a 'fad' in 1889, Mary Lee claimed that by 1891 the issue 'had achieved a footing within the charmed region of practical politics'.[126] Those conservatives who looked with 'sneering indifference' on the issue had begun to 'seek the influence of the women', while 'the labour party' also supported it.[127] By 1891 the League had a

123. WSL Report, 1894, p. 3

124. Observer, 14 July, 1894, 24d

125. Both Cockburn and Holder had spoken on the same platform in favour of women's suffrage at the WCTU Convention of 1890, Holder advising 'no compromise' with equal suffrage. WCTU Minutes of second annual convention, 1890, p. 15. Neither, as Premier, had sufficient support in the matter to introduce a Bill. Cockburn was Premier from June 1889 to August 1890, Holder from June 1892 to October 1892.

126. Mary Lee to Lady Windeyer, 20 July, 1891, A134, ML. In 1890 Cockburn had claimed that 'The tide of of public opinion was with the women', WCTU Minutes of second annual convention, 1890, p. 15

127. Mary Lee to Lady Windeyer, op. cit.

tight organization working steadily, the Executive being responsible for the circulation of 'literature bearing on the subject', and paying for 'printing cards circulars &c for postage & advertise[ts] [sic]'.[128] In May 1892, at the Women's Suffrage League's annual meeting, a large committee of 33, with power to add, was elected.[129] Under Lady Colton's presidency the League was operating more strongly than when Stirling held the position; she had more time to devote to the issue, and the ground-work had been laid in the first few years. By 1892 women's suffrage was a well-known public issue.

In September, 1892, Mary Lee wrote:

> Those women who are generally most difficult to move are at length throwing off their apathy and beginning to realize that the vote is not likely to be a barren honor, but a real benefit. What is even more hopeful is that the other sex in all classes is recognizing that justice is on our side. 130

She and her 'dearly loved and deeply honoured' President, Mary Colton, worked in close harmony; she advised Lady Windeyer in Sydney to do the same with her secretary, Rose Scott:

> It is an article That you & the Secretary, dear Miss Scott must still regard yourselves as the very core of the movement and for no provocation give up the role. What does it matter what they call you or how you are abused? The more I am abused the more I feel assured that we are progressing, so I just take heart and go on. 131

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128. Ibid., 8 September, 1891

129. Register, 17 May, 1892, 7d

130. Mary Lee to Lady Windeyer, op. cit., 23 September, 1892

131. Ibid., 24 July, 1893. In the same letter she wrote of difficulties: 'do not think ours has been all plain sailing - by no means; more than once the attempt has been made to use our League for the promotion of selfish ends ...'

To Rose Scott, who had mentioned the assistance a clergyman had given by lecturing in favour of women's suffrage, Mary Lee protested vehemently:

> We are glad & grateful for all & any help, but I must, if speaking with my last breath, emphasize my conviction that what is done for women must be done by women, more than ever at this crisis in the history of womanhood ... If we cannot fairly represent our own case are we fit to exercise its duties? Have we any right to claim its privileges? I say no. We have taken the field - thrown up our own earthworks, let the men who wish to help us rally to our flag and take their due place - They have not led this struggle. [132]

These are important statements, indicating Mary Lee's assessment of the strength of women's place in the South Australian suffrage struggle. No records of the League's membership appear to have survived, but Mary Lee indicates that it was mainly women who joined. Numbers are not known. She herself had given several lectures in 1893, just before writing to Rose Scott, 'and have been most successful in winning converts to our cause'. She realized, very practically, that membership was 'the test of persuasion'.[133]

One of the main leaflets circulated during the campaign was titled 'Letter to Women'. Written by Mary Lee and first published in April 1890, in the *Register*, it comprised almost a full newspaper column. An eloquent plea, it was skilfully composed somewhat in the manner of a sermon. Beginning with the statement, 'She does not ask for it', the letter introduced themes of justice, patriotism, the English women's movement, and the sufferings of the poor under male representation. Making use of poetry and prose quotations and rhetorical questions, the writer worked to a climax, the peroration including the following words:

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132. Mary Lee to Rose Scott, Scott Papers, 27 June 1893, A2271, p. 68 ML

133. *Ibid*. In order to give one lecture she had gone out while sick to the Port Adelaide Democratic Club where there was 'a grand gathering', presided over by the Mayor. Two Parliamentarians present were to take the meeting's resolutions in favour of women's franchise to the Government.

> Let us be up and doing. Let every woman who can influence an elector see that he gives his vote as a sledgehammer, and goes to the poll resolved to dash from its pedestal of authority this hoary injustice to womanhood to give no support or countenance to the man who would withhold from woman her birth right to be free. Do not let us continue to deserve the taunt, 'She does not ask for it'. 135

Leaflets, letters and petitions were continually circulated, frequently by hand. One of the most widely-circulated leaflets was titled 'Sixteen Reasons for Supporting Woman's Suffrage'. It was first published by the Woman's Christian Temperance Union National Franchise Department, New Zealand, and contained sixteen cogent reasons in favour of the suffrage, briefly set out.[136] Some campaigners spoke on every occasion possible, a new departure for most women in South Australia. In moving about the colony Mary Lee reported in 1894 that she had spoken at Gawler, Templers, Quorn, Port Pirie and Port Augusta,[137] when the press devoted considerable space to the issue, with 'fairness and courtesy[138] which assisted publicity. The total cost of the Women's Suffrage League campaign over six years was less than £150.[139]

Contact with other colonial movements was maintained through letters and visits. In Sydney, the new _Woman's Suffrage Journal_, in 1891, reported that 'Of the Australian Colonies, South Australia stands first in the matter of suffrage work ...'[140] When the Womanhood Suffrage

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135. _Ibid_. This leaflet was also sent to Sydney to assist the WSL there, and to Broken Hill. Mary Lee to Rose Scott, _op. cit._, 10 October, 1892

136. See Appendix E.

137. _WSL_ Report, 1894, p. 7

138. _Ibid_.

139. Proud, _op. cit._, p. 38

140. _Woman's Suffrage Journal_, 1: 1 (June 1891) p. 3

League of New South Wales was founded in that year it adopted 'in the first place' the South Australian League's rules.[141] Judging from the letters which Mary Lee wrote to Lady Windeyer, president of the New South Wales League, the latter sought advice from her South Australian counterpart. Mary Lee advised the New South Wales League that suffrage moves were being made in Tasmania,[142] and she also sent South Australian news to suffragists in New Zealand,[143] and the League in South Australia responded with increased efforts following the New Zealand women's suffrage Act in September 1893.

The South Australian suffragists kept in touch with suffrage affairs in England and America; both Kirby and Rose Birks visited English suffrage headquarters, exchanging views and making contacts with leaders of the campaign.[144] After Kirby's visit to the headquarters of the National Society for Woman's Suffrage, London, the South Australian League received a letter from its secretary, Miss Helen Blackburn, saying that his visit 'seems to have brought us much closer to our co-workers in Australia'.[145]

The final successful Bill took a considerable time to make its way through the Parliamentary process. Introduced in the Legislative Council in July, 1894 by Chief Secretary J.H. Gordon, it passed, but was allowed to lie before being presented at a propitious time in the Assembly. In the meantime, the biggest effort of the Suffrage League

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141. Parkes correspondence. Lady Windeyer to Henry Parkes, 8 September 1893. A918 v. 48, NLA. See also Woman's Suffrage Journal, 1: 2 (July 1891) p. 3; 1: 3 (September 1891) p. 3

142. Fischer, J.F., 'A Collection of Pamphlets, Newspaper Cuttings and Manuscript Notes 1886-1894' (relating to women's suffrage). Newspaper cutting headed DT [Daily Telegraph] 10/6/1892. 324, 3/F ML

143. Ibid. [Prohibitionist, New Zealand, 5/11/92 - Details handwritten]

144. In mid-1892 two eminent American women suffragists visited Adelaide Ibid., p. 2; Observer, 21 May, 1892, 34a; Mary Lee to Lady Windeyer, op. cit. 8 September, 1891. See also WSL Annual Report, 1891, pp. 5-6

145. Ibid.

was under way, a great petition which began circulating in March, 1894 and which finally carried 11,600 signatures[146] of both men and women. It was worded simply:

> The petition of the undersigned adult residents of the province of South Australia. To the Speaker and Members of the House of Assembly. Humbly sheweth -
> I That your petitioners are convinced of the absolute justice of giving women the franchise for both Houses of Parliament on the same terms as now or may be hereafter granted to men
> II They therefore respectfully pray that the necessary legislation may be passed by your Honourable House with the least possible delay. [147]

The petition, in the form of sheets each holding about 30 signatures, was formulated and managed by the Women's Suffrage League, and was circulated to many parts of the colony.[148] The Woman's Christian Temperance Union gave its full support, later claiming to have gained 8000 of the total signatures.[149] The final document was formed by pasting the sheets together, making a great roll 400 feet long, which was carried to the House by Proud who had composed the petition, and presented by G.C. Hawker on 23 August, 1894.[150]

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146. There is a discrepancy in the numbers of petitioners as stated in Hansard and in the preamble to the petition as printed in the Parliamentary Papers. See SAPD (HA) 1894 c. 1086 which includes the statement that the Hon. G.C. Hawker presented the petition 'signed by 11,600 adults in South Australia ...' The Parliamentary Paper, No. 75 of 1894, prints the number as 11,000. The petition itself is too brittle to be completely unrolled.

147. SAPP, 1894, No. 75

148. One sheet, for example, carries 30 names from Willunga and district. On the reverse it bears a penny stamp and the address 'Mrs Mary Lee, Y.M.C.A. rooms, Adelaide'. It is endorsed 'Petition only from J. Jenkin, Willunga'. Other sheets carry names from such places as Moonta Mines, Willow Plains, Millicent and Port Pirie. The majority among the first several hundred are from Adelaide.

149. WCTU Minutes of sixth annual convention, 1894, p. 29. Their total membership in October 1894, however, was only 1540. Ibid., seventh annual convention, 1895, p. 75

150. The petition is preserved, in a fragile condition, in the vault of Parliament House, Adelaide. The first part is missing; the earliest name is numbered 42.

The way in which the Bill finally passed the House of Assembly, when the Government had assured itself of the numbers for a vote on the second reading late at night, has been recounted in various writings on the suffrage.[151] As the Bill was being debated, women filled the galleries, having 'deluged' Parliamentarians with telegrams,[152] although for its final passage on the morning of 18 December, following the last vote, few women were present as they had remained in the galleries waiting for the third reading until 'after midnight'.[153] In committee, opponents of the suffrage proposed two clauses in the hope of wrecking the Bill. Both were accepted. One permitted women to stand as candidates for Parliament, while the other allowed postal votes on account of distance from a polling booth or for health reasons.[154]

3. Women's Leadership in Political Education

The impact of the suffrage on women will be considered in the following chapter. The first elections were not until March 1896, and in February of that year a very significant event occurred, one which has been recorded in no subsequent history. At the Adelaide Town Hall, at a gathering of men and women, 'principally ladies', the Mayor of Adelaide presided over a ceremony to honor Mary Lee for her work 'done

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151. These works are named in Appendix J, 'Historiography of the South Australian Women's Suffrage', with the exception of the lively account given by W.G. Spence, the Labor Party and trade union pioneer, who described the way in which Sir Langdon Bonython detained 'wobbly' member of Parliament Jimmy Howe until the division bells rang, thus ensuring a majority. Spence, W.G. Australia's Awakening, Sydney, 1909, p. 272.

152. Information from Miss E. Walker who discussed the suffrage in 1941 with Elizabeth Nicholls.

153. Herald, 21 December, 1894, 3a

154. In effect, for reasons related to the Constitution Act, they could not at first stand for the Legislative Council. South Australia, Constitution Amendment Act No. 613, 1894

in a determined and consistent manner ... in connection with the female franchise'.[155] He stated that:

> Mrs. Lee had been the motive power in bringing about woman's suffrage, and her name would be honoured for that ... 156

The Premier, Kingston, next presented her with a testimonial and a purse of fifty sovereigns, saying that:

> Mrs. Lee was closely connected with one of the most important constitutional reforms in South Australia. She was ever foremost in the fight for the emancipation of her sex ... 157

The testimonial read, in part:

> Many other names occur to us worthy of mention as having been associated with you in this work but it is generally admitted that it is mainly due to your persistent advocacy and unwearied exertions, as Hon. Secretary of the Women's Suffrage League that ours has been the first in the Australian colonies to attain this forward step in modern progress. 158

This public acknowledgement confirms Mary Lee's place in the lead of all South Australian suffrage campaigners. The question arises, why has she been neglected? At the time, she was well known and honored, but those who wrote of the suffrage, with the exception of Proud and Woman's Christian Temperance Union reports, did not mention her. When she was included, it was in a manner that assumed the reader knew of her work.

She herself antagonized people by her forthrightness, and in her old age, when she was in want, the Reverend J.C. Kirby appealed through

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155. Register, 15 February, 1896, 7f. The people present were former suffrage workers.

156. Ibid.

157. Ibid. The usually satirical journal Quiz and the Lantern, commenting on the occasion, noted that 'she [Mary Lee] has had to endure much obloquy, and £50 is a very poor solatium'. Quiz and the Lantern, 20 February, 1896, 3b

158. Ibid. During the meeting congratulatory telegrams were read from the Victorian Women's Franchise League and 'friends of the movement'.

the New South Wales journal, the Australian Woman's Sphere, for funds for her relief.[159] The fund was 'not very well taken up'[160] although Rose Scott sent a guinea. Kirby explained to her that Mary Lee

> has taken such an advanced position on many things that though many have benefited they are not particularly grateful. [161]

Her poverty had led her, as early as four years previously, to the extreme step of asking Sir Josiah Symon to arrange for sale of her library, which she hoped would be acquired by the South Australian Public Library.[162]

Mary Lee's part in the suffrage campaign was crucial to its success. The fire and vigour of her speeches and letters struck home to South Australians who had similar, if sometimes milder, views on equality and justice. The only secretary of the Women's Suffrage League, she was the right person present at the appropriate time and place to act as the stimulus for a great reform. Her work and that of the Women's Suffrage was reinforced by some formal educational influences. The widening of women's higher education undoubtedly influenced public thinking on the issue, and the example of Dr Laura Fowler, first female graduate in medicine of the University of Adelaide, who had attended the Advanced

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159. Australian Woman's Sphere, 2: 21 (May 1902) 167b

160. J.C. Kirby to Rose Scott, 12 May 1902. Rose Scott papers, A22/72, 685, ML

161. Ibid. Mary Lee wrote to thank Rose Scott for a letter of 'loving sympathy and encouragement' and spoke bitterly of being an 'unsalaried' visitor to the lunatic asylums, threatened with homelessness after all her work for others. Mary Lee to Rose Scott, op. cit., 21 April, 1902

162. Symon, although acknowledging that her 'literary possessions' were 'of a character and value entitling them to a place in our Public Library' said that he had no connection, 'official or other', to make the transaction, and instead approached a 'respectable and trustworthy bookagent' on her behalf. The result is not known. Josiah Symon letters, v. 5, pp. 339-40, 26 September 1898, MS 1736/1/887/5 NLA

School for Girls, was cited in the League's 1891 report as evidence of the 'advancement of women' in the colony.[163]

Eliza Kelsey, speaking in her capacity as a headmistress, in addressing the 1893 conference of the Australasian Association for the Advancement of Science, noted that her own ability, as a rate-payer, to vote for members of 'the Municipal Council' was a half-way step to women's suffrage, which she saw as 'only a question of time'.[164] She described her own experience, saying:

> Personally, I avail myself of my privileges, and my experience has been that I walk quietly down to the booth, the men move aside, allow me to enter, and I as quietly come out and walk away. In fact, there is far less 'hustling and jostling' than one meets with every day at railway stations, or on getting in and out of tramcars. [165]

Her commonsense approach would surely have been effective in winning support.

The Advanced School for Girls provided the most powerful example to South Australians of the effects of higher education on women, many of whom subsequently took up positions of responsibility. There is no doubt that the school's existence and its scholars' achievements had a direct connection with the success of the suffrage campaign. In December 1894, several days after the Constitution Amendment Act's successful passage, this link was identified by the Minister of Education, Dr John Cockburn. He said at the Advanced School's speech day:

> Had it not been for the girls' successes at the University and elsewhere proving their equality to men the champions of the cause would have struggled in vain. So they saw that they now had the final consummation of the emancipation of women, and the girls and the school had rendered a lot of assistance in bringing about the dénouement ... [166]

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163. WSL Annual Report 1891, op. cit., p. 6

164. Kelsey, op. cit., p. 8

165. Ibid.

166. Register, 22 December, 1894, p. 7a

This very important statement, made by a man who had been closely associated with the introduction of Parliamentary measures for the female suffrage, draws into perspective the singular place of the Advanced School as exemplar of the role of the educated woman.

The nature of the society itself was of the greatest importance. In commenting on the granting of suffrage in both New Zealand and South Australia, Catherine Helen Spence wrote:

> This, the greatest step towards enfranchisement of women all over the world, is, I think, directly due to our doctrinaire ancestry, which I trace to Molesworth, Grote, Mill, Wakefield and Rowland Hill, all advanced Radicals and strong for women's rights. 167

These planners and founders of South Australia were responsible for attracting the men and women settlers who themselves frequently had liberal ideas. It was also Catherine Helen Spence's opinion that in both New Zealand and South Australia

> women have always taken a greater interest and been allowed a greater share in public work than in the other colonies. 168

Her considered views are supported by the contemporary evidence.

The educational campaign for women's suffrage in South Australia arose from various social influences. It was successful not only because of the liberal attitudes of many colonists and the work of individual men and women, notably that of Mary Lee, but also because the state already accepted the potential of women in higher education, demonstrated by the Advanced School for Girls. South Australians too, had become accustomed to the authority of such women as Catherine Helen Spence, Augusta Zadow, Agnes Milne, Mary Colton and Annie Montgomerie Martin, and to their reformist activities.

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167. Catherine Helen Spence papers. Untitled paper on National Council of Women, p. 53, M55 202/5-1 ML

168. *Ibid.*

The women's suffrage was won because of all these factors which were used either explicitly or implicitly in the well-sustained educational campaign. Critics who have claimed that most women were publicly silent may have been correct, but, as Mary Lee maintained, 'they made speeches at their own fireside'.[169] Their behaviour may be compared to that of men during the reform movement for the extension of male suffrage in England. The few spoke out for the majority who took up their privileges when they were granted. South Australian women were similar, and were to show by their electoral enrolment and voting behaviour that they had been educated to accept the suffrage which had become a popular reform.

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169. Observer, 6 June, 1891, 35a

## Chapter VI

## Educating Women Voters

Under the Constitution Amendment Act of 1894 which granted female suffrage, South Australian women had the opportunity, on their enrolment as voters, of becoming citizens with an effective voice in politics. Immediately the suffrage was gained, certain organizations initiated educational moves designed to instruct women in their political rights and responsibilities.

Like the education campaign for the suffrage, the education of women as voters proceeded informally, by 'the process of teaching and learning in ... non-institutional situations'.[1] This informal education, like that carried on in institutions, was characterized by

> the acquisition of knowledge which ... in turn [led] to alteration of the individual's view of the world and to subsequent changes in attitude, behaviour and action.[2]

The education of South Australian women in citizenship following the suffrage was partly a continuation of the former suffrage educational campaign.

Final implementation of the 1894 Constitution Amendment Act was the granting of the Royal assent, in March, 1895. Within a week of the Act's passage through Parliament, the President of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union, Elizabeth Nicholls, had written: 'We are so glad there will be abundant time for education and enrolling before the next elections'.[3] It was fortunate that time was available for the enrolment

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1. See Introduction, p. 3 above

2. Ibid.

3. Windeyer Papers, Elizabeth Nicholls to Lady Windeyer, 27 December, 1894, Papers of Lady Windeyer, 1893-5. MSS 186/14, ML

of new voters, before the closing of the rolls six months prior to the next election in April, 1896. Because there was no necessity for the process of enrolment to be rushed, some organizations took opportunities to educate women in their new duties as citizens.

South Australian women had been granted political privileges unprecedented in the world. In the United States women in three states could vote for the state, but not the federal legislatures, and in New Zealand they were able to vote equally with men for the national parliament. In South Australia women not only enjoyed equal privileges to men in that they could vote for both Houses, where qualified, but in addition, they could stand for election to the Lower House and make use of postal votes in certain circumstances. This change in each woman's status was very similar to that of a man on reaching the statutory age of 21 years and consequently being able to enrol as an elector to vote. However, the process of men becoming electors had been a gradual and continuous one since manhood suffrage had come into force in 1856.[4] The process of women taking up the duties of the franchise involved a sudden influx of tens of thousands of voters ranging from women aged 21 years onwards.

While no particular educational provision was customarily made to prepare male citizens, certain organizations became interested in educating women in their political duties immediately because the change was so sudden and such large numbers of voters were about to participate for the first time. Naturally, political parties saw an advantage in putting their point of view to women. They were concerned primarily to enrol members, and their activities are outside the scope of this study. Outside the political parties there were three main educational organizations which are to be considered. They are the Woman's Christian Temperance Union, which continued its ambivalent role as a lobbying and

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4. Pike, _op. cit._, p. 480

pressure group for temperance reforms, and also as a general educative body; the Woman's League, which was formed in 1895 as an educational body, directly in response to the granting of women's suffrage; and almost fifteen years after this event, in 1909, the Women's Political Association, which was founded on a specific educational platform.

## 1. Women and Politics 1895-6

Women about to vote for the first time had not been isolated from political education. Not only had the suffrage campaign opened up very wide discussion of political processes and issues, but for some years from 1880 all state primary school children had received some political education through Catherine Helen Spence's text on citizenship, The Laws We Live Under.[5] Written at the suggestion of the Minister of Education, and with Director-General Hartley's critical advice,[6] the book ranged simply and clearly over general principles of citizenship, the constitutions of England and of South Australia, banking and trade, taxation, land tenure, trade unions, the press, aspects of the law, social welfare and functions of government.[7] Thousands of children, male and female, had therefore been instructed not only in 'the actual facts about the laws they live under, but also some of the principles which underlie all law'.[8] By 1895, when large numbers of female citizens became eligible to enrol as voters, those who had studied The Laws We Live Under, and others, had some acquaintance with the implications of their new role. Catherine Helen Spence had written in the preface to the second edition that she hoped that the book would reach the parents as well as school children.[9]

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5. Spence, C.H., The Laws We Live Under, Adelaide 1880. Parts of this became obsolete with Federation; it was not clear when its use ceased. The first edition of 5000 copies was quickly followed by a second edition in 1881.
6. Spence, An Autobiography, op. cit., pp. 57, 58
7. Spence, The Laws We Live Under, op. cit., passim
8. Spence, An Autobiography, op. cit., p. 58
9. Spence, The Laws We Live Under, 2nd ed. 1881, p. 2

Women did not, therefore, approach their new responsibilities in complete ignorance and may, in view of the suffrage campaign, have been better prepared than many men on enrolling. However, because such greatly increased numbers of voters were new to the simple processes of enrolment and voting, interest groups and others at once began advising them.

Early in 1895, Mary Lee addressed the Adelaide Democratic Club on the popular question, 'What will she do with it?' Under Thomas Price's chairmanship, she spoke in general terms and advised women to act as conciliators through the ballot box. Each woman should, she said, 'use her freedom in the interests of order, peace and progress'.[10] The newspaper report of her address is brief, containing no reference to specific instructions on voting, but emphasizing principles. The political parties were ready to give practical advice. As early as March, 1895, the Observer commented that the Labor Party, the National Defence League and the Patriotic Association were 'all chorusing Register! to women'. A week later the same paper noted that the National Defence League was making efforts to get women to enrol.[11]

In September of the same year, the Register in a patronizing manner reported a political meeting under the heading 'The New Factor in Politics'. The writer claimed that:

> Probably never before on the continent of Australia have so many ladies graced a political meeting as they did at the annual gathering of the National Defence League on Friday evening. The spacious Town Hall was crowded, and nearly if not half of those present consisted of the new voters, and, what is more, they seemed to take a deep interest in the proceedings. [12]

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10. Observer, 9 February, 1895, 13e

11. Observer, 23 March, 1895, 35b; 30 March, 1895, 41c

12. Register, 14 September, 1895, 5b

Such an occurrence should not have surprised the reporter, for at the same meeting the Member for North Adelaide, Patrick McMahon Glynn, stated that up to 31 May, 1895, there were 126,000 voters on the roll for the House of Assembly, of whom 53,000 were females.[13] That this number of women enrolled so quickly indicates considerable interest in their new political role; the number comprised 89 percent of the total number of women who enrolled before the 1896 election.[14]

When the Royal assent to the Constitution Amendment Act first reached South Australia, Mr J. Langdon Parsons, an experienced politician and public servant, who was once Minister of Education, gave a lecture entitled 'Women as Citizens' to the Young South Australian Patriotic Association.[15] The latter part of his discursive address included advice to women to learn their responsibilities and duties - to enrol, to learn about public issues, and 'on no account to abstain from voting'.[16] He advised women to examine the political parties, and to determine, for example, whether the National Defence League's 'conservative and progressiveism [sic] will secure and increase the happiness and prosperity of the community'.[17] Parsons predicted that Labor Party members, 'whose organization, discipline, energy and enthusiasm deserve high commendation' would certainly enrol their 'mothers, wives, sisters and sweethearts'. He raised a number of current political questions, asking whether land should be nationalized, and if not whether a tax

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13. Advertiser, 14 September, 1895, 6d

14. Register, 20 June, 1896, 5c. Extracted from statistics of voters at the 1896 election.

15. Parsons, J. Langdon, Women as Citizens A Lecture Delivered in the Albert Hall, Adelaide (Before the Young South Australian Patriotic Association), Adelaide, 1895

16. Ibid., p. 14

17. Ibid., p. 15

should be imposed on owners for 'public uses'. Should there be a state bank? And what of the future of state school education, and of the free enterprise economy?[18]

Parsons, like some others who undertook women's political education, treated his audience as though they were unfamiliar with political questions. He did, however, give his view that it was unlikely that women would vote the same way as their fathers, husbands and brothers.[19] Neither he nor anyone else at the time suggested that the schools should instruct girls in politics. However he was probably aware of the use of The Laws We Live Under. Because there was no formal political teaching of women, the pattern of women's enrolment, voting and participation in political discussion and action reflects the level of interest generated independently of any state action. In fact, the actual political behaviour of the new female voters provided a striking instance of the functioning of democracy in South Australia.

The hopes of those who set out to instruct the female citizens were idealistically high, for many believed that there was a political area of 'women's questions' in which women would respond as women and not as political party members or as members of certain economic, family or religious groups.[20] This theory was strongly postulated in May, 1895, by the British socialist, H.H. Champion in the New South Wales magazine Cosmos.[21] Unlike Parsons, the writer believed that the suffrage for women might not lead to any great result immediately, but like the

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18. Ibid., pp. 14, 15, 16

19. Ibid., p. 16

20. See MacKenzie, Norman, Women in Australia, op. cit., pp. 269-70

21. H.H. Champion, 'The Claim of Women', Cosmos An Illustrated Australian Magazine, 31 May, 1895. Champion was married to the sister of Victorian suffragist, Vida Goldstein.

enfranchisement of the working class, it would take some years to make its influence felt, the vote being divided among 'Liberals, Conservatives and Indifferentists' as well as Labor. He predicted that women were going to vote 'as might be expected of the mothers and sisters of Tom, Dick and Harry', and for much the same reasons. However, he believed that on 'sex questions' such as the 'trap of marriage' and double standards of morality, there would be distinct women's views.[22]

On these questions Champion believed that the effect of the female franchise would be that 'women _as women_ disagree with men, _as men_'.[23] It was to be partly on this premise that the education of women for their political duties was based; such views were widely expressed in the comments on the first election. For example, on the eve of the 1896 election the _Register_'s editorial was titled 'Women and Morality in Politics'. The writer stated:

> One of the strongest of the minor reasons advanced to women was that the female vote would tend to purify politics ... We are confident that as a body they will be true to the lofty instincts which govern their judgement of men and things, and will throw the weight of their influences on the side of purity and righteousness. [24]

These sentiments were also held by the Woman's Christian Temperance Union and influenced their educational work in attempting to prepare women as responsible voters.

However, such separatist views were not universally held, as a very significant event of August, 1895, demonstrates. In that month, the earliest nomination in Australia of women for political office occurred, when Catherine Helen Spence and Mary Lee were both nominated by trade unions for selection as candidates for the 1896 House of Assembly elections.[25] Even though both declined to stand, their nomination,

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22. _Ibid._, pp. 448a, 451a
23. _Ibid._, p. 448b
24. _Register_, 16 March, 1896, 4f
25. _Advertiser_, 13 September, 1895, 6c; _Register_, 13 September, 1895, 5d

which would have been an impossibility twelve months previously, indicated male trade unionists' views of their capabilities and opened the way for similar nominations. Mary Lee gave her reasons for declining in a letter to the Observer in September, 1895:

> I find it necessary to state that the withdrawal of my name from the list of candidates for Parliamentary honours, as nominated by two of our Unions, has not been prompted by reluctance to serve or insensibility to the honour and trust implied in that nomination. [26]

She explained her reasons by quoting from a letter of 25 August which she had written to the Secretary of the United Labor Party:

> While the affection and trust implied in the proposed honour have very deeply affected me, they have also (after much soul-searching) resolved me not to presume to contend for the place which may be filled by someone infinitely more fitted, by knowledge and experience, to undertake the very serious responsibilities of legislating for a young State like ours, with all its unborn - perhaps undreamt-of possibilities. [27]

She ended by stating her willingness to continue to work 'on the side of right ... unfettered by pledge or obligation to any party whatever'. At this time she was 74 years old, but her age did not deter her from active community work. [28]

Catherine Helen Spence's response to her nomination does not appear to have survived, but she had stated more than once that she wished to be free to work independently of any party.[29] She was 70 years old when she was nominated, and, like Mary Lee, continued working for a number of years. These nominations[30] are significant in indicating the good will and serious attitude which existed among some Labor men towards the new women voters. They also provide evidence that women did not deserve

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26. Observer, 14 September, 1895, 27d
27. Ibid.
28. See below, p. 283
29. For example, she said in address in Adelaide, 'I am an Independent Liberal and neither of the two organized parties represents me'. 'Old Scholars' Associations of Ladies' Schools' Adelaide, 13 April, n.d.
30. They have been mentioned in no previous history.

the sometimes-patronizing instruction which was directed towards them. During the suffrage campaign women had learned much of politics, not only through public meetings and newspaper articles, but also by following the passage of Bills through Parliament and by their own lobbying activities.

In 1895, many women responded enthusiastically to the prospect of their political future. The Women's Suffrage League ceased operating when the suffrage was gained, although no records of its conclusion appear to have survived. Suffrage Departments of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union however, continued to work within their established structure. A number of these Departments reported to the 1895 Convention: 'All members enrolled', or occasionally, 'All but one member enrolled'. The Gawler report sums up the tone of others:

> Dec. 20 (1894) ... Rejoicing at passing of Bill. Psalm read and doxology sung. Jan. 17. Monthly meeting, Letter of congratulations read from Barossa Political Reform League. Feb. 21. Monthly Meeting. Handbills announcing sermon in Wesleyan Church on Women's Suffrage were handed round for distribution. Resolved to hold suffrage fruit social in Institute Hall following Wednesday ... Feb. 27. Suffrage social successful and enthusiastic. March 21. Monthly meeting. Members urged to fill in electoral forms as soon as possible, Literature distributed. Nearly all members' names on roll; communicating with those names are not ... Members interest increasing in politics. [31]

The suffrage was seen as a holy trust by some of the branches. The Yongala Suffrage Department reported:

> that nearly all the women of the town had enrolled, and all the names of the members of their Union are printed on electoral role. [sic] Our Yongala sisters regard the right to vote as another God-given talent, and pray that women may use it for His glory. [32]

The suffrage Departments were initially maintained by most local Unions,[33] and the Union's Colonial Superintendent of the suffrage

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31. WCTU Minutes of seventh annual convention, 1895, p. 78
32. Ibid., p. 79
33. WCTU Report, 1895, op. cit., pp. 77-79

continued to operate until 1899, when this Department was replaced by one called Christian Citizenship.[34] In 1902 the latter became the Department of Legislative work and Christian Citizenship,[35] and later still it became named Equal Citizenship.[36]

Initially, the suffrage Department in 1895 worked vigorously to enrol women, both members and non-members, and in some districts house-to-house calls[37] were made to persuade women to enrol, while prayers were added to practical action in the hope that women may be 'led by God to vote for protection, purity and freedom'.[38] Few Temperance Union women joined political parties; they were persuaded to remain flexible in voting.[39]

In conjunction with another temperance organization, the South Australian Alliance, the Woman's Christian Temperance Union founded a Temperance Electoral Committee which sent out thousands of copies of a leaflet, 'How to Vote' which explained the process of voting, and the Union also distributed a reprint from the Register of Catherine Helen Spence's advice to women voters.[40] The President, Elizabeth Nicholls, drew up a 'Platform of Principles' which was printed and widely circulated. Each Parliamentary candidate was sent one of these and a list of questions about his beliefs and intentions.[41] Sometimes these

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34. Ibid., 1896-99
35. Ibid., 1902, p. 17
36. McCorkindale, op. cit., p. 178
37. WCTU Report, 1895, op. cit., p. 79
38. Ibid.
39. Ibid., p. 77
40. Ibid., 1896, p. 89
41. Ibid.

questions were asked publicly at election meetings.[42] The results were made known locally by press advertisements and through local Temperance Union meetings.

Elizabeth Nicholls rebutted ideas that her members would follow directives in voting. She said, in speaking on 'Our Political Platform' that

> They were not like women who lived in a Turkish harem, but they were going to decide for themselves and not follow any one party blindfoldedly ... It had been said that the WCTU would support the present government because she had been given a position on the Hospital Board ... no promises had been asked by the Government and no promises had been made. 43

There is, indeed, no evidence of individual direction through the Union, but ample evidence of members being urged to make their own voting decisions. Elizabeth Nicholls claimed that 'The persistent education carried on by our Union, publicly and privately' had also influenced a large number of the votes of non-members.[44] The Union was undoubtedly an active educational force before the first election.

During the Union's 1895 Convention, held in September, a Suffrage Demonstration meeting was held in Adelaide, where reports of large numbers of electoral enrolments were announced; Catherine Helen Spence urged the importance of voting wisely, and a clergyman, J. Berry, told the women that the world would be watching to see what use they made of the vote.[45] There appeared to be a general feeling of excitement at the meeting because of the successful resolution of the suffrage struggle, and a determination to give careful thought to the process of voting.

The optimism following the success of the suffrage campaign caused some people to see the women's vote as a great opportunity for a new era, a forthcoming period of responsibility in politics where enlightened

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42. Ibid., p. 93
43. Register, 31 March, 1896, 7e
44. WCTU Report p. 92
45. Ibid., 1895, p. 18. See below p. 279

women would vote intelligently for good men. It was because of the need for enlightenment, not only in understanding the simple electoral processes, but in identifying society's problems and the possibilities of reform, that further education of women as citizens occurred. The foundations had been laid, and even Catherine Helen Spence agreed with the women of the Christian Temperance Union in hoping for women's purifying influence. She wrote:

> character should count for more than it has done in the past. Women do not want to be represented by drunkards, libertines, gamblers or political adventurers.

She made this point in a succinct article, 'A Few Plain Words to the Women Electors', shortly before the 1896 election.[46] Her main advice, apart from a simple direction as to how the ballot paper should be marked, was firstly, 'Do not vote for any man, however respectable or clever, whose policies you disapprove of; and secondly, women ... ought to support economy in the housekeeping of the state ... We want a clean and wisely economical Government'. Thirdly, she advised electors to 'learn exactly what each candidate intends to do' and to enquire into his past political history. Finally, after the election, voters should watch the conduct of their representative in Parliament, whether they voted for him or not. She warned against expectations that the member should 'push local interest', for the member 'is our representative, not our slave', who has the interests of the whole community to care for. She also reminded South Australian women that 'the eyes of the world are upon us, and we owe it to ourselves and to South Australia to use the vote conscientiously'.[47]

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46. Register, 24 March, 1896, 6c

47. Ibid.

In fact the Times had noted the passage of the 'South Australian Adult Suffrage Bill' through committee on 18 December, 1894.[48] In May, 1896 the same newspaper referred to the issue of the recently achieved female suffrage in relation to Kingston's federation platform of full adult suffrage. The Times saw a contrast with the neighbouring colony of Victoria where a female suffrage proposal had 'lately been laughed out of both Houses'.[49] The 1896 election in South Australia was of more than colonial interest, for the Times, in recording the opening of the South Australian Parliament on 11 June included the Governor's reference to 'the successful working of the Female Suffrage Act'.[50]

The election passed uneventfully, as future elections were also to do.[51] The Treasurer of South Australia, F.W. Holder, stated in September, 1896 that:

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48. Times (UK) 18 December, 1894, 5b
49. Ibid., 20 May, 1896, 15c
50. Ibid., 12 June, 1896, 5a
51. A description of her Australian voting experience by Alice Henry, who worked for women trade unionists in the United States, gives an account which is representative of South Australian elections:

    > The polling booths are as respectable as the vestibule of a railroad depot or a theatre, and the process of voting is as simple as that of buying a ticket. The ordinary housewife votes during the slack hours ... the baby - who was to be, so we were told, so hopelessly neglected when his mother took to politics - often accompanying her in his go-cart.

    Henry, Alice, 'The Australian Woman and the Ballot', North American Review, 183 (July-December 1906) 1276

> The women came to the poll in both city and country without the slightest molestation or unpleasantness, and with a singularly business-like air, evidently much impressed with the responsibility of the task devolving upon them. 52

He said that there were 'remarkably few informal votes throughout the elections' and that the women's attendance at election meetings and at the polls had a 'moderating influence', while the number of registered women who came to the polls was 'exceedingly large' and the percentage who registered was 'very high'.[53] In fact the percentage of enrolled women who voted was marginally higher than that of men. For the whole of South Australia the totals were as follows:

Table XIV: Voters at 1896 South Australian Elections[54]

| | Men | Women |
|---|---|---|
| Number on roll | 77,752 | 59,166 |
| Voted | 51,572 | 39,312 |
| Percentage of those enrolled who voted | 66.33 | 66.44 |

These figures, as the Register emphasized, exploded some of the 'pet fallacies' built up about women's suffrage,[55] particularly the claim that women did not want the vote, or that if they had it they would not use it. There was no increase in the number of informal votes. Again, the view that 'refined' women would not approach the polls was vindicated by the North Adelaide figures, where, in 'not by any means the least refined of South Australian electorates' more women than men voted'.[56]

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52. 'Testimony as to the Working of the Woman's Vote', Issued by the United Council for Woman's Suffrage, Melbourne, n.d. Rose Scott Papers, 396, 3/S, ML
53. Ibid.
54. The figures were 'compiled from the tables which have appeared from time to time giving the details of the voting in the various districts, and may be relied upon'. Register, 10 June, 1896, 6c
55. Register, 10 June, 1896 4h
56. Ibid. There were in fact more women than men enrolled in North Adelaide.

In some country constituencies where the women's vote was low, the Register explained that given 'indifferent' candidates, the women may have cast no vote, whereas men chose the lesser of two evils.[57]

The success of the first election in terms of women's participation is clear evidence of the effectiveness of the educational campaigns which preceded and followed the passage of the Act. There is no contemporary evidence of women being prevented from enrolling or from voting,[58] while ample evidence exists of their keen interest in their new responsibility, and of general enthusiasm for the reform.

Why then was there any further educational activity? The answer relates to the idealistic aims of those who saw the vote as a potent means of righting society's wrongs, especially those under which women frequently suffered. As Holder wrote in 1896, women's attention before the election was directed to the candidates' personal character, and to

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57. The lowest percentage of enrolled women voting occurred in Wallaroo, one of the country electorates where the Register suggested the selection of candidates may have been 'indifferent'. In East Adelaide, the electorate of the Premier, Kingston, the figure was only 59.1%. The highest percentage, 81.88%, was in the country electorate of Victoria. Of the 26 electoral districts, in eleven more than 70% of enrolled women voted. Ibid.

58. Almost fifty years later it was claimed in a newspaper article that some women in Adelaide wished to vote, 'but dared not do so' because their husbands' employers were 'not pleased with the turn of events', and their views led to the tacit assumptions that employes' wives were not expected to vote, and 'none of them even enrolled' for fear of their husbands' dismissal from their low-paid jobs. The same writer also noted that mining wives 'keenly voted', to better conditions. D.H. P(aynter), 'Women Here Had First Vote 48 Years Ago', Mail, 22 April, 1944, Newspaper cuttings, v. 2, 256, SASA. In one readily identified mining district, Burra, the percentage of enrolled women voting was 64.39, close to the colonial average. Percentage extracted from figures in Register, 10 June, 1896, 6e

'legislation touching health &c'.[59] It was mainly in these and related areas that the education of women, in their new role as full citizens, was centred, in an occasional and informal manner by newspapers and journal writers, and directly and purposefully by several particular organizations.

## 2. Further Work in Women's Political Education: The Woman's Christian Temperance Union; the Woman's League

The Woman's Christian Temperance Union kept a close watch on newly-elected members of Parliament regarding temperance issues and other social reforms, especially those affecting women and children. Union members continued to correspond with their representatives and subsequently to move resolutions within the Union relating to their responses, and to publicize these through their internal meetings and reports and through frequent newspaper reports.[60] Union meetings gained press coverage, and the Conventions were fully reported.

The Union's work in educating women in their role as citizens was strengthened by the associate membership and support of some well-known public figures; one of the most outstanding was the popular Congregational minister, J.C. Kirby, who frequently gave sermons on social reform in his Port Adelaide church.[61] In 1895 as a result of discussions with concerned women, he wrote a pamphlet, 'Amendments in the Laws Needed to Secure the Rights of Women and Children'.[62] The Union gave its approval to all his recommendations, and publicized them.[63] He

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59. 'Testimony as to the Working of the Woman's Vote', op. cit.
60. WCTU Report, 1896, p. 92
61. Cox, F.W. and Robjohns, Leonard, Three Quarters of a Century, op. cit., p. 168
62. Kirby, J.C., Amendments in the Laws Needed to Secure the Rights of Women and Children, Port Adelaide, 1895. This paper was first presented as a lecture by Kirby for the Temperance Union. Advertiser, 19 September, 1895, 9g
63. WCTU Report, 1895, op. cit., p. 39

advocated, for example, that women should be appointed to official positions. This did occur, and although the means by which it was achieved was not recorded, the appointments were certainly a direct result of the women's suffrage and of the education of South Australians towards acceptance of women's role in public life.

Augusta Zadow had become Inspector of Factories and Catherine Helen Spence was subsequently appointed to the Royal Commission enquiring into the Adelaide Hospital, and to the Destitute Board.[64] Mary Lee was made first female Visitor to the Lunatic Asylums, possibly in response to Kirby's observation that while male Visitors with considerable powers were appointed to the Lunatic Asylums, 'There are many women in these sad abodes'.[65] Mary Lee did not, however, confine her attention to women at the Asylums, as an examination of the Visitors' Book shows.[66]

Kirby, backed by the Union, pleaded for female inspectors of state schools, emphasizing that pupils and more than half the teachers were female:

> There are grievances which women will only tell to women, and there are points in connection with womankind which men cannot see and cannot understand. 67

The case of the female Factory Inspector proved this, he claimed. Here again, it is difficult to establish if it was because of Kirby's

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64. Ibid. Kingston himself persuaded Catherine Helen Spence to join the Destitute Board. Spence, An Autobiography, op. cit., p. 83

65. Kirby, J.C., op. cit., p. 6. A female Visitor to the Lunatic Asylums was also suggested at a Woman's League meeting. Register, 8 February, 1896, 5a

66. South Australia, Lunatic Asylums, Copy of minutes from Visitors' Books, op. cit. Mary Lee advocated the release from Parkside Asylum of Paris Nesbit, and became embroiled in a public controversy over the issue. Observer, 36 February, 1898, 31d

67. Kirby, J.C. op. cit., p. 6

pamphlet, the backing of the Temperance Union women, or the fact that Inspector-General Hartley had died in September, 1896, thus increasing the load of existing Education Department inspectors, that Blanche McNamara was appointed as first female Inspector of Schools in 1897. Probably all factors, and especially the female suffrage, combined to lead to her appointment.

The educational work of the Union continued, some being initiated within the Union itself, and some being taken up from outside suggestions; Kirby's ideas were an outstanding example of the latter. A new means of publicity was established in January, 1898, with the publication of the first number of Our Federation, 'the Monthly official organ of the W.C.T.U. of Australasia'. Elizabeth Nicholls had been elected Australian president of the Union in 1897, and edited Our Federation during its existence from 1898 to 1904.[68] The journal was a forum for the Union's news and for members' ideas. Elizabeth Nicholls' own work was widely reported, including numerous inter-colonial visits to promote women's suffrage.[69]

Not all issues were successfully resolved. For example, at the Colonial Executive meeting in Adelaide in July, 1898, it was agreed to write to the Government,

> urging the importance of raising the age of protection for girls to 18; the alternative of lodging a complaint under the same law from two to twelve months; and an alteration of the affiliated law to provide for proving paternity before birth.[70]

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68. McCorkindale, op. cit., p. 12

69. She had spoken in a single month at 39 meetings in Victoria including suffrage meetings. Our Federation, 1: 9 (September 1898) 145, 147, 149

70. Ibid., 1: 7 (July 1898) 119

These matters came before the Executive through the requests of various local Unions. Kirby's pamphlet had been influential on the Woman's Christian Temperance Union and his ideas were 'well received' by the Government with whom the Executive were in contact.[71] But the Union had no success with the age of consent; nor did it succeed with its temperance aims, reporting that 'the Government is unable to see its way to deal with the necessary amendments to the Licensed Victuallers Bill'.[72] The paternity measure was passed, Kingston having given Kirby an undertaking to do so.[73]

Again in the 1899 election the Union questioned candidates and circulated its platform. Candidates' advertisements appeared in Our Federation. These included the following:

> Electors of STURT
> Give one Vote to
> J.G. JENNINGS
> who has been a life-long teetotaller [74]

Another ran thus:

> EQUAL LAWS FOR MEN AND WOMEN
> All supporters of the above SHOULD VOTE for
> the following Labor Candidates

Following was a list of eleven districts and names, all of men morally acceptable to the Union.[75] The Union's Superintendent of the franchise Department wrote to all South Australian Unions asking them to see that all members and friends were enrolled as voters in time for the 1899 election in order that they may be 'in a position to vote ... in the interests of WCTU principles'.[76] During its short existence Our Federation remained both a vehicle for directing women's voting, along general lines, and for guiding them towards possibilities of social reform.

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71. Ibid.
72. Ibid.
73. Cox, F.W. and Robjohns, Leonard, op. cit., p. 168
74. Our Federation 2: 16 (April 1899) 65
75. Ibid.
76. Ibid., 1: 3 (March 1898) 42

In their local meetings, Temperance Union women continued to discuss political issues. For example, in the suburb of Parkside, in March, 1899, two drawing-room meetings were held. The first heard a woman speak on 'Suffrage'; the second group listened to another woman's paper on 'Woman's Influence in Politics' and a second paper, 'My Pledge, My Vote: Do they Agree?'[77] By this time the number of members in South Australia was falling.[78] The suffrage struggle had been a powerful cohesive force; once that was accomplished, the initial impetus of the Temperance Union appeared to flag, just as that of the Working Women's Trades Union had done. However, those who remained were keen members who met and talked regularly. In 1900, the Herald referred to them as 'a parliament of women'.[79] In 1903, when the first Commonwealth election to include women of all states was held, Temperance Union speakers from South Australia travelled to other states to speak on the responsibilities of voting.[80] Mary George, the Secretary, spoke in Victoria on 'Women as Citizens' and 'Our Opportunites and How to Use Them'.

It was in 1915 that the Woman's Christian Temperance Union had a notable political success. In that year their platform succeeded in the South Australian referendum on six o'clock closing. The outcome resulted from the Union's energetic lead in giving platform and open-air addresses and holding indoor meetings. Assistance came from some churches, and from other societies and individuals.[81] By 1915 the Union

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77. Ibid., 2: 15 (March 1899) 51
78. The minutes of the annual Conventionsrecord numbers. In 1896 this record noted the 'continuous leakage in our numbers' which were 1231. However, after a low point of 657 in 1902, numbers increased in response to travelling speakers. WCTU Minutes of Annual Conventions, 1888-1915.
79. Herald, 7 April, 1900, 6d
80. Our Federation, 6: 72 (December 1903) 139, 145. Both Elizabeth Nicholls and Mary George undertook further interstate tours to speak on suffrage.
81. McCorkindale, op. cit., p. 113

had become adept at political education among its own members and associates, and to some extent among the general public. Its influence in the political education of South Australian women is difficult to measure precisely, for its aims overlapped with those of non-members. Nevertheless, it made substantial contributions.

In contrast to the Union, the Woman's League was formed in direct response to the granting of female suffrage; it had no temperance platform and was designed solely for the education of women as citizens. Although it was short-lived, it was an interesting and significant venture. Planned by Lucy Spence Morice, in conjunction with her aunt, Catherine Helen Spence, and a small group of other women, it began at a drawing room meeting in Mrs Spence's house[82] at Glenelg on 11 July, 1895.[83]

Lucy Morice, a Unitarian who believed the millennium possible, was devoted to her aunt and greatly influenced by her. She was 34, and had only one child. Well-read, she possessed a lively social conscience and the time and inclination to take up some work outside her home. She described the Woman's League as:

> an effort we made after the franchise was granted to us to educate women politically and to form a real Woman's Party of work for the interests of women and children. [84]

Although no acknowledgement remains in the League's records, it may have been modelled on the Women's Social and Political League of Wellington which was apparently founded in 1894, the year after New Zealand women

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82. Probably Mrs John Spence, sister-in-law of Catherine Helen Spence.
83. Woman's League, Minute book, 11 July 1895;4 April, 1897, 570M SASA
84. Morice, L., 'Auntie Kate', op. cit., p. 4

gained the suffrage.[85] Similarities indicate some knowledge in South Australia of the Wellington League.

The Woman's League[86] began with high hopes and ideals; it was designed to make use of women's enfranchisement, which, Lucy Morice stated at the first meeting, was supposed to have deep effects:

> Public life was to be moralised and politics purified; but the Bill has been passed for more than six months, and what do we find? [87]

She thought that women were either doing nothing 'to fit themselves for the task of moralisation and purification' or else they were joining existing Leagues and accepting their teaching which, 'some of us' felt might stultify them'.[88] Therefore the objects of the Woman's League were primarily educational, and were worked out from a basis presented by Lucy Morice[89] and adopted at a second meeting, held in her drawing room, on 27 July, 1895. The objects were:

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85. Its declared object was:

    > the promotion of knowledge amongst the women of the Colony, with respect to social, political, municipal and other questions affecting their well-being.

    Its more particular objectives and platform covered a wide range of issues and included 'the appointment of women as Inspectors of Asylums and of Industrial Schools' and other areas similar to those which Kirby requested in the following year. Its fifty one meetings in the first year embraced a variety of questions and its enthusiasm and aims appear akin to those of the Woman's League in its early stages. Simpson, Helen, The Women of New Zealand, Auckland, 1962, pp. 173-5

86. In some of its records it is designated 'Women's'; the correct title is Woman's League.

87. 'The Women's [sic] League Report to First Meeting'.

88. *Ibid*. She probably referred to the political party, the National Defence League.

89. In Lucy Morice's draft, women too were included as future representatives 'if need be'. See final object 1, p. 289

I To educate ourselves politically and socially that we may be capable of intelligently taking part in the politics of our country with the object of securing as our representatives men of good character & ability.

II To stand together as women apart from all considerations of class and party & to interest ourselves specially in questions relating to women & children.

III To try by all means in our power to interest other women in this movement & to try & awaken in them a sense of responsibility. 90

Those present at the first two meetings included Catherine Helen Spence, Rose Birks and Annie Montgomerie Martin, all of whom had held office in the Women's Suffrage League.

These women, and Lucy Morice who became the League's secretary, were to remain among the most faithful members. Annie Montgomerie Martin made one of her school rooms in Pulteney Street available for committee meetings.[91] Other members assisted in different ways, one offering to canvass for further members among the Children's Hospital staff, another at the Adelaide Hospital.[92] To increase members' involvement, the post of chairman was subject to election at each meeting.

In spite of aims to bring in women of all backgrounds, the Woman's League never gained a popular following. The low entrance fee of one shilling was set 'so that it might come within the reach of the poor classes of women' while for 'the very poor' the fee was to be remitted.[93] The hope was recorded that the Working Women's Trades Union would send a delegate, and at a subsequent committee meeting it was stated that Augusta Zadow promised to send a representative 'to sit on the committee'.[94] But there is no evidence that this occurred; the only

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90. Woman's League, Minutes, 27 July, 1895
91. Ibid.
92. Ibid.
93. Ibid.
94. Ibid., Committee minutes, 11 August, 1895

identifiable woman linked with working women in the Woman's League records is Agnes Milne, who suggested that the committee consider producing a 'definite policy with regard to labour', similar to a recent British manifesto, which 'might win recruits among working women organized and unorganized'.[95] Her suggestion came at the end of 1897, after she had been appointed Inspector of Factories, but near the end of the League which had not by then succeeded in appealing to working women.

The Woman's League took up only one practical matter, at Catherine Helen Spence's suggestion. This was an investigation 'of the need there was for agitating about seats being provided in the shops for the employees'. She and another committee member made visits to a 'great number' of shops, mainly drapers', with little practical result. They found that:

> the humane employers who are few provide seats and the others declare them unnecessary and unless under compulsion they will take no action in the matter. [96]

Woman's League members did not follow the matter further. Their aims in joining the League appear to have been self-education rather than practical action.

Probably the largest League meeting was one of the earliest, when 26 new members were enrolled from among the 158 present in the YWCA Hall, in August, 1895. Catherine Helen Spence was the speaker, her subject being 'The State Ourselves', and another speaker read a paper on 'Early Closing',[97] a contemporary public issue; the Woman's League was not associated with the temperance platform, although it attracted Temperance Union members, including Elizabeth Nicholls and Mary George.

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95. Ibid., 20 November, 1896

96. Woman's League, 1896, Report, p. 4. A Seating in Shops Bill was presented in the South Australian Parliament in August, 1896. In spite of Mr King O'Malley's extravagantly-worded speeches in support, the Bill failed. SAPD (HA) 19 August, 1896, c. 297a, b; 29 October, 1896, c. 622b, 628a, 629b, 644b

97. Woman's League, Minutes, 23 August, 1895

After a promising start, the numbers attending meetings trailed downwards; even committee meetings were not always well attended. In January, 1896 a committee meeting did not have a quorum.[98] Although the meeting of July, 1896 with a speaker on 'Sweating' attracted a good attendance,[99] the subsequent meeting heard Catherine Helen Spence deliver a written address on 'The Lessons of the Recent Elections' to 'the smallest audience ever assembled under the auspices of the Woman's League'.[100] J.C. Kirby spoke on the laws of bequest and maintenance at the next meeting which was 'very poorly attended'.[101] After this the committee decided to hold meetings monthly, instead of fortnightly, and a debate on 'Federation' in October 'went off well' although 'The audience was a small one'.[102] It was very likely Lucy Morice, who, under the pseudonym 'A Lady Contributor', wrote in exasperation in the Weekly Herald in July 1896:

> Many women seem to be quite satisfied with the fact that they have once voted without making any glaring mistakes in that merely mechanical act, and are ready to remain with hand and brain quiescent until the next election calls them forth to play the game of noughts and crosses ... [103]

She pointed out that the Woman's League was designed 'to discuss serious subjects for our enlightenment'.[104]

The future of the League was sealed on the night of 6 November, 1896, when Catherine Helen Spence proposed that, except for a forthcoming business meeting, the League should go into recess, 'until something

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98. Ibid., 22 May 1896
99. Ibid. The speaker took 'a different view from the Fabian Tract read by Mrs. Morice 4 weeks before'.
100. Ibid., 17 July, 1896
101. Ibid., 31 July, 1896
102. Ibid., 9 October, 1896
103. Weekly Herald, 31 July, 1896, 5b
104. Ibid.

urgent such as the Legislative Council Election comes on'. This was carried and the committee then waited for members to arrive, but

> Eight minutes elapsed after 8oc' [sic] struck and the audience failed to arrive. The committee dispersed and the meeting on Municipal matters was not held. 105

Only one more general meeting was held, where some discussion of the League's failure occurred, Annie Montgomerie Martin believing that it might have become identified with the Woman's Christian Temperance Union because it had sent delegates in a deputation of the latter body to the Premier, concerning laws for women and children based on Kirby's suggestions.[106] Some of its meetings were held in the Temperance Union's rooms which may also have led people to believe there were ideological links between the two organizations and which may have dissuaded some women from joining the League. Catherine Helen Spence thought that attendance had diminished following the April elections and that interest would revive 'when another election is in view'.[107]

Finally, in April, 1897 it was agreed by the committee that 'no meetings should be attempted' although it was planned that 'at some future time' a business meeting should be called for 'the re-election of the committee and the foundation of further plan of action'.[108] This never occurred, and Lucy Morice, who had been secretary throughout, and who deposited the records of the Woman's League in the State Archives of South Australia, wrote acidly in the 1896 Report:

> It is very disappointing to find that womanhood and citizenship are not strong enough bonds to hold us together - as our League is non-political and many-sided it fails to arouse either enthusiasm or animus, both of which seem necessary for the successful carrying on of the Association. 109

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105. Ibid., 6 November, 1896
106. Ibid., 19 February, 1896
107. Ibid., 20 November, 1896
108. Ibid., 4 April, 1897
109. Woman's League 1896 Report

The Woman's League failed for various reasons. It attempted to cover a very wide range of subjects; in 1896 these included (apart from those mentioned previously): The Gothenberg system (Collective control of the liquor traffic): Effective voting; the financial position of the colony; the Married Women's Property laws; Functions of government; Nationalisation of health; Vivisection; Official and political positions for women; Land reform; Heredity and environment, and Local option.[110]

These were all questions of the day, and the speakers were chosen for their particular knowledge. But the meetings were held at night and were fortnightly, and women had to find their way, usually by horse-tram, to the meeting place, and return home, perhaps alone, in the same way. Among members there were a number of married women who might have hesitated to leave their homes and husbands for the sake of a political lecture, and some were school teachers who had their daily work and preparation to attend to. Again, the great cause of the suffrage had taken enormous effort, and some of the Woman's League members had been deeply involved in that.[111] Those who joined the Woman's League were already politically aware, and the League had little success beyond them, even though some of its meetings were reported in the newspapers.[112]

Lucy Morice herself ascribed its demise to animosity by people with vested interests. She later wrote:

> This [the Woman's League] was wrecked by Brother Man who desired above all things to keep the world safe for democracy and sound finance, and distrusted the entry into political life of mothers and wives and sisters who might be expected to bring along disturbing ideas and suggestions. 113

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110. Ibid.

111. The number of members is not known. However in drawing up programmes in August 1896, the League ordered 150 copies for distribution. Woman's League Minutes, 21 August, 1896

112. See, for example Register, 13 June, 1896, 6f. Weekly Herald, 31 July, 1896 5b

113. Morice, Lucy, 'Auntie Kate', op. cit., p. 4

There is, unfortunately, no evidence of opposition to the League, male or otherwise.

Lucy Morice's aspirations were shattered. At the League's foundation, she had expressed her hope that:

> If each of us works for the cause in our own circle, quietly and earnestly, it will spread and spread, and become a real power for good in the land ... let us go slowly and softly ... We will find, I am sure, that much of the apathy and indifference with which we have had to contend is only on the surface ... 114

Woman's League members were, like Lucy Morice, women who cared about the society in which they lived and who believed that their influence could redress wrongs, but they were a very small fraction of that society and their League remained remote from most women. It is likely that the 'apathy and indifference' could have been due to tiredness and lack of money. As Patricia Branca has written of women in Europe:

> ... most women did not have time or energy to devote to abstract arguments about their function in society ... what would appear to be apathy could be simply lack of resources on the part of most women to become involved in anything beyond coping with day to day domestic chores. 115

Probably the same situation applied to women in South Australia, and the Woman's League lost its impetus when all but a very few women failed to respond in a practical way to its aims and ideals.

## 3. The Women's Non-Party Political Association

Two of the Woman's League founders, Lucy Morice and Catherine Helen Spence, were at the heart of the next experiment in the same direction, after a twelve years' interval. In the meantime, Lucy Morice had become connected with the Women's Employment Mutual Association, and when the Kindergarten Union began in 1905 she became its secretary and

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114. 'The Women's [sic] League' Printed leaflet n.d. 470M, SASA

115. Branca, op. cit., p. 187

was deeply involved in all aspects of its work. Catherine Helen Spence continued working for social and political reform, especially for proportional representation, which remained her primary cause to the end of her life.

In 1896, the Effective Voting League was started to campaign for proportional representation,[116] and its leader, Catherine Helen Spence, travelled within South Australia and to other cities speaking on the subject. She hoped that the system of proportional representation would be included in the writing of the new Federal Constitution, and for that reason she stood for the Federal Convention in 1897, becoming Australia's first female political candidate.[117] She was not elected, gaining 22nd place out of 33, but her candidature made her and her cause even better known. Referring to the results, Catherine Helen Spence later wrote 'Women do not vote as women for women. If the South Australian women had done so I should have been elected to the Federation Convention'.[118] Her failure to gain election did not diminish her enthusiasm. As late as 1909, when she was over 80 years of age, she wrote to Alfred Deakin about the success of a recent newspaper ballot conducted on proportional representation principles.[119]

It may have been through her direct political move for the Federal Convention that she made contact with Vida Goldstein, the Victorian suffragist who later became a Parliamentary candidate on five occasions. Certainly, in 1900, following a speaking tour in New South Wales, she stayed in Victoria and visited Vida Goldstein at her home.[120] They

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116. Spence, An Autobiography, op. cit., p. 79

117. Ibid., p. 81

118. Catherine Helen Spence to Rose Scott, 15 August, 1903, op. cit.

119. Catherine Helen Spence to Alfred Deakin, September 1909, Deakin papers, 1540/15/926, ML

120. Catherine Helen Spence to Alice Henry, n.d. D 2475/29, ML

developed a close friendship, and when Vida Goldstein came to South Australia in May-June 1909, to attend a State Children's Congress, she stayed with Lucy Morice and discussed with her the Victorian Women's Political Association which she had begun.[121]

'I thought the time was ripe to make a new effort to educate and organize the women in South Australia', Lucy Morice later wrote.[122] In July, 1908 she arranged a meeting in private rooms in the city and 'the Women's Non-Party came into being', with Catherine Helen Spence elected first president.[123] Lucy Morice and her aunt shared a sense of social responsibility, perhaps related to their Unitarian beliefs as well as to their distinctive family background. The cause which they began found followers among responsive South Australians; in this new Association there was a firmer basis than the Woman's League ever had. The Women's Non-Party Political Association began when women had become accustomed to their voting rights, both State and Federal. They no longer regarded their full citizenship as a novelty and there had been time for interested women to gauge the effects of their votes on the state.

When Professor Edward Stirling was asked in 1902 to assess the influence of the franchise for women in South Australia, he replied that it had led to no ill effects domestically, and that it

> has done something in the direction of broadening women's minds, and cause[d] them to take an intellectual interest in political questions ... [124]

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121. Lucy Morice, 'Auntie Kate', _op. cit._, p. 5

122. _Ibid._

123. _Ibid._ The name originally was Women's Political Association of South Australia. With no explanation, the Minutes of the 14th Meeting in September, 1910 use the name Women's Non-Party Political Association. For some years this was unchanged, later becoming the Women's Non-Party Association and then the League of Women Voters.

124. _Australian Woman's Sphere_, 2: 20 (April 1902) 162. The enquiry had first come from America.

This was undoubtedly so among many women. The question remains, however, why they should have formed associations of their own sex to further these interests and to educate themselves and other women in political affairs? Why did Lucy Morice, who had seen her hopes dashed with the failure of the Woman's League, begin another similar association? Some answers to the question probably lie in a newspaper article of 1906. The Labor newspaper, the Herald, in June 1906, included an assessment of South Australian female voters, in relation to the women's suffrage question in England. The writer, 'Mascot', made the judgement that:

> there is always an inert mass which simply wants to let things alone, but which falls in with any change readily enough once it is an accomplished fact. [125]

'Mascot' noted that as soon as the suffrage Bill became law 'the opposition died away' and that even the extremely conservative women, who had claimed they would be 'driven to vote against their will' were now approaching their task 'with resignation and even zeal'.[126]

The writer claimed that there was a considerable and gradually increasing minority 'which thinks and decides for itself'. Among them, 'political women', who were usually 'mature women of experience' were the exception rather than the rule; they spent time in public work, regarding politics 'as a more effectual means of philanthropy than charity has yet proved'.[127] It is quite possible that 'Mascot' may have been Lucy Morice, who was keenly interested in the Women's Employment Mutual Association and had in fact given an address to them in April 1906.[128] She also had contacts among members of the Labor Party. 'Mascot' wrote in terms which are in accord with the philosophy of the Women's Non-Party Political Association, stating that:

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125. Herald, 9 June, 1906, 5a
126. Ibid.
127. Ibid.
128. Lucy Morice spoke on 'The co-operative movement in Ghent' to the WEMA. Herald, 28 April, 1906, 8d

> The franchise has been a political education to women, and has roused them to an interest which they could not feel while it seemed outside their sphere. 129

This was undoubtely true, as the increased interest and knowledge demonstrated. Another point made also links 'Mascot's' article with the Political Association. That is the statement that 'An effective minority counts for more in the end than a passive majority'.[130] This outlook permeated the Association's work.

In this, it was similar to overseas women's groups, where the rallying of effective minorities was occurring in a proliferation of women's associations in the United States and England. The Association was in fact part of the women's movement which flowered in the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In practical terms, women's groups were able to concentrate their resources on specific questions, such as the suffrage, or women's industrial conditions, or laws relating to marriage and property. In these matters they were attacking the status quo which favoured men, and thus they banded together as a sex, holding firmly to the late Victorian ethic of progress, for

> In the spirit of democratic optimism they believed their turn had come in the struggle for freedom. 131

In South Australia, once the suffrage had been gained and women had not only begun their industrial organization, but had started to fill some public positions and enjoyed some benefits of the law in relation to married women's property, there was no longer an urgent need for specific associations related to particular major reforms.

But as some women became more aware of bad conditions in both public and private enterprises, of the shortcomings in provisions for

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129. Herald, 9 June 1906, 5a

130. Ibid.

131. Carroll, Berenice, ed. Liberating Women's History Theoretical and Critical Essays, Urbana, 1976, p. 86

women and children who happened to be 'immured'[132] in state institutions, and of the possibilities for improvement if women were to be appointed to work in certain public areas, a new and stronger attitude emerged.[133] In organizing the Association, Lucy Morice was starting a tight-knit, active body with specific aims. Unlike the somewhat dilettante Woman's League, it had direct and practical objects. The naiveté of the League, which hoped to transform society by good-will, had hardened into a firm resolve to improve certain specific aspects of society by education of citizens, thereby generating a demand for change which would be applied to politicians. Through this Association women deliberately made use of education for specific political purposes.

The Association had the benefit of learning from the newly-formed Victorian sister-organization.[134] In both associations, there was a broad interest in general political matters, and specific attention to affairs affecting women and children: the predictions of those who saw this emerging from the suffrage were being realised. Other similar associations existed in Australia, but they had a particular political bias, like the Women's Liberal League of New South Wales, founded in 1902. A spokesman for this League stated in a paper to the Brisbane Commonwealth Conference in 1909:

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132. WNPPA Committee minutes, 8 April, 1913 SRG/116 SASA

133. As Vivian Szekeres has noted, there had been little alteration in women's position by 1909, and only a gradual realization that parliamentarians 'did not realize the depths of inequality' which women suffered. Vivian Szekeres saw the WNPPA's task as making members of Parliament understand these inequalities. It had in fact a wider educational function also. Szekeres, Vivian, 'A History of the League of Women Voters', BA Honours History thesis, University of Adelaide, 1976, p. 8

134. WNPPA Minutes, 19 July, 1909

> 'The principle of woman's (sic) associations for women alone' is based on the fact that woman silent for long ages has at last found her voice, which she can only exercise clearly and forcefully by means of associations organized by women. 135

Armed with the confidence of having the vote, the Women's Non-Party Political Association provided a means for women's voice being used effectively. Moreover, the nature of some women's lives, which often permitted them to manipulate their leisure time and devote it to afternoon meetings, was an important factor in enabling them to meet together.

It should be noted that after September 1910 when the Association's name was altered,[136] it was known among members as the 'Women's Non-Party', a diminutive which became well known outside the membership also. On examination of its records, a number of strong themes emerge, based on the Constitution and its Objects. The Association's cohesion and effectiveness was probably due as much to the practical nature of its aims as to the quality of its membership. The objects were described in the Constitution thus:

> The objects of the Association shall be to educate citizens to appreciate the value of non-party political and industrial action, and to protect the interests of women and children and the home under Municipal, State and National Government. 137

The Objects were amplified in the platform which was also part of the Constitution. In 1912 the platform included:

1. Equal Federal marriage and divorce laws
2. Equal parental rights over children
3. Equal pay for equal work
4. Pure food and pure milk supply
5. Educational reform
6. Protection of boys and girls to the age of 21 against the vicious and depraved
7. Appointment of a special Children's Magistracy to be composed of both men and women
8. Stringent legislation to protect the child wage-earner

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135. Luffmann, Laura Bogue, 'The Principle of Women's Associations for Women Alone', Sydney, 1909

136. See footnote 123 above.

137. 'Constitution of the WNPPA of South Australia' Pasted in WNPPA Minute Book at February, 1911.

9. Appointment of women
    (a) Police matrons
    (b) Sanitary inspectors
    (c) Inspectors of State Schools and Truant Officers
    (d) Inspectors of all State institutions where women and children are immured
    (e) Members of Municipal and District Councils
    (f) Women Jurors
    (g) Women Justices of the Peace
10. Reform of the Liquor Traffic
11. Cessation of Borrowing except for reproduction works
12. International Women's Suffrage
13. International Peace and Arbitration
14. Proportional Representation
15. Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. [138]

The majority of these aims were practical and possible, at least to some extent, and the Women's Non-party's strong membership worked in separate committees towards certain of them.

Catherine Helen Spence was elected President, a post which she held until her death in 1910; Lucy Morice and Dr Violet Plummer were vice-presidents.[139] The latter was to prove a valuable member because of her medical knowledge.[140] Other Council members included some who had worked for women's issues previously. One was Lillian de Lissa, director of the Kindergarten Union and friend of Lucy Morice. Because of the relatively small size of Adelaide and the overlap of membership among various organizations, most of the 50 to 60 women present at the first meeting knew some of the remainder. The membership list in the earliest Minute book[141] includes names of private and state school teachers, among them being Edith Devitt and Jane Walker, headmistress of the Methodist Ladies' College; artists; wives of clergy, a first Council member being Mrs Margaret Wragge, wife of the Master of St Barnabas Theological College; members of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union

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138. No earlier Constitution is extant. Nos 14 and 15 were added in 1911.

139. _WNPPA_ Minutes, 19 July, 1909

140. She read a paper in December, 1909, on 'Pure Food Supply' disclosing the widespread use of boracic and other preservatives. _Ibid._, 15 December, 1909

141. _WNPPA_ Minutes, 1909-21, SRG/116, SASA

including Elizabeth Nicholls; women who worked for charity, and in addition to Dr Violet Plummer, Dr Helen Mayo.

These women, an articulate and overwhelmingly Protestant, well-educated group, decided to publicize their meetings by appointing a recording member who would pass the material to the press; because such news was then considered worthy of publication the Women's Non-Party Political Association gained constant news coverage, which indicates wide public interest. Another means of spreading news of their aims and work was through the practice, established at the first meeting, of asking all other associations of women to send a delegate to meetings.[142] Communication with other states was maintained through correspondence,[143] and through sending news to Vida Goldstein's journal, the Woman Voter,[144] while some international links were also formed.[145] These were strengthened when in 1914 a member went as a delegate from the Women's Non-Party to the Woman's Suffrage Union British Dominions Overseas Conference in London, where Sir John Cockburn, then having become Agent-General for South Australia, presided.[146]

By the third general meeting, a suitable venue had been found.[147] Unlike the Woman's League, the Association held its general meetings in the afternoons and had the advantage of a set of rooms which were hired on a permanent basis. Regular meetings were held monthly, with occasional special meetings interspersed. The committee meetings were

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142. Ibid., 19 July, 1909. One of the earliest delegates was Miss Dorothy Vaughan from the ULP, who was to become one of the first female Justices of the Peace.

143. Vida Goldstein wrote from Victoria, Bessie Rischbieth from Western Australia and Rose Scott from New South Wales.

144. WNPPA Minutes, 14 September, 15 October, 1909

145. For example, a letter from the Swedish National Women's Suffrage Society requested information concerning the results of women's suffrage in South Australia, WNPPA Minutes, 9 July, 1909

146. WNPPA Minutes, 9 July, 1914

147. Ibid., 14 September, 1909 et seq. These were the rooms of the May Club, which catered for female membership.

held in such places as Dr Plummer's rooms, the Unitarian school room and the Young Women's Christian Association.[148]

The Women's Non-Party Political Association was a well organized association which approached its self-imposed educational role confidently, for its objects were within the realm of possible achievement. Members worked methodically and displayed an understanding both of political processes and of the importance of public relations. Speakers at the general meetings, which usually attracted between 40 and 60 women, were mainly women.[149] Examples of speakers and their subjects include Miss Kate Cocks, probation officer, on Children's courts; Miss Price, Matron of Redruth Reformatory on the 'Mentally and Morally Unfit'; Lucy Morice who gave a resumé of work done by women's societies since the granting of suffrage, Mr Skipper, LLB who discussed the laws of inheritance; Englishwoman Miss Adela Pankhurst on the need for women in Parliament, and Canon Hornabrook who urged the need for housing reform in Adelaide.[150]

Working groups of members undertook particular tasks. For example, in September 1914 a sub-committee, after considerable difficulty, gained access to the police courts in order to inspect prisoners' accommodation.[151] This committee passed its findings to the Association Vigilance committee whose function was to request Parliamentarians to ask questions in the House. The question in this case related to improving conditions for women prisoners. Mr E. Lucas, MP asked, on notice, whether it were true that 'women inebriates are locked up in their quarters daily at 5 o'clock and are not allowed artificial light'.[152] The reply was

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148. WNPPA Committee Minutes, 9 November, 10 December, 1910; 1 March, 10 May, 1911

149. There were occasional male speakers. An application for membership from a man was considered on one occasion. It was agreed that men could become 'sympathetic members' but could not attend meetings. WNPPA Minutes, 17 August, 1910

150. WNPPA Minutes, 15 June, 1910; 21 September, 1910; 1 April, 1914; 17 June, 1914; 1 July, 1914; 6 May, 1915

151. WNPPA Committee minutes, 26 August, 22 September, 13 October, 1914

152. SAPD (HA) 4 November, 1914, c. 1327

affirmative, and a subsequent campaign by the Women's Non-Party Political Association led to better conditions. By a gradual process of exploration, publicity and sustained pressure on Parliamentarians by the Association, certain issues, some of wide social importance, others relatively minor, came under public notice and many were eventually resolved. One campaign undertaken by the Association's Municipal committee in 1914 took on the responsibility of visiting the 'sanitary conveniences' of all large drapery shops and many business offices, where they often found none.[153] They wrote to individual firms and organizations, including the Botanic Gardens, pressing for improvements,[154] with some effect.

In 1911 an important sub-committee was formed for the 'Protection of Women and Children'.[155] This included delegates from other women's organizations and it undertook correspondence throughout Australia with the object of establishing equality and uniformity of divorce laws throughout the Commonwealth.[156] Although no practical results ensued, the issues were widely publicized, laying the foundation for later action.

In the same year Lucy Morice proposed a successful resolution which was to lead to long term educational work by the Association. Her proposal was:

> As women of the Commonwealth are enfranchised citizens equally with men that women have equal opportunities for employment with men as well as equal pay for equal work in the Federal service. 157

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153. WNPPA Minutes, 1 July, 1914

154. Ibid. Facilities at the Botanic Gardens were reported as being 'disgraceful'.

155. WNPPA Committee Minutes, 14 July, 1911

156. Ibid., 21 July, 1911

157. WNPPA Committee Minutes, 26 September, 1911

She further proposed that this resolution should be sent to members of the Federal Parliament with a footnote intimating that if women could not obtain justice from men the Women's Non-Party Political Association 'will have to take steps to send women to represent them in Parliament'.[158] Such steps were eventually taken, but not within the period of this study.

At the end of 1911 the committee for the Protection of Women and Children formed a deputation to the Premier, John Verran, with six main requests.[159] Led by Elizabeth Nicholls, who was then president of the Association, the deputation included Lucy Morice and Mrs Crawford Vaughan, whose husband was to become Premier from 1915 to 1917.[160] The deputation asked for:

> (1) Help for inebriates including women
> (2) Sex instruction for young people
> (3) Women as police matrons to have charge of women and girls awaiting trial
> (4) Women to become jurors
> (5) Women to be appointed as JPs
> (6) Indeterminate goal sentences to be accompanied by a reformative and educational system. [161]

Verran's response was interesting. He appeared to be confused by the terms of the deputation, saying that it was:

> ... quite out of the ordinary. It was one that had to do with the citizenship of the State more than with material interests. [162]

He also made the curious comment that 'a woman had just as much right to be in the world as man'.[163]

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158. _Ibid._
159. _Evening Journal_, 1 December, 1911, n.p.
160. Mrs Crawford Vaughan argued to Verran that women had obtained their rights to the franchise and must be allowed 'to undertake the duties of enfranchised citizens'. _Ibid._
161. _Ibid._
162. _Ibid._
163. _Ibid._

He supported several of the requests, stating that he favoured prison reform and female Justices of the Peace;[164] he believed drink to be 'the greatest enemy in the world'.[165] He promised to put the matter of police matrons before the Chief Secretary, but nothing came of it and a further deputation was sent to the Chief Secretary in 1913.[166] The Association was characterized by persistence; some issues were followed for many years. A second deputation to Verran in 1913 included the ambitious request of equal pay for equal work, and the more modest petition for women as state school inspectors,[167] for the gap since Alice Hill's removal in 1902 had remained. Neither request was granted.

Much of the work of the Women's Non-Party Political Association concerned children. The first decades of the twentieth century were the period when both theories of the New Education and improved paediatric practice had reached Australia. There was much public concern at the time with children, in particular 'the child as a future citizen'.[168] In Adelaide this concern was manifest in the foundation of the Kindergarten Union in September, 1905, and of the School for Mothers in 1909. Strong personal links existed between these institutions and the Association.

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164. However, it was not until 1915 that four female JPs were appointed. One was Elizabeth Nicholls.

165. Evening Journal, 1 December, 1911

166. WNPPA Committee minutes, 8 April, 1913

167. Ibid.

168. Davey, Constance, Children and Their Law-makers A Social Historical Survey of the Growth and Development from 1836 to 1950 of the South Australian Laws Relating to Children. Adelaide 1956, p. 137

Lucy Morice was secretary of the Kindergarten Union from its inception; Lillian de Lissa, the Union's director and from 1907 the Principal of the Kindergarten Training College,[169] was a foundation council member of the Association. The Franklin Street Kindergarten building was used for early School for Mothers' meetings which were organized by Dr Helen Mayo and Miss Harriet Stirling,[170] both foundation members of the Women's Non-Party Political Association.

In an address prepared for the Woman's League, Lucy Morice had written:

> It is surely simpler and better to educate and train the children of the poor than to have to provide for a pauper and criminal class, with gaols, stockades and destitute asylums which are best [sic] but confessions of our inefficiency as Thinkers workers & rulers. 171

These sentiments were echoed on a number of occasions by Lillian de Lissa. In her first Report on the free kindergarten she stated:

> That so much money is yearly expended on reformation (prisons, reformatories, asylums), could be considerably lessened if more were spent on formation ... if every child in South Australia had a fair chance of finding his true self in an atmosphere of love and culture, such as the Kindergarten affords, in the future there would be an immense decrease in the cost to the State that is entailed by the present-day penal system. 172

The work of the Kindergarten Union combined both formal and non-institutional education. The former occurred to some extent through the kindergartens themselves and also through the Kindergarten Training College, under Lillian de Lissa's principalship.

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169. Lillian de Lissa gave talks to mothers' meetings and visited homes, instructing mothers in principles of hygiene and child care. She trained her students to do likewise. Jones, Helen, 'The Acceptable Crusader', op. cit., p. 131

170. The daughter of Dr Edward Charles Stirling, she was also a member of the State Children's Council for many years.

171. Woman's League, Untitled paper in Lucy Morice's handwriting, n.d. There appears to be some influence from Plato's Republic in her ideas. She became lecturer in History of Education at the Kindergarten Training College in 1908.

172. Lillian de Lissa in Kindergarten Union of South Australia, Report, 1906-7, p. 9

An outstanding example of the informal educational work of the Kindergarten Union, and of the development of the women's movement in Adelaide occurred in 1907, when mothers of the Franklin Street Kindergarten, situated in Adelaide's poorest district, proposed at a Mothers' meeting that a kindergarten should be opened in the depressed suburb of Bowden.[173] They regarded the Bowden mothers as having an urgent need of a kindergarten for their children, and were sufficiently strongly motivated, in spite of their own poverty, to suggest to Lillian de Lissa that they should visit Bowden and offer to mind the children to enable the Bowden mothers to watch the kindergarten at work at Franklin Street.[174]

This is what occurred, and the result of their increased awareness of common problems and their co-operation was the opening, in 1908, of the Bowden Free Kindergarten. Of this episode, Lillian de Lissa said:

> I was more stirred by this than anything that had happened in my life up to that time, because I saw a vision of a new world; a world in which women, as women, would begin to think about children who were not their own and who would work for them and their well being though they themselves were getting nothing out of it. [175]

Her comments indicate an awakening consciousness and capacity among women of varying backgrounds in Adelaide to teach and to learn from each other.

Women with the education and social conscience of Catherine Helen Spence, Lucy Morice, Lillian de Lissa, Helen Mayo, Harriet Stirling and

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173. Talks given by Lillian de Lissa at the Golden Jubilee of the Kindergarten Union of South Australia 1955, Adelaide, 1955, pp. 28-9

174. Ibid., p. 29

175. Ibid.

others were a powerful influence in the relatively small Adelaide community.[176] Lucy Morice was unusual in moving in varied circles. She not only had close connections with women unionists but was also invited to evening parties at Government House,[177] and she was a close friend of Joanna Barr Smith,[178] a philanthropist like her wealthy husband. Lucy Morice held salon afternoons, to which the well-read and interesting were invited; and her North Adelaide house became a focus for those seeking stimulating conversation.[179] Personal contacts were important in women's education and in effecting reforms; however the Women's Non-Party Political Association acted as a semi-public body open to a wide variety of women. It was an organization through which reformist thought could be channelled and effective action taken through education of the public, particularly women. The Association's interests spanned a wide range. Some matters raised were very specific, where precise questions were opened for discussion and action; one of these was the request for female police patrols in city streets to protect girls and women. This was granted by the Government relatively quickly after only several months' discussion.[180] Other matters demanded protracted pressure which built up on politicians as the public and other women's groups became interested. A large-scale educational campaign was begun in October 1915 to discuss the need for female candidates for municipal

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176. Other steadfast WNPPA members included Dr Gertrude Halley, appointed as the first South Australian Medical Inspector of Schools in 1913, SAPP, 1914, 44, Report of the Minister Controlling Education, p. 10

177. Information from Mrs M. Caw, also a Unitarian who knew Lucy Morice well.

178. This is illustrated by a letter to both Lucy Morice and Lillian de Lissa from Joanna Barr Smith dated 13 July 1913, regarding their kindergarten work. It begins 'Each dear' and ends 'Your loving friend' KUSA Minutes of Executive Committee, 1913, p. 64, GRG/69 SASA

179. Information from Mrs M. Caw, Mr Felix Barton, Miss Mabel Hardy

180. WNPPA Minutes, 21 July, 1915; SAPD (HA) 1915, c. 536, 1818

elections.[181] This involved Association speakers addressing other women's societies on the subject.[182]

Members frequently discussed formal education topics; for example, a debate on co-education was held in October 1915;[183] in November, 1915, Miss Adelaide Miethke spoke on 'Technical Education for Girls', arguing that 'the technically gifted girls should have a chance of developing their bent'.[184] In 1915 a sub-committee on Women's Work and Wages examined women's commercial, industrial, domestic and teaching work, unanimously concluding that unequal pay for equal work was 'mainly responsible for the evils in the conditions under which women work'.[185] From the outbreak of the war in 1914 no legislation affecting women and children was passed, but the Association's work persisted, and enthusiasm continued; many questions were publicized in spite of the war.

By 1915 the Women's Non-Party Political Association was an established and effective educational force, a means by which women alerted other women and the public generally to areas requiring reform and through this educative process stimulated legislative and administrative changes. Some of its aims however, were well beyond the power of the small South Australian group. Nevertheless, the desire to influence the peace conference after the Great War provides a clear example of the Association's assertiveness and idealism. On 8 December, 1915, the

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181. WNPPA Committee Minutes, 5 October, 1915

182. Mrs Harold Davies, wife of a musician and lecturer, headed the campaign. The first woman in Australia was not elected to a municipal council until 1919. She was Mrs Susan Grace Benny, who represented Seacliff ward on the South Australian Council of Brighton. Australian Dictionary of Biography, op. cit., v. 7, 1979

183. WNPPA Minutes, 20 October, 1915

184. Ibid., 17 November, 1915

185. Ibid., 7 July, 1915

council of the Association formed a resolution which was sent to the Prime Minister, W.B. Hughes. It stated:

> That in the Conference that shall meet at the end of the war to decide the terms of peace there shall be both men and women delegates. 186

The fact that such a resolution could be envisaged, only twenty one years after women's suffrage had been attained, was a mark of the impact of women's influence in the public realm. This had been achieved through various educational programmes, and largely by women themselves. They did not, however, take part in active politics within Parliament, although this was already under discussion (see above, p.305).

It is probable that the reason why no women stood for political office, following Catherine Helen Spence's attempt in 1897,[187] lay in the development of parties and their hierarchical structure. Certainly, a reading of the United Labor Party's Council minutes indicates that women were valued in that organization as members, but that their role was regarded as separate from that of men. They formed their own branches,[188] for example, and were thanked separately for their help before elections.[189] Women of differing political opinions continued to work primarily through informal educational channels to effect changes in society.

Catherine Helen Spence's _Autobiography_ refers to

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186. _WNPPA_ Committee Minutes, 8 December, 1915

187. Spence, _An Autobiography_, _op. cit._, p. 96

188. See _United Labor Party_, Council Minutes, 12 May, 14 July, 11 August, 1910

189. _Ibid._, 14 April, 1910. A motion recommended 'that special mention be made of the valuable services rendered by the women workers ...' before the recent election.

> ... my association with a band of cultured and earnest women interested in social, political and other questions - women who, seeing the 'tide of things', desired to direct them that each wave of progress should carry the people to a higher place on the sands of life. 190

The organizations to which she and others like her belonged worked to educate themselves and others. By 1915 they had enabled many South Australian women to learn of their political rights and duties, and had extended their aims further in the direction of social justice. Accustomed by then to their role of political influence, they were becoming increasingly effective.

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190. Spence, An Autobiography, op. cit., p. 96

## Conclusion

In this work education has been viewed in its broad sense, encompassing formal education within institutions and also non-institutional, informal education. Such an approach has demanded that this examination of women's education be extended beyond the class room and lecture theatre to the wider society. Here, the educational influence of individuals and organizations caused some South Australian women to alter their view of the world, and to adopt 'subsequent changes in attitude, behaviour and action'.[1]

The leading sectors of women's education in the years between 1875 and 1915 have been discussed, beginning with that of female pupils in the state primary system, which affected the majority of women. Here the chief distinctive influence resulted from the official view of girls as the state's future wives and mothers. It was assumed that South Australian women would take up a domestic role as their contribution to the aim of national efficiency. In spite of the fact that a high proportion of South Australian women did not marry, South Australia, like other Australian colonies, emulated Britain and other countries in this aim.

The state, through the primary schools, partially prepared girls for this role. From the 1875 Education Act, needlework was included in the curriculum as a compulsory subject for girls; it was made increasingly complex until quite late in the period. However, by 1915 the influence of the New Education and of increasing knowledge of child development had led to some less rigid demands in this subject designed specially for girls. Nevertheless, the majority of women were, through

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1. See Introduction, p. 3 above

the schools, equipped with sewing skills, not as part of a distinctive embroidery tradition, as in European countries, but for utilitarian reasons and as a basis of earning a living.

The Education Department, consistent with the official aim of national efficiency, introduced domestic economy, at first with only tentative moves in the 1890s, when the Department lacked finance for the necessary capital expenditure and also teachers trained in domestic economy. Even the first female Inspector of Schools, appointed in 1897, was concerned not with domestic economy but mainly with needlework. A major change occurred when a highly qualified English domestic economy instructor was appointed in 1900. Her two years of work and planning included teacher training and classes for primary school girls. This was followed by School of Mines' control of domestic subjects for school girls, with mixed results owing to their general unpopularity, until a second Englishwoman was appointed in 1910. Her work led to the establishment of several centres for teaching domestic skills to both primary and secondary school girls in the city and the country.

By learning needlework and domestic economy, girls were precluded from spending as much time as boys on general school work; the subject which they missed during needlework and domestic economy classes was usually arithmetic, thereby perpetuating the idea that this was a difficult subject for girls.

While accepting British precedent and its educational limits for state primary school girls, the South Australian legislature showed no prejudice against women's higher education, and in fact adopted an ambivalent attitude towards female education. By admitting women from the first to University of Adelaide classes, by pressing the British government for their admission to degrees, and by founding the Advanced School for Girls as the state's first secondary school, the South Australian Parliament demonstrated confidence in women's higher education

and a desire to provide opportunities which, by 1879 were still lacking in girls' private schools.

The effects of the academically-based Advanced School were cumulative; eventually it provided a model for all state secondary schools, and almost immediately its influence led to higher academic standards in private schools and to greater expectations for girls by parents. Some outstanding women teachers, including Ellen Benham, first female lecturer at the University of Adelaide, Madeline Rees George, headmistress of the Advanced School, and Caroline Jacob, headmistress of Tormore House School, were among those who moved between the Advanced School and private schools. The private schools provided diversity in their approach and curricula, although the ideal of the English girls' high school remained widely influential. While the Advanced School remained the state's only secondary school there was considerable personal contact between its staff and that of the private schools, and indeed between educationists at all levels, including those in the Kindergarten Training College, the Education Department and the University as well as the private schools. Adelaide's relatively compact size and the consequent ease of contact, allied with enthusiasm among teachers, facilitated both informal and formal communication.

Women demonstrated that they were fitted for working not only in traditional roles such as those of teachers and nurses, but in excelling at University studies. Women doctors in particular were cited as models of women's capacity. Such acknowledgement of women's intellectual ability was a very important factor in social acceptance of the idea of women's suffrage in South Australia.

Women's informal education, which proceeded through the work of organizations and of individuals, was a means of spreading knowledge, and of awakening women to a consciousness of their social, economic and political situation.

The organization of the Working Women's Trade Union arose out of educational campaigns connected with the position of female sweated workers, mainly in the clothing trades. The initial organization was backed by two influential women: Mary Lee and Augusta Zadow. The latter became first female Inspector of Factories, and worked intensively from that position, until her early death, to educate women workers to take their place fully in political and economic life.

Some of the distinctive aspects of women's education were clearly evident in the foundation of the South Australian Co-operative Clothing Company. Solely a women's venture, it drew together shareholders of varied economic backgrounds and epitomized their hopes for educating working women and for wider co-operation throughout the community. That such co-operation was possible was clearly demonstrated in their own organization, where some of the wealthiest and most highly educated combined with some of those who worked in ill-paid occupations to achieve a better way of life for working women. The use of informal education had clearly demonstrated possibilities of women's co-operation.

In political education, South Australian women benefited from a number of influences. They had the advantage of Mary Lee's skilful leadership and organization; of the mutual efforts of numerous women and men working together; the support of the widely-known reformer, Catherine Helen Spence, and a legislature which, though reluctant to make the final decision on suffrage, was becoming accustomed to seeing women as responsible citizens. The Women's Suffrage League was supported by other organizations, in particular the Woman's Christian Temperance Union and the United Trades and Labour Council. Nevertheless, the educational campaign had to overcome traditional attitudes and political expediency.

After the suffrage was achieved more women were appointed to public bodies, and the political education of South Australian women continued,

at first through the Woman's Christian Temperance Union and the idealistic and short-lived Woman's League, and then through the practical Women's Non-party Political Association which achieved reforms through public education and political pressure. Considerable overlap of membership among women's organizations indicated the close-knit nature of the society and the marked homogeneity of much of the population.

Not all, however, worked harmoniously in these educational campaigns. The Woman's League failed through lack of interest in its educational activities, whereas in the Women's Suffrage League there was sometimes the problem of the member who joined, not to help the campaign, but for social self-seeking. As Mary Lee reminded Lady Windeyer, president of the New South Wales Womanhood Suffrage League:

> ... when you first organized I warned you, that, while you might expect the support of those noble souls to whom 'The Cause alone is great' you must also look out for the 'tag rag' (sic) which always tacks itself on to any important movement ... [2]

Such minor impediments, in addition to more intractable political attitudes, frequently hindered women's non-institutional education.

The weight of evidence presented in this work indicates that women's education in South Australia was a considerable force. Women acted and responded vigorously to increase their knowledge and to improve their position and that of others in society. Within the limits of their physical and financial resources they made use of education to ameliorate the lot of the woman worker and to raise the status of women as citizens.

These aspects of South Australia's past show that there were many complexities in women's history but that women's public influence was much

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2. Windeyer papers. Mary Lee to Lady Windeyer, 24 July, 1893, MSS 186/14, ML

greater than has hitherto been acknowledged. Although many women acted from their traditional position within the family to influence those close to them, rather than speaking and writing publicly, others took up public educational work and frequently persevered for many years. An example of this work is provided by the suffrage, where South Australian women became the leaders of the Australian movement.[3]

Whereas effects on women of South Australian Education Department policies at primary school level were far-reaching in that they both developed and retarded their capabilities, government decisions regarding women and the University and the foundation of the Advanced School for Girls were more positive in their impact and led to an enrichment of society. Those South Australian women who benefited from higher education, both state and private, found that 'Knowledge [was] no more a fountain sealed',[4] and they developed a community of interest in literature, the arts and in general social questions. This knowledge influenced both their own families and the wider society.

South Australia was responsible for a number of pioneering social initiatives, and although the majority of ideas originated in England, the small, relatively homogenous society in South Australia enabled

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3. This leadership aspect, which emerges clearly in Mary Lee's correspondence with Lady Windeyer and Rose Scott, and in other evidence presented earlier, is still overlooked. See, for example, Ray Markey, 'Women and Labour, 1880-1900', in Windschuttle, Elizabeth, ed., Women, Class and History Feminist Perspectives on Australia 1788-1978, Melbourne, 1980, p. 83. Markey describes the movement for women's franchise in Australia, naming Rose Scott in New South Wales as the leader of the movement in the 1890s. He includes suffrage dates for several states and for the Commonwealth, but fails to mention South Australia.

4. The motto of the Girls' Public Day Schools Trust, quoted in Burstall, Sara A., English High Schools for Girls, London, 1907, p. 10

reforms and innovations to be established more readily. These were achieved not only by partnership between men and women but also through leadership by women themselves. This thesis then has challenged ideas that South Australian women were supine and oppressed. On the contrary, their educational activities showed considerable vitality and originality which led directly to changes in society.

## Appendix A

Refer to p. 38

### Contents of Domestic Economy Student's Note Book, 1901[1]

The hand-written notes include three main areas: first aid, laundry work and cooking. First aid, laundry work, and one page on furniture polish and maintenance occupy the earlier part of the year from 1 February to 24 May, notes being included for twelve separate weeks. After 24 May (except for 19 September) no dates are included; all of this latter period, including apparently thirteen separate weeks' entries, is devoted to cooking.

Topics Listed[2]

1. First Aid

   Common ailments

   Toothache, Eye troubles, Faints and Fits Bruises, Burns & scalds & Sprains

2. Furniture Polish[3]

3. Laundry Work

   Washing Sheets
   Washing Flannels
   Stains
   Damping, Ironing & Folding
   Washing & Ironing of silks
   Getting up Table-Linen
   Washing, Starching & Ironing Print
   Starching and Ironing of Cuffs and Collars
   To clean Black Lace
   How would you sort out your clothes for soaking for a family of three?
   How would you set about to a family wash?

4. Cooking[4]

   Purée Milk Soup
   Substances that may go into stock pot
   Substances not to be put in stock pot

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1. The cover is missing and the student's name is unknown. She would have been aged about thirteen years. This school exercise book came into my possession as part of an auction lot of recipe books sold among the contents of an Adelaide suburban house c. 1962. HJ
2. Headings only. Full instructions and recipes are included in note book.
3. This is the only entry relating to cleaning chores.
4. The topics are grouped apparently in weekly sections. With one

Short Pastry
Apple Tart

Flaky Pastry
Scotch Broth

Batter for Yorkshire Pudding or Pancakes
Fritters (very rich batter)

Beef Steak Pudding

Roast Meat
Gravy
Bread Pudding

Date Pudding
Potatoes
Fried Potatoes

Cornish Pasties
Cottage Pie

19.9.01

Grilled Steak
Semolina Pudding
Rice Mould
Queen of Puddings

Exeter Stew and Savoury Balls
Rock Cakes
Cauliflower

Steamed Celery
Lemon Cheese Tarts
Frying Fish 5

Scalloped Fish
Gooseberry Compôte
Shrewsbury Cake

Scones
Toad-in-a-hole
Victoria Sandwich
Boiled Custard

Salad
Trifle
French Beans
Scotch Eggs 6

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5. A note at the beginning of the recipe gives advice for buying fish: 'Fresh fish should have red gills, bright eyes, smell fresh and have regular scales and be stiff'.

6. Last entry made in schoolgirl's (copperplate) hand. The remainder of the book contains recipes written in an adult hand. Entries throughout are marked, usually in indelible pencil, by the teacher as 'V.G.' or 'V. Good' or 'Exc'. Some are also signed 'E.D.' (Edith Darby).

## Appendix B

Refer to p. 79

### The New Advanced School for Girls

You can but agree 'tis a beautiful thing
For a statesman his pride out of window to fling,
And go in _con amore_, like good Mr. King,
   For keeping a ladies' school.

When the House has prorogued there's little to do,
Mayhap he will suddenly burst on our view
With a lengthy procession of girls, two and two,
   When keeping a ladies' school.

In their studies his pupils will quickly advance,
He will teach them to draw, he will teach them to dance,
He will teach them to talk in the language of France
   When keeping a ladies' school.

Oh!  hasten the day when his classes will meet.
What a sight to observe the dear man in the street,
With his troop of 'girl graduates', smiling and sweet,
   When keeping a ladies' school.

And soon may the bright happy era begin,
When statesmen no longer will struggle to win
Political fame, but grown wiser, go in
   For keeping a ladies' school.

_Register_, 23 September, 1879, 6a

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## Appendix C

Refer to pp. 190, 193

### Evidence Relating to Conditions of Sewing Workers in Adelaide, 1892 and 1899.

Part 1 includes evidence by working women to the 1892 Royal Commission on Shops and Factories *op. cit*. Part II is a transcription of a letter from Audrey Lady Tennyson, wife of the Governor of South Australia, to her mother in England.

This material further substantiates that included in the text. Public knowledge of working women's conditions led to increasing realization by the women themselves that their industrial status could be improved. The responses of women workers themselves and those of Lady Tennyson, a perceptive woman of great influence, provide evidence of widespread concern about working women's conditions in South Australia.

Part I

Extracts and some comment on evidence presented to the Royal Commission on Shops and Factories, 1892.[1]

One of the witnesses, Elizabeth Rogers of Bowden, described herself as a needlewoman who employed girls in her home in order to gain a living for herself and her sick husband and young children.[2] She described her own circumstances, stating that shirts for which she had received 6/6 two years previously now brought a third less, or 4/6.[3] Because of the low prices paid she had to work long hours. She said,

> By working night and day I make in some weeks 14s. I am not all the time at my machine. I have my family to attend to. That is why I work such late hours at night. There are dozens around me who have to do the same. [4]

The 'sweater' according to this witness, got 2/- per dozen from the factory, in addition to what he paid her, for cutting out, delivering and collecting the garments she made up.[5]

Elizabeth Rogers showed deep concern for others in the trade more helpless than she, saying,

> I could mention six young girls now whose lives are worked out through working so hard at the shirt trade. It is hard work to make a dozen shirts in a day, and some have to work, oh, so hard ... One girl is at home now, and is being attended by the doctor ... she got 12/6 a week for twelve shirts a day. [6]

Such sympathetic consideration characterized many of the comments women made on the workers' situation.

The Commission heard evidence from several other women who worked at sewing in their own homes. These included Agnes Milne 'shirtmaker

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1. SAPP, 1893, 37, op. cit.
2. Ibid., paras 2137, 2140, 2180
3. Ibid., para 2389
4. Ibid., para 2226
5. Ibid., paras 2177, 2174
6. Ibid., para 2337

of Bowden-on-the-Hill who [was] vice-president of the W.W.T.U. and a member of the Women's (sic) Christian Temperance Union'.[7] She employed five girls, who worked from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. with an hour for dinner and from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Saturdays. The wages she paid were 4/- per week for the youngest girl of 14 who ran messages; older girls in her employ received up to 15/- per week. She had to pay 2/6 weekly on her sewing machines. She outlined the work involved and the cost structure of shirt-making. The 'sweaters' brought the shirts to her cut out and ready to sew.[8] She received 4 shillings a dozen for shirts, having to pay 6 pence out of that for cotton, leaving her 3½d for each shirt which she had sewed, folded and pressed.[9] This took her a total of eleven hours' sewing, two hours' buttonholing, and one hour pressing and folding. She thought that the price of the shirt for which she received 3½d would be about two shillings and eleven pence in a retail shop.[10]

Agnes Milne claimed that prices of shirt-making were kept down because some 'houses of ill fame' took in shirts, accepting a very low rate, and that warehouses consequently expected other workers to accept similar low prices.[11] She confirmed what had been found in other industrial societies, the fact that 'large numbers in suburbs and city' were compelled to work, chiefly because they were widows or deserted wives or their husbands were out of work.[12]

Another aspect of the situation was presented in the evidence of a work-shop owner who had been named a 'sweater' by Elizabeth Rogers.[13]

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77. Ibid., para 2337
8. Ibid., para 4020
9. Ibid., para 2160
10. Ibid., para 2211
11. Ibid., paras 4379, 4382. She claimed that many shirts done in these places were spoilt and that other workers had to re-do them. A similar complaint that middlemen ('Syrians') 'get work from the warehouse-shirts - some of which go to the brothels to be made up' was made to the 1904 Legislative Council Select Committee on the Alleged Sweating Evil, op. cit., para 1604
12. Shops and Factories Commission, op. cit., paras 4149-51
13. Ibid., para 2217

She was Mrs A.E. Larsen; her Bowden workshop, known as 'the Beehive', employed thirty females, all working 48 hours per week, whose wages ranged from 2/6 per week for the only 13 year-old employed on odd jobs, to 17/- for two experienced women shirtmakers.[14] She reported having eventually agreed to reduce her hours from fifty two to forty eight in response to discontent among her 'girls'.[15] She stated that, after Mary Lee's visit to her workshop, when the latter addressed the staff,

> The girls said if I would give them eight hours they would not join the union. I said I would whether they joined or not. 16

Now, less work was done in the shorter working week and Mrs Larsen insisted on strict adherence to the hours, beginning at 7.45 a.m., working to 5 p.m. with three quarters of an hour for dinner, and finishing on Saturday at 1 p.m. She claimed her employees were satisfied:

> I have to be stern to such a lot of girls. I like them, however, because they are good girls. When I left them today they were singing and as merry as crickets. 17

In this case, the employer claimed that her staff were industrious and content. It is difficult to establish the true situation.

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14. Ibid., paras 5425, 5427, 5447, and written submission by Mrs Larsen dated 4 May, 1892.

15. Ibid., paras 5631, 5775

16. Ibid., para 5777

17. Ibid., para 5781

Part II: Extract of letter from Audrey Lady Tennyson to her mother Zacyntha Boyle.[1]

16 July 1899. Government House Adelaide Sunday

Then I had been talking to the Premier Mr. Kingston, about the terrible sweating system that alas is going on here, & he asked me to allow him to send a lady inspector of factories to talk to me about it, & she came & brought a lot of the clothes to show me the work & the prices. I found her a very interesting sensible woman a Mrs. Milman [sic][2] a widow her husband died 15 years ago & she has lost all her children and has always had this work at heart since she was a girl. She has been 6 years government inspector of factories (chiefly shoe) but only as far as regards Sanitary regulations for the workers & she told me that all that part is greatly improved. She has also independantly [sic] felt very strongly about the Sweating system which is getting worse each year. Mr. Kingston who is the Minster of Industries also promised to try & bring it before Parliament last Session but with Federation there was no time. This Session she hopes much something will be done & I think so too from what he said to me and they will probably have a Government tariff for everything. She told me two years ago a committee of ladies got a room as a centre & went round to the shops to ask them to send all their materials to them, & they would cut them out & give them to the workers and pay fair prices to them.[3] It answered admirably for 18 months then the Manager fell ill another was appointed who was not so competent & it all collapsed. It seems to me by far the wisest plan, only instead of its being a private enterprise as Government does everything here, that it should start the centre of work & so do away with the horrible middle man & what is worse the hawkers or Syrians[4] as they call them here (probably Jews) who are worst bullies & keep lowering prices & then carry them out up country & charge double & treble the prices that the town shops sell at, the farmers who are well off & can't come into town are willing to pay these prices

The prices I saw yesterday, of course all machine-made work but extremely good machine work, womens [sic] flannellette [sic] petticoats 10½ the dozen. Boys [sic] flannel shirts beautifully made 1¾d with turn down collar & cuffs, & if they cut them out themselves 2½d - Mens [sic] 2¾d to make cut out also gussets and bands & all made 5d - Womens [sic] nightgown endless insertion & embroidery & dozens of tucks 6d chemises of the same 4d-cotton blouses with band 4d - the mens [sic] cloth trousers - 6d. The woman was enchanted at my taking it up poor thing, she says she has hoped for improvement for so many years & now

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1. Tennyson papers, MS 479, Papers of Audrey Lady Tennyson, Series 4 1/27, NLA

2. Lady Tennyson mistook Agnes Milne's name.

3. This probably refers to the Distressed Women's and Children's Fund of 1894.

4. Complaints against 'the Assyrian and Chinese hawkers' occurred in Agnes Milne's 1898 Report. SAPP, 1898, 96, 'Reports of the Inspectors of Factories, p. 8

she hopes it may really come. She tells me that the moral standard of the girls here is fairly good-the factory girls are by no means always the poorest lowest set more artisans' daughters, & tho' they begin with only 2/6 a week & feed themselves & often have to pay 3/6 a month tramway & wear out loads of shoeleather they are willing to do it because they get their evenings Saturday afternoons and Sundays, for pleasure. The average wage of all the workers in factories is only 8/6 a week.

I forgot to say that the needle workers have with the prices given to provide their own thread their own machines which if they hire is 2/6 or 3/- a week for an hour, & their machine needles! It is really horrible.

## Appendix D

Refer to pp. 196, 207

Letter from Mary Lee, Honorary Secretary, Working Women's Trade Union, in the Observer 14 March, 1891, p. 8d

Why Should Women Form Unions?

TO THE EDITOR

Sir - The above question has been repeatedly asked, more, it would seem, in the spirit of despondency by women whose worn-out patience sees only a sky without a star than with any hope of an encouraging answer. I subjoin a series of simple replies, and trust that my working sisters will grasp and hold on with determined tenacity to the incontestable truths that the beneficent All-Father has made ample provision on this earth of His for every-one of His numerous human family ... Women should unite, because 'union is strength'; because working women need shorter hours and better pay; because long hours and low wages starve the body, stunt the intelligence, and stunt and damage the health; because low wages give no opportunity to provide for loss of health or loss of place; because disunited they are tempted to undersell their labours and thus hurt each other; because by underselling their labour they are hurting their fathers, brothers, and husbands in the same trades by compelling them to take lower wages or lose their work; because by uniting to secure their own rights they will help others who are too weak or helpless to resist injustice; because union enables women workers to advise, help, and protect each other; because their claims on each other educate them to remember that they are not mere 'hands' - that they have heads to think and hearts to feel; because they claim the right to live honest, respectable lives, in return for honest, respectable labour; because as citizens they have rights which they have no strength to insist on unless they are united - I am, Sir &c

MARY LEE

Hon. Sec. Women's Trades Union

Barnard-street west, N.A. [North Adelaide] March 5.

## Appendix E

Refer to p. 258

Sixteen Reasons for Supporting Woman's Suffrage. Originally published by the WCTU National Franchise Department, New Zealand. Reprinted for the Woman's Christian Temperance Union of South Australia.

1. Because it is the foundation of all political liberty that those who obey the law, should be able to have a voice in choosing those who make the law.
2. Because Parliament should be a reflection of the wishes of the people.
3. Because Parliament cannot truely (sic) reflect the wishes of the people, when the wishes of women are without any direct representation.
4. Because a Government of the people, by the people, and for the people, should mean all the people and not one half.
5. Because most laws affect women as much as men.
6. Because laws which affect women especially are now passed without consulting those persons whom they are intended to benefit.
7. Because some of those laws press grievously on women and mothers, as for instance those relating to the guardianship of children.
8. Because some set up a different standard of morality for men and women.
9. Because such laws are thereby rendered insufficient for protecting women from wrong.
10. Because the enfranchisement of women is a question of public well being, and not a help to any political party or sect.
11. Because the votes of women would add power and weight to the more settled communities.
12. Because the possession of votes would increase the sense of responsibility among women towards questions of public importance.
13. Because public spirited mothers make public spirited sons.
14. Because large numbers of intelligent, thoughtful, hard working women desire the Franchise.
15. Because the objections raised against their having the franchise are based on sentiment, not on reason.
16. Because, to sum up all reasons in one - it is just.

## Appendix F

Refer to p. 226

### Historiography of the South Australian Women's Suffrage

Writings on the granting and background of women's suffrage in South Australia date from 1895, the year in which Royal assent was given to the Constitution Amendment Act. The matter has been treated in various ways, sometimes casually, at other times in some depth. Throughout the literature, with only a few exceptions, a fundamental misconception has been propagated. From 1895 onwards writers have compounded the myth that women were given the suffrage with little or no effort on their part. This, and other aspects of writings on the suffrage in South Australia are examined below.

The earliest account written is Cornelius Proud's 'The Story of How Women's Suffrage was Won in South Australia', _Review of Reviews_, Australian edition, January 1895.[1] Proud had been involved with the question at least since his debates in the Young Men's Society in 1883. As an associate member of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union and a foundation member of the Women's Suffrage League he had consistently worked and spoken for the suffrage. This fact, together with his support for other social reforms, was probably responsible for his selection by the Labor Party as candidate for the seat of East Torrens in 1894, a contest he lost.[2] Proud's view of the suffrage was that of of an 'insider' in the campaign, and his account reflects this fact.

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1. Reprinted in McCorkindale, _Torch-bearers_, _op. cit._, pp. 31-38

2. Proud, a sharebroker for several years, had formerly been a reporter for the _Register_, Information from his daughter, Mrs K. Magarey, _loc. cit._

From this view-point he wrote:

> No-one, looking at the final figures, would have any conception of the intensity of the struggle, of the manifold difficulties overcome ... [3]

Proud gave an outline of the various Parliamentary attempts at the suffrage with some detail of the 1894 process and the final dénouement. He gave credit to Kingston's 'capacity for skilful and dogged determination when he has once espoused a cause', and to Gordon and Cockburn.[4] He rightly placed the Women's Suffrage League next in responsibility for the success, mentioning 'my colleagues' on the Council, Mary Colton, Mrs Birks, and Mrs Lee

> who have practically been connected with the League since its inception and who have worked earnestly for it ever since. [5]

He stated that the women of South Australia ought to 'cherish [their] memory'.

Proud believed that the Bill would not have been passed 'in this year of grace' without the 'really invaluable help' of Mrs Nicholls, Miss George and the Woman's Christian Temperance Union, while he also gave credit to Catherine Helen Spence, Dr Stirling, Dr Magarey, Dr Cockburn, the Revs J.C. Kirby, Hugh Gilmore and J. Day Thompson. He acknowledged his own part as one who 'shared very largely in the contempt and abuse poured on the "faddists" who supported the suffrage',[6] and as the person who drafted the 'now historic petition' and carried it to the House.

For his article, Proud was roundly ridiculed by the Bulletin. Under 'Political Points' the following appeared:

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3. McCorkindale, op. cit., p. 32
4. Ibid., p. 37
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid., pp. 37-38

> Much amusement and some indignation has been caused in Adelaide by the perusal of Corney Proud's Review of Reviews article re the South Australian Women's Suffrage Act. His calm arrogation of the chief credit attached to its passage is so utterly unfounded that the ludicrous aspect of the situation strikes most people 'in the know'. [7]

This comment denotes a mis-reading of Proud's article, for taken in context, his references to himself are just. The Bulletin preferred to give credit for the passage of the Act to the apparently inexplicable support of the Register for the issue under its recent more conservative editor,[8] in contrast to earlier years when it was

> a Radical paper, and able articles advocating women's suffrage were penned by Catherine H. Spence, that wonderful woman who had sone so much for S.A. democracy. [9]

Proud, on the other hand, referred to having had 'hardly any help from the daily press'.[10] To resolve this matter would require detailed study of the press during the years of the suffrage campaign. It appears, from a general examination, that newspapers counselled delay at first, partly on the grounds of equity, but that few arguments were raised in opposition to later proposals of equal suffrage and that active editorial support appeared in the last year.

Proud's article is a fair, though brief, narrative account, giving due emphasis to the various forces involved in the suffrage campaign. He attempts no analysis or discussion of general community attitudes or the impact of the campaigners on popular opinion. He was writing immediately after the passage of the Act and regarded the issue mainly from an organizational point of view.

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7. Bulletin, 23 February, 1895, 11b
8. Ibid., 19 January, 1895, 11a
9. Ibid.
10. McCorkindale, op. cit., p. 31

In March, 1895, the Hon. J. Langdon Parsons delivered a lecture in Adelaide entitled 'Women as Citizens', to the Young South Australian Patriotic Association. It was subsequently printed.[11] He examined women's history and St Paul's pronouncements on women, before stating the constitutional position of South Australian women which was similar to that of New Zealand, Wyoming, Colorado, and 'Dakotah' in that they possessed the parliamentary franchise. He said;

> And the women of South Australia alone of the human race possess, or ever have possessed, the right to become Members of Parliament, Ministresses of the Crown and Premieresses. 12

This, he maintained, was 'a stupendous fact', and he attempted to distinguish various kinds of citizens and their responses to the suffrage, quoting Tennyson's Princess to illustrate two aspects of womanhood - 'Distinctive' and 'Advanced'.[13] His writing is light-hearted, almost flippant, but he descended to a serious plane when he related the necessity of women becoming interested and educated in their new duties, for:

> In the need for such action we discern the evidence that the women of the colony as a whole were not desirous to become voters, and that the passing of the women's Suffrage Bill by the Parliament was premature and in advance of the public sentiment and demand of women. 14

Here, Parsons was laying the foundation of the distortion of facts which others were to perpetuate.

> That there were most intelligent, earnest, and eager championesses of Women's Suffrage is admitted, that they formulated their claim and expressed it by speeches, pamphlets, and petitions, is a matter of history. But it is indisputable that the majority of the women of the Colony held aloof from the movement and were silent, and not with a silence that meant consent. 15

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11. Parsons, J. Langdon, Women as Citizens, op. cit. A former Baptist minister, he had been a member of the House of Assembly, a Minister of Education, and from 1884 to 1890, Government Resident in the Northern Territory. He was member for the Territory in the House of Assembly from 1890 to 1893. Pascoe, J.J. History of Adelaide and Vicinity Adelaide, 1901, p. 327.

12. Ibid., p. 10

13. Ibid., pp. 11, 12

14. Ibid., p. 14

15. Ibid.

For his last statement he supplied no evidence; possibly he knew of such cases individually. It is not possible that he could speak for 'the majority of the women of the Colony', and there is no way of discovering the exact extent of support or disapproval among women. It is very likely, considering the high proportion, i.e. almost three-quarters, of eligible women who enrolled at once as electors (a matter discussed in Chapter VI) that Parsons was almost completely mistaken. However, his pronouncements were to have great influence.

When Paris Nesbit gave his 'Lecture on Woman Suffrage'[16] at St David's Hall, Burnside in November, 1895, he had swung away from his youthful support to become highly suspicious of the wisdom of women's suffrage. In the intervening years much had occurred to sour his views of women, including a marriage of 'utter misery' from which he could not escape.[17] His main grounds of disapproval of women's suffrage in South Australia both relate to misconceptions. He claimed that the Woman's Christian Temperance Union 'and kindred bodies' were dominant in gaining the vote and he could not contemplate 'without a shudder' the prospect of a Parliament 'composed of saints of the pattern which the Women's (sic) Christian Temperance Union is disposed to set up'.[18] He assumed that the Women's Suffrage League had temperance aims and that Woman's Christian Temperance Union women represented South Australian women as a whole, both mistaken premises. He also claimed that women voters were rarely taxpayers, and if so, had gained their wealth 'always' from the 'labor and ability of men'.[19] The Census of 1891 reveals a very different picture, with 16% of all women being breadwinners.[20] Nesbit's is a debater's case, a posture taken to make a speech, which he concluded

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16. Nesbit, E. Pariss (sic), Lecture on Woman Suffrage, op. cit.
17. Loughlin, op. cit., pp. 54-5. His wife was the daughter of a brewer who had been Sir Edwin Smith's business partner. See p.252 above.
18. Nesbit, op. cit., pp. 10, 11
19. Ibid.
20. SAPP, 1894, 74, Census, Table I

by a slight retraction - 'I am not a virulent opponent of it'[female suffrage], and quoted Tennyson's much-quoted poem, The Princess.[21]

A more important work is that of W. Pember Reeves, State Experiments in Australia and New Zealand, published in 1902. Reeves, a New Zealander, was Minister of Education and Justice, then Agent-General in London in 1896, when he 'became close friends' with leading Fabian Socialists.[22] He wrote State Experiments in London, and his sources for the section on the South Australian women's suffrage were both secondary: a French review article and Proud's article.[23] He did not acknowledge having seen Langdon Parsons' pamphlet. His arguments, however, are not unlike Parsons', for he wrote:

> In South Australia the fight to obtain this privilege [the suffrage] for them was begun, directed, and almost entirely waged by men. The part played by Miss Spence, Mrs Nicholls and their friends was useful but strictly subordinate. [24]

He did not mention Mary Lee, though acknowledging that the Women's Suffrage League was 'a real educating influence'.[25] But he saw the Woman's Christian Temperance Union as 'unquestionably the chief practical influence at the back of the agitation for the enfranchisement.[26] Reeves' was a distant view, dependent on slim sources which did not give

21. Nesbit, op. cit., pp. 14, 15
22. Reeves, op. cit., v. 1, pp. 13, 14
23. Ibid., p. 103. The French article was by Mrs Maybanke Wolstenholme (later Anderson), an Australian, of Sydney, who had little knowledge of the South Australian suffrage. See Anderson, Maybanke, 'Paper on the Suffrage Work in Australia sent to Mrs. Ferguson 15.8.24', typescript, MSS 3447 NLA
24. Ibid.
25. Ibid.
26. Ibid., p. 127

him a balanced picture. He made a useful comment, however, in contrasting the campaign in New Zealand with that in South Australia where the 'smaller and much more centralized population is particularly easy to get at' - most being 'within striking distance' of Adelaide.[27] Reeves' work was widely read 'by students of politics in the U.S.A. and Europe',[28] where his inadequate account of the South Australian female suffrage campaign was no doubt accepted, and misapprehensions established.

There was a long period when nothing further was written on the subject; this interval caused reinforcement of earlier views in which the part that Mary Lee and the Women's Suffrage League played was underestimated or ignored. In 1936 Mary Tenison Woods wrote 'Reforms in Law Affecting Women and Children', in _A Book of South Australia The First Hundred Years_.[29] Mary Tenison Woods (née Kitson) was the first woman to graduate in Law at the University of Adelaide, in 1916. Her article ranges over a wide field, beginning with suffrage. Her paper is prefaced by Tennyson's popular lines,

> The woman's cause is man's; they rise or sink
> Together, dwarf'd or godlike, bond or free.[30]

She stated that the truth of the couplet was demonstrated in the South Australian women's suffrage struggle, which, she reiterated, _was_ a struggle. She appears to have depended on Proud's article; there are distinct echoes of phraseology. Mary Tenison Woods wrote:

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27. _Ibid._, p. 126

28. _Ibid._, p. 14. This is the view of John Child, in his Introduction to Reeves' work.

29. Brown _et al._, _op. cit._, pp. 127-134

30. _Ibid._, p. 127. This couplet appeared on the title page of the WSL's 1891 Report.

> No one looking at the final figures could conceive of the intensity of the campaign or of the difficulties that had to be overome; or of the fact that the issue was doubtful until within twelve hours of the final vote. [31]

This should be compared with Proud:

> No one, looking at the final figures would have any conception of the intensity of the struggle, of the manifold difficulties overcome, nor of the fact that the issue was doubtful till within twelve hours of the final vote. [32]

Her article said nothing new; she acknowledged the importance of the Women's Suffrage League and listed its officers and other people whom Proud had pronounced significant. Hers was a slight but useful contribution in that she based it on accurate, though limited information.

In 1952 the only major examination of the subject was made, in an Honours thesis at the University of Adelaide, when E.J. Wadham wrote 'Woman's suffrage in South Australia (1883-1894)'.[33] In this pioneering study, E.J. Wadham examined the course of the campaigns and the Parliamentary history of the suffrage, dating it from the foundation of the Social Purity Society.[34] Taking a broad view, the author has made a detailed study of the chronological sequence of events, and has drawn some strong conclusions, not all of which stand up to examination. She did not examine the effect of the campaign on the community, and viewed the suffrage as mainly a Parliamentary and Woman's Christian Temperance Union matter. The Women's Suffrage League and Mary Lee are mentioned a number of times, but with no exploration or assessment of their significance. The writer remained aware of political motives throughout, and claimed that what she called the 'Adult Suffrage Bill' became

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31. Ibid.
32. McCorkindale, op. cit., p. 32
33. Wadham, E.J. 'Women's Suffrage in South Australia (1883-1894)', Honours BA thesis, University of Adelaide, 1952
34. She gives no evidence that it was founded in 1883, Ibid., p. 52

> a facade, behind which lurked, firstly, those who desired to strengthen the property holders' power over the Legislature and then the radicals with their desire to sweep away the property-representing House and the old electoral division. [35]

In fact, her view is a cynical one in which she portrayed South Australian women as passive:

> The women accepted almost without question the improved status bestowed upon them by male legislators, just as they accepted opportunities to serve upon the State Children's Council and to act as Guardians of the poor and as factory inspectors. [36]

E.J. Wadham's major conclusion has no factual basis. She claimed that women were 'accorded important improvements in their status without any agitation on their part, simple (sic) because such advances had been proposed in England'.[37] No evidence is presented to back this sweeping claim; she concluded also that the main basis of support for the suffrage by women was in order to 'elect candidates who would bring forward a measure for six o'clock closing of hotels'.[38] This is a premature assumption; the six o'clock closing proposal was not mooted until the twentieth century.[39] The thesis is useful but includes unwarranted assumptions and conclusions.

Douglas Pike, in writing Paradise of Dissent in 1957, treated the matter very briefly as it lay outside his main period, although he begins his account with the statement that 'The greatest political

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35. Ibid., p. 72. The successful Bill was in fact the Constitution Amendment Bill and was not named the Adult Suffrage Bill.

36. Ibid., p. 44. Two women initiated the State Children's Council; it is not clear what 'Guardians of the poor' are, unless they might be members of the Destitute Board - Catherine Helen Spence worked for many years in that capacity; women's role as Factory Inspectors, as has been demonstrated, arose largely because of women's work through the WWTU, as exemplified by Mary Lee and Augusta Zadow.

37. Ibid., p. 124

38. Ibid. Footnote 91, opposite p. 60

39. McCorkindale, op. cit., p. 113

success of the decade was female suffrage'.[40] Having accepted Wadham's work as his chief source, he also accepted her arguments concerning the Woman's Temperance Union and political motivation. He used the anachronistic term 'suffragette';[41] his account makes no further contribution to knowledge of the suffrage.

In 1962, Norman MacKenzie wrote Women in Australia,[42] a report to the Social Science Council of Australia. An Englishman, he demonstrated the capacity to view Australian history and society from a broad perspective. However, although he investigated Stirling's background,[43] he failed to go beyond Pike, Reeves and Langdon Parsons, whom he quoted. He observed that women's victory 'had been achieved for them, not by them'.[44] Mary Lee's name was not mentioned. When his book was expanded in 1974, no revision was made of the material on women's suffrage in South Australia which was merely condensed.[45]

The first survey of women's suffrage throughout Australia was published by Dianne Scott in 1967.[46] In this overview of all colonies and states the author recognized that 'The suffrage movement in Australia was motivated to a considerable degree by sympathy for the working

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40. Pike, Douglas, Paradise of Dissent South Australia 1829-1857, London, 1957, pp. 484-5
41. This term was first coined in 1906 in England
42. MacKenzie, Norman, Women in Australia, Melbourne, 1962
43. Unlike Pike, who refers to Stirling as 'a new arrival', whereas he had been born and lived much of his life in South Australia.
44. MacKenzie, op. cit., pp. 36-7
45. Encel, Sol, Tebbutt, Margaret and MacKenzie, Norman, Women and Society An Australian Study, Melbourne, 1974, pp. 223-4
46. Scott, Dianne, 'Woman Suffrage The Movement in Australia', Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society, 53: 4 (December 1967) 299-322

woman'.[47] She used Proud, McCorkindale, Reeves and Pike as sources for South Australia and thus was able to present a descriptive account, but she made little attempt to estimate the nature of the campaign. Mary Lee's name was not included, and she drew no particular conclusions concerning the South Australian suffrage campaign.

In 1969 a collection of articles, In Her Own Right Women of Australia, began with Ian Turner's 'Prisoners in Petticoats A Shocking History of Female Emancipation in Australia'.[48] He made the doubly inaccurate claim that 'Australian women were, in the 1880's, handed the vote on a plate'.[49] Turner's cavalier treatment of historical facts indicates the lack of interest by historians in the issue of women's suffrage in Australia which has rarely been mentioned in general histories.

When Anne Summers wrote Damned Whores and God's Police[50] in 1975, she put forward a fresh view, very briefly. She postulated the idea that:

> while the agitation never matched the militancy of the English suffragettes, a relentless and tenacious struggle was carried on for well over a decade in most states. [51]

She discussed the New South Wales and Victorian campaigns in this light, not including South Australia, and stating that 'The details of the

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47. Ibid., p. 304

48. Rigg, Julie, ed., In Her Own Right Women of Australia, Melbourne 1969, pp. 3-23

49. Ibid., p. 20

50. Summers, Anne, Damned Whores and God's Police, Harmondsworth, 1975

51. Ibid., p. 349

suffrage campaigns in each state are not widely known'.[52] Her work was a constructive beginning. Miriam Dixson, in The Real Matilda Women and Identity in Australia 1788 to 1975,[53] had little to say about South Australian women's suffrage, although she admitted that Susan Eade may have been right in ascribing a more active part in the suffrage to South Australian women than MacKenzie postulates.[54] Susan Eade has described something of Catherine Helen Spence's role in the campaign.[55]

Two further books take opposite views of Australian suffrage campaigns, without referring in detail to South Australia. Beverley Kingston, in The World Moves Slowly A Documentary History of Australian Women [56] questioned the old cry that women did not have to fight for their political rights, and commented:

> It is, however, also possible to show that those early male champions of votes for women were not entirely altruistic, and that women did indeed organize and lobby and wage very proper, thoroughly constitutional campaigns ... [57]

She rightly challenged the standard argument that the Woman's Christian Temperance Union was responsible for gaining votes for women in Australia and New Zealand 'so that they might exercise their moral power more realistically over such areas as licensing legislation'.[58]

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52. Ibid.
53. Dixson, Miriam, The Real Matilda Women and Identity in Australia 1788 to 1975, Harmondsworth 1976
54. Ibid., p. 212
55. Eade, Susan M., 'A Study of Catherine Helen Spence 1825-1910', MA thesis, ANU, 1971, pp. 353-365
56. Kingston, Beverley, The World Moves Slowly A Documentary History of Australian Women, Melbourne, 1977
57. Ibid., p. 78
58. Ibid., p. 165

The view put forward by Ruth Teale in 1978 in Colonial Eve Sources on Women in Australia 1788-1914,[59] was the traditional one that 'the Australian colonies granted votes to women readily and quietly'[60] and that 'Women did not fight for the suffrage; rather it was thrust upon them'.[61] This superficial argument, stemming from Langdon Parsons in 1895 and Reeves in 1902, has distorted the history of South Australian women's suffrage, while the lack of any real examination of the campaign has contributed to the continuance of this myth.

A more recent study by Christopher Nance perpetuates earlier views, and indeed, earlier errors, as for example when he refers to the 'first woman Science graduate Edith Darnwell'.[62] Nance fails to acknowledge New Zealand's pioneering women's suffrage Act, stating that 'South Australia was the first British colony to grant women the vote'.[63]

Nance reaches conclusions remarkably similar to those of Wadham, as the following passages demonstrate. The first two compare British and South Australian women. Nance wrote:

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59. Teale, Ruth, ed., Colonial Eve Sources on Women in Australia, Melbourne, 1978

60. Ibid., p. 253

61. Ibid., p. 254

62. Nance, Christopher, 'Paving the Way The Women's Suffrage Movement in South Australia', Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society, 65: 3 (December 1979) 191. E.J. Wadham, op. cit., made the same error, v. p. 57. Both have incorrectly spelt 'Dornwell'.

63. Nance, op. cit., p. 198

> Women in South Australia, on the other hand, enjoyed the benefits of several important emancipatory reforms without forming any concrete demand for improved status, without rousing any strong or effective opposition ... 64

Wadham had written:

> Women in South Australia, on the other hand, had been granted emancipation in, for example, educational and industrial fields, without forming any concrete demand for such status and without rousing any strong or effective opposition. 65

The major conclusion reached by Nance may be compared with the similar statement of Wadham which has been partially quoted already (p. 339).

Nance claimed:

> In South Australia, women were accorded important improvements simply because similar changes were being considered in the United Kingdom, for the desire to emulate and if possible to surpass, the Mother country was an important ingredient in the makeup of South Australian society. 66

Wadham had stated that:

> In South Australia ... women were accorded important improvements in their status without any agitation on their part, simple [sic] because such advances had been proposed in England. The desire to emulate, if not to surpass, the mother country was all important. 67

Thus various repetitive sentiments and statements mark studies of the women's suffrage campaign in South Australia to which few have applied searching enquiry.

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64. Ibid., p. 189

65. Wadham, op. cit., p. 69

66. Nance, op. cit., p. 69

67. Wadham, op. cit., p. 124

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Mrs Dorothy Angove (née Clare)
Miss Evelyn Ayliffe
Mr Felix Barton
Mrs Katie Beckwith (née Clark)
Mrs Mercy Bennett (née Close)
Miss Norah Bleechmore
Lady Bonython (née Jean Warren)
Mrs Muriel Brown (née Day)
Mrs E.M. Brummitt (née Kay)
Mrs Marjorie Caw (née Hübbe)
Mrs Myrtle Cashmore (née Grubb)
Mrs Anne Dawkins (née Close)
Mrs Marjorie Dowdy (née Grubb)
Mr L.A.R. Evans
Mrs Katherine Geytenbeek (née Jacob)
Miss Marjorie Harley
Miss Ida Heyne
Miss Nora Jacob
Mrs Marjorie Kay (née Hayward)
Mrs Ida Kearney (née Dorsch)
Mrs Katherine Magarey (née Proud)
Mrs Grace Millhouse (née Ayliffe)
Miss Lyndall Morris
Mrs Marjorie Oldham (née Anderson)
Mrs Mabel Robjohns (née Cashmore)
Miss Gisela Siebert
Mrs Marian Spinkston (née Dobbs)
Mrs Catherine Strapps (née Riddapath)
Mrs Marjorie Trott (née Eyre)
Mrs Lilian Viney (née Wollaston)
Miss Marthe Wait
Miss Ellinor Walker
Mrs Caroline Williams (née Jacob)
Mrs Kathleen Williams (née Grubb)

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