

# **“A Veritable Augustus”:**

**The Life of John Winthrop Hackett, Newspaper Proprietor,  
Politician and Philanthropist (1848-1916)**

by

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I declare that this thesis is my own account of my research and contains as its main content work which has not been previously submitted for a degree at any tertiary education institution.

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## ABSTRACT

Irish-born Sir John Winthrop Hackett was a man of restless energy who achieved substantial political authority and social standing by means of the power gained through his editorship and part-ownership of the *West Australian* newspaper and his position in parliament. He was a man with a mission who intended to be a successful businessman, sought to provide a range of cultural facilities and, finally, was the moving force in establishing a tertiary educational institution for the people of Western Australia.

This thesis will argue that whatever Hackett attempted to achieve in Western Australia, his philosophy can be attributed to his Irish Protestant background including his student days at Trinity College Dublin. After arriving in Australia in 1875 and teaching at Trinity College Melbourne until 1882, his ambitions took him to Western Australia where he aspired to be accepted and recognised by the local establishment. He was determined that his achievements would not only be acknowledged by his contemporaries, but also just as importantly be remembered in posterity. After a failed attempt to run a sheep station, he found success as part-owner and editor of the *West Australian* newspaper.

Outside of his business interests, Hackett's commitment to the Anglican Church was unflagging. At the same time, he was instrumental in bringing about the abolition of state aid to church schools in Western Australia, which he saw as advantaging the Roman Catholic Church. He was a Legislative Council member for 25 years during which time he used his editorship of the *West Australian*, to campaign successfully on a number of social, industrial and economic issues ranging from divorce reform to the provision of economic infrastructure. As a delegate to the National Australasian Conventions he continually strove to improve the conditions under which Western

Australia would join Federation. His crowning achievement was to establish the state's first university, which he also generously provided for in his will. One of the most influential men in Western Australian history, his career epitomised the energy and ambition of the well-educated immigrant.

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## **PREFACE**

When I was searching for a thesis topic, I read Geoffrey Bolton's article 'A Trinity Man Abroad: Sir Winthrop Hackett' in *Studies in Western Australian History* published in 2000. In his essay, Bolton makes the comment that at the time of writing no one had written an adequate biography on Hackett and considering it had been nearly ninety years since his death, it would be difficult 'to penetrate his reticences'.

There were three major reasons why I decided to write the story of Hackett's life. Firstly, it is a Western Australian topic, although he did not arrive in Australia from Ireland until he was twenty-seven years of age and first visited Western Australia seven years later in 1882. Secondly, the topic was a biography and over the years I have received an enormous amount of pleasure reading such books, as people who later succeed in life, usually experience interesting childhoods. The subject of this research was to be no different. Thirdly, Hackett was a Western Australian member of the Legislative Council for twenty-five years. In my youth, I had lived in the electoral constituency of Wolverhampton South West, in the English midlands, whose then Member of Parliament was the firebrand conservative politician, Enoch Powell, and there is no doubt that my initial interest in politics occurred because of this controversial figure. It was a combination of all these three factors that attracted me to John Winthrop Hackett. So it was with trepidation I decided to take up Bolton's challenge to write a comprehensive account of Hackett's life.

Early in proceedings, I found there were no personal papers associated with Hackett, because they had been destroyed. Although for many biographers this would have been a drawback, the subject's very public lifestyle, including being editor of the *West*

*Australian*, the state's most widely read newspaper, for nearly thirty years, has meant that the lack of personal papers has been less of a disadvantage.

The challenge has not disappointed me. The more I delved into Hackett's public life the more he intrigued me, especially his holding down two challenging professional careers of newspaper editor and politician, together with numerous other community roles. Most people, when discussing the subject, know him only as a major beneficiary of the University of Western Australia. When his other achievements are revealed, people are astounded that he was such a prominent figure, especially during the halcyon days of the 1890s gold rush and the first decade of the twentieth century.

So, this is the story of a person who not only left an indelible mark on the state's first university, but has also left the people of Western Australia with several institutions that are today taken for granted. These include (notably): the art gallery, library, museum and zoo. Our community would be much the poorer without such facilities and for the reforms Hackett advocated during his parliamentary career.

## ABBREVIATIONS

ACT	Australian Capital Territory
ADB	Australian Dictionary of Biography
BDWA	The Bicentennial Dictionary of Western Australia pre-1829-1888
BL	Battye Library, Western Australia
BRMPWA	Biographical Register of Members of the Parliament of Western Australia
CMG	Companion of the Order of St Michael and St George
Convention Debates	Official Report of the National Australasian Convention Debates
Hillman Diaries	The Hillman Diaries 1877-1884
KB	Knight Bachelor
KCMG	Knight Commander of the Order of St Michael and St George
ML	Mitchell Library, Sydney
MLA	Member of Legislative Assembly
MLC	Member of Legislative Council
NLA	National Library of Australia
RHSV	Royal Historical Society of Victoria
SROWA	State Records Office of Western Australia
TCD	Trinity College, Dublin, Ireland
TCM	Trinity College, Melbourne
UWA	University of Western Australia
WA	West Australian
WA V & P	Western Australian Parliament Votes and Proceedings
WAPD	Western Australian Parliamentary Debates
WM	Western Mail



## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Completing a thesis is impossible without the support of many people. Firstly, I wish to acknowledge the support and knowledgeable guidance of my supervisor, Professor Bob Reece. This thesis could also not have been completed without the assistance of other individuals and organisations. Those who deserve special mention were my researchers, Ruth Lawler in Ireland and Bart Ziino in Melbourne. In Ireland, Reverend Gordon Fyles, the past vicar at St James' Church, Crinken, Co. Dublin was only too willing to assist me with the history of the Church, in particularly with the Hackett's family involvement. Rae Clarke in Melbourne, the Hackett family genealogist proved invaluable assistance in respect to the subject's family background. I also recognise with appreciation the work of Pam Matthews, my Murdoch University Liaison Librarian and last but not least Frank Galligan who proof-read the complete final draft. To all of you – thank you.

There were several people who provided me with their moral support throughout this project, especially when I found the going tough. To these people I owe a special debt. They were Dick and Joan Slattery, Ken Spillman, Ami Weissman and Joy and David Wilkinson.

**A list of other organisations and people who assisted along the way were:**

Staff at the following associations, institutions and organisations:

Anglican Church Office, Perth Diocese	Royal Historical Society of Victoria
Art Gallery of Western Australia	St George's Cathedral, Perth
Baillieu Library, University of Melbourne	South Perth Lawn Tennis Club
Botanic Gardens & Parks Authority	State Library of Western Australia
Busselton Public Library	State Records Office of Western Australia
Department of Land Information, Perth, Geographic Names	Trinity College Archives, Dublin
Freemasons Grand Lodge of Western Australia	Trinity College Archives, University of Melbourne
Mitchell Library, Sydney	Typographix
Murdoch University	University of Western Australia
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John Hartley  
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## INTRODUCTION

John Winthrop Hackett was a remarkable individual. Nevertheless, as Geoffrey Bolton's article 'A Trinity Man Abroad: Sir Winthrop Hackett', has observed, no one had previously studied Hackett's life extensively. His article, published in 2000, is the most extensive discussion of Hackett to date.<sup>1</sup> It is puzzling that there has not been a biography written previously on the subject and just as mystifying is the lack of journal articles. Also perplexing is that what little has been written lacks criticism of the man. For this, we have to go back to the *W.A. Record*, the mouthpiece for the Catholic community in Western Australia. This criticism mostly occurred in the 1890s during the debate leading to the abolition of state aid to religious schools, when the Catholics campaigned for its retention.

It is mystifying as to why political historians have not previously written comprehensively about Hackett and have only mentioned him in passing. Most authors have pointed out that he was an influential churchman, newspaper owner and editor and parliamentarian, as well as being the driving force for the establishment of the University of Western Australia. Such publications include, Frank Crowley's *Australia's Western Third*; David Black's *The House on the Hill*; Tom Stannage's *A New History of Western Australia*; O. K. Battye's unpublished manuscript 'The West Australian'; and the *Australian Dictionary of Biography*.<sup>2</sup> The entry in the latter

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<sup>1</sup> Geoffrey Bolton, 'A Trinity Man Abroad: Sir Winthrop Hackett', *Studies in Western Australian History: The Irish in Western Australia*, 2000, no 20, pp. 67-80.

<sup>2</sup> Francis Keble Crowley, *Australia's Western Third: A history of Western Australia from first settlement to modern times*, Melbourne: Heinemann, 1970; David Black, ed., *The House on the Hill: A History of the Parliament of Western Australia 1832-1990*, Perth: Western Australian Parliament, 1991; C. T. Stannage, ed., *A New History of Western Australia*, 4<sup>th</sup> impression, Nedlands: UWA Press, 1987; Battye family papers, *Battye Library [BL]*, MN 1719, Acc. 5192A/30; Bede Nairn, et al., eds., *Australian Dictionary of Biography [ADB]*, 12 vols., Melbourne University Press, 1983, vol. 9, pp. 150-153.

publication essentially highlighted Hackett's accomplishments, while O. K. Battye's manuscript was bland in respect of detail on the subject's life.

Although these books have been conspicuous in their lack of detail on Hackett, none had any reason to expand on his achievements (excepting possibly Battye). When Hackett is studied in detail, it becomes apparent that he was a very significant player, both politically and culturally, in the development of Western Australia during the 1890s and the first decade of the twentieth century.

One of the likely reasons for the dearth of written material on Hackett is that there are no substantial surviving personal documents. These were destroyed by a person or persons unknown for reasons that remain equally unknown. In all likelihood the culprit was probably his widow, Deborah. It would have helped significantly the writing of this thesis if Hackett's papers had survived, but despite this difficulty it has been possible to scrutinise a variety of archival material that reflects his considerable and influential public role. Although it is impossible to explore much of his personal life in any real detail, it is possible to examine his public life, and this has been done mostly from *West Australian* editorials and parliamentary debates in the Western Australian Legislative Council. This thesis aims to remedy Hackett's omission from Western Australian historiography and suggest why he is a subject worthy of study.

In 1955, Peter Boyce was fortunate enough to interview Hackett's widow, Deborah Buller Murphy, at which time he managed to obtain a rare insight into Hackett's physical and personal characteristics. Deborah recalled that he had 'high cheekbones, penetrating eyes and regal bearing'.<sup>3</sup> He was a man of around 5' 11" [1.8 metres] in height. Surviving photographs of him in adult life show him as a bearded, well-built

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<sup>3</sup> P. J. Boyce, 'The Hon. Sir J. Winthrop Hackett K.C.M.G. Hon LL.D.: His Life and Times', *BL*, PR14514/HACKETT, item 3, p. 9.

figure who rarely smiled. Of his temperament, Deborah remembered that: '[b]eing an Anglo-Irishman he did not display a sharp temper, but he was nervous and highly strung, a direct consequence, probably, of late hours and unremitting mental labours'.<sup>4</sup> His son, General Sir John Hackett, recalled in 1988 that during his childhood his father was 'a kindly, gentle, bearded figure, speaking softly but with firmness and precision'.<sup>5</sup>

Recollections of Hackett's characteristics from outside the family are scarce. Kimberly could not flaw him. He considered the newspaper editor to be

a reserved man. A weighty and eloquent speaker, and a writer of great power, it is well for Western Australia that all his ambitions and hopes have now to do with the colony. His speeches prove him to be a purist in language, and there is probably no more eloquent man before the public in our midst. His individuality has been indelibly impressed on the public mind, and will leave a lasting mark on history. With the aid of such men, these first few years of autonomy – the most important in the colony's history – are sure to lay a stable foundation, upon which a noble structure shall be reared.<sup>6</sup>

However, as Geoffrey Bolton argues, Kimberly's interpretation must be read with caution because his book 'was subsidized by both the Forrest government, representing the old colonists, and a large number of t'othersider newcomers ...'.<sup>7</sup> It is hardly surprising that there was no criticism of Hackett as he was a close confidant of Forrest.

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<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> General Sir John Winthrop Hackett, 'Inauguration Ceremony to mark the opening of the University of Western Australia's 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebrations' in Christine Shervington, ed., *The Official Record of the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the University of Western Australia 1988*, Nedlands; UWA Press, 1989, p. 2.

<sup>6</sup> W. B. Kimberly, *History of West Australia: A Narrative of her Past, together with Biographies of her leading men*, Melbourne: F. W. Niven & Co., 1897, pp. 21-23.

<sup>7</sup> G. C. Bolton, 'Western Australia Reflects on its Past', in C. T. Stannage, ed., *A New History of Western Australia*, 4<sup>th</sup> impression, Nedlands: UWA Press, 1987, p. 679.

A further perspective came from the writer, Mollie Skinner, who considered that his features lay

behind the well-trimmed beard and moustache not of much distinction, but his figure was lithe and slim, his hands slender and strong, and he was always well and conservatively dressed. His laugh seldom rose above a chuckle and his clear melodious Irish voice was part of the secret of his extra-ordinary charm.<sup>8</sup>

She also recounted that Hackett had

something almost biblical in kindness, humility and spiritual power. He loved his neighbour as himself and was free from any taint of jealousy, rudeness or self-glory. If he believed he was right he took not the slightest notice of either praise or blame and proceeded without confusion to carry out his plans. He was indeed a very *parfit gentil knight*... [he] was loaded not only with intellect, but with tact, good humour and the spirit of youth, even if the tact was subtle, [and] the humour Irish ...<sup>9</sup>

Hackett's business partner at the *West Australian* was Charles Harper, whose family commissioned Frederick Mercer's 1958 biography of the newspaper proprietor, *The life of Charles Harper of "Woodbridge"*.<sup>10</sup> It was not surprising that Mercer rarely mentioned Hackett in the biography. This was the outcome of a bitter two-year court battle over the value of shares in the company that had been acquired by Hackett from Harper shortly before the latter's death in 1912. It would have been helpful if Mercer

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<sup>8</sup> Mary (Mollie) Louisa Skinner, *The Fifth Sparrow: An Autobiography*, Sydney: Sydney University Press, 1972, p. 41.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 40-41.

<sup>10</sup> Frederick Royston Mercer, *The life of Charles Harper of "Woodbridge"*, Guildford, Western Australia, Perth: Westralian Farmers Co-operative Printing Works, 1958.

had written about their twenty-nine year personal and business friendship but this was not to be. The omission of Hackett from the biography shows that his actions has left a permanent bitterness amongst Harper's descendants.

Hackett did not write about himself, although he once might have been thought to do so unintentionally. This was on the death of the former British Prime Minister, William Ewart Gladstone, on 19 May 1898. In an editorial the following day, Hackett praised Gladstone highly by writing that he had been 'a man who brought to his work equal powers of intellect, equal greatness of purpose, equal honesty of conviction, and equal purity of heart'.<sup>11</sup> Gladstone, like Hackett, had been raised in a devout Evangelical family. Roy Jenkins noted in his biography that 'there can be no doubt of the depth, dominance and consistency of Gladstone's religious passion'.<sup>12</sup> Both men had lived in an era when several of their acquaintances had been attracted to the Tractarian element within the Anglican Church, although neither of them considered this an option.

This thesis will attest that Hackett's values were instilled into him during his Irish Protestant upbringing and were further reinforced during his student days at Trinity College Dublin. Because of his family's close connections with the Church, he was a life-long committed Anglican who followed its teachings assiduously. It will be further suggested that his dream when he departed Ireland at the age of twenty-seven was to find fame and fortune and to acquire power and authority in his new antipodean homeland. In order to achieve this, he had first to obtain recognition and acceptance in colonial society.

This biography is about the motivation he demonstrated in the achievement of his aims. Finally, it will be argued that on the attainment of these goals, he was determined to be

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<sup>11</sup> *West Australian* [WA], 20 May 1898, p. 4.

<sup>12</sup> Roy Jenkins, *Gladstone*, London, Pan Books, 2002, p.28.

recognised, not only by his contemporaries, but by posterity. This thesis will also record how, in his first eight years on Australian soil, he failed miserably to make progress and how, following his decision to leave Melbourne for Western Australia in 1882, his fortunes changed dramatically.

This study commences with Hackett's childhood days in Ireland which coincided with some turbulent political times. Being a staunch member of the Church of Ireland, he was not comfortable with Ireland's independence struggle and correctly assessed that there were more troubled times ahead. His solution was to emigrate. After a few months spent in Sydney, followed by several years in Melbourne, he decided to move across the continent.

Following his arrival in Western Australia in 1882, Hackett's adult life followed four different but inter-connecting paths. These consisted of his involvement with the Anglican Church, his work as part-owner and editor of the *West Australian*, his parliamentary career, and finally, his involvement in the establishment of the University of Western Australia.

In addition to the above he also sat on a number of committees with the aim of establishing cultural facilities, such as a library, museum, art gallery and zoo. The final legacy he left to Western Australia was in the form of substantial financial endowments to both the University of Western Australia and the Church of England.

Hackett is a significant subject for study, as he was involved in many developments that occurred in Western Australia during and after the hectic gold rush days of the 1890s. In respect of his church activities, this thesis will suggest that he initiated the movement for the abolition of state aid to church schools and was the chief protagonist for such change. He used his positions in both the Anglican Church hierarchy and as editor of the *West Australian* in order to pursue his argument. This episode, because it stretched



over a period of three years, was the first time that a newspaper had played such a significant role in altering Western Australian legislation.

Hackett's twenty-five years as a parliamentarian were also an outstanding triumph of achievement. He supported the expansion of the railway system, particularly in the south west of the state, and was a vocal supporter of the water pipeline between Mundaring Weir and the Eastern Goldfields. Not only did he articulate his views in the Legislative Council, but also more importantly, as will be illustrated, he often supplemented his opinions with editorials in the *West Australian* prior to and immediately following a parliamentary debate. As a talented debater, he was able to thrust his views into the public sphere in a forceful manner, in some cases pressing his position as if he were in a court of law. Although a qualified lawyer, he was never to practise full-time. He was also a non-aligned member of parliament, and so enjoyed the freedom to express himself on a wide range of subjects, such as social and parliamentary reforms and on industrial and economic infrastructure issues.

Throughout the 1890s Hackett was a Western Australian delegate to the National Australasian Conventions that resulted in Federation. One indirect consequence of his participation at these Conventions was that he began a lifelong friendship with Alfred Deakin, a future three-time Australian Prime Minister. However, when Federation was finally achieved in 1901, unlike Western Australia's first Premier John Forrest, Hackett remained in state politics rather than move into the Federal sphere. The reason for this was because of his extensive business and community interests in Western Australia.

As editor of the *West Australian*, Hackett was relentless in promoting any issue about which he felt passionate, the most prominent being the abolition of state aid to church schools. This thesis maintains that he strove for power and status and that his main means of accomplishing this was through his newspaper editorials. Crowley confirms

the newspaperman's authority in society when he considered Hackett to be 'the gifted and influential editor (since 1887) of the *West Australian* newspaper, who was for long a power behind the scenes'.<sup>13</sup> Crowley was referring to Forrest and a few of his close advisors, including Hackett, who assembled informally each Sunday to discuss future projects for Perth. Initially, Hackett conveyed in his editorials his forthright feelings on issues irrespective of the possible consequences. However, after some prominent defamation cases against the newspaper, including one by Reverend John Gribble, he became less aggressive in his editorialising.

It is impossible to understand Hackett without examining what evidence remains of his personal life. There are two particular periods that illustrate different aspects of his character. The papers of Alexander Leeper, who was Trinity College Warden from 1876 to 1918,<sup>14</sup> now held in Trinity College Melbourne's archives, spasmodically refer to Hackett – the two men having been lifelong friends since their university days in Dublin. These papers reveal that Hackett displayed generosity and compassion towards the Leeper family. In contrast, it will be pointed out that when he dealt with Gribble who sued the *West Australian* in 1886 for defamation, he was merciless in retaliating in his editorials against the hapless missionary, which resulted in Gribble clandestinely leaving the colony as a bankrupt.

Hackett's dedication to the establishment of a university can be traced back to an 1879 address to the Dialectic Society at Trinity College Melbourne where he spoke on the subject.<sup>15</sup> However, the opportunity did not present itself until late in his life. The legislative progress required to establish the institution was a prolonged affair,

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<sup>13</sup> Crowley, *Australia's Western Third*, p. 114.

<sup>14</sup> John Poynter, *Doubts and Certainties: A Life of Alexander Leeper*, Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1997, pp. 60, 390.

<sup>15</sup> J. W. Hackett, *Address delivered at the Inaugural Meeting of the Third Session of the Society, 2 July 1879*, Dialectic Society, Trinity College, Melbourne University, 1879.

commencing in 1901 and culminating in 1911 when the University Bill passed through parliament. Again, this was an episode in his life during which he would not take ‘no’ for an answer. It will also become clear that his bequest to the University of Western Australia demonstrated his underlying belief that such a facility was essential to the state’s future and that his gift would enable it to be placed on a firm footing.

Hackett was an extremely industrious person. In addition to his role at the *West Australian* and his involvement with the Anglican Church, he also served on a variety of committees. These included, the Library, Museum and Art Gallery board;<sup>16</sup> King’s Park Board;<sup>17</sup> Karrakatta Cemetery Board Trustees;<sup>18</sup> Perth Zoological Gardens;<sup>19</sup> President of the South Perth Lawn Tennis Club;<sup>20</sup> Western Australian Lawn Tennis Association;<sup>21</sup> and the Western Australian Cricket and Football Associations.<sup>22</sup> From the available evidence it appears that he saw his participation in community associations as being not only a public duty and responsibility, but also as an additional means of enhancing his reputation and status.<sup>23</sup> As a consequence of the many committee positions he held, he was able to cultivate a large number of personal and professional friendships.

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<sup>16</sup> Charles Thomas Stannage, *People of Perth: A Social History of Western Australia’s Capital City*, Perth: Perth City Council, 1979, p. 320; *BL*, Rare Serial, 027.4 PUB, Annual Report 1911-1912.

<sup>17</sup> *State Records of Western Australia [SROWA]*, Series no. 1831, Consignment no. 1363, Minutes of the King’s Park Board.

<sup>18</sup> Leonie Beth Liveris, *Memories Eternal: The First 100 Years of Karrakatta Cemetery*. Perth: Metropolitan Cemeteries Board, 1999, p. 277.

<sup>19</sup> Western Australian Parliament Votes and Proceedings [*WA V & P*], Paper No. 12, Annual Report of the Acclimatisation Board, 26 August 1897, p. 1.

<sup>20</sup> Lindsay Richardson, et al., ‘The History of the South Perth Lawn Tennis Club, Inc.’, unpublished, 1999, p. 1.

<sup>21</sup> Harry C. J. Phillips, *Tennis West: A History of the Western Australian Lawn Tennis Association from 1890s to the 1990s*. Sydney: Playright Publishing Pty Ltd, 1995, p. 44.

<sup>22</sup> *WA*, 23 June 1886, p. 3. The author contacted both the Cricket and Football Associations. However, neither of them were able to provide the exact years when Hackett held these positions.

This thesis consists of ten chapters and a conclusion. Chapter One outlines Hackett's Irish background before he emigrated to Australia. Particular attention is paid to this period, as throughout the thesis it will be suggested that it was at this time, belonging to a beleaguered religion, he developed several personal traits that he carried into adulthood. Sources for this chapter include Mrs Rae Clarke (a Hackett family genealogist), Gordon Fyles, a former Rector of St James' Church, Crincken, Co. Dublin, and the archives at Trinity College.

Chapter Two examines Hackett's initial years in Australia from 1875 until 1883 when he obtained a half share in the *West Australian* newspaper and also became its business manager. Records of his life in the eastern colonies are sparse. However, through the Leeper papers held by Trinity College it has been possible to acquire some significant information. Secondary source material include Ronayne's *First Fleet to Federation: Irish Supremacy in Colonial Australia*,<sup>24</sup> which explains why so many Trinity College, Dublin graduates left Ireland for Australia. It provides a succinct profile of Hackett, who was aware of 'the power that the editor of a mainstream newspaper can have' and 'made good use of the medium in his early days'.<sup>25</sup> Additional information came from Poynter's *Doubts and Certainties: A Life of Alexander Leeper*. This is the only work that portrays anything of Hackett as a private citizen and provides particulars of his personal generosity. It will be proposed in this chapter that his time in Melbourne – and particularly his experiences at Trinity College – served to foster his lifelong interests in both politics and education. It will be also be suggested that he saw no benefit in

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<sup>23</sup> A complete list of Hackett's involvement in various committees, together with his years of service, are noted in the appendices.

<sup>24</sup> Jarlath Ronayne, *First Fleet to Federation: Irish Supremacy in Colonial Australia*, Dublin: Trinity College Dublin Press, 2002.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 192.

remaining at 'Wooramel', the sheep station, he took up in late 1882, especially as there would be little prospect of his climbing the social ladder or entering politics whilst living 870kms from Perth.

Sources of information on Hackett's early life in Western Australia include Alfred Hillman's meticulously recorded diaries,<sup>26</sup> which indicate that Hillman, unlike many of his contemporaries, was disparaging of Hackett. A further source was Mollie Skinner's *The Fifth Sparrow*. Skinner later considered herself 'an intimate friend' of Deborah Hackett,<sup>27</sup> and from her personal contacts with Hackett's household, and what she learned from others, she was able to recount some of Hackett's early years in the colony. Nor were her comments about him always flattering, possibly because he refused to employ her at the *West Australian*.

Chapter Three examines Hackett's role in the Anglican Church in Western Australia, which because of his Irish Protestant upbringing was an important part of his life. It will be suggested that religion not only provided Hackett with personal satisfaction, but more significantly, presented him with a means of mingling with Perth's social élite.

Material for this chapter has been drawn from a range of secondary sources. The background of the disestablishment of the Church of Ireland in 1869 was obtained from Francis Warre Cornish's *The English Church in the Nineteenth Century*,<sup>28</sup> and Robert McDowell and D.A. Webb's *Trinity College, Dublin*<sup>29</sup> explained how the British

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<sup>26</sup> Alfred Hillman, *The Hillman Diaries 1877-1884: The personal diaries of Alfred James Hillman from 21 December 1877 to 24 April 1884* [Hillman Diaries], Perth: F. V. Bentley Hillman, 1990.

<sup>27</sup> Skinner, *The Fifth Sparrow*, p. 42.

<sup>28</sup> Francis Warre Cornish, *The English Church in the Nineteenth Century*, part 2, London: Macmillan and Co., 1910.

<sup>29</sup> Robert Brendan McDowell and D. A. Webb, *Trinity College Dublin 1592-1952: An academic history*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982.

parliamentary legislature and the pronouncements of Pope Pius IX left a lifelong mark on the religious beliefs of some Trinity College students. With respect to Hackett's acrimonious relationship with the Tractarian Dean Frederick Goldsmith, Colin Holden's biography *Ritualist on a Tricycle*, was invaluable.<sup>30</sup> These secondary sources were supplemented by Hackett's own editorials in the *West Australian* and its subsidiary, the *Western Mail*. Anglican Church records were also scrutinised for Hackett's involvement in Western Australian church affairs.

Chapter Four analyses Hackett's twenty-five year parliamentary career. Besides his newspaper business and involvement with the Anglican Church, his parliamentary work was the third major area of interest that absorbed his time. Later chapters analyse the two issues that very much preoccupied his parliamentary work – Federation and the abolition of state aid to church schools. This chapter examines the remainder of his lengthy parliamentary career, suggesting that he not only used parliament as a platform to promote the economic development and progress of Western Australia, but also to enhance his own reputation.

Material for this chapter has been drawn largely from the Western Australian Parliamentary Hansard and supplemented by editorials from the *West Australian*. David Black's *Legislative Council of Western Australia* was a helpful reference to the background of the Western Australian parliamentary system, whilst Ralph Gore's thesis 'The Western Australian Legislative Council, 1890-1970' provided statistics on its composition.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Colin Holden, *Ritualist on a Tricycle, Frederick Goldsmith: Church Nationalism and Society in Western Australia 1880-1920*, Nedlands: UWA Press, 1997.

<sup>31</sup> David Black, *Legislative Council of Western Australia. Membership Register, Electoral Law and Statistics 1890-1989*. Revised Edition, Perth: Western Australian Parliamentary History Project, 1991; Ralph Gore, 'The Western Australian Legislative Council, 1890-1970: Aspects of a House of Review', MA Thesis, UWA, 1975.

Chapter Five describes Hackett's participation in the Federation Conventions held during the 1890s, which culminated in 1901 with Australia attaining Federation. The first four volumes of *Official Record of the National Australasian Convention Debates* were the main source of information.<sup>32</sup> Fortunately, some contemporary correspondence between Hackett and the future Australian Prime Minister, Alfred Deakin, has survived, in which, amongst other issues, the two men frequently discussed Federation. These letters are significant, as it is rare to have access to Hackett's private thoughts on a particular issue. In June 1898, he dramatically changed from arguing against Western Australia's entering Federation to suddenly assenting to it. It will be argued that throughout the Convention proceedings Hackett was determined that the colony would be one of the original members of Federation, but importantly, that it would only enter on the best possible terms.

Chapter Six deals with Hackett's successful campaign from 1893 to 1895 to abolish state aid to religious schools. Although there are various books and journal articles that cover this issue, such as Mossenson's *State Education in Western Australia, 1829 – 1960*,<sup>33</sup> there has been no close examination of Hackett's involvement and motives during this campaign. It will be suggested that if it had not been for his unrelenting and vituperative attacks on the education system in the *West Australian*, the legislation would not have been passed.

In his review of Jarlath Ronayne's *First Fleet to Federation: Irish Supremacy in Colonial Australia*, Bob Reece asserts that Ronayne's celebration of Hackett's involvement in the establishment of the University of Western Australia 'has to be set against his near-destruction of the Catholic parochial school system and the disgrace

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<sup>32</sup> *Official Record of the National Australasian Convention Debates* [*Convention Debates*], Facsimile edition, 6 vols. Sydney: Legal Books Pty Ltd, vols. 1 to 4.

<sup>33</sup> David Mossenson, *State Education in Western Australia 1829-1960*, Nedlands: UWA Press, 1972.

and ruination of the admirable Archbishop Matthew Gibney'.<sup>34</sup> Although Hackett was ruthless in his determination to see the abolition of state aid to religious schools, in the opinion of this writer this should not diminish his many other achievements in Western Australia.

The main sources of information for this chapter were the *West Australian* and the Catholic congregation newspaper, *The W.A. Record*, supplemented by Western Australian Parliamentary records in *Hansard*. It will be seen that the weekly *Record's* responses were totally ineffective in negating Hackett's tirades in the daily *West Australian* because the newspaper's circulation was restricted to the Catholic community.

Chapter Seven examines Hackett's thirty-three year involvement with the state's major newspaper, the *West Australian*. Having arrived in Western Australia in 1882 as a virtual unknown, Hackett was, by the time of his death in 1916, one of the state's most prominent citizens and had also become both the newspaper's sole owner and editor. Throughout this thesis, it will be argued that Hackett strived for power and influence and that his role at the helm of the *West Australian* was vital in achieving these objectives.

As a consequence of the scarcity of Hackett's personal correspondence, the main source of information for this chapter was the *West Australian*. Other newspapers such as *Coolgardie Miner*, *The Inquirer and Commercial News*, and the *Sunday Times* were also consulted whilst other significant secondary sources included James Battye's *Cyclopedia of Western Australia*, Alan Frost's 'Early West Australian Newspapers', and the 1994 edition of *Studies in Western Australian History: Media, Politics and Identity*. Also helpful were the unpublished manuscripts of O. K. Battye's 'West

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<sup>34</sup> *Australian Book Review*, December 2002/January 2003, p. 44.



Australian', and Alan Frost's 'Early West Australian newspapers and their editors'.<sup>35</sup>

On more specific events, Su-Jane Hunt's writings on Hackett's dispute with John Gribble, known as the 'Gribble affair', have been invaluable.

Chapter Eight focuses on Hackett's private life. Until Hackett's marriage at the age of fifty-seven, Alexander Leeper's family acted as *de facto* relatives. It is fortunate that Trinity College, Melbourne, holds the Alexander Leeper papers and these have been an invaluable resource, especially because of the scarcity of Hackett's own private papers. A further significant insight was also provided by John Poynter's *Doubts and Certainties*, a biography of Alexander Leeper. Molly Lukis's brief description of Hackett's residence in St Georges Terrace portrayed the house's opulence and confirmed his growing status.<sup>36</sup>

In 1895 Hackett married eighteen-year-old Deborah Drake-Brockman. Sources of information for this episode of his life were found in his correspondence with Walter James, the Western Australian Agent-General in London, the Alfred Deakin correspondence, the Leeper diaries and parliamentary debates. The contention here is that he used his marriage as a means of climbing the social ladder, although it must be added that it was a surprise to many people that the marriage was a success. In respect of Hackett's precious recreation time, Peter Boyce provides various reasons why he became a Freemason: one being his thirst for public distinction. Paul De Serville in his book, *3 Barrack Street*, also throws light on the composition of the exclusive, men's-

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<sup>35</sup> James Sykes Battye, *The Cyclopaedia of Western Australia, illustrated: an historical and commercial review, descriptive and biographical facts, figures and ill. An epitome of progress*, facsimile ed., 2 vols. Perth: Hesperian Press, 1985; A. C. Frost, 'Early West Australian Newspapers', *Early Days*, 1983, vol. 9, no. 1, pp. 77-87; Media, Politics and Identity', *Studies in Western Australian History: Media, Politics and Identity*, 1994, no. 15. O. K. Battye, 'The West Australian', unpublished manuscript, BL MN 1719, Acc 5192A/30; Alan Charles Frost, 'Early West Australian newspapers and their editors', unpublished manuscript, BL MN 954, ACC 3177A.

<sup>36</sup> BL, RN 558, 'Hackett Home'.

only Weld Club.<sup>37</sup> For a person of Hackett's disposition, membership would have been essential, and once more this served as a stepping-stone into élite society.

Various honours were bestowed on Hackett late in his life, including an honorary doctorate in Ireland and a knighthood. The *Irish Times* provided information on the events that occurred when Hackett collected his doctorate from the University of Dublin. As for Hackett's rejection of a lesser grade of knighthood for fourteen years, correspondence from various luminaries, such as Joseph Chamberlain, John Forrest and Alfred Deakin revealed the reasons behind his continual refusal. Yet again, the motive was the elevation of his own social and political status.

Chapter Nine examines Hackett's role in the establishment of the University of Western Australia. As Fred Alexander's book *Campus at Crawley* extensively documents the history of the university, this chapter concentrates on Hackett's involvement and examines some of the initial practical problems he experienced when the university was opened. It will be argued that from the time of his arrival in Western Australia Hackett had been determined to create a university, an additional motivation being his continual need to strengthen his community standing.

The type of university he wanted was outlined and reinforced during his parliamentary speeches on the subject in 1901, 1903 and in 1911. Then the question arose as to the permanent siting of the university. In dealing with this issue, Hansard and the *West Australian* were again both utilised. The chapter concludes with the views of several contemporaries on Hackett's legacy to the university. Sources included parliamentary speeches, newspaper articles and public lectures.

Chapter Ten deals with Hackett's legacy to Western Australia. It focuses on his will and his generous donations to both the University of Western Australia and the Church

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<sup>37</sup> Paul De Serville, *3 Barrack Street, The Weld Club 1871-2001*, Sydney: Helicon Press, 2003.

of England. Following numerous tributes to him immediately after his death in February 1916, his name was commemorated not only in a variety of place names in Perth and Canberra, but also in animal names, including a category of wallaby. It will be suggested in this chapter that his meticulously written will attempted to continue after his death the philosophy he had practised in life, and explores the possibility that it was at least in part modelled on that of Cecil Rhodes, modified to suit Western Australian circumstances.

The major source of information for this chapter was Hackett's will, with the last codicil completed in May 1915.<sup>38</sup> The monetary proceeds ultimately received by the University were specified in a 1926 court document.<sup>39</sup> His funeral details and ensuing tributes to him were obtained from the *West Australian* and from various institutional documents.

This thesis aims to fill a gap in the biographies of influential Western Australians, focusing as it does on the work of a person who achieved much in his own lifetime as an Anglican Church layman, newspaper proprietor and as a politician. Following an outstanding career, in death he left an indelible mark for the future of tertiary education in Western Australia.

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<sup>38</sup> *SROWA*, consignment no. 3436, items 1916/478 and 1917/393.

<sup>39</sup> Supreme Court Order no. 20 of 1926, *UWA OG* 721.

## CHAPTER ONE: THE FAMILY IN IRELAND

*To be 'Irish was to be Gaelic and Catholic; the Anglo-Irish were Protestant and separate'.*

– Jarlath Ronayne, 2002.

### **Introduction**

John Winthrop Hackett's family can be traced to the twelfth century to Tipperary, Ireland. It will be argued in this chapter that his main personal beliefs and characteristics were derived from his immediate family and subsequently as a student at Trinity College, Dublin. Throughout his life he had the motivation to be a high achiever and he eventually succeeded in doing so. In his will he made bequests that attempted to see that his philosophy was continued after his death. However, the beneficiaries of that legacy were not the Irish, but the citizens of Western Australia. This chapter examines his family background; his immediate family at Crinken; his student days at Trinity College; and concludes with possible reasons as to why he emigrated to Australia.

### **Family background**

The Hackett family goes back to William de Haket, who accompanied King John (1199-1216) to Ireland. For this William was granted a large land holding in the county of Tipperary. Hackett was a twenty-first generation member of the family, his father also being called John Winthrop Hackett.<sup>1</sup> The family held on to its substantial land holdings throughout many generations until the late eighteenth or early nineteenth

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<sup>1</sup> Hackett family tree provided to the author by Mrs Rae Clarke, Melbourne.

century. During this period it was not surprising that, as with many large families, some of the Hacketts attempted to make their fortune without depending on the land. Many found their vocation in the clergy.



#### De Haket Effigies

Coffin lids built into the old city wall, Cashel, Tipperary, Ireland. The effigies are said to be that of Sir William De Haket and his wife c.1260, ancestors of Winthrop Hackett.

Acknowledgment: Mrs Rae Clarke, September 2004.

Before discussing Hackett himself it is necessary to look at the third generation of the family, which may provide some insight into the origins of its prominent involvement in religion. William de Haket had been rewarded with the estates in Co. Tipperary and in 1265 he established the Franciscan Friary in Cashel, which in later years became known as Hackett's Abbey.<sup>2</sup> Throughout subsequent generations other conspicuous

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<sup>2</sup> 'Franciscans in Cashel and Emly', *Homepage*. <<http://tinet.ie/~cashesemly/friaries.htm>>, accessed 17 February 2002. Today, Cashel's Catholic Church stands on the site where once the Friary once stood.

family members included Sir John de Haket, (fourth generation), who was made a peer in 1302.<sup>3</sup> James Hackett, (twelfth generation), was one of the first freemen and burgesses of Fethard, Co. Tipperary, whilst James Hackett (sixteenth generation) was the unfortunate family member who was forced to surrender the Corporation of Fethard to Oliver Cromwell in 1675. In 1743 Thomas Hackett married Mary Sheppard, also from Tipperary. They produced ten children, the three eldest being boys. The eldest son was also named Thomas. Although a Counsellor-at-law, he managed to squander much of the family wealth through gambling. Included in the lost fortune were much of the family's land holdings in Tipperary. Although married, Thomas died without issue, which resulted in his younger brother, Major James Hackett, inheriting the remnants of any assets. Their third child was Capt. John Hackett, the grandfather of the subject of this thesis. Capt. Hackett's wife was Sarah Pope, whose father Richard Pope had been guillotined during the French Revolution. The couple had fourteen children, a Thomas Hackett again being the eldest, and the subject's father, John Winthrop, being the second eldest. Out of fourteen children, three were to die in their youth while a further six never married, leaving only five children to continue the family lineage.

It can be assumed that family members steadily converted to the Church of Ireland from Roman Catholicism with Hackett's immediate family, surprisingly, taking things to extraordinary levels with several members shortly thereafter becoming clergymen in the Church of Ireland. This rather begs the question, when did Hackett's immediate family, who had such a prominent lineage of Irish Roman Catholics, change their religion to that of the Church of Ireland? It was during the eighteenth generation when a Hackett family member is first noted as having converted from Catholicism to the Protestant faith. James was the eldest son of Valentine and Elinor Hackett and when he died on

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<sup>3</sup> Records indicate that Michael Hackett, a sixth generation member was the first to use the surname 'Hackett'. The fourth generation members still called themselves 'de Hackett', while the following generation were known as 'Hackett'.

12 December 1773, the record of his death, recorded in the parish of Newcastle, Ireland notes that he was a Protestant. Yet, his wife and one of their children are listed as ‘papists’, but it has not been possible thus far to trace the reason for the conversions.<sup>4</sup>

The Penal Laws were introduced into Ireland in the late seventeenth century by the English Protestant ruling class in an attempt to keep Roman Catholics out of power. The purpose of the laws was to ‘disenfranchise the native [Irish] majority from all power, both political and economic’, with the ultimate aim of eradicating Catholicism in Ireland.<sup>5</sup> The outcome of these laws, in part, ensured that Catholics were forbidden to: exercise their religion; receive a Catholic education; enter a profession; to hold public office; engage in trade or commerce; live within five miles [eight kilometres] of a corporate town; purchase or lease land; vote; receive an inheritance or gift from a Protestant; be a guardian of a child or send their children overseas to be educated.<sup>6</sup> The regulations were an attempt to deprive the Irish of their Catholic identity.

Overall, the Penal Laws were effective, but some Roman Catholics took evasive action to escape them. If Catholic families could not afford to send their children overseas to be educated, some were taught at home. There were also clergymen who surreptitiously moved around the country, thereby forfeiting a permanent community. Moreover, some Catholics were able to retain their estates, usually with the cooperation of sympathetic Protestants. The Penal Laws were to have an unexpected and lasting effect, because with many wealthy and professional Catholics moving overseas to avoid them, their former roles in political leadership were taken up by the clergy.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Hackett family tree provided to author by Mrs Rae Clarke, Melbourne.

<sup>5</sup> “Laws in Ireland and the suppression of Popery”. In *University of Minnesota, Law School*. [on line] <<http://www.law.umn.edu/irishlaw/intro.html#TABLEOFCONTENTS>> Accessed 18 August 2002.

<sup>6</sup> “The Penal Laws”. In *Irish Clans*. [on line] <<http://www.irishclans.com/articles/penallaws.html>> Accessed 18 August 2002.

<sup>7</sup> James Camlin Beckett, *A Short History of Ireland*, 5<sup>th</sup> ed., London: Hutchinson & Co., Ltd, 1977, p. 99.

In respect of the Hackett family, it seems that there was some success, as his father and two younger brothers were to dedicate their lives to the Church of Ireland. In the late eighteenth century Thomas Hackett lost much of the family's property through gambling, so consequently descendants probably had little choice but to take any secure income, the church being one of the most common options. It may well be that by the time Hackett came on to the scene, he had hopes of one day being able to restore the family prestige and fortune.

Returning to Major James Hackett; he fathered nine children, of whom one, John Hackett, is recorded as dying in Australia.<sup>8</sup> As the remaining children were to die in Ireland, it is quite probable that the Major served in Australia at some time and that his wife, Anne, gave birth to John, who died before the family returned home. A William Hackett (twentieth generation) also had connections with Australia. He and his wife Elinor had eight children. Their seventh child, Lydia, married a Mr Meares and records indicate that they lived in Melbourne. Another daughter, the fifth child, also decided upon her marriage to live in the colonies. Unfortunately, the couple drowned on their way to Australia. William and Elinor had a further connection to Australia. A grandson, James, came to live in Melbourne where in 1858 a son, James Thompson Hackett, was born. This section of the family seems to be the first of the Hacketts to have settled permanently in Australia. James Thompson was educated at Wesley College and Melbourne University and from 1877 became a partner in a law firm with Sir John Cox Bray.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> No date is provided for the death. It was after the settlement of white Australia in 1788 as James married Anne Lowe in 1777. John was their third child.

<sup>9</sup> Hubert William Coffey and Marjorie Jean Morgan, *Irish families in Australia and New Zealand*, 3 vols, Melbourne: Magenta Press, 1983, vol 2, p. 99.



## The Hacketts of Crinken

The Reverend John Winthrop Hackett was born in 1804. Between 1834 and 1840 he was vicar at St Nicholas Church, Cork, before taking over at St James' Church, Crinken, Co. Dublin.<sup>10</sup> His wife, Jane Sophia Monck, was the second daughter of Henry Joseph Monck-Mason, a barrister-at-law.<sup>11</sup> The couple had eight children, three sons and five daughters. John Winthrop Hackett, born 4 February 1848, was the third eldest child (with twin sister, Jane Georgina), and the eldest son.<sup>12</sup>

The original Crinken church community was established in the 1820s and played a significant role in the Hackett family for over sixty years. It was also to be a very influential place in the formative years of the young Winthrop. In 1840, St James' Church was constructed with the assistance of two widows, Mrs Hannah Georgina Magan, who donated the land together with £200, and a Mrs Clarke who donated £1,550. The first vicar of the church was the thirty-six year old John Winthrop Hackett, the subject's father, who held the position until his death in 1888 and was succeeded by his youngest son, the thirty-three year old Thomas Edmund.<sup>13</sup> Around 1860 a parsonage was purchased for the vicar and his large family and it was to serve both father and son until 1903 when Thomas retired. The parsonage was then extensively modified for future incumbents.<sup>14</sup>

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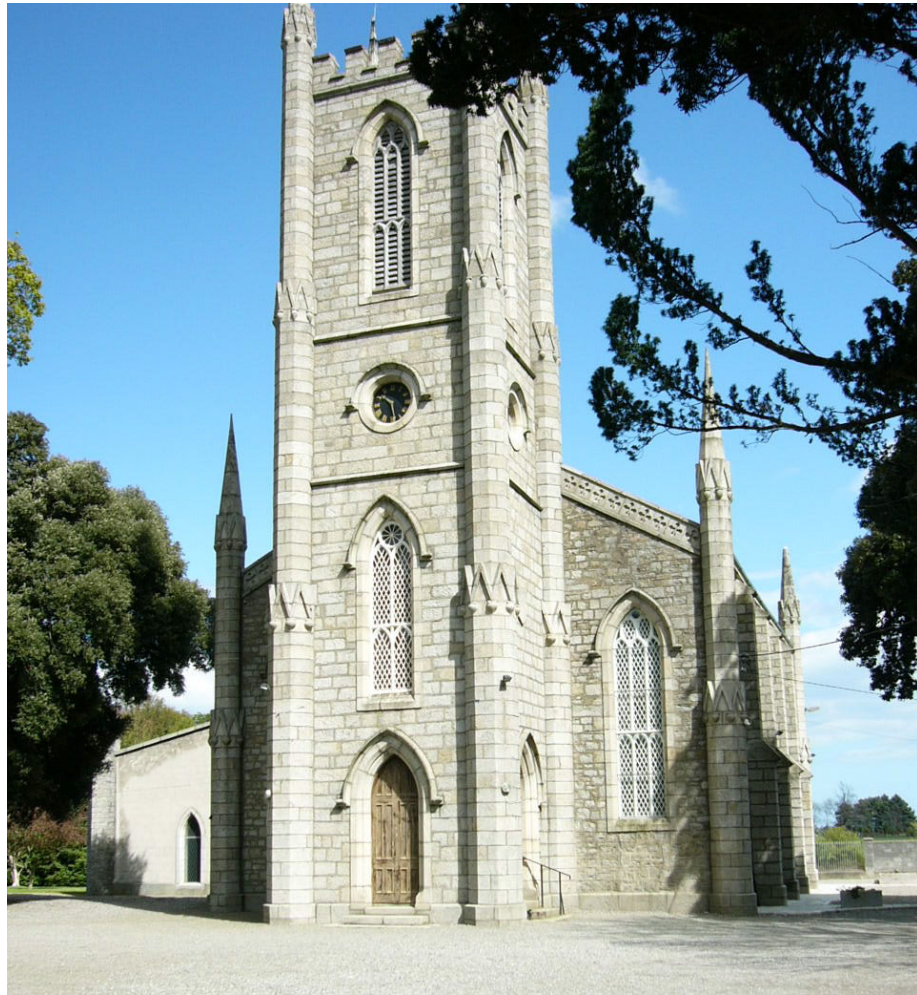
<sup>10</sup> W. J. R. Wallace, *Clergy of Dublin and Glendalough*, Dublin: The Diocesan Council of Dublin and Glendalough, 2001, p. 692.

<sup>11</sup> Hugh Montgomery-Massingberd, ed., *Burke's Irish Family Records*, 5<sup>th</sup> ed, London: Burke's Peerage Ltd, 1976, pp. 539-540.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>13</sup> -, *St. James' Crinken, 1840-1900*, Dublin: St James' Church, 1990, p. 16.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15.



St. James' Church, Crinken, Co Dublin, Ireland  
The church where both Hackett's father, John Winthrop (1840-1883)  
and his brother Thomas Edmund (1883-1903) were vicars.  
Acknowledgment: Author, April 2004.

Some of the church furnishings of the Hackett period, such as the pulpit, the reading-desk and the organ still exist today.<sup>15</sup> Years later, Hackett still had fond memories of the church, and his will included a bequest of £500.<sup>16</sup> It is not surprising that a year after John Winthrop's death in 1889, a Hackett Memorial Hall was built providing a place for parishioners to hold services, meetings and missions.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.18-19.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 19.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 38.

A tablet on the church's wall reads:

This tablet and the neighbouring Memorial Hall were  
erected in loving remembrance of  
The Rev. John Winthrop Hackett M.A.  
the first minister of this church  
and for nearly half a century its devoted pastor.  
Gifted with a rare and persuasive eloquence  
and adorned with a holy consistency of life,  
his aim was ever to exalt the Saviour,  
win the sinner, and edify the Church of God.  
The cause of Christian missions throughout the world  
was dear to his heart,  
but a lover of his country above all,  
he zealously promoted the work of scriptural  
education in this land, and earnestly  
laboured for Ireland's true enlargement and peace.

"To me to live was Christ and to die was gain"  
He entered into rest November 23, 1888  
Aged 84 years <sup>18</sup>

When the lives of the subject's brothers and sisters are examined, it was probably not surprising that he eventually decided to take the career path he did. The clergy had an immense influence on the household. Five of the children became involved in the church with two daughters marrying clergymen. The eldest child, Annie Frances, was born in 1844 and in 1870 married the Right Reverend William Pakenham Walsh, Bishop of Ossory, Ferns and Leighlin. The seventh child, Alice Isabella, born 1851,

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<sup>18</sup> E-mail from Gordon Fyles (Rector of St James' Church, Crinken) to the author, 2 May 2002.



#### Hackett's father

Reverend John Winthrop Hackett

Birth: 31 October 1804 Died: 23 November 1888

Acknowledgment: St James Church, Crinken, Co Dublin, Ireland.

married the Most Reverend John Baptist Crozier, Archbishop of Armagh, and Primate of All Ireland in 1877. Hackett's two younger brothers also entered the clergy. The Reverend Henry Monck-Mason Hackett (born 1849) held church positions including Canon (1903-1913) and Dean (1904-1913) of Waterford Cathedral and Vicar at St Peter's, Belsize Park, London (1913-1929).<sup>19</sup> Thomas Edmund (born 1850) was initially curate to his father at St James, Crinken and subsequently upon his father's death took over his duties.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Montgomery-Massingberd, ed., *Burke's Irish family records*, pp. 539-540. According to Rex Hackett (Henry's grandson), Henry, as well as serving in the United Kingdom, also served overseas in India and Canada. (Rex Hackett to the author, 20 January 2006)

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*



Hackett as a child  
c. 1850s  
Acknowledgment: University of  
Western Australia, Ref: 2040P

Hackett and his two younger brothers were educated at Trinity College, Dublin.<sup>21</sup> His father also graduated from Trinity College with a Bachelor of Arts degree in 1827 and subsequently in 1832 with a Master of Arts.<sup>22</sup> The reason all four men were educated at Trinity was due to the Erasmus Smith Trust fund, which was established under Royal Charter in 1669. Smith (1611-91) had been a London merchant who had financially supported Oliver Cromwell and as a reward was granted lands in Ireland. In addition, he was to acquire a further 46,000 acres [18,616 hectares] of Irish countryside. Smith was subsequently granted permission by Charles II to establish a trust fund as he wished his future estate to ‘be used to educate children because he was of the firm belief that it was ignorance that made people unruly’. The charter stipulated that the 32 Governors to be appointed should include bishops and archbishops and the Provost of Trinity College, Dublin. Monies raised from the estate were to establish several grammar schools to educate the children of tenants. Smith was a firm believer that children

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<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>22</sup> Wallace, *Clergy of Dublin and Glendalough*, p. 692.

should at least experience a basic education. The Trust also provided scholarships for prospective students at Trinity College, Dublin,<sup>23</sup> which explains why Hackett was never in arrears with his College fees, which were due quarterly in advance. If students were behind with their fees their names soon disappeared from the student register. Also, there is no doubt that in later years that Hackett discovered the reason for his education at the college and sought to emulate the Trust fund himself in Western Australia.



#### 72-74 Harcourt Street, Dublin

The address of the Incorporated Society for the Promotion of English Protestant Schools in Ireland.  
Revd John Winthrop Hackett was the Trustee Secretary for over thirty years.  
Acknowledgment: Author, April 2004.

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<sup>23</sup> “Erasmus Smith Archive” In *The High School, Rathgar, Dublin 6*.  
<<http://www.highschoolublin.com/erasmus.htm>>. Accessed 18 May 2002; John Victor Luce, *Trinity College Dublin: The First 400 Years*, Dublin: Trinity College Dublin Press, 1992, p. 47.

As well as being vicar for St James', Hackett was from 1858 to 1888 Secretary to the Incorporated Society for the Promotion of English Protestant Schools in Ireland. Records indicate that for an unspecified period he was also Registrar of the Erasmus Smith Trust. So, not surprisingly, in 1889, a year after his death, a memorial fund was set up in his name for the promotion of English Protestant Schools in Ireland. The address of the fund was noted as 73 Harcourt Street, which was part of a group of semi-detached buildings, four storeys in height and having a basement.<sup>24</sup> Hackett provided this address as his residential address while he was a student at Trinity. It was therefore most probable that his family lodged above the Society's offices whilst staying in Dublin.

### **Trinity College, Dublin**

Whilst Hackett was at Trinity College, controversial issues were never far away. The 1801 Act of Union had been intended, in part, to guarantee that the Anglican churches of England and Ireland were united. However, throughout the nineteenth century successive British governments showed little interest in retaining this component of the Act. By the time Hackett entered Trinity College in 1866,<sup>25</sup> disestablishment was openly discussed, so that when Gladstone's Liberals regained power in 1868, the ecclesiastical aspect of the Union was in a precarious state. Opposition to disestablishment at Trinity was unanimous and a committee was established to fight such moves. This was to no avail, as by the following year a Disestablishment Act was passed disendowing the Irish Church.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> 'Hackett Memorial Prize Fund', *Trinity College, Dublin [TCD]* MS 5787/10/1-43. In June 2002, Dublin City Council advised the author by e-mail that the building occupants were then listed as an investment bank and three solicitors.

<sup>25</sup> Trinity College Dublin, Manuscript Room, Berkeley Library, V26/4 July Entrance 1866.

<sup>26</sup> S. J. Connolly, ed., *The Oxford Companion to Irish History*, Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 1998, p. 149.

The Disestablishment Act had repercussions for Trinity College during Hackett's student days. The period coincided with the push by Henry Fawcett, a British Member of Parliament, for the abolition of religious tests for all offices at Trinity, which impeded the progress of both Catholic students and academics. Subsequently, in 1873 when Fawcett was successful in having the relevant Bill passed, Trinity felt no obligation to stay loyal to the State and two years later the nexus between the Church and the State was broken. During this debate, the College had provided some strenuous opposition especially when in 1868 a memorial was 'signed by the Vice-Chancellor, six Senior Fellows and over six thousand graduates, praying that the Protestant character of Trinity College should be preserved'.<sup>27</sup> The consequences of Fawcett's Act at Trinity were initially minimal. However, over a prolonged period it created an unforeseen 'atmosphere that was religious but not clerical, tolerant but not indifferent, and neither formally secular nor denominational'<sup>28</sup> as future appointments were open to all faiths. Although there are no records available that indicate Hackett's involvement with the two issues, he was probably implicated in both because of his family connections with the Church. It is also possible that because of the implementation of the Fawcett Act that Hackett decided that although he had no aspirations to be a cleric, it strengthened his resolve to later assist with church affairs as a layman.

Hackett's main interest at Trinity was the college's Historical Society, commonly known as 'Hist'. The Society is one of the oldest debating societies in the world and can be traced back to April 1747, when 'Edmund Burke, then a Senior Sophister, founded a club for the discussion of historical and philosophical questions and for practice in

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<sup>27</sup> McDowell and Webb, *Trinity College Dublin 1592-1952*, p. 251.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 256.



public speaking'.<sup>29</sup> After Burke's departure, and without his influence, the Society went into recess. It did not recommence again successfully until 1770 when a further association was formed 'mainly for the cultivation of historical knowledge and the practice of the members in oratory and composition'.<sup>30</sup> The Society experienced a turbulent history, including several periods when it has been excluded from the College's confines, including the period of the Provostship of Thomas Elrington in 1815. Elrington distrusted 'intellectual independence in young men and ... [saw] in the most innocent assembly of students the seeds of a Jacobin Club'.<sup>31</sup>



Student days, c.1867

Hackett (front right) with fellow students, including Alexander Leeper (second from left) at Trinity College, Dublin.

Acknowledgment: Trinity College, Melbourne.

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<sup>29</sup> Luce, *Trinity College Dublin*, p. 69, fn. 1.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>31</sup> McDowell and Webb, *Trinity College Dublin*, p. 79.

Courteous behaviour was usually displayed at their first yearly meeting when it was the tradition for the various dignitaries, including Dublin's Lord Mayor, to attend.<sup>32</sup>

The Society's minute book indicates that Hackett was nominated as a member on 11 January 1871 and was accepted a week later.<sup>33</sup> He was to take his participation at the 'Hist' extremely seriously. Rex Hackett (grandson of Henry Monck-Mason) recalls being told the story of our subject's father having to reorganise the attic at the parsonage at Crinken into a bedroom for Winthrop to practice his speeches. This was done in order that he would not disturb Henry, his younger brother, who was thirteen months his junior.<sup>34</sup> Debates, when Hackett supported the affirmative position of a motion, included the following topics:

'That the French Revolution of 1789 is to be condemned and its consequences deplored',<sup>35</sup>  
'That Trial by jury ought to be abolished';<sup>36</sup>  
'That Pitt's birth policy is deserving of our approval';<sup>37</sup> and  
'That the policy on non-intervention is injurious to England'.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Poynter, *Doubts and Certainties*, pp. 21-22.

<sup>33</sup> *TCD MUN/SOC/HIST* 33 1869-1876, 11, 18 January 1871.

<sup>34</sup> Rex Hackett to author, 20 January 2006.

<sup>35</sup> *TCD MUN/SOC/HIST* 33 1869-1876, 11 December 1872.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 19 March 1873.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 30 April 1873.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 26 November 1873.

He supported the negative side of the debates on the following motions:

‘That the present state of our Indian Empire gives grounds for alarm’,<sup>39</sup> and ‘That the beneficitation of Germany demands the approval of Europe’.<sup>40</sup>

It is worth noting that Hackett, like the Society’s founder, Burke, was to make his future reputation as a politician, brilliant orator and writer, and that during Hackett’s first two years in the Society, he was never on a losing side.

A lifelong friend of Hackett’s, Alexander Leeper joined the Society on 17 April 1872.<sup>41</sup> He was to start a similar Society in Melbourne, where Hackett had the honour of making the inaugural speech in July 1879.<sup>42</sup> In the same year Hackett stood for the Society’s General Committee but failed to get elected, finishing twelfth from sixteen candidates. Only the six highest nominees were elected.<sup>43</sup> The following year Hackett’s fortunes were reversed when he was appointed the Society’s Treasurer<sup>44</sup> and was re-elected a year later.<sup>45</sup>

When the Society learned of Hackett’s impending departure for Australia the minutes of February 1875 noted that: ‘The Society have heard with great regret of the approaching departure for Australia of Mr John W. Hackett BA...’ and expressed ‘...wishes for Mr

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<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 17 April 1872.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 22 January 1873.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 17 April 1872

<sup>42</sup> J. W. Hackett, *Address*.

<sup>43</sup> TCD MUN/SOC/HIST, 33, 29 May 1872.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, nd.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 3 December 1873.

Hackett's prosperity and success in the new sphere which he is about to enter'.<sup>46</sup>

Hackett seemed surprised by the appreciation showed by fellow members, and responded:

Will you convey to the Society my warmest thanks for the very kind resolution of last Wednesday. I was mistaken in thinking nothing could be added to the store of pleasant memories which remain from a five-year [sic] connection with the Historical Society and its friendships to be one of the severest my departure must entail believe me.<sup>47</sup>

In a letter dated November 1949 from the Registrar of Trinity College, Dublin to the then Librarian of the University of Western Australia it was suggested that Hackett had an undistinguished academic career:

He had a very ordinary undergraduate career here. He entered in July 1866 under Mr T. T. Gray as College Tutor ... He obtained a second class honor in Classics in his Senior Freshman (second) year and a second class honors in English and Classics in his Junior Sophister (third) year. He did not attempt the Moderatorship examination (the honor degree examination) and obtained a pass B.A. degree in 1871 ...<sup>48</sup>

In 1871, Hackett graduated from Trinity College with a degree in Classics and English and three years later with a Law degree.<sup>49</sup> The years spent at Trinity, especially as a member of its Historical Society were however to leave a lifelong impression on him.

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<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 17 February 1875.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 24 February 1875. Hackett was only a member of the Society for four years.

<sup>48</sup> Cited by Fred Alexander, *Campus at Crawley: A Narrative and Critical Appreciation of the First Fifty Years of the University of Western Australia*, Nedlands: UWA Press, 1963, p. 18.

<sup>49</sup> Brian K. de Garis, *Campus in the Community: The University of Western Australia, 1963-1987*, Nedlands: UWA Press, 1988, p. xx; Bede Nairn, *et al.*, eds., *ADB*, vol. 9, pp. 150-153.

As a Western Australian parliamentarian for twenty-five years his talent for debating was put to practical use and his Classics and English degree aided him whilst he was editor of the *West Australian*. His father's involvement, both in the clergy and the Society for the Promotion of English Protestant Schools were to influence Hackett's future involvement as a church layman. Furthermore, his passion for education was to remain with him for the remainder of his life. His close friendship with Alexander Leeper was also to last a lifetime.

### **Possible reasons for leaving Ireland**

John Winthrop Hackett and his wife Jane were to play a significant part in deciding their son's future, especially their commitment to the church. It is most likely that he did not wish to follow his father and brothers into the clergy; so alternatively, he decided to work for the church in a lay capacity. As to a profession, he followed his grandfather into law.<sup>50</sup>

There are several possible reasons why John Winthrop emigrated so soon after graduating from university. As the two eldest children were girls, it raises the question as to why he considered leaving Ireland, and why specifically he chose to go to Australia. Being the eldest son, he would have been expected to inherit the family's assets, so that his father's wealth may have been a consideration. The 1870 records of Co. Tipperary christenings, marriages and deaths indicate that John W. Hackett held only 164 acres [66.37 hectares] of land at Bray, County Wicklow.<sup>51</sup> It would have been difficult for any family to sustain a livelihood from such a small holding.

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<sup>50</sup> Information on Hackett's family tree provided by Mrs Rae Clarke.

<sup>51</sup> "Property owners Co. Tipperary 1870." In *Tipperary County Ireland CMCR Project*. <<http://www.cmcrcp.net/Tipperary/Landowner7.htm>> Accessed 18 October 2001.

When Hackett died in 1888, his estate totalled 2,623 pounds, five shillings and two pence,<sup>52</sup> and although this would have been considered a reasonable amount at the time, if divided up between surviving family members, any resultant gratuity would have been meagre.

John Winthrop's two younger brothers followed their father into the clergy and he might thus have felt obliged to uphold the family tradition. Also, the fact that his two sisters married into the clergy may have added extra pressure. However, believing that there was no financial security in becoming either a clergyman or a landowner, he decided upon the law. Moreover, following the 1829 Catholic Emancipation Act Catholics were no longer required to pay tithes to the Church of Ireland, which also resulted in sons being less likely to enter the church as a profession. By living overseas Hackett would also be away from further family pressures. As has already been noted, he had a twin sister, Jane Georgina, who died in 1862 from tuberculosis.<sup>53</sup> As a result, Rex Hackett has suggested that Winthrop was concerned about his own health and so decided to emigrate.<sup>54</sup> Also, as twins, they were presumably very close and he may have simply wished to move away from such painful memories.

The death of Hackett's twin sister was not the sole reason for his finally deciding to emigrate to Australia. His reasons were probably more complex. To understand just why he left Ireland, the circumstances of life there before, and more particular during the nineteenth century, must be taken into consideration. James Battye, the future long-standing Chief Librarian of the Public Library of Western Australia and a close friend of Hackett, would confirm this theory. In a radio broadcast in October 1945, he

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<sup>52</sup> *National Archives of Ireland*, Will index, Revd J. W. Hackett, Probate, 10 January 1889.

<sup>53</sup> Roy Fullick, *Shan Hackett: The Pursuit of Exactitude*, Barnsley, England: Leo Cooper, 2003, p. 2.

<sup>54</sup> Rex Hackett to the author, 20 January 2006.

suggested that Hackett had emigrated because he had ‘possess[ed] democratic views which did not fit in with the official Irish political outlook, he soon decided to seek a wider field in Australia’.<sup>55</sup> His decision to emigrate was most likely the result of a combination of events, although one can only speculate what the actual reasons were because of the sparse records available. Ireland had experienced tumultuous times in the nineteenth century, culminating in its independence in 1921.

Before addressing the nineteenth century, attention should be drawn to the 1673 Test Act which required those holding public and military office to accept the Anglican sacrament. Roman Catholics and other ‘dissenters’ were disqualified from holding such office. Furthermore, such individuals were also banned from becoming British members of parliament. Early in the nineteenth century, William Pitt, the British Prime Minister attempted to unite Britain and Ireland by persuading the Irish Parliament to pass the 1801 Act of Union. As a result, the Irish Parliament was abolished, and subsequently the Irish were granted seats in the British Parliament. Unfortunately for the Irish, the economic benefits promised by the British government, except in the industrial northern province of Ulster, never materialised. In 1823, Daniel O’Connell formed the Catholic Association and five years later was elected to Parliament. If the 1673 Test Act was not repealed and O’Connell would not be allowed to sit in Parliament and the British Government feared that any consequent unrest could result in civil war in O’Connell’s homeland. Despite intense opposition from the Tories, the 1829 Catholic Emancipation Bill was passed allowing Roman Catholics to take their seats in Parliament.

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<sup>55</sup> Transcript of a talk given by J. S. Battye, ‘Sir Winthrop Hackett and What We Owe to Him’ on ABC radio station 6WF, 30 October 1945, *BL*, PR14514/HACKETT, item 2, p. 1.

Unfortunately, the benefits of this Bill were nullified, as other legislation stipulated that tenants, mainly consisting of Catholics, not only lost their right to vote but were also barred from taking degrees at several British Universities, including the prestigious Oxford and Cambridge. This situation continued until 1873 when the University Religious Tests were rescinded.<sup>56</sup> Coming from such a devout Anglican family, Hackett, who was about to finish his student days at Trinity, no doubt recognised that this religious agitation was likely to continue for many years and wished for no involvement in such matters.

When Hackett was a student at Trinity, many of his fellow students emigrated to Australia. There were several explanations for this. Irish nationalism steadily increased throughout the nineteenth century, so to be ‘Irish was to be Gaelic and Catholic; the Anglo-Irish were Protestant and separate’.<sup>57</sup> People who had already settled in Australia sent home messages that Australia was a place embodying ‘religious tolerance, secular education, universal suffrage, land reform, and democratic institutions’.<sup>58</sup> For similar ideals to be achieved in Ireland seemed merely a dream. Colonialists had seen the turmoil that intolerance had created at home and wished to avoid such conflict in their adopted country. Also, Irish people were more accepted in Australia, compared to those immigrants who had settled in America, where many became impoverished and found themselves living in ghettos. There were those of the Irish educated gentry who ‘regarded themselves as agents of culture and civilisation and who entered enthusiastically into public life’<sup>59</sup> whilst others, who were both educated

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<sup>56</sup> *The Penguin Dictionary of Modern History 1789-1945*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, pp. 68-69, 154; “Irish History Page”. In *Mick Gills Home on the Net*. <<http://www.mickgill.co.uk/irish.html>> Accessed 18 August 2002; “Ireland in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century”. In *TEFL Virtual Library (Kenji Kitao and S. Kathleen Kitao)* <<http://ilc2.doshisha.ac.jp/users/kkitao/library/resource/ireland/history4.htm>> Accessed 18 August 2002.

<sup>57</sup> Ronayne, *First Fleet to Federation*, p. 7.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 8.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*



and ambitious, travelled to far away places in the hope of becoming rich. One could place Hackett in the latter category, as it was only through well-connected contacts that he eventually entered successfully into business. Ronayne writes that Hackett was an example of one of those who had qualified as a lawyer in Ireland, but was never to practice full-time in Australia. He is only recorded as having appeared once in a Western Australian court when in 1888 he acted as a junior counsel to Septimus Burt QC, in a libel case brought by Alfred Hensman.<sup>60</sup>

Then of course there was the Irish economic situation. It was barely twenty years since the Great Famine (1845 to 1849), which had resulted in the Irish population being reduced from over eight million to about six million people. One million people died, while a further million emigrated.<sup>61</sup> As a young boy, Hackett would have had vivid memories of the aftermath of the tragedy, especially the ‘workhouse sites, famine graves, sites of soup-kitchens, deserted homes and villages ... and many roads and lanes [that] were built as famine relief measures’.<sup>62</sup> He might have considered that such a catastrophe could recur.

Irish political events may also have influenced Hackett’s decision. He entered Trinity College, Dublin as a student in 1866 and was to remain there until 1874. This period in Irish history was a turbulent one. In 1868 William Gladstone became British Prime Minister and stated ‘My mission is to pacify Ireland’.<sup>63</sup> The following year he

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<sup>60</sup> Enid Russell, *A History of the Law in Western Australia and its Development from 1829 to 1979*, Nedlands: UWA, 1980, p. 222.

<sup>61</sup> Robert Kee, *The Laurel and the Ivy: The story of Charles Stewart Parnell and Irish Nationalism*, London: Hamish Hamilton Ltd, 1993, p. 15.

<sup>62</sup> Bernard O’Hara and Nollaig ÓMuraíle “County Mayo: An Outline History, Part 4 – 1800-1900”. In *County Mayo: An Outline History – Part 3*. <<http://www.mayohistory.com/H18to19.htm>> Accessed 1 January 2002.

<sup>63</sup> “Ancient Through Modern Times In Celtic History 1800AD to 1899 AD”. In *Celtic Crossroads*. <<http://www.celticcrossroads.com/celt1800.htm>> Accessed 13 July 2002.

disestablished the Church of Ireland and deprived it of its property. In 1870 Isaac Butt, a Unionist lawyer who was interested in land reform legislation, founded the Home Government Association, commonly known as the Home Rule League, which called for an Irish Parliament but was not encouraged by other Irish Nationalists groups. At the 1874 British General Election the League gained sixty-one seats out of one hundred-and-three Irish constituencies, but not surprisingly, the members found themselves isolated when attempting to introduce legislation relating to Irish affairs.<sup>64</sup> No doubt Hackett envisaged the struggle ahead for his Irish compatriots and after much soul searching decided that he was not to be part of it.

A further reason for emigrating may have been that he had a relation, James Thompson Hackett, already living in Melbourne and completing his law studies. A newly-graduated Hackett might have considered obtaining some family support by going into a partnership.

Finally, there was the pressure from his close friend, Alexander Leeper at Trinity College, Dublin. Leeper had obtained the position as Senior Classics Master at Melbourne Grammar School and persuaded Hackett to join him in Australia. Hackett agreed, but instead of Melbourne, decided he would first try his fortune in Sydney. Leeper delayed his departure from England until Hackett was admitted to the Dublin Bar and on 26 February 1875 they both departed on the *Hampshire* from Plymouth leaving behind a bitterly cold, windswept England.<sup>65</sup> Leeper was bound for Melbourne

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<sup>64</sup> "Ireland: Home Rule 1868-1918." In *The Hutchinson Family Encyclopedia*. [on line] <<http://EBOOKS.WHSMITHONLINE.CO.UK/ENCYCLOPEDIA/93/FOOOO193.htm>> Accessed 1 January 2002; "The Home Rule movement and the Land League". In *University of California, Berkeley Art Museum Pacific Film Archive*. <<http://www.bampfa.berkeley.edu/exhibits/irish/homerule.html>> Accessed 13 July 2002; "Ancient Through Modern Times In Celtic History 1800AD to 1899 AD". In *Celtic Crossroads*. <<http://www.celticcrossroads.com/celt1800.htm>> Accessed 13 July 2002.

<sup>65</sup> Leeper to Marian Allen, 21 February 1875, Trinity College, Melbourne [TCM], Alexander Leeper's Correspondence files, Packet 14.

and Hackett for Sydney but within the year Hackett had joined his friend in Melbourne. Also accompanying the two on their voyage to Australia was an Edward Hackett, aged 32, single and described as an English gentleman, who disembarked in Melbourne.<sup>66</sup> It has not been possible to confirm if Winthrop and Edward were related, but this may have been the case, as at the time there was already a branch of the Hackett family residing in Melbourne.

Hackett came from an Irish family and although considered part of the gentry he was not wealthy. Although now well educated he probably realised he had little prospect of work in Ireland. However, most importantly as will become clear, he had the ambition and motivation to improve himself. It is difficult to identify the main reason for his move to Australia. All the above factors must have played a significant role in his final decision, but it seems that his close friendship to Leeper may have been the one that finally decided that his future was to be in the colonies.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter has provided evidence that from Hackett's family background that his childhood days spent in Ireland, followed by his student days spent at Trinity College, both had an enormous influence on his future life in Australia. Notwithstanding his strong Church of Ireland background, he did not wish to be a clergyman like his father. At Trinity College, besides studying, his main interest was the college's debating society which would eventually be of benefit to him, especially during the 1890s as a Western Australian delegate to the National Australasian Conventions and his twenty-five years as a member of the Western Australian Legislative Council.

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<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*

Not only did he gain a law degree, but his time at Trinity also provided him with a lifetime of yearning to provide future generations of children with the opportunity to gain a tertiary education.

During Hackett's time at Trinity, the repeal in 1873 of the University Religious Tests made him realise that religious agitation would not only continue, but was likely to intensify. Also as a student he would have heard of some of his contemporaries emigrating to Australia and eventually he was courageous enough to accept the challenge from Alexander Leeper to move to the opposite end of the world. As evidence indicates he was an ambitious man and although he experienced some disappointments along the way, as this thesis will make clear, he eventually attained most of his objectives. His early years spent in Australia, before he accepted part-ownership of the *West Australian* newspapers will be examined in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER TWO: INITIAL YEARS IN AUSTRALIA, 1875-1883

*'I don't like him [Hackett] much. He talks so incessantly – gives the impression that he is frivolous + superficial though rather amusing'.*

- Adeline Allen, May 1875.

### Introduction

On leaving Ireland, Hackett firstly settled for a few months in Sydney, followed by six years in Melbourne, before moving to Western Australia in 1882. This chapter will argue that his likelihood of employment in the eastern colonies was limited, and seeing little prospects for an ambitious person he eventually decided to move to Western Australia to lease a sheep station. The chapter examines Hackett's friendship with Alexander Leeper and his family and his time spent at Trinity College. It also scrutinises his initial forays into politics, his departure from Melbourne, his early contacts with Perth's society and finally, his unsuccessful attempt at running a sheep station in the Gascoyne region of Western Australia. Although his earnings were meagre whilst he was in Melbourne, including those of part-time journalist, the experience he gained was invaluable and left an indelible mark on him whilst he considered what was best for the future for an expanding Western Australia.

### Alexander Leeper

Alexander Leeper, also the son of an Irish clergyman, was to remain firm friends with Hackett throughout their lives. Early in his life Leeper was considered by his family and friends to be a hypochondriac, but in 1869 he was 'diagnosed with phthisis (pulmonary consumption) in one lung'.<sup>1</sup> A warmer and drier climate was suggested.

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<sup>1</sup> Poynter, *Doubts and Certainties*, p. 23.

Subsequently, an unknown benefactor paid Leeper's way to Australia to recuperate. It was during this trip, at a horticultural society show in Sydney, that he was to meet his future wife, Adeline Allen, daughter of a prominent solicitor, Sir George Wigram Allen, and later Speaker of the New South Wales Legislative Assembly. He stayed in Australia for nearly a year, spending time tutoring Adeline's brothers, and vowed to return by 1873.<sup>2</sup>

However, he was not to return to Australia until 1875, and then travelled to Melbourne. Hackett did not travel with Leeper to Melbourne, but decided first to try his luck in Sydney where his main contact was with the Allen family. The Allen's family response to him was mixed. Initially he did not make a good impression on Adeline Allen, who noted: 'He is nice looking, very pleasant and gentlemanly, but talked a great deal'.<sup>3</sup> Two days later her views were more definite: 'I don't like him much. He talks so incessantly – gives the impression that he is frivolous + superficial though rather amusing ... I felt very indignant with Mr Hackett [,] several times he made some silly remarks like this which I hated him for'.<sup>4</sup> Over time the situation did not improve. Adeline's sister, Ethel, thought Hackett was 'the rudest young man she ever saw'.<sup>5</sup> However, not all the Allens disliked him. George Boyce Allen, Leeper's future brother-in-law, considered him 'very pleasant ... I find I do like him much better as I know him better'<sup>6</sup> while Leeper's future mother-in-law wrote to him advising: 'We all like him

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<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 23-31; James Grant, *Perspective of a Century: A Volume for the Centenary of Trinity College, Melbourne 1872-1972*. Melbourne: The Council of Trinity College, Melbourne, 1972, p. 14.

<sup>3</sup> *TCM*, Adeline Allen's Diaries, 25 May 1875.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 27 May 1875.

<sup>5</sup> Poynter, *Doubts and Certainties*, p. 55.

<sup>6</sup> George Boyce Allen to Leeper, 9 November 1875, *TCM* Alexander Leeper's Correspondence files, Packet 14.

very much'.<sup>7</sup> Adeline's thoughts on Hackett changed little. Several months after their first meeting she noted: 'I don't care for him at all, nor do the others ... he has evidently no low opinion of himself + has not tact enough to conceal the fact'.<sup>8</sup> For his part, Hackett was not impressed by Adeline's character. He once snapped at her: 'If a young lady at home spoke to her mother like that she would be sent to bed' and then added insult to injury by adding 'I hope you will soon recover from your bad temper'.<sup>9</sup>

Adeline's relationship with Leeper was a turbulent one. At one stage her parents forbade her to write to him. Hackett seemed to be the unfortunate man in the middle of the relationship as Adeline was convinced that he was 'at the bottom of it all'.<sup>10</sup> On several occasions Hackett attempted to reassure Adeline of Leeper's character: 'I have seen him in more moods and humours than any other living soul'.<sup>11</sup> When he did provide more positive accounts about her sweetheart, Adeline's disposition towards Hackett markedly improved. The relationship was further complicated as Leeper realised that Adeline and Hackett were regularly writing to each other and he was becoming increasingly jealous. Leeper warned Hackett: 'do not condemn my sunny heart, for at present it is all I have'.<sup>12</sup> Hackett seemed bewildered by such a response and retorted such a reply 'seems like a place that a curse rests on, that the birds do not sing'.<sup>13</sup> The turbulent relationship survived with Adeline and Leeper eventually marrying in Sydney on 30 December 1879, with Hackett being best man.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Marian Allen to Leeper, 28 December 1878, *TCM* Alexander Leeper's Correspondence files, Packet 18.

<sup>8</sup> *TCM*, Adeline Allen's Diaries, 17 October 1875.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>10</sup> Poynter, *Doubts and Certainties*, p. 56.

<sup>11</sup> Hackett to Adeline Allen, 24 May 1877. Cited by Poynter, *Doubts and Certainties*, p. 442, fn. 20.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>13</sup> Hackett to Adeline Allen, 29 December 1875. Cited by Poynter, *Doubts and Certainties*, p. 56.

<sup>14</sup> Poynter, *Doubts and Certainties*, p. 98.

When Leeper took up a position as a Senior Classics Master at Melbourne Grammar School, the Headmaster, Edward Ellis Morris, introduced several innovations to the school that Leeper noted and no doubt passed on to Hackett when they worked together. As well as establishing a school paper, Morris introduced a library and museum in the school.<sup>15</sup> Although he didn't realise it at the time, these were to have an influential bearing on Hackett's future.<sup>16</sup>

### **Trinity College, Melbourne**

Meanwhile, Melbourne's weather did not agree with Leeper who considered it 'one of the vilest in the world'.<sup>17</sup> When his father heard that he was considering leaving his employment at Melbourne Grammar School, he retorted in disgust: 'instead of looking for a place in a private family you ought to look for a Private Lunatic Asylum'.<sup>18</sup> Finally, Leeper decided not to leave Melbourne, after having rejected a position at Sydney Grammar School and accepted a position across the Yarra River as Warden at Trinity College, (not a part of Melbourne University until 1876<sup>19</sup>) which consisted at that time of only seven students.<sup>20</sup>

The Bishop of Melbourne, the Right Reverend Charles Perry, the principal founder, named Trinity College, Melbourne after the one in Cambridge, England. Former

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<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 45-48.

<sup>16</sup> Hackett and Leeper were both to serve on their respective University Council Boards, although it would take Hackett over thirty years to do so.

<sup>17</sup> Poynter, *Doubts and Certainties*, p. 58.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 71.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 61.



students from Cambridge and Oxford Universities, as well as Trinity College, Dublin established the College. The founders' aims were that the institution should be compared favourably with the ones that they had recently left. The College was provided with a portion of land, which was initially granted by the Victorian colonial government to the Church of England in 1853, but it was not until 1870 that it was founded and it was a further two years before students were enrolled.<sup>21</sup>

Unfortunately, Hackett found employment difficult to obtain in Sydney. There was an over abundance of lawyers, especially as the city was now educating its own. To gain some income he found work as a journalist at the *Sydney Morning Herald*.<sup>22</sup> For a period he lodged in rooms owned by a Mrs Spencer at 359 Liverpool Street, Darlinghurst.<sup>23</sup> Leeper, knowing that his friend was unsettled in Sydney, hoped that he might join him in Melbourne. One of the conditions that Leeper had attached to his acceptance of his new position was that Hackett would be allowed to join the staff. The latter departed Sydney and on 24 March 1876 was appointed to the position of Vice-Principal, a position that carried no salary, but provided free accommodation. Throughout the term of his appointment he was not a member of the College's Council but attended several of their meetings as a visitor. He taught Law, Logic and Political Economy.<sup>24</sup> Overseeing the discipline of boarders was one of his duties. One student, Reginald Stephen, recounts the story of Hackett 'appearing in his nightshirt to quiet unruly students with the admonition "Moderate your transports, gentlemen"'.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> "Trinity College." *The University of Melbourne*. [on line] <http://www.unimelb.edu.au/ExecServ/colleges/trinity.htm>. Accessed 16 March 2002.

<sup>22</sup> Grant, *Perspective of a Century*, p. 15.

<sup>23</sup> Hackett to Leeper, 8 June 1875. *TCM*, Alexander Leeper's Correspondence files, Packet 14.

<sup>24</sup> Poynter, *Doubts and Certainties*, pp. 71-72; *TCM*, Minute Books, 24 March 1876.

<sup>25</sup> Poynter, *Doubts and Certainties*, p. 72 and Grant, *Perspective of a Century*, p. 18.



#### 1876 Trinity College, Melbourne

Vice-Warden Winthrop Hackett (front row, third from right) with Trinity College Warden Alexander Leeper (front row, sitting with legs crossed) and students.

Acknowledgment: Trinity College, Melbourne.

It was not surprising that on 13 April 1877 Leeper, with Hackett's assistance, founded the College's Dialectic Society, an essay and debating group. Their aim was: 'The encouragement of the practice of oratory and promotion of literary culture among its members'<sup>26</sup> and was modelled on the debating society at Trinity College, Dublin. Leeper was the Society's first President, while Hackett was its initial Vice-President and actively participated in debates. For instance, in 1878 he argued on the affirmative side 'That Classics are of more importance than Science in popular education' and subsequently against the motion 'That Napoleon I, conferred greater benefits on his country than Wellington [did on England]'. Not surprisingly, following his

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<sup>26</sup> Grant, *Perspective of a Century*, p. 85.

accomplishments in debates in Dublin, he continued to be in the winning teams.<sup>27</sup> On 2 July 1879, he had the honour of providing the inaugural Prelector's Lecture at Melbourne University. This speech will be analysed more comprehensively in Chapter Nine when his involvement with the establishment of the University of Western Australia will be examined in greater detail. This address was the first recorded public occasion at which he revealed his own philosophy on the future of Australian universities.

### **Political ambitions**

The year 1880 saw the commencement of Hackett's active involvement in Australian politics. A few years earlier whilst he had been residing in Sydney, he had hinted in a letter to Leeper of having 'political and historical'<sup>28</sup> ambitions, but he subsequently brushed over the topic by writing that he hoped to see him shortly as he 'could say so little in a letter'.<sup>29</sup> It is worth remembering that Hackett was not being remunerated for his services at Trinity College and that since 1871 the Victorian Legislative Assembly backbenchers had been paid.<sup>30</sup> As a renowned debater and a proven public speaker, he realised that if he were to have a reliable income it would have to be away from Trinity. He saw a move into Parliament as a natural progression and became a supporter of the Victorian liberal Premier, Graham Berry.<sup>31</sup> He attempted twice during 1880 to gain a seat in the Victorian Legislative Assembly, but failed on both occasions. This resulted in placing his political career on hold until after his departure from Victoria.

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<sup>27</sup> Hackett, *Address*, appendix.

<sup>28</sup> Hackett to Leeper, 8 June 1875. *TCM*, Alexander Leeper's Correspondence files, Packet 14.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>30</sup> Raymond Wright, *A People's Council: A History of the Parliament of Victoria 1856-1900*. Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1992, p. 85.

<sup>31</sup> Bolton, 'A Trinity Man Abroad', p. 69.

Hackett first stood for the urban Victorian seat of Normanby on 28 February 1880. Out of five candidates he managed only fourth place with a meagre 81 votes, two votes ahead of the last placed candidate. The winner, William Shiels, gained 528 votes, defeating the sitting member William Tytherleigh, by 224 votes.<sup>32</sup> Shiels, ‘a tall, lean, prematurely bald and grey’ character, was a liberal free trader. For the novice Hackett he was a formidable opponent and was to enjoy a prominent parliamentary career. Like Hackett, he had been trained as a lawyer and was also a fine orator. He was to hold various prestigious cabinet positions, including those of Premier, Treasurer and Attorney-General before a fatal illness ended his political career in 1904.<sup>33</sup>

Five months later on 14 July 1880, undaunted by his initial failure, Hackett again attempted to become a parliamentarian, by contesting the Legislative Assembly seat of Sandridge. Once more he was up against a powerful opponent in Dr (later Sir) John Madden, but this time he was determined that he was not going to experience the embarrassment of losing the candidate’s deposit.

Like Hackett and Shiels, Madden was also to have a successful career. He was born on 16 May 1844 at Cloyne, Co. Cork, Ireland where his father was a solicitor. In his early years Madden was educated in both England and France before arriving in Australia in 1857. Coming from a Catholic family, he continued his education at St Patrick’s College and later gained entry to Melbourne University to study law. He was called to

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<sup>32</sup> *The Age*, 15 July 1880, p. 3.(Final results were noted with the subsequent colonial election results.)

<sup>33</sup> Kathleen Thomson and Geoffrey Serle, eds., *A Biographical Register of the Victorian Legislature 1851-1900*, p. 189

the bar in 1865 and began practising law with Edward Holroyd as the senior partner. In 1871 Madden attempted to become a parliamentarian when he contested, and lost, the seat of West Bourke. He eventually won the seat in May 1874, but held it for only seventeen months before losing it in October 1875. Not easily discouraged, Madden contested and won the inner Melbourne seat of Sandridge in August 1876.<sup>34</sup> Then in July 1880 came the inexperienced parliamentary opponent, Hackett. The latter was up against a hardened electorate campaigner who, although he was the current parliamentary sitting member, had already experienced two losses.

As *The Age* reported the day after the election:

The contest at Sandridge was keen, but orderly, throughout the day; but it was evident that money, coercion and intimidation had been at work on the winning side. Four Conservative magistrates stood outside the doors, and the cabs bearing Dr Madden's placards far outnumbered his opponents and were incessantly driving about in every direction. Nearly all the hotels were conspicuous by their exhibition of winning placards, while the "Madden flag" waved over prominent factories and other establishments. People spoke in whispers lest their employers should discover their Liberal tendencies, and disengaged cabmen dared not run for Mr Hackett lest the "boss would sack them ...".<sup>35</sup>

Again Hackett was to feel the bitter disappointment of defeat, but this time he was not disgraced. He lost by only thirty-one votes out of 1,515 valid votes, in an electorate consisting of 2,001 people.<sup>36</sup> It was a very impressive performance from a candidate who had lacked the financial resources of his powerful rival and who had been soundly

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<sup>34</sup> *A Biographical Register of the Victorian Legislature 1851-1900*, p. 137.

<sup>35</sup> *The Age*, 15 July 1880, p. 3.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*

defeated only a few months earlier. Nevertheless, the experience was sufficient for him not to attempt to stand again for another Victorian electorate, although he returned to his parliamentary ambitions after settling in Western Australia in 1882. Madden, on the other hand, relinquished his Sandridge seat in February 1893 when he was appointed Chief Justice of Victoria. Subsequently he was appointed Vice-Chancellor of Melbourne University and in 1897 its Chancellor.<sup>37</sup> Indeed, Hackett's future life in Perth would closely parallel that of Madden's in Melbourne, as both men had experienced the benefits of a university education and envisaged that the future for Australians should require well established universities, similar to those in Europe.

### **Departure from Trinity College**

Having twice been defeated as an electorate candidate, Hackett realised that it would be difficult to enter the Victorian parliament and having no secure income, except for the occasional contribution to *The Age* newspaper, he decided his future lay away from Melbourne. As evidenced from surviving records, he seems to have been unsettled in Melbourne since 1878. In November of that year he wrote to the Council of Trinity College asking that any surplus funds from the Perry Scholarship Fund be granted to him 'for services rendered'.<sup>38</sup> A year earlier he had been paid £70 from the same fund and the Council had agreed to his request.<sup>39</sup> He was also willing to provide free advice to the College on legal matters, as he did in 1880 in respect to correspondence written by a Mr Alfred Levi.<sup>40</sup> It was also probably unfortunate for him that the College was

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<sup>37</sup> *A Biographical Register of the Victorian Legislature 1851-1900*, p. 137.

<sup>38</sup> Hackett to TCM, 10 November 1878, *TCM*, Correspondence files, Box 3A.

<sup>39</sup> *TCM*, Council Minute Book, 2 October 1877, 26 November 1878.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 12 March 1880.

experiencing a severe financial crisis, as in 1880 in an attempt to alleviate the problem, a Fancy Fair was held in March that yielded £2,500.<sup>41</sup>

Over the next two years, Hackett's despondency grew because of the continuing lack of a secure income. Then in 1882 he informed the Council that 'to my own regret I may be compelled to sever my connection with the College' and that he intended to be absent for several weeks.<sup>42</sup> On his return in October, he abruptly resigned.<sup>43</sup> While away he had visited Western Australia and arranged to lease a sheep station 870kms north of Perth. At the October meeting of the Trinity College Council it was unanimously resolved:

That the Council of Trinity College, while accepting with extreme regret Mr Hackett's resign of the office of Vice-Warden, desire to place on record their grateful recognition of his valuable work for the College from the year 1876 to the present time.<sup>44</sup>

They then approved a payment of 'a sum not exceeding ten pounds (£10) ... for a suitable present to Mr Hackett'.<sup>45</sup> After all those years of unselfish and unpaid work, what Hackett's private feelings were in respect of this farewell gift will never be known. At the subsequent Council meeting there was a long discussion about his successor. It was the members' feeling that the chosen person should be a clergyman and preferably be paid, provided that sufficient funds could be found. However, no resolution was finalised.<sup>46</sup> Considering that during his time at the College non-payment

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<sup>41</sup> Grant, *Perspective of a Century*, p. 16.

<sup>42</sup> Hackett to TCM, 5 June 1882, *TCM*, Correspondence files, no 170.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 12 October 1882. *TCM*, Correspondence files, Box 3C.

<sup>44</sup> *TCM*, Council Minute Book, 13 October 1882.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 10 November 1882.

of a salary to Hackett was never an issue, such an outcome would have probably amused him. He never completely forgot his time at Trinity, Melbourne and does not seem to have retained any hard feelings, as in 1914, in his only recorded gift to the College, he donated £100 (not an insignificant amount) towards outfitting a gymnasium.<sup>47</sup>

During his time at Trinity College, Hackett had indulged in some acting. In June 1881, Leeper, inspired by the annual theatrical performances at the Westminster School, London, and with the assistance of his deputy, directed classical plays ‘in the original tongue’.<sup>48</sup> It was the first play to be performed in Victoria in Latin and was the start of Leeper’s life long love affair with the theatre. The first play, with three performances, was *Mostellaria* (Haunted House) of Plautus and it was held in the College’s new improvised dining hall, which was ‘fitted up with a sloping auditorium, a classic proscenium and stage of necessarily limited proportions’.<sup>49</sup> Hackett played the father Theopropides and the play received fine reviews.<sup>50</sup> Although he and Leeper were to remain close friends throughout their lives, he did not always obtain his own way with his friend. A few years after his departure from the College, he recommended a Mr Mackay for employment at Trinity, only to be informed of his rejection, as Mackay was considered ‘unsuitable through excessive deafness’.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Grant, *Perspective of a Century*, p. 18.

<sup>48</sup> Poynter, *Doubts and Certainties*, p. 107.

<sup>49</sup> Grant, *Perspective of a Century*, p. 157.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*; Poynter, *Doubts and Certainties*, pp. 107-108; Bolton, ‘A Trinity Man Abroad’, p. 69.

<sup>51</sup> TCM to Hackett, 15 December 1886, *TCM*, Correspondence files, no. 144,



## **Making contacts in Western Australia**

In 1858 the Government Surveyor, Frank Gregory, had explored the Gascoyne region of Western Australia. Although he had noted an absence of poisonous plants he did not recommend its settlement for several reasons. He considered that the reliability of the region's climate had yet to be established and there were no port facilities in the area; having already suggested a port north of Exmouth Gulf. Furthermore, it was a time in Western Australian history when investment capital was scarce.<sup>52</sup> Some years later several would-be pastoralists, including John Henry Monger, Aubrey Brown, Charles Brockman, Charles Gale, Robert McNeill and Robert Bush again started exploring the area.<sup>53</sup> Subsequently, by 1879, with the possibility of intercolonial reports on the region's development, settlement of the area became popular. Then in 1882, Hackett came to Western Australia for five weeks searching for his El Dorado.<sup>54</sup>

On 23 June 1882, Hackett, together with several other guests, went to the residence of a prominent Perth citizen, George Leake to play cards. The following day, Alfred Hillman, one of the guests, offered to show Hackett around Perth. When they were viewing the city from the Town Hall tower, Hillman remarked that Hackett 'was not very complimentary to the gentleman who laid out the Town, old Roe I suppose, and lamented much over the absence of public reserves for parks etc'.<sup>55</sup> Unbeknown to both at the time, Hackett was to play a major role in the development Perth's Kings Park as a

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<sup>52</sup> C. W. M. Cameron, 'R. E. Bush, Gascoyne Explorer and Pastoralist', *Early Days*, 1982, vol 8, no. 6, p. 56.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 57.

<sup>54</sup> Alexander, *Campus at Crawley*, p. 19.

<sup>55</sup> Hillman, *The Hillman Diaries*, pp. 687-688. In referring to 'old Roe', Hillman was referring to John Septimus Roe, Western Australia's first Surveyor-General. (Rica Erickson, *The Bicentennial Dictionary of Western Australia pre-1829-1888 [BDWA]*, vols 4, Nedlands: UWA Press, 1988, vol 4, p. 2665.)

major recreational area. Although he had been most unflattering about Perth, Hillman endured Hackett the following day when he invited him to lunch:

Mr Hackett dined with us today, he is a conversable sort of fellow, rather too young to give me much of an idea of being a learned Professor [sic] of the Melbourne University. After dinner we walked up to the burial ground and out by old Jewell's residence at Villa Grants. Mr Hackett was rather interested in the bush shrubs and the few bush flowers yet in bloom, they being all so different from what he had seen in the other colonies.<sup>56</sup>

Hillman records on 14 July 1882 that Hackett 'has bought a sheep station in the Gascoyne'<sup>57</sup> and a few months later notes that Hackett has settled into his new venture.<sup>58</sup> This comment, as will be pointed out shortly, was to prove premature. Hillman thereafter saw very little, if at all, of his guest. The last time the diarist mentions Hackett's activities was in February 1883 when several citizens, including himself, were appointed Justices of the Peace.<sup>59</sup>

It is worth noting that from Hackett's early days in Western Australia, he had no intention to practise law. Nevertheless, he was accepted at the Bar in December 1882, which fact is confirmed by *The Inquirer and Commercial News*.<sup>60</sup> Some years later his appointment to the Bar had an amusing consequence when he was requested to serve on a jury. He promptly protested at his selection on the grounds that he was a lawyer. But,

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<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 688.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 696.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 759-760.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 798-799.

<sup>60</sup> *The Inquirer and Commercial News*, 6 December 1882, p. 6.

as Stephen Parker argued, the Act only exempted ‘those barristers, solicitors, or attorneys who were *in actual practice*’.<sup>61</sup> After some bantering between the two, Hackett was successful in persuading the Chief Justice to have his name removed from the jury list.

### **‘Wooramel Station’**

In November 1882 Hackett leased a sheep station, ‘Wooramel Station’, 870 kilometres north of Perth. The *Western Australian Government Gazette* of that date noted that he had been granted the lease on twelve lots (N2698-N2709), each consisting of 20,000 acres [8,094 hectares] at an initial rent of thirty pounds in total.<sup>62</sup>

It is difficult at this distance to know with any certainty what drew Hackett to ‘Wooramel Station’. What was the fascination for him? The amount of land involved, 240,000 acres [97,128 hectares] must have appeared to a young and impecunious Irish immigrant an immense area, especially as he had earned so little for his work in Melbourne. It is a time when land was still an attraction and in the days when such an amount of land confirmed a person’s independence and security and was considered a safe investment. Moreover, people believed land provided them with local status. From a distance, especially for his family back in Ireland with vivid memories of the Famine, his action must have been perceived as a move conferring an upward status. However, the enterprise was to last a mere five months.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 15 April 1885, p. 5.

<sup>62</sup> *Western Australian Government Gazette*, 14 November 1882, p. 466.

<sup>63</sup> Alexander, *Campus at Crawley*, p. 19.

When Hackett purchased the sheep station lease, he was reported to have told his station manager ‘he would be back north in time for the lambing’.<sup>64</sup> He promptly received a telegram that the lambing season had already begun. In his innocence he retorted: ‘Put it off’!<sup>65</sup>

Life at the station was tough. Hackett found the work not to his liking and that the land was unsuitable for his requirements. To rub salt into the wound, he experienced drought conditions. After one season, he decided to return to Melbourne, thereby cutting his financial losses to a minimum, as he had little capital in reserve.<sup>66</sup> This time his stay in Melbourne would be short, as in Perth he had made the acquaintance of Charles Harper who offered him a business proposition too good to refuse. This was as partner and business manager of the major local newspaper, the *West Australian*. They had probably met at the exclusive Weld Club where Hackett had probably been a guest.

A well-known Gascoyne identity, Leopold von Bibra, took over the lease of ‘Wooramel Station’ from Hackett. Von Bibra was an established pastoralist in the region who was also involved in the pearling and sandalwood industries, as well being a shipowner. He eventually served as Mayor of Carnarvon.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> Skinner, *The Fifth Sparrow*, p. 41.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>66</sup> WA, 5 January 1933, p. 5.

<sup>67</sup> BDWA, vol 4, p. 3157; James Sykes Battye, *The History of the North West of Australia*, facsimile edition, Perth: Hesperian Press, 1985, p. 275.

## Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter has been to establish that Hackett was unsettled in the eastern colonies, especially in the latter years when he received no payment for his work at Trinity College and his two attempts to enter the Victorian parliament had failed. By 1882, possibly irritated by these setbacks, his motivation and ambition again rose to the fore when he decided to move across the continent. Although at the time he probably felt disappointed about his years in Melbourne, little did he realise that the experience he gained at Trinity College was invaluable for his future in Western Australia. His initial move into sheep farming at 'Wooramel Station' was no panacea. However, fortunately for him, on a previous visit to the colony he had met Charles Harper, the owner of the *West Australian* newspaper, and after joining the firm in 1883, his fortunes began to change for the better, including his being nominated in 1890 to be a Legislative Council member. His arrival in the colony could not have been timed better, as within a few years Western Australia was to reap the rewards of several significant gold discoveries. However, before his parliamentary and newspaper careers are analysed, his lengthy association with the Anglican Church in Western Australia will first be examined.

## CHAPTER THREE: THE CHURCH

*'The English Church expects to see its chief pastors men of piety and wisdom, of cultivation, of wide sympathies, of high training, of fair learning, tactful, capable preachers, successful in dealing with men and things'.*

– J. W. Hackett, December 1893.

### Introduction

The Anglican Church in Western Australia was a significant part of Hackett's life and although he had no intention of becoming a clergyman, he still sought to serve the church as a lay member. This chapter will suggest that Hackett not only received personal satisfaction from handling church affairs, but due to his personal aspirations it was a means by which he could identify with Perth's socially privileged. It will be shown that although he probably expected serving the church to be a harmonious experience, this was not always the case. In a period spanning thirty years he served on nineteen committees. The chapter examines his family religious background in Ireland, the state of the Church in Ireland before he left in 1875, his involvement with the Anglican Church in Western Australia, his relationship with clergymen Frederick Goldsmith and Charles Riley and the problems he encountered with the Diocese of Perth. Finally his benevolence to various charitable organisations in Perth, and his bequest to the Anglican Church are examined.

In 1895 state aid to religious schools was abolished. This was the result of a lengthy and acrimonious public campaign between 1892 and 1895 with the Roman Catholic Church. As Hackett was the principal proponent for change, this issue will be examined in greater detail in Chapter Six.

## **Family religious background**

Family records allow Hackett's descendants to be traced back to the thirteenth century when Sir William de Haket accompanied King John to Ireland as part of the Norman conquest of England and Ireland. A third generation was to establish the Franciscan Friary in Cashel in 1265. It was not until the death of James Hackett (nineteenth generation) in 1773 that there is a mention of a Protestant in the family. He is noted as being buried in the Protestant section of the cemetery at Newchapel, Ireland, although his wife, a child and a nephew were listed as Roman Catholics. This was probably because James' attempted to circumvent the Penal Laws, in order for his estates to be retained by his family and thereby allowing close relatives to remain Catholics. It is interesting to note that James' only son (also named James) was disinherited, possibly because he did not wish to change religion.<sup>1</sup>

John Winthrop Hackett's connections to the Protestant faith can be traced to the family of Thomas and Mary Hackett who were married in 1743, although there is a fragile link to Protestantism in 1702, when an earlier Thomas Hackett (born c.1674), a member of the seventeenth generation, noted his occupation as a churchwarden of Fethard. Thomas and Mary Hackett were wealthy Roman Catholics who still held considerable lands inherited through previous generations. The Penal Laws, introduced from the late seventeenth century, had yet to fully impact on the family fortune. However, before this could occur, the eldest of ten siblings, Thomas, dealt a more severe blow to their assets. Not only was he a Counsellor-at-law (suggesting he could have already converted to Protestantism, because such a profession would have been barred to him as a Roman Catholic), but also a compulsive gambler, with the consequence that much of the family's wealth was dissipated during his lifetime. The effect of this was that family earnings no longer came

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<sup>1</sup> Information on various aspects on Hackett's family tree provided to author by Mrs Rae Clarke, Melbourne.

from land holdings, and each child was consequently forced to search for an alternative income.

The sixth child of Thomas and Mary, Elizabeth, was the first Hackett family member to be recorded as having married a member of the Protestant clergy, the Reverend Peter Augustus Franquefort of Waterford. As Elizabeth was the sister of John Winthrop Hackett's grandfather, Captain John Hackett, it is most probable she had some influence over John Winthrop Hackett senior, who during his lifetime served the church with distinction. He served St James' at Crinken, Co. Dublin for nearly fifty years and before that had been curator of St Michael's Church in Cork City.<sup>2</sup> Thomas P. Power has argued 'it is apparent that conversion helped to maintain the catholic propertied interest, and that converts were not fully absorbed into the established order in the church and state'.<sup>3</sup> In respect of the Hackett family, this was definitely not the case.

### **The Church in Ireland**

Before investigating John Winthrop Hackett's role within the Church of England in Western Australia, a brief explanation of the Ireland he left behind may be pertinent. From 1603, Ireland was effectively under English control and by the end of the seventeenth century the government was essentially serving the interests of the small portion of people who were English Protestants. The native Irish, being Roman Catholic, bitterly resented the restraints placed on them by the protestant-dominated legislature and this animosity slowly grew into Irish nationalism as the divisions between the two groups grew wider. The power of the English came from their colonial garrison and so Protestants found themselves in a dilemma. They could never unite themselves on the

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<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> Thomas P. Power, 'Converts'. In *Endurance and Emergence: Catholics in Ireland in the Eighteenth Century*, Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 1990, p. 124.



side of the Catholic Irish because of their religious differences, nor could they push England too far in a dispute, as their masters would ultimately resort to military force to end any disagreement. By the end of the seventeenth century Roman Catholics held only 7% of land in Ireland,<sup>4</sup> but even this meagre amount was too much for Protestants to accept. From 1692 various Penal Laws were introduced with the ultimate aim of keeping Roman Catholics from political power and limiting them economically. The Irish Parliament considered Protestant landowners were the ones who should hold political power and the Penal Laws, in part, were designed to prevent the Roman Catholic gentry from acquiring additional lands. To further entrench Protestant power in the country, in 1801 Ireland and England joined in an Act of Union ‘as a safeguard against the violent overthrow of the social and political order’.<sup>5</sup> This referred to the growing threat of Irish patriotism, which opposed the interests of the English in Ireland.

It was probably during Hackett’s student days at Trinity College that he realised that if he wished to lead a peaceful life his future would have to be away from the intensifying Irish Catholic nationalism. He might have also thought that his own family was by then well represented in the Irish clergy: his father was involved, his two younger brothers both became prominent clergymen; while two sisters married outstanding Irish churchmen. It is also conceivable that another reason for him leaving Ireland was the disestablishment of the Church of Ireland that occurred whilst he was at university.

The origins of the disestablishment of the Church of Ireland can be traced back to the 1830s when several attempts were made by the Church of England to gain possession of

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<sup>4</sup> Beckett, *A short history of Ireland*, p. 97.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

church property in Ireland.<sup>6</sup> However, it was not actively proceeded with until a debate in the House of Commons in May 1865, when James Dillwyn, MP for Swansea, drew the attention of his colleagues to the fact that the Church of Ireland was in an unsatisfactory state, and suggested that the government should take action to solve the problem. Two years later, in late 1867, a group of Fenians, who were committed to the establishment of an independent Ireland, brought their organisation to the attention of the British public when they attempted to rescue some of their supporters from British prisons, resulting in loss of life. Early in 1868, the Member of Parliament for Cork, Roman Catholic John Francis Maguire, moved that a committee be established to inquire into Ireland's future. While doing so, Maguire talked of the 'the dark and blood-stained page of cruelty, oppression, and wrong unequalled in the world' carried out by the English.<sup>7</sup> He also criticised 'the richly endowed Church of Ireland, the church of a small minority of the people'.<sup>8</sup> Such comments were not unexpected as Irish Roman Catholics had been attempting to persuade the British government to disestablish and disendow the Church of Ireland. On 23 March 1868, Liberal William Gladstone moved a motion: 'that it is necessary that the Established Church of Ireland should cease to exist as an Establishment'.<sup>9</sup> The resultant debate ended with the defeat of Disraeli's Conservative Government, and the succession of the Liberals with Gladstone as Prime Minister. The following year, on 1 March 1869, The Irish Church Bill was introduced into Parliament and was eventually passed on 22 July 1869.<sup>10</sup>

As mentioned in Chapter One, Trinity College also had to deal with Fawcett's attempts to abolish religious tests at Trinity. To add to Hackett's distractions, Roman Catholicism

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<sup>6</sup> Cornish, *The English Church in the Nineteenth Century*, p. 288.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 291.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 293.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 288-310.

was also experiencing some fundamental changes. Pope Pius IX strongly promoted the upholding of Catholic beliefs. In 1864, with the publication of *Syllabus errorum*, he made it clear that the Vatican would no longer negotiate for concessions with other religions, but intended ‘to fight for its right’.<sup>11</sup> Moreover, in 1870, after twenty years of development, the Catholic Church at the First Vatican Council declared that the Pope was infallible.<sup>12</sup> Although Catholics welcomed this throughout Ireland, it was no doubt received with consternation at Trinity College.

A further event that probably also perturbed the young Hackett was the financing of an institution at 86 St Stephen Green, Dublin, a non-denominational University, established in 1854, which was to become commonly known as the ‘Catholic University’.<sup>13</sup> The Irish University Bill introduced by the British Parliament on 13 February 1873, proposed annual finance totalling £50,000 for the above institution, which by now had been attached to University College and was ‘at the extreme nadir of its fortunes’.<sup>14</sup> Of this, £12,000 was to be provided by Trinity College which: ‘resented its being placed on an equality with a college which was unendowed, unchartered, reduced to a mere handful of students and a few tired and discouraged professors, with tight clerical control’.<sup>15</sup> Also included in the bill was Fawcett’s suggestion that required Trinity College to remove all religious tests. Fortunately, for Trinity the bill was defeated.

These events left an indelible mark on Hackett and as will be argued, his Irish upbringing reverberated in his future life’s philosophy. Therefore, it is of little surprise that, as a devout Evangelical throughout his life, as was his father, he disapproved of those within

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<sup>11</sup> McDowell and Webb, *Trinity College Dublin*, p. 243.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 549.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 253.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

the Church with Anglo-Catholic beliefs and completely rejected Roman Catholicism himself.

A likeness can be seen between William Ewart Gladstone and Hackett. The former held the position of Prime Minister of Britain four times between 1868 and 1894 and experienced similar personal emotions. Gladstone, whom Hackett greatly admired, was also an ardent follower of Evangelicalism and lost several friends, including John Henry Newman and Henry Edward Manning (who both became Cardinals) to the Catholic Church. Embittered by these losses, Gladstone made several anti-Catholic statements throughout his career on those 'British converts or adherents of the Church of Rome'.<sup>16</sup>

### **Involvement with the Western Australian Anglican Church**

By the time Hackett had settled permanently in Western Australia in late 1882, the Anglican Church, under the guidance of Bishop Parry, was steadily consolidating itself. The isolation from the remainder of Australia strengthened the local Anglican community, which resulted in them being essentially independent. In January 1858 the evangelical Mathew Blagden Hale, known for his 'laid-back consensualism',<sup>17</sup> was appointed the first resident Bishop of Perth. In 1872, Hale, wishing to keep abreast with other Australian dioceses had created a Synod. His aim was for Western Australia to become more self-reliant, and this move to create a Synod came well ahead of the Colony becoming self-governed.

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<sup>16</sup> Jenkins, *Gladstone*, p. 386.

<sup>17</sup> Brian Dickey, 'Secular Advance and Diocesan Response 1861-1900', in Bruce Kaye, ed., *Anglicanism in Australia: A History*, Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2002, p. 56.

It did not take Hackett long to become intimately involved with the Anglican Church in Western Australia. Within three years of his arrival, in 1885 he attended his first Synod meeting at the Third Session of the Fifth Synod of the Diocese of Perth.<sup>18</sup> He had decided that the life of a clergyman was not for him so he chose to assist the church in a lay capacity. He was to serve continuously for thirty years on numerous church committees until his death. In 1886 he was elected a Council Member as well as a member of the Panel of Triers. This latter position consisted of both churchmen and laymen who convened when one of their members was charged with ‘ecclesiastical offences’. It also met to consider, with the Bishop of the day, Synod replacements when a vacancy occurred due to a death, resignation or removal from the committee.<sup>19</sup> With his legal background it was not surprising that he continued to be a member of this Panel throughout his involvement with the church. Also, not unexpectedly, with his passion for education he was appointed to the inaugural Education Board in 1892 and served on the Board until 1903. In the latter year he was appointed Diocesan Trustee for four years and from 1901 until his death he was Diocesan Registrar of Perth.

In 1905, an Inter-Diocesan Committee was established, which was replaced the following year by a Provisional Council. This Committee met whenever a Bishop summoned members to consider replacements of Rectors.<sup>20</sup> In the same year Hackett’s confidant, Bishop Charles Riley, appointed him Chancellor of the Diocese of Perth. Due to his parliamentary experience, it was not unexpected that he served on the Diocesan committee that dealt with government legislation from 1908 to 1911. This coincided with the period from 1906 when he was also ‘Father of the House’ of the Legislative Council. Other positions he occupied in the Diocese included Auditor of the Diocesan Accounts

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<sup>18</sup> *Church of England in Australia, Diocese of Perth: Synod Report*, 15 September 1885.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, *Code of Statutes*, p. 126.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 229.

(1886-1888); Chairman of Committees (1897-1898); Trustee of Clergy Widows and Orphans' Fund (1890- 1895); Canon (1906); the Padbury Memorial Committee (1908-1911); Presentation Board (1907); member of the Provincial Synod (1912-1916); Social Questions Committee (1912); Clergy Memorial Committee (1912); and General Synod Representatives (1914-1916).<sup>21</sup> In total he served on nineteen Diocesan of Perth committees. As the Church was a major part of Hackett's life, it was no surprise that after the University of Western Australia, it was to be the second largest financial beneficiary in his will.

In Hackett's era, there were two reasons for public debate on church issues to be carried out in the press. In those days of limited public forums, newspapers were one of the few means of venting opinions. His editorship of the *West Australian* provided an obvious platform for him to raise topical issues. Nor did he miss many opportunities to express himself in his own newspaper. For example, (probably to embarrass Anglo-Catholic followers) he reprinted certain articles from the *Church News* when it suited him, although this paper was known for its Anglo-Catholic disposition, to which he was hostile. The *West Australian* claimed to follow a policy of refusing to publish correspondence that did not provide a signature, in contrast to its main opposition, the *Morning Herald*. When the *West Australian* eventually did publish a letter with an anonymous correspondent, the reason given by Hackett, after a flurry of letters criticising his action, was that the paper wished to respect a distinguished churchman.<sup>22</sup> This is a prime example of Hackett changing procedures to suit his own purposes.

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<sup>21</sup> *Church of England in Australia, Diocese of Perth: Synod Minutes 1885-1894 and Year Books 1895-1917.*

<sup>22</sup> Holden, *Ritualist on a Tricycle*, pp. 106-107.

## Frederick Goldsmith

For the first few years of Hackett's involvement, the Church ran smoothly. On 2 May 1888, he welcomed the new Dean of Perth, Englishman Frederick Goldsmith. At the official welcoming function, Hackett suggested that such an appointment 'should knit closer the ties which bound the church and people of the older country to us' and continued optimistically 'We can assure you of our anxious desire to give you our loyal aid in all your endeavours to further the work of the Church ...'.<sup>23</sup> In reply, Goldsmith hoped the goodwill would continue to develop between himself and his congregation. Later that year, on 15 November 1888, Perth's new majestic cathedral, St George's Cathedral, was consecrated and Hackett played a prominent role in the proceedings.<sup>24</sup>

In the second half of the nineteenth century the central part of church activities consisted mainly of 'parishes, clergy, representative synods or church conferences and church societies to raise funds'.<sup>25</sup> So it was of little surprise in a relatively small and isolated population, that when two robust personalities, such as the Evangelical Hackett and the Anglo-Catholic Goldsmith were involved within the same diocese tension and conflict would result.

Frederick William Goldsmith was born in 1853, the son of a writing master at Merchant Taylors' School, London, where he was also educated. In 1872 he won a scholarship to St John's College, Oxford,<sup>26</sup> where a close contemporary of his noted the atmosphere was not conducive to study:

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<sup>23</sup> *Western Mail* [WM], 5 May 1888, p. 20.

<sup>24</sup> John Tonkin, *Cathedral and Community: A History of St. George's Cathedral, Perth*, Nedlands: UWA Press, 2001, p. 51.

<sup>25</sup> Dickey, 'Secular Advance and Diocesan Response 1861-1900', p. 54.

<sup>26</sup> Holden, *Ritualist on a Tricycle*, pp. 21-25.

Of the men, say twenty or twenty-five were 'Scholars', all I think from Merchant Taylors', the great London School, who had all gone through the mill, and many were in for classical honours ... The rest of us were either hopeless idlers, intent only on pleasure ... In those days temperance was unheard of and the wine and beer that was daily put away seems now idiotic and worse. It was the day 'Wines' were almost the only recognized form of entertainment, the 'Wine' being a dessert supplied by the grocer with unlimited Port and Sherry and Tobacco, songs were sung with rattling choruses ...<sup>27</sup>

From an early age, Goldsmith's and Hackett's education differed, as the latter led a studious life, whilst Goldsmith's was more frivolous.

Goldsmith was ordained in December 1877 and until his appointment to Western Australia in 1888 he served in the diocese of Rochester, Kent, in the southeast of England.<sup>28</sup> There is no single explanation why Goldsmith became an ardent devotee of Anglo-Catholicism. During his university days St John's College was known for its staunch Evangelical beliefs. However, Goldsmith's transformation to Anglo-Catholicism can be attributed to several factors. When in October 1876 he became a deacon, Thomas Legh Claughton, who performed the ceremony, was a known sympathiser of the High Church, and so initially might have had some influence over him. It was at a time that the Tractarianism movement was gaining popularity. Then in 1880, a more distinct determinant for his conversion occurred when he married Edith Emma Frewer. This alliance is significant as his wife's two brothers were both priests who held Anglo-Catholic beliefs. Indeed, George Ernest Frewer and Goldsmith were

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<sup>27</sup> Cited by Holden, *Ritualist on a Tricycle*, p. 25.

<sup>28</sup> Holden, *Ritualist on a Tricycle*, p. 28.



also probable contemporaries at Oxford,<sup>29</sup> so his future brother-in-law might have influenced him earlier than is recorded.

In 1885 Goldsmith was appointed to the parish of Halling, Kent. It was during this brief tenure that there was further evidence of his move towards Anglo-Catholicism. Two years later he joined the Chatham branch of the English Church Union, which was known to promote Anglo-Catholicism, whilst in the same year he established a branch of the Church of England Working Men's Association. Then, in 1887, Goldsmith, with the assistance of Frewer, organised a series of addresses to the Working Men's Association. The two men were also known to be members of another High Church organisation, the Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament, the aims of which were 'concentrated on the promotion of particular eucharistic doctrines, devotional attitudes and liturgical practices'.<sup>30</sup> The above alliances explain why, by the time Goldsmith left England a year later for Western Australia, he was so entrenched in his Anglo-Catholic beliefs.

Initially, the relationship between Hackett and Goldsmith was congenial. On 10 October 1889, in Perth Town Hall, around 600 people attended a public meeting to discuss the revival of the Church of England Temperance Society, which had lapsed some ten years earlier. When Hackett addressed the audience he encouraged them to support a revitalised Society and congratulated Goldsmith for organising the meeting and considered the night as 'one of the best of the many efforts with which their pastor had rewarded his people for choosing him as Dean'.<sup>31</sup> Goldsmith, like Hackett, was to be a powerful supporter of the temperance movement, although, after his student days he did not embrace total abstinence himself.

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<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 33.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 36.

<sup>31</sup> *WM*, 12 October 1889, p. 13.

The camaraderie between Hackett and Goldsmith did not continue. The differences between the two men arose essentially from their strongly differing positions within the Church of England. The Evangelical movement in the Church of England originated in the late eighteenth century when many of the clergy's sermons were considered verbose and support was lost to Methodism and other new Evangelical sects. Most Evangelicals considered the scriptures as their sole authority and as being divinely inspired. They viewed preaching as important and stressed the need for personal salvation. In general, they had a strong antipathy towards the Roman Catholic Church and minimised the role of liturgy in worship. In the Church of England these tendencies gained in popularity in the late nineteenth century in response to the Anglo-Catholic or 'High Church' Tractarian movement. It was not surprising that such opposing views resulted in a certain amount of antagonism between Hackett and Goldsmith. Their disagreement mirrored a power struggle within the Church of England which still exists today.

Hackett and Goldsmith both possessed forceful personalities, so it was not surprising that their relationship became volatile. Hackett's Evangelical upbringing in Ireland, meant that he grew up with a distaste for Anglo-Catholicism, as he saw the church laity in the role of governing the church and avoiding non-scriptural traditions. Conversely, Goldsmith, part of the Tractarian brotherhood, felt that the organisational power in the church should remain with the clergy and tradition.

The early congenial relationship between the two churchmen therefore was soon to change. In 1891, in a *Western Mail* editorial (the weekly subsidiary of the *West Australian*), Hackett lambasted an unnamed fellow Synod member, (almost certainly Goldsmith), for suggesting that the government-funded Ecclesiastical Grant should be spent on metropolitan buildings rather than the less populated regions of Western

Australia.<sup>32</sup> Such an attack was not a surprise as Hackett, as a member of the Legislative Council for the South-West Province, rarely missed an opportunity to support his electorate, which included the local church at Donnybrook where he owned a nearby property, 'Cherrydale'.<sup>33</sup>

### **Charles Riley**

On 15 November 1893, after a brief illness, the Bishop of Perth, Henry Hutton Parry, died and until a replacement was appointed Dean Goldsmith administered the Diocese. To determine Parry's successor a special Synod was summoned to decide whether members of the local Synod, or alternatively, bishops outside the diocese, should make the decision.<sup>34</sup> The latter method was chosen, with three English bishops selected, all of whom were familiar with Parry's beliefs.<sup>35</sup> Hackett once again used a *West Australian* editorial as a device to win popular opinion. A month after Parry's death he espoused those qualities that he considered any future Bishop should embody, a man 'of great interest to many more than the religious community over which he will have to preside'.<sup>36</sup> The incumbent should:

extend beyond his own denomination. The English Church expects to see its chief pastors men of piety and wisdom, of cultivation, of wide sympathies, of high training, of fair learning, tactful, capable preachers, successful in dealing with men and things.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 14 March 1891, p. 13.

<sup>33</sup> A. C. Frost, *Green Gold: A History of Donnybrook WA, 1842 to 1974*, Donnybrook: A. C. Frost and the Donnybrook Balingup Shire Council, 1976, p. 170.

<sup>34</sup> P. J. Boyce, 'The First Archbishop: Charles Owen Leaver Riley', in Fred Alexander, ed., *Four Bishops and their See: Perth Western Australia 1857-1957*, Nedlands: UWA Press, p. 52.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>36</sup> WA, 13 December 1893, p. 4.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*

C.O.L. Riley, a follower of Evangelicalism, was eventually elected as the new Bishop of Perth.<sup>38</sup> As Riley and Hackett were to become close confidants, it is worth scrutinising their relationship in greater detail.

Early in 1894, Riley had accepted a position of Vicar in Morecambe, Lancashire, but on Parry's death he received an 'episcopal command' from the Bishop of Manchester to become a colonial bishop.<sup>39</sup> What Riley thought of his new posting one can only guess, considering that Parry's widow had advised him of the vastness of his new diocese. Hoping that his stay in Australia would only be brief, he thought that this colonial position would be a positive stepping-stone towards the enhancement of his future prospects for high church office on his return to England.<sup>40</sup> Shortly before he left England, in October 1894, he was consecrated Bishop by the Archbishop of Canterbury and early the following year arrived in Perth.

When Riley arrived in Western Australia in February 1895, Hackett was in Tasmania and consequently missed the welcoming ceremony. Riley initially stayed as a guest at Government House and he immediately granted an interview with a journalist. He spoke of his interest in education and hoped he would continue his involvement with it in Western Australia. In respect to liquor consumption, although not a prohibitionist, he supported the work of the Temperance Society.<sup>41</sup> Hackett was no doubt delighted to have gained a church colleague with similar views to his own, which included a passion for education.

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<sup>38</sup> Boyce, 'The First Archbishop', p. 52.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 51.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 53.

<sup>41</sup> *WM*, 9 February 1895, p. 2.

The same issue of the *Western Mail* (an editorial most probably drafted by Hackett before he had departed to the eastern colonies) reported the arrival of Bishop Riley to Perth. The writer attacked the current ineffectiveness of the Anglican Church in an era when it should have been reaping the rewards from the gold rush boom. The editorial also remarked that instead of being able to command the majority of the colony's population, the church was gently urging its congregations 'down the incline of disbelief or send[ing] them to other places of worship'.<sup>42</sup> The writer anticipated that with the appointment of Bishop Riley there would be an improvement in church attendances, so that the Anglican Church could share in the colony's newfound prosperity. The editorial resulted in a vigorous debate in various newspapers, such as the *Western Mail*, the *Southern Times* and the *Morning Herald*,<sup>43</sup> with one 'ex-Anglican' suggesting that one possible reason for the unpopularity of the Anglican Church was due to the Rector of Bunbury, W. F. Marshall, whose ritualistic services were driving congregations into the Wesleyan church.<sup>44</sup>

Although the Church of England was the dominant religion in the colony when Parry arrived in Western Australia, it was considered to be stagnant compared with other faiths. For instance, the popularity of Roman Catholicism was steadily increasing due to the influx of Irish people from the eastern colonies during the gold rushes and by 1894 consisted of around 24% of the colony's population.<sup>45</sup> Although small in number and not renowned for their wealth or influence, Catholics made up for this by being well organised within their community. For instance, in 1846 John Brady was consecrated as

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<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>43</sup> Holden, *Ritualist on a Tricycle*, p. 111.

<sup>44</sup> *Southern Times*, 12 November 1895. Cited by Holden, *Ritualist on a Tricycle*, p. 111.

<sup>45</sup> Boyce, 'The First Archbishop', p. 56.

Perth's first Catholic Bishop,<sup>46</sup> while the Church of England did not appoint their inaugural Bishop, Mathew Hale, until 1856. The *West Australian* reported early in 1895 that the Church of England's congregation had 'not expanded ... in the proportion which has been witnessed in the case of many denominations'.<sup>47</sup> Hackett, in his formative years as a church layman in Western Australia, no doubt recognised the difficulties ahead of him, especially having been raised in an intensely Anglican family.

One of the first tasks Bishop Riley undertook on his arrival in the colony was to become a member of the Grand Lodge of Antient, Free and Accepted Masonry, of which Hackett was also a member. The latter succeeded Governor Sir Gerald Smith in 1901 as its Grand Master. Three years later, Hackett resigned from the position so that Riley could succeed him. Boyce in *Four Bishops and their See* suggests that Hackett's gesture in resigning this prestigious position clearly indicated the difference between the two personalities, especially as Riley was to hold the position for fourteen years.<sup>48</sup> Riley had an affable nature in total contrast to Hackett's subdued disposition. The Bishop always attempted to gain the public's attention, while Hackett's personality was diametrically opposite, being 'aloof, shy and sensitive, preferring to be the power behind the throne'.<sup>49</sup>

As Boyce emphasises, Hackett was of great influence in Riley's incumbency as Bishop (and from October 1914, as Archbishop<sup>50</sup>) of Perth. As editor of the *West Australian*, Hackett provided Riley with as much publicity for church affairs as the bishop required, including unabridged versions of his sermons and extensive coverage of Synod

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<sup>46</sup> George Russo, *Lord Abbot of the Wilderness: The Life and Times of Bishop Salvado*, Melbourne: The Polding Press, 1980, p. 34.

<sup>47</sup> Cited by Boyce, 'The First Archbishop', p. 55.

<sup>48</sup> Boyce, 'The First Archbishop', pp. 79-80; N. R. Collins, *Golden Jubilee History, 1900-1950: Grand Lodge of Western Australia of Antient, Free and Accepted Masons*, Perth: Paterson Brokensha, 1950, p. 11.

<sup>49</sup> Boyce, 'The First Archbishop', p. 80.

<sup>50</sup> Tonkin, *Cathedral and Community*, p. 79.

proceedings.<sup>51</sup> Hackett also frequently acted as the calming force when Riley's volatile behaviour was directed towards his fellow clergymen. The Bishop was not renowned for delegating authority, which frequently resulted in his failing 'to enlist the sympathy and affection of many devout Anglican clergymen of gentler or humbler disposition than himself'.<sup>52</sup> Notably, Riley and Goldsmith both possessed strong personalities, which resulted in intense friction between the two. Hackett advised Riley to 'soften his approach', but the advice went unheeded.<sup>53</sup> The Bishop's 'rugged exterior was to some extent a mask that hid a deep-seated self-questioning and insecurity' towards those people he disliked.<sup>54</sup>

### **Problems in the Diocese of Perth**

The Diocese of Perth, before being divided into various regions, commencing with Bunbury in 1904, was larger than any diocese in Great Britain. This created a problem in recruiting new clergymen for outback parishes as '[l]onely, inexperienced and usually young clergy stationed in these parts [were] sometimes driven to drink, adultery or insanity'.<sup>55</sup> Riley's early years in the colony were ones of 'despair at the vastness and poverty of his diocese'<sup>56</sup> and Hackett would have been one of the friends to whom he turned to for moral support. According to Boyce, Riley 'wore a mask of brazen toughness, [but] beneath the mask lay an essentially gentle nature, keenly sensitive to public or private criticism and sometimes oppressed by the weight of spiritual

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<sup>51</sup> Boyce, 'The First Archbishop', pp. 73, 106.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 104.

<sup>53</sup> Holden, *Ritualist on a Tricycle*, p. 131.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>55</sup> Ruth Frappell, 'Imperial Fervour and Anglican Loyalty 1901-1929', in Bruce Kaye, ed., *Anglicanism in Australia: A History*, Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2002, p. 84.

<sup>56</sup> Boyce, 'The First Archbishop', p. 75

responsibilities’.<sup>57</sup> On most Sunday mornings after church, Hackett, Riley and Premier, John Forrest met at the latter’s residence ‘to exchange views, to dream, and no doubt to plot and scheme’.<sup>58</sup> As Archbishop Dr Peter Carnley, Primate of Australia suggested in 2000, ‘[i]t was as though they [Hackett, Riley and Forrest] could move mountains’.<sup>59</sup> On Hackett’s death in 1916, Riley reflected ‘From the first day of my arrival he was my friend and helper in all kinds of work ... There was little of his work that we did not discuss...’.<sup>60</sup> Although Riley would not have openly admitted to it, he probably shared his problems with Hackett. In the early 1920s, Riley nostalgically observed ‘that the older generation of Western Australians had been men who counted it a privilege to serve church and state at the one time, whereas the younger sons seemed blind to their responsibilities’.<sup>61</sup> By then many of his contemporaries, including Hackett, had died.

In April 1892 Hackett praised the work being carried out by the Salvation Army, and warned his readers that if established churches continued ‘to bind themselves in a strait waistcoat of rigid rule and conventional action’,<sup>62</sup> there would be a possibility of existing congregations, including those from the Church of England, considering changing faiths. Within a year, another editorial discussed the Home Rule Bill that was then before the British House of Commons. Hackett’s concern for the Church was that if the Bill was passed it could be construed as an attempt to disestablish and disendow the Welsh Church. Considering that this discussion was happening after the disestablishment of the

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<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 106-107.

<sup>58</sup> “Law and Religion: An Address”. In *Anglican Church of Australia*. [on line] <[http://www.anglican.org.au/pctalks/speeches/law\\_and\\_religion.htm](http://www.anglican.org.au/pctalks/speeches/law_and_religion.htm)> Accessed 11 October 2002.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>60</sup> Boyce, ‘The First Archbishop’, p. 106.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 94-95.

<sup>62</sup> *WA*, 21 April 1892, p. 4.



Church of Ireland in 1869, he was fearful the same fate could occur to the Church of England itself.<sup>63</sup>

Furthermore, Hackett stressed that in England it was

... impossible to avoid a feeling of pain that an institution, the oldest in England, bound up with the whole national life, interwoven with her history at all eras, famous for its long roll of noble, saintly, or commanding minds, should now be on the eve of being brought to the ground.<sup>64</sup>

Hackett then wrote of the uncertainties posed by any possible further disestablishment of the Church of England by asking how, if church property were to be sold, would one be able to distinguish between public and private endowments? The authorities, he suggested, would have to decide how cathedrals and churches would be subsequently utilised. He then asked: if churches were to be secularised, would such buildings become ‘museums, temple of art, and the like?’<sup>65</sup> There is no doubt at all that he was being alarmist for the purpose of alerting the local Anglican congregation into action, as similar arguments had previously been used in British parliamentary debates in 1868 by those who had spoken against the disestablishment of the Irish Church.

Hackett believed that twenty-five years on, few people, if any in Western Australia, would have been familiar with those discussions. For instance, back in 1868 Lord Cranborne had talked of such a measure ‘as one of spoliation as sweeping as human or radical ingenuity could devise, and on a principle which would apply equally to Wales or

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<sup>63</sup> The Act was passed in 1869, but was not proclaimed until 1871. See also *Collins Dictionary: British History*, Glasgow: Harper Collins Publishers, 2002, p. 139.

<sup>64</sup> WA, 11 March 1893, p. 4.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*

Cornwall<sup>66</sup> and Lord Chancellor Cairns suggested that the Irish Church Bill was about the Church's assets rather than the Church's status and stressed the Bill 'might prepare the way for the overthrow of the Church in England'.<sup>67</sup> Another objection to the Bill was that if such a measure was taken, subsequent legislation could lead to 'universal disestablishment, if religious property were once diverted to secular uses [and] the danger to England and Scotland of giving up the principle of an established Church'.<sup>68</sup> Hackett hoped for public reaction to his article and was not disappointed by the prompt response.

Dean Goldsmith responded in the following edition of the *West Australian*.

Unfortunately for its readers, much of Goldsmith's response, rather than addressing the issues within the editorial, personally attacked Hackett. Goldsmith's first swipe suggested 'the futility of entering into a controversy with the Editor'<sup>69</sup> and in the last sentence of his response, the Dean finally came to the issue in question, that '[r]ecognition by the State never made and never will unmake the Church'.<sup>70</sup> In reply Hackett politely avoided a belligerent tone and stressed that Goldsmith had totally missed the purpose of the article and that he was only attempting to advise his readers of the consequences for the church if it happened to cease to be a 'national institution' and therefore lost government funding.<sup>71</sup>

While Hackett and Goldsmith publicly debated the future of the Church, correspondence also appeared in the local press concerning low attendances at St George's Cathedral.

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<sup>66</sup> Warre Cornish, *The English Church in the Nineteenth Century*, p. 296.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 300.

<sup>69</sup> WA, 13 March 1893, p. 3.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*

One correspondent, 'Justice', while supporting Goldsmith's efforts to make services more acceptable, stated that he was handicapped by 'these old fogies [that] raise the hue and cry'<sup>72</sup> against High Church practices when any alternative programmes were suggested. 'C.T.B.' wrote that the Dean preached 'extempore sermons',<sup>73</sup> but was still hampered in his efforts by other faiths who provided services that were 'more attractive and the preaching more to their taste. Give us extempore preachers at the cathedral and we will attend divine service regularly, morning, afternoon and evening'.<sup>74</sup> The issue would be a continuing debate.

Hackett, who was usually extremely persuasive, especially through his editorials, did not always win controversies. One example occurred in September 1894 in respect of parliamentary amendments concerning the abolition of ecclesiastical grants. Although it was eventually passed, Hackett attacked the bill in the *Western Mail* as 'simply monstrous'.<sup>75</sup> He maintained that the bill had two aims. Firstly it would immediately cut the flow of monies from government to the churches, and secondly, it would stop the supply of future grants. As a result, he argued 'the growth of the colony will most seriously cripple the work not of one but of all the churches'.<sup>76</sup> He also attacked the myth that allocated monies to all churches had mainly been spent in either Perth or Fremantle by asserting that 87.5% of funds were spent in country regions of Western Australia.<sup>77</sup> He maintained that these regional areas would be the ones to suffer from any shortfall. He compared the proposed amount likely to be saved, totalling approximately £3,200, as less than the monies provided to 'the new militia to teach them the art of killing one

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<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, 30 May 1893, p. 6.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>75</sup> *WM*, 6 October 1894, p.4.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*

another'.<sup>78</sup> He was reiterating views he had published three years earlier in 1891, when he supported the maintaining of ecclesiastical grant funds for country regions, as otherwise the church would leave 'next to nothing for the thinly populated districts'.<sup>79</sup>

One of the few issues the Dean and Hackett agreed upon was that the ecclesiastical grant should remain. Addressing the Anglican Synod on 16 October 1894, Goldsmith advised his audience that the people who opposed the abolition of the grant were the same people who believed: 'that the material prosperity of the public can be advanced by gifts from the public purse, but when it comes to aiding in the teaching of morals their attitude at once undergoes a radical change'.<sup>80</sup> A further supporter for retaining the grant was Northam's clergyman, Edward S. Clairs, who warned *West Australian* readers that if government finances could not provide for future church services there was the possibility for 'people to lapse into a pagan system of a false civilization'.<sup>81</sup> As previously mentioned, Hackett had to swallow his pride when ecclesiastical grants were abolished. However, the various church authorities, by accepting the cessation of funds, were provided with a one-off total payment of £35,000 for capital works.<sup>82</sup>

When Goldsmith was consecrated as the first Bishop of Bunbury on 17 July 1904,<sup>83</sup> the animosity between himself and Hackett remained, and it was no surprise that the headstrong Hackett avoided the enthronement. Through Bishop Riley, Hackett presented

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<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, 14 March 1891, p. 13.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, 20 October 1894, p. 17.

<sup>81</sup> *WA*, 27 October 1894, p. 6.

<sup>82</sup> Marian Aveling, 'Western Australian society: the religious aspect 1829-1895', in C. T. Stannage, ed., *A New History of Western Australia*, Fourth impression, Nedlands: UWA Press, 1987, p. 598.

<sup>83</sup> Holden, *Ritualist on a Tricycle*, p. 179.

an apology and offered £50 towards the building of an official residency, emphasising pointedly that the donation was not for Goldsmith's use in the diocese.<sup>84</sup>

### **Benevolence**

Hackett's public support was not always directed towards his own faith. Although the 1890s was an era of great prosperity for Western Australia during the gold rush era, not all inhabitants benefited. People had trekked from the eastern colonies but many hopeful gold miners were unable to find their El Dorado. If not struck down by typhoid, many were left penniless without sufficient monies to return home. As a result some of them turned to charitable bodies in order to survive. Unfortunately, there were few such organisations in the colony and their management was usually *ad hoc*, which meant alternative methods of collection had to be found. Consequently, monies came from wealthy individuals or church organisations and, in a limited capacity, from the colonial government. Colonial officials were reluctant to become involved as they concentrated their financial resources into establishing those public works associated with an increasing population that required roads, railways and water supplies, especially around goldfield sites. Children were also casualties of the times. The Colonial government did not accept any responsibility for social welfare, except orphanages.

One of those individuals who would have been approached to assist the less fortunate in life would have been Hackett. The ethos at the time was one of individual's responsibility to care for the dispossessed and it wasn't until the first decade of the twentieth century that it became the practice that such responsibilities should be taken over by organised groups, including governments. In the 1890s, Christians exercised charity 'by

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<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 179-180.

individuals for individuals' with 'love to one's neighbour' emphasised.<sup>85</sup> Evangelicals were prominent both in the Bible Societies and the worldwide Protestant Missions. Amongst their adherents were the prominent English social reformers William Wilberforce and Lord Shaftesbury.<sup>86</sup> There can be no doubt that Hackett knew of these two men and wished to emulate their feats in his own way. All three men perhaps considered that philanthropy 'was a form of religion which released energy rather than satisfied intellectual sophistication'.<sup>87</sup> A local Church of England contemporary of Hackett's was Walter Padbury. At the time of the latter's death in 1907 the *West Australian* wrote 'of his kindly, considerate and generous acts not only to institutions but to persons in distress of whatever kind, many stories could be told'.<sup>88</sup> Padbury, like Hackett, left several enduring legacies in his will, including money for the upkeep of St. George's Cathedral, Perth.

The Colonial government also assisted with several poor houses, but the destitute attempted to avoid such places, not only because of their 'restrictive and depressing'<sup>89</sup> nature, but also the stigma associated with them. Clergymen who had direct contact with the unemployed realised that poverty existed, but laymen were usually less forthcoming about the situation so 'continued to suspect that poverty was simply a result of laziness, intemperance, or improvidence'.<sup>90</sup> But generally, where denominational charities did assist their own, government financial support was unreliable, as the government provided preferential treatment in assisting non-denominational institutions.

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<sup>85</sup> Elizabeth Willis, 'Protestants and the Dispossessed in Western Australia, 1890-1910', *Studies in Western Australian History: Religion and Society in Western Australia*, October 1987, no. 9, p. 33.

<sup>86</sup> Jenkins, *Gladstone*, p. 31.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>88</sup> Cara Cammilleri, 'Walter Padbury (1820-1907): Pioneer Pastoralist, Merchant and Philanthropist', *Early Days*, 1971, vol. 7, no. 3, p. 63.

<sup>89</sup> Willis, 'Protestants and the Dispossessed in Western Australia', p. 32.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 35.

Hackett, while talking at the 1896 Annual Meeting of the Sisters of the People Mission, understood the significance of the organisation and reminded his audience of the colony's history and that they should not forget where their gratitude should lie, as before the gold rush era

sickness and poverty in the colony were almost unknown except as regarded the ordinary ailments of men [sic]. They had no wealth, but few wants. All this had changed in a few years ... That wave of prosperity which swept over the colony bore on its very crest such a body of diseases that it converted their healthy colony into a hotbed of pestilence.<sup>91</sup>

The speech indicated that Hackett realised that the quiet and serene days of the colony's past were over and that its citizens should now adjust to the times so that some of the newfound wealth should be redirected to the destitute. The 'ancient colonists'<sup>92</sup> were slowly accepting that there were no simple solutions to the current situation - such as by sending families back to their original colonies - and that longer-term strategies were essential. Subsequently, several church groups, including Anglicans, established charitable organisations. The Anglican initiatives included: a hospice to care for the dying (1897), a Home of Peace (1901) and in 1902 Parkerville Children's Home established by the Sisters of the Church.<sup>93</sup> When the Salvation Army established a denominational charity late in 1891 they upset religious establishments, including the Church of England, who commented in newspaper advertisements 'that Army officers were "full of wildfire

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<sup>91</sup> WA, 15 September 1896, p. 5.

<sup>92</sup> A member of the Western Australian Parliament who was born, or who had arrived in the colony before 1885.

<sup>93</sup> Willis, 'Protestants and the Dispossessed in Western Australia', p. 36.

but false in doctrine”<sup>94</sup> Hackett, as a senior layman in the Anglican church, took such remarks in his stride and criticised his church colleagues in a newspaper editorial when congratulating the Army for its accomplishments, remarking ‘that the established churches were often too rigid and conventional’ in dealing with such issues.<sup>95</sup>

However, those people who did assist the destitute were in a dilemma. If church assistance was provided to the poor, this aid was usually counteracted by reduced government subsidies, especially to denominational charities. To compound the difficulties, sectarian jealousies resulted in the lack of co-operation between various faiths. Non-denominational organisations such as the Women’s Service Guild provided welfare aid to several needy causes throughout the colony, although much of the help was still left to wealthy individuals.

An example of Hackett’s contribution to the poor in the colony is illustrated by the following situation. In July 1893, Reverend George Edwards Rowe, Superintendent of Perth Wesley Mission, established the first non-Anglican charitable organisation, the Sisters of the People Missions in Western Australia. It was a period in the colony’s history when the influx of new arrivals meant that the goldfields could not cope with the rudimentary hygienic conditions, with the result that typhoid outbreaks in the region became rampant. It was the Sisters who initially revealed the plight of the underprivileged in the colony, with some of the ‘ancient colonists’ slowly awakening from their apathy to realise the seriousness of the situation. Ten government hospitals, totalling a meagre 102 beds, were unable to cope with the crisis, so in an attempt to alleviate the predicament Rowe established various Missions around the colony

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<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 37.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*



as he became increasingly aware that many of the impoverished were unable to afford medical attention. The aims of the Sisters' of the People were 'to give assistance to any and all sick poor, irrespective of race, religion or creed, without charge'.<sup>96</sup> In this endeavour, working under primitive conditions, not only did the Sisters establish canvas hospitals on the goldfields, but also took some patients into their own homes.<sup>97</sup>

In 1896, Hackett attended the Third Annual Meeting of the Sisters held in front of a packed St George's Hall chaired by Governor Sir Gerard Smith. Hackett was not oblivious to the sufferings of the poor and the sick. He told the gathering that he had initially only come to listen, but when pressured to address the audience, asserted he could not speak highly enough of the courageous work of the Sisters and the Mission's founder. He continued:

[Rowe] well remembered the hopeless and helpless which overtook Western Australia at finding itself at a loss to meet these diseases, unprovided as it was with the ordinary instruments for meeting them so familiar in the eastern colonies ... and if ever any man had occasion to be proud of his work it must be Mr Rowe, when he looked around and saw the results of his efforts.<sup>98</sup>

By 1897, the Sisters not only worked in Perth but also at Fremantle, Cue, Coolgardie, Northam, Menzies and Kalgoorlie.<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>96</sup> Vera Whittington, *Gold and Typhoid: Two Fevers: A Social History of Western Australia 1891-1900*, Nedlands: UWA Press, 1988, p. 19.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 16-19.

<sup>98</sup> WA, 15 September 1896, p. 5.

<sup>99</sup> Willis, 'Protestants and the Dispossessed in Western Australia', p. 35.

A further institution in which Hackett and some of his fellow churchmen became involved was the Industrial School for the Blind (originally known as the Western Australian Home Teaching Society for the Blind and today called the Senses Foundation). On 16 November 1896, a meeting was held, with Bishop Riley in the chair, concerning the institution. Subsequently, a committee was formed and Riley became the Association's inaugural Vice President, with both Hackett and Goldsmith being elected to the committee.<sup>100</sup>

Another institution to benefit from Hackett's contribution was the Karrakatta Cemetery Board. He was appointed a foundation member in 1897, and three years later succeeded Alexander Forrest as its Chairman.<sup>101</sup> Initially intended for people who wished to be buried at Karrakatta, there were strict regulations in respect of 'being buried with the full rites of one's own church in one's own section the cemetery'.<sup>102</sup> With the Anglican population being the State's largest religious denomination, it only took until 1912 for its ten acres [4.047 hectares] allocation to be used, or pre-purchased. Under Hackett's chairmanship a further nine acres [3.6423 hectares] were promptly granted, with Bishop Riley consecrating the cleared land.

It has been illustrated that Hackett was not only very much involved within the Anglican Church but also sought involvement with social initiatives, including those by other faiths, but excluding those involving Roman Catholics. Although he never publicly wrote about the growing potency of the Catholic Church in Western Australia, there is little doubt that Hackett was concerned at its growing strength.

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<sup>100</sup> WA, 17 November 1896, p. 4.

<sup>101</sup> Liveris, *Memories Eternal*, p. 277.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 70.

In 1912 philanthropist and former Etonian, Cecil Oliverson, wished ‘to endow a school chapel within the Empire’.<sup>103</sup> Eventually the grant was allocated to the St Mary and St George chapel at Guildford Grammar School, in an outer Perth suburb, but not until Hackett had ‘harboured deep regrets that it had not been erected at the [U]niversity [of Western Australia]’.<sup>104</sup> This was probably one reason why he eventually bequeathed a large sum of money to the University of Western Australia.

Late in life Hackett managed to get his family involved in the church. As his son General Sir John Hackett fondly recalled decades later:

We, the children, would be taken down to matins on Sunday in the Cathedral in a horse-drawn open Victoria and I can still see the little pattern of small flies sitting in sunlit stillness on the broad blue cloth of the coachman’s back. I can almost taste the boiled sweets produced in my mother’s gloved hand from her bag and handed around to keep us quiet during the sermon, and I can remember one of my sisters so pleased to see her father coming round with the plate that she joined him in the aisle and went on his rounds with him, hanging on the tail of his frock coat.<sup>105</sup>

In October 1914 Riley was elevated to the position of Archbishop of Perth. The Province of Perth could not exist unless there were at least three dioceses with synods. This requirement was not met until the diocese of Kalgoorlie was formed in 1914. The diocese of the North West, although formed earlier in 1910, did not have a synod and therefore could not be represented at the first provincial synod which comprised Perth, Bunbury and Kalgoorlie. To overcome this problem, the Bishop of Kalgoorlie moved in August

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<sup>103</sup> Ruth Frappell, ‘Imperial Fervour and Anglican Loyalty 1901-1929’, p. 93.

<sup>104</sup> Boyce, ‘The First Archbishop’, p. 84.

<sup>105</sup> Hackett, ‘Inauguration Ceremony’, p. 2.

1915, at Hackett's urging, to include the diocese of the North West in the provincial synod, despite lacking its own synod.<sup>106</sup> It was probably Hackett's last significant act as a church layman.

### **Bequest to the Anglican Church**

With Hackett's death and the deaths of some of his influential associates, such as Lord John Forrest and Septimus Burt, there was a change of the old guard on the political scene as well as in the church hierarchy. Boyce suggests several reasons. Firstly, with the increase in population the old established families were not as influential as they been in the past. Population statistics confirm this. When Hackett initially arrived in Western Australia in 1882, the population totalled 31,016.<sup>107</sup> By the time he died in 1916, the population had grown nearly tenfold to 308,806.<sup>108</sup>

A further reason for the younger generation not serving the church was the possibility that although the influential pastoral families, such as the Lee Steeres, Brockmans and Cliftons still existed, a new generation of non-élite politicians had appeared on the scene. Lastly, although a small minority of people were still devout churchgoers, Boyce suggests that 'the younger sons of the pioneer families inherited the fruits of their father's labours and drifted into idleness and faithlessness'.<sup>109</sup> In Hackett's case, within a matter of two years of his death in 1916 his immediate family had moved to the eastern states and his children were never to reside permanently in Western Australia again.

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<sup>106</sup> Evelyn M. Halley, 'The Largest Anglican Diocese in the World', in Fred Alexander, ed., *Four Bishops and their See: Perth Western Australia 1857-1957*, Nedlands: UWA Press, pp. 153-154.

<sup>107</sup> George Seddon and David Ravine, *A City and its Setting: Images of Perth, Western Australia*, Fremantle: Fremantle Arts Centre Press, 1986, p. 277.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 279.

<sup>109</sup> Boyce, 'The First Archbishop', p. 103.

After Hackett's bequest to the University of Western Australia, his legacy to the Church of England was the second largest donation, totalling £138,285.<sup>110</sup> Such amounts were much greater than those provided to other institutions, and showed how much he had appreciated and valued both institutions during his lifetime. The Church, as stipulated in Hackett's will, allocated a portion of his bequest towards augmenting clergymen's incomes on their return to Perth; on the condition they had served at least five years in a country diocese.<sup>111</sup> This was an attempt to compensate for the hardships of the outback suffered by young clergymen and to encourage them to continue with their commitment to the church. A permanent connection between the Church and the University commenced in 1932 with the university's dedication of Hackett's bequest to the University. Thereafter, annually on Low Sunday, this developed into an interdenominational service held at St George's Cathedral.<sup>112</sup>

## **Conclusion**

This chapter has attempted to show that following in the family tradition Hackett became very much involved in church affairs, not from the pulpit, but as a highly influential member of the laity. In over thirty years in Western Australia, he held nineteen different church positions. Many appointments were purely advisory, such as a Panel of Triers or as a Diocesan Trustee, where his legal background was utilised. He may have been interested in the social status attached to these positions, but probably also as a local parliamentarian wished to keep Church and State affairs apart where possible. An example of this occurred when he blocked Bishop Riley's attempt to become a Senate

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<sup>110</sup> *Church of England in Australia, Diocese of Perth: Year Book*, 1928, p. 182.

<sup>111</sup> J. W. Hackett's will, *SROWA*, consignment no. 3436, item 1916/478, clause 15.

<sup>112</sup> Tonkin, *Cathedral and Community*, p. 102. University Sunday is still held today, with the ceremony now taking place at the UWA campus.

member of the new University.<sup>113</sup> His differences with Bishop Goldsmith would have been an irritation, but he found a means around such problems. In 1893, when he raised the issue of the Disestablishment of the Church of England, did he feel insecure by reiterating arguments that had been discussed twenty-five years earlier? By revisiting the 1868 debate, it seems that he was not satisfied with the initial outcome and felt that by again discussing the issues in far removed Western Australia, the outcome could possibly be different. In respect to his charitable work with the Sisters and People Mission, the Salvation Army, the Industrial School for the Blind, and the Karrakatta Cemetery Board, he expanded his influence outside his own Anglican Church commitments and beliefs.

In his philanthropy, Hackett principally favoured Anglican causes, but as previously mentioned, this did not stop him supporting other denominational causes. In his position as part-owner and editor of the *West Australian* he could ill-afford to be otherwise. He readily provided newspaper space for his church colleague and confidant, Bishop Riley to espouse various Church of England causes. Likewise, he also provided space for Goldsmith's viewpoints, although as it has been observed the latter did not always take full advantage of such opportunities to defend his Anglo-Catholic perspective.

There is no doubt that Hackett considered his work in the Church as an initial means of being recognised and accepted into the local community. Records indicate he became involved in Church affairs in 1885, five years before he entered Parliament and it will be argued that his church activities were only the start of his elevation towards the hierarchy of the social élite of Western Australia. His intense motivation was not only to lead him to be a successful community leader, but also a successful businessman.

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<sup>113</sup> Alexander, *Campus at Crawley*, pp. 47-49.

Another of Hackett's major commitments was his twenty-five years service as a Legislative Council member in the Western Australia Parliament. He was to cover numerous issues including social reforms, and industrial and economic infrastructure issues. In the next chapter his political career will be examined and although he never became a cabinet minister, he was to play an influential part in Western Australia's development, especially as a select member of John Forrest's 'kitchen cabinet'.

## CHAPTER FOUR: HACKETT'S PARLIAMENTARY CAREER

*'It seems to me that if gold is the arch on which our prosperity is built, the keystone to that arch is a water supply on the [gold]fields ... unless we are willing to tackle this matter in a liberal spirit, not only in the interests of better life on the goldfields, but in the interests of Western Australia as a whole ... I see disaster on the country, not in years to come but in months'.*

- J. W. Hackett, July 1896.

### **Introduction**

This chapter will analyse Hackett's political career, including why and how he entered the Western Australian Legislative Council and the possible reasons he chose to become a Council rather than an Assembly member. Then, the politics of the era, between December 1890 to February 1916, will be contextualised, which was the period encompassing Hackett's parliamentary career. Throughout these twenty-five years he spoke on numerous topics, some of which will be examined here. He was concerned with a wide range of issues including social reforms and industrial and economic infrastructure topics. With regard to political rights, he supported franchise for women and encouraged increased payments for parliamentary members. He recognised that some social reforms, such as divorce and mental health legislation, had to be amended to suit the circumstances of the time, and he was also an environmentalist well before it became popular to do so. In respect of the economic infrastructure, such as water supply and the construction of Fremantle harbour, he supported government intervention rather than having private enterprise take on such projects. He was an independent parliamentary member whose position as a newspaper proprietor gave him licence to comment on whatever issues he desired.



The two issues in which Hackett played his most significant roles were his involvement with Sir John Forrest as Western Australian delegates to the 1890s Federal Conventions, which culminated in the colony joining Federation and, from 1892, his three year crusade to abolish government aid to church schools. Both of these major issues will be examined in subsequent chapters.

Hackett's foremost concern was that any proposed legislation should benefit the people of Western Australia and the colony as a whole. He was also a pragmatic person, which could not be said about some of his colleagues. With age he realised that he was more fortunate in life than many others, but was not afraid of fighting to raise the living standards for the ordinary citizen, including franchise for women, thereby illustrating his more radical political attitudes. This resulted in him speaking out passionately in respect of amending various legislation that he considered out-dated, while several of his parliamentary detractors only desired the preservation of the *status quo* to retain their influential status in society.

It is extremely difficult to categorise Hackett as belonging to a political party or faction, as he was neither a Liberal in the contemporary sense nor a Conservative. He could probably best be classified as a mixture of 'reformer' and 'progressive liberal'.

Scruton's definition of a liberal is a person who:

expresses the political theory of limited government, and conveys the political sentiments of the modern man, who sees himself as detached from tradition, custom, religion and prejudice, and deposited in the world with no guidance beyond that which his own reason can provide.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Roger Scruton, *A Dictionary of Political Thought*, London: Pan Books Ltd, 1983, pp. 268-270.

Hackett's political beliefs were not conservative in the accepted sense and his philosophy could probably be best likened to those of the British writer, Trelawny Hobhouse, who espoused a balance 'between market and plan which enhanced individual freedom'.<sup>2</sup> Hackett saw himself as a maverick who wished to retain his political independence in order to have a licence to express himself as an independent liberal member. He qualifies under this category, as throughout his career he possessed views that were different from those of his more liberal colleagues. This was apparent when he supported state economic initiatives such as the Fremantle Harbour and the Coolgardie Pipeline while opposing restrictions on the rights of the mentally ill. His ideas were innovative and often well ahead of his time, especially when in connection with the environment. However, he was not always able to persuade his colleagues towards his own thinking.

A further difficulty in categorising Hackett's convictions lies in the fact that at the time he entered the Legislative Council in 1890 there was no definite configuration of political parties, but merely factions. Personal loyalties rather than political ones united these groups. For instance, he was closely associated with Premier, Sir John Forrest and his friends. Not only were both wealthy but they were also parliamentarians and members of the influential Weld Club. Another indication of Hackett's growing status in society was that during the 1890s, the Premier and several close confidants usually met each Sunday on an informal basis at his residence, 'The Bungalow' in Hay Street. As well as Hackett, other members included 'George Shenton, Colonel Phillips, B. C. Wood, G. T. Poole [sic], A. Lovekin and Sir John's brothers David and Alexander

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<sup>2</sup> David Jary and Julia Jary, *Dictionary of Sociology*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, Glasgow: Harper Collins Publishers, 1995, p. 289.



### South Perth tennis courts

South Perth Lawn Tennis Club during an inter-club match, 22 June 1907. The courts were within the boundary of the Perth Zoological Gardens. Hackett was instrumental in the establishment of both the tennis club and zoo.

Acknowledgment: Battye Library, Western Australia, Ref: 21125P

Forrest'.<sup>3</sup> The Premier was 'concerned that Perth lacked amenities'<sup>4</sup> and although this 'kitchen cabinet' lacked authority it was these men who were encouraged to create recreational facilities around Perth. Some of the places established as a result included Queen's Gardens, Hyde Park and the zoological gardens.<sup>5</sup> Both Forrest and Hackett participated in several community boards together, including the King's Park Board. They also agreed on some major Western Australian infrastructure projects, including the construction of Fremantle harbour.

As part-owner of a newspaper as well as editor, Hackett saw the possibility of a conflict of interest between these two positions and his parliamentary career and so declined to join a political faction, thus depriving himself of the opportunity to serve as a cabinet member. However, by not serving as a Minister of the Crown, he had the freedom to publicly debate issues of the day in the *West Australian*, which in effect provided him with more public influence than if he had served as a minister, especially when dealing with such issues of state aid to religious schools and Western Australian attempts to join

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<sup>3</sup> Ray and John Oldham, *George Temple-Poole: Architect of the Golden Years 1885-1897*, Nedlands: UWA Press, 1980, p. 133.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 133-134.

Federation. During his parliamentary career no issue was too trivial for him. He spoke on the great engineering feats of the era, such as the Fremantle harbour<sup>6</sup> and the water pipeline from Mundaring Weir to the eastern goldfields. He also spoke on mundane matters as rabbit trapping, suggesting that rabbit traps could be a profitable revenue earner for small landholders.<sup>7</sup> It is of little wonder that years later, his son and namesake would recall him as a 'practical realist', although some people at the time considered him 'something of a misfit'.<sup>8</sup> Today, he would be known as a 'radical conservative'.

### **The parliamentary system in Western Australia**

Prior to discussing Hackett's lengthy career as a member of the Legislative Council in Western Australia, a brief history of the Council will be provided to illustrate how its members were selected. This was by means of a rigorous set of selection criteria which disenfranchised most of the colony's population. The Council was established shortly after white settlement in Western Australia under an Order in Council issued in England on 1 November 1830.<sup>9</sup> It consisted of five un-elected individuals, known as the Executive Council, which included the Colonial Governor, the Commandant, the Colonial Secretary, the Surveyor-General and the Advocate. By the time elections were held for the first time in 1867, the Council had increased by six members; however, all nominations still had to be confirmed by the Governor. By 1870, election to the chamber was again amended to provide for six nominee members (three official

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<sup>6</sup> When the word 'harbour' was used in Hackett's era, it was spelt 'harbor'. For consistency, I have spelt the word throughout this thesis as it spelt today.

<sup>7</sup> *Western Australian Parliamentary Debates [WAPD]*, 8 December 1902, vol. 22, p. 2732.

<sup>8</sup> Hackett, 'Inauguration Ceremony', pp. 2-3.

<sup>9</sup> David Black, *Legislative Council of Western Australia*, p. 3.

and three unofficial) and twelve elected members.<sup>10</sup> The size of the Council steadily increased to twenty-six members until October 1890, when the colony gained self-government.

In 1890, a bi-cameral legislature which consisted of a Legislative Assembly and Legislative Council was created in Western Australia. The former Chamber contained thirty elected members, while the Council consisted of fifteen nominated members selected by the Governor. The members were to serve terms of up to six years or until the colony's population reached 60,000.<sup>11</sup> The Council would then become an elective body.

Hackett was one of the fifteen nominated members and was appointed on 29 December 1890.<sup>12</sup> With the gold discoveries in the Coolgardie region in the early 1890s and the consequent influx of people, mostly from the eastern colonies, Western Australia rapidly reached its target of 60,000 people by July 1893 and an elective Legislative Council was accordingly established the following year. This resulted in Hackett having to face an electorate for the first time in Western Australia.

When Hackett first stood for the South West Province seat in the Legislative Council in 1894, the region covered the Murray, Wellington, Bunbury, Nelson and Sussex districts and was one of seven electoral provinces. By the time he died in 1916, his electorate had extended to cover the regions of Collie and Forrest.<sup>13</sup> On 16 July 1894, Hackett contested the seat against four opponents, of which the three candidates acquiring the

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<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> *WAPD*, -, vol. 1, p. vi.

<sup>13</sup> Black, *Legislative Council of Western Australia*, pp. 9-10.

most votes were to be elected. The electorate had an enrolment of 402 people with 337 voting. Stringent regulations applied to those people who wished to stand for the Council. They had to be ‘men of at least thirty years of age who had resided in the colony for two years and were natural-born British subjects or had been naturalised for at least five years prior to election’.<sup>14</sup> Not only were these confining rules for the candidates, but there were also obstructions for people who wished to vote. To be qualified to vote:

a man had to be of at least twenty-one years of age, a British subject (if naturalised of at least one year’s standing) and have resided in Western Australia for at least twelve months. Electors had to satisfy a property qualification, i.e. possess freehold property worth at least One Hundred Pounds, as a householder occupy a dwelling of a clear annual value of Twenty Five Pounds (and which they must have occupied for a year), hold a leasehold estate of similar annual value, or hold a mining or pastoral lease with an annual rental of at least Ten Pounds. Aboriginals were debarred from voting except in terms of the freehold qualification.<sup>15</sup>

Hackett was one of the privileged few who had the credentials to stand as a candidate.

It was an era when the colony’s population grew rapidly, with annual figures indicating an increase of 15,966 people from to migration between 1893 and 1894.<sup>16</sup> However, the gold rush boom had a detrimental effect on the population of the South West region.

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<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> Seddon and Ravine, *A City and its Setting*, p. 279.

In 1890 the region contained 20% of the Western Australian electorate, but six years later, although the population of the colony had considerably increased, the South West Province had dwindled to only 12.5% of the total.<sup>17</sup> Not surprisingly, at the 1894 Legislative Council election, only slightly more than 4,000 people were eligible to vote out of a colonial population estimated to be 82,072.<sup>18</sup> This was an attempt by Western Australia's ruling class to prevent new settlers from obtaining the vote, with Premier Forrest justifying the Government decision by explaining: 'when men are wandering about, they are not entitled to so large a share in making the laws of the country, as people who are settled'.<sup>19</sup>

Prior to his nomination for the Legislative Council there were indications that Hackett was again showing a strong interest in politics. In an editorial in early 1888 he warned his readers that Western Australians 'can no longer expect to control their destinies without active exertion'.<sup>20</sup> Later that year he commented on people's apathy towards voting, while admitting that it was not surprising 'that in a small community, public "gossip" should prove far more attractive than public questions of an abstract nature'.<sup>21</sup> He concluded by hoping that 'we may strike the word "apathy" out of the vocabulary we use in dealing with local politics'.<sup>22</sup> Unfortunately, the issue of voter apathy in

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<sup>17</sup> C. T. Stannage. 'Electoral Politics in Western Australia: 1884-1897'. MA Thesis, UWA, 1967, pp. 42-43.

<sup>18</sup> Black, *Legislative Council of Western Australia*, pp. 26-27; Seddon and Ravine, *A City and its Setting*, p. 279.

<sup>19</sup> Cited by de Garis, 'Self Government and the Emergence of Political Parties, 1890-1911', in David Black, ed., *The House on the Hill: A History of the Parliament of Western Australia 1832-1990*, Perth: Western Australian Parliament, 1991, p. 70.

<sup>20</sup> WA, 8 February 1888, p. 2.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 30 November 1888, p. 2.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*

Western Australian elections would remain until 1963 when compulsory voting was introduced.<sup>23</sup>

Hackett's parliamentary role provided him with additional power and influence as one of Western Australia's Protestant establishment. Giddens, a British sociologist, succinctly portrays C. Wright Mills's influential élite as comprising mainly '(male) wealthy white Anglo-Saxon professionals (WASPs), many of whom have been to the same prestigious universities, belong to the same clubs and sit on government committees with one another'.<sup>24</sup> This assertion certainly applies to Hackett in Western Australia, as he was white, wealthy and a prominent member of the Church of England. During the nineteenth century several Western Australian residents had been law students at Trinity College, Dublin. As well as Hackett, they included Advocates General, George Fletcher Moore and Bartholomew Vigors, Chief Justice Sir Henry Wrenfordsley and Colonial Governor Sir Arthur Kennedy.<sup>25</sup> He also had his business partner, Charles Harper, and Premier John Forrest as fellow members of the Weld Club. Furthermore, on 27 February 1900, the Western Australian Freemasons was formed with Hackett as one of its founder members.<sup>26</sup> Other prominent members were Michael Samson, Sir Newton J. Moore and James S. Battye.<sup>27</sup> Finally, he, Harper and Forrest were parliamentary colleagues, and so they not only worked together but also associated with one another at civic events.

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<sup>23</sup> Lenore Layman, 'Continuity and Change, 1947-1965', in David Black, ed., *The House on the Hill: A History of the Parliament of Western Australia 1832-1990*, Perth: Western Australian Parliament, 1991, p. 167.

<sup>24</sup> Anthony Giddens, *Sociology*, Cambridge, England: Polity Press, 1989, p. 327; pp. 278-279.

<sup>25</sup> Ronayne, *First Fleet to Federation*, pp. 231-235.

<sup>26</sup> Collins, *Golden Jubilee History*, pp. 5, 69.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 12.



There are several reasons why Hackett accepted nomination as a member of the Legislative Council rather than contest an Assembly seat. Firstly, having failed twice in 1880 to enter the Victorian Legislative Assembly, he was possibly apprehensive in trying his luck with Western Australian electors in an election campaign, even though by 1890 he was a well-known local businessman. A more likely reason was that he would be amongst colleagues and friends in the Council. Included amongst them was the President of the Council, Sir Thomas Cockburn-Campbell, who was then a political writer for the *West Australian* and Hackett's predecessor as editor. Other members of the fifteen man Council who would have been on familiar terms with Hackett were businessmen Edward Hamersley, George Leake and George Shenton.<sup>28</sup> The Council provided him with an additional voice through which to express his viewpoints (supplementing his newspaper editorials), power as a legislator and reinforcement of his status in the colony.

Hackett was eager to have a transparent image in the two very public roles he held in the community – that of a newspaper owner and editor and parliamentarian. When he was initially nominated to the Council in 1890, he and his business partner, Charles Harper, felt obliged to resign from the Legislative Council for reasons Hackett described as a possible but unspecified 'technical interpretation of the Constitution Act'.<sup>29</sup> However, when it was put to him: 'that it would be an advantage to the colony that I should continue to hold my seat',<sup>30</sup> the two men promptly withdrew their resignations.

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<sup>28</sup> *WAPD*, 1890-91, vol. 1, p. vi.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 9 December 1891, vol. 2, p. 19.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*

Although Hackett had his sights set on becoming a member of the Council, in 1889 he encouraged people in his editorials to enrol to vote, especially for the Legislative Assembly. He spelt out what entitled a person to vote: ‘Any man who owns an estate of the value of a hundred pounds sterling, or who occupies a dwelling house of the value of £10, yearly, or holds a leasehold of the annual value of £10’.<sup>31</sup> In his own case, as part-owner of a newspaper, the prerequisites were easily met.

At the first elections in 1890, after Western Australia had achieved responsible government, the less privileged began to complain about the revised registration system. One anonymous correspondent to the *West Australian* mentioned that he would have been able to vote if he had been renting two unfurnished rooms, but as he was actually renting two furnished rooms he was ineligible to vote unless he signed a false declaration.<sup>32</sup> A few days later another disgruntled and disenfranchised individual, Francis Hart, explained that he had been a resident in the colony for twelve years and a householder for six years, but because he had moved home shortly before the election he had not resided ‘in one particular place for *twelve clear months*’, so therefore under the current Electoral Act he was ineligible to vote.<sup>33</sup> Hart considered the Act as ‘pernicious and objectionable as the Members’ Property Qualification’ and suggested that there would be many other Western Australians in a similar situation.<sup>34</sup> The correspondent concluded by proposing that the Act should be repealed. However, such petty dissent was not going to deter Hackett from becoming a parliamentarian, a role that he had already coveted for at least a decade.

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<sup>31</sup> WA, 13 February 1889, p. 2.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 28 July 1890, p. 4.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 7 August 1890, p. 3.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*



### 1890 Western Australia's Parliamentary members

Twenty-nine members (plus the Parliamentary clerk), of Western Australia's first parliament under responsible government. Hackett is in the front row, fourth from the left, while the President of the Legislative Council, Sir Thomas Cockburn-Campbell, is also in the front row, third from left. Premier Sir John Forrest is absent.

Acknowledgment: Battye Library, Western Australia, Ref: BL 6022B

Before Hackett's parliamentary speeches are analysed in detail, it is worth noting his patriotic enthusiasm for Western Australia. It was unparalleled amongst fellow Western Australians. In 1894, he expressed his passion for the colony by saying that he 'would not support any Government that did not have as its motto, "West Australia as a whole, and the whole of West Australia."' <sup>35</sup> He later told his parliamentary colleagues: 'I am not a West Australian. I was not born in this colony, but if I had I should never tire of my pride in such a land'. <sup>36</sup> A few months earlier, when discussing how he thought Western Australia would develop in the future, he stressed it was important to take into consideration 'that it is the whole country we have to consider, and not a single district'. <sup>37</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> *WAPD*, 4 October 1894, vol. 7, p. 907.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 908.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 26 July 1894, vol. 6, pp. 20-21.

His love of his adopted homeland never diminished. Fifteen years later he informed his colleagues he had invested in the property, 'Cherrydale', near Donnybrook for his family's future:

It was my lot to take up two or three blocks of land for my wife and myself and I was so pleased with the country, and so anxious to place my own relatives upon the soil there that I took up land also in their names ... [including for] a nephew, who was a namesake, and a godson, who has been and is still learning farming in Canada, and I hope a little later on will bring brain and muscle to bear in this country. If, as it was called at the time, the family settlement was to be there, I know of no part of Western Australia where it would be more desirable to place it, or where a richer reward could be obtained than in this part of the country ... I am so pleased myself with it that I am recommending everyone else to go there.<sup>38</sup>

It will be argued throughout this thesis that he was committed to and continuously strived to better Western Australia's future. This was apparent not only in his parliamentary speeches but also in the many civic responsibilities he undertook.

### **Political issues**

In 1894 Hackett had to contest his first and only election in Western Australia. The composition of Council members throughout his time as a member will be analysed in order to find out how Hackett fitted in as a member and his only electoral campaign will also be discussed. It must be remembered that candidates did not have the technology

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<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 9 December 1909, 37, pp.1990-1. The nephew referred to was probably John Winthrop Hackett of Foxdale, Saskatchewan, Canada, son of Revd Henry Monk-Mason Hackett.

used in today's political campaigns. His Address-in-Reply speeches aired the broad views he held on various topics. These debates gave inexperienced members the opportunity to speak on topics of their choosing. The position he adopted on specific issues will be explored, in such matters as payment to members of Parliament and female franchise.

It is worth examining the composition of the Legislative Council and how Hackett fitted into the overall establishment. As Ralph Gore states in his thesis on the Legislative Council: 'The emphasis put by Council candidates on local residence, family property, local government service and business connections of a long standing type appeared to be what mattered most in gaining a seat in Council'.<sup>39</sup> Before 1890, Hackett's business partner, Charles Harper, was a member of the Council (although after 1890 he became a Legislative Assembly member for Beverley) and was also a member with Hackett of the influential, men's only, Weld Club. So, it was not surprising that Hackett was nominated to be a Council member, especially as Harper no doubt knew of Hackett's interest in politics.

The statistics for members entering the Council seem to suggest that Hackett was a typical member. When he entered Parliament in December 1890 he was 52 years old, with the average age of Council members during the 1890s being 56.<sup>40</sup> He was also one of the nearly 70% of members who was born outside of Western Australia.<sup>41</sup> Members with rural interests dominated the Council during the 1890s, although by the turn of the century, business people, such as himself, outnumbered those who earned their living

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<sup>39</sup> Ralph Gore, 'The Western Australian Legislative Council, 1890-1970', p. 158.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 153.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 158.

from the land, with sixteen representatives against six from rural interests.<sup>42</sup> With so few members in the Council being employees, Gore observed:

Inside and outside of the Council reference was often made to that body being the 'House of Property'. When legislation affecting the rights of property was debated in the Council it was common for statements affirming that House's duty to safeguard the interests of property to be heard.<sup>43</sup>

However, when Hackett's speeches to the Council are examined it was noticeable he was the odd person out. He unpredictably supported such issues as women's franchise and the agriculturalists in his electorate, and was, as previously mentioned, also one of the early colonial environmentalists.

The only time in his career that Hackett had to campaign for his parliamentary seat was in 1894. His electorate covered an immense area and was served by an inadequate rail system, with the effect he was unlikely to cover the whole region in his election campaign. Like other candidates, he used postcards as a method of communication between himself and his constituents. In June 1894, he advised his electorate:

I have the honor [sic] to offer myself as a Candidate for election to the New Legislative Council for the South West Province, and I beg to solicit your Vote and Interest in my favour. I hope to put my political views fully before you at the chief centres of population in the Province, before the day of nomination.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 159.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 187.

<sup>44</sup> Stannage, 'Electoral Politics in Western Australia: 1884-1897', p. 302.

A month later a further postcard was received by his constituents reminding them of the date of the election and the location of the polling places.<sup>45</sup>

It was not surprising that the *West Australian* comprehensively covered their editor's 1894 election campaign. When, twelve days before polling day, Hackett spoke at a rally at the Weld Institute in the electoral constituency of Vasse, Mayor G. W. Barnard urged his audience to give him their full support. In his speech, the candidate praised the Forrest government for the work carried out in the previous four years, which involved the Vasse region being included in the rail network. Instead of focusing entirely on mineral resources, he then continued to discuss the Premier's determination to serve the entire state and advised his audience that if it retained the serving government there were still plenty of challenges ahead for a Forrest ministry. He compared the government to a 'fly wheel which, having attained a certain amount of momentum, carried itself round by the force which had been imparted to it over what were called "dead points"'.<sup>46</sup> He also stressed that any future Forrest government would continually attempt to alleviate any weaknesses within government.

After speaking about his attempts to withdraw grants from religious schools (which will be discussed in detail in Chapter Six), Hackett praised agriculturalists as 'not so much to him to be the backbone of the country as the skeleton of the whole'.<sup>47</sup> He suggested that farmers provided continual stability for the colony's revenue, whereas he felt the recent mineral finds would only produce a temporary prosperity. Although his statement was made in a financial year when mining revenue would exceed agricultural income for the first time in the colony's history, it would be one of those rare occasions when one of

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<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>46</sup> WA, 10 July 1894, p. 6.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*

his predictions proved to be incorrect. He told his enthusiastic audience that there were three ways in which the administration intended to improve a farmer's lifestyle and to induce people to settle on the land. Firstly, the government intended to establish a land bank to assist farmers with financing crops. Then, probably at his urging, the Premier intended to expand the rail network so that farmers were able to transport crops to markets more effectively. Finally, with an increased crop production, the government would also be seeking additional cold storage facilities in order to keep produce until its distribution. Speaking to an audience of predominantly farmers, such pledges would have been well received because, although the Western Australian population had increased by 40%, between 1892 and 1894 the State 'wheat acreage decreased 64% from 35,061 [14,189 Hectares] to 21,433 [8,674 Hectares]'.<sup>48</sup> One promise was quickly realised, as on 1 November 1894, the Agricultural Bank Bill was passed by the Western Australian Parliament, which resulted in the Agricultural Bank opening its doors to the public on 21 January 1895.<sup>49</sup>

Hackett continued to entertain his Vasse audience by promoting Western Australia's railway system. As stated above, the development of railways within his electoral region was an issue that he pursued throughout his parliamentary career. He mentioned that the two routes from Perth to Cue and Perth to Coolgardie were important to serve newly populated mineral regions, but the biggest applause and cheers of the evening came when he suggested that routes within his own electoral area should be improved and expanded. He also commented that although both Blackwood and Vasse regions were capable of producing fruit and timber, they had possibly been backward in promoting the dairy industry because of the lack of suitable transport. In his closing

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<sup>48</sup> Ken Spillman, *Horizons: A History of the Rural and Industries Bank of Western Australia*, Nedlands: UWA Press, 1989, p. 7.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 10-11.



remarks he cautioned the audience about the colony's changing economy and warned them that they had to deal individually with future challenges. When canvassing for his Council seat, he probably had little idea of the impending economic growth in the colony and the part he would play in establishing many of Western Australia's public amenities and institutions.

At the 1894 elections, voters were permitted to select several candidates in accordance with the number of vacancies. Therefore, in the South West Province, there were three vacancies so voters were allowed to select up to three candidates. In a close contest Hackett topped the poll with 237 votes, twenty-two ahead of the runner-up Edward McLarty with 215 votes, and with third placed John Foulkes well behind with 158 votes.<sup>50</sup> Elected candidates were to serve on a rotational basis, so initially Hackett, who received the greatest number of votes, was to serve six years, while second and third place candidates were to serve four and two year terms respectively. Although he never took his electorate for granted, at subsequent State elections in 1900, 1906, and 1912 Hackett was never to be challenged for his seat again.<sup>51</sup> Nevertheless he was never complacent, as in 1912, while debating the Rights in Water and Irrigation Bill, on specifying certain issues he wanted discussed, he pointedly remarked: '... or else, I shall not get a chance of re-election'.<sup>52</sup>

When commenting on the 1894 Election results in the *West Australian*, Hackett congratulated the electorate for increasing the number of members in the Legislative

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<sup>50</sup> Black, *Legislative Council of Western Australia*, p. 27.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 35, 51, 80.

<sup>52</sup> *WAPD*, 12 November 1912, vol. 44, p. 3178.

Assembly who supported the Conservative viewpoint, but then made some pointed comments about some of his newly-elected colleagues in Council. He felt some were of mediocre quality that only 'weakened the prestige and influence' of the current Chamber.<sup>53</sup> He gave the example of the West Province Council seat (covering the Fremantle area) where he suggested electors had selected one member (unnamed) who would probably bring 'a sense of intolerable shame to every respectable person in the community'.<sup>54</sup> Still feeling in a belligerent mood, he continued to characterise some members of the Council as: 'the same disintegrated and hostile atoms which formed it in the last Parliament'.<sup>55</sup> As a newspaper editor he was in a powerful position to influence his readers by placing his thoughts into print. The above editorial is an excellent example of the forthright opinions that characterised his early writings.

The first opportunity for a new member to speak in Parliament is usually during the Address-in-Reply debate, which is held immediately after the customary Governor's speech that opens each new session of Parliament. While acknowledging the Governor's speech, the debate is also an opportune time for inexperienced members to discuss issues of their choosing. The occasion also provides opposition members with the opportunity to attack the government of the day on subjects that they feel strongly about. In his early career Hackett frequently spoke in such debates as he did not associate himself with any political faction. Issues raised by him included the limited franchise in Western Australia, the development of railways and the importance of the agricultural industry for the colony.

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<sup>53</sup> WA, 18 July 1894, p. 4.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*

The first time Hackett spoke in the Address-in-Reply debate in the Legislative Council on 22 January 1891 was also the first time he addressed Parliament. However, it was an uneventful affair. Although generally approving of the government's announced intentions, he told his fellow members that he had misgivings on several issues. He foresaw the problems with the Loan Bill for railways, but only briefly outlined his concerns in the knowledge that the subject would be fully debated at a later date. This issue would be the first, but not the last, dispute between the Legislative Council and Assembly members in respect of financial matters. He then discussed what he considered were the three future strengths of the Western Australian economy: its pastoral, agricultural and mineral resources.<sup>56</sup> Little did he realise that the colony's impending gold strikes would not only transform the local economy, but increase its population nearly four-fold by the end the decade.

At the end of 1891, Hackett was again on his feet to speak in an Address-in-Reply debate. This time he included such subjects as the Australasian Federal Convention that he had attended; the upturn in the Western Australian economy; his thoughts on 'one man one vote' elections; and the Midland Railway Company's proposal to raise a loan to construct a railway line to Geraldton. With regard to the 'one man one vote' issue, Hackett had been greatly impressed by the flamboyant New Zealand delegate, Sir George Grey (who coincidentally, in his early days had been an explorer in Western Australia) at the Convention, although admitting: 'he was generally regarded as a nuisance' because of his continually pressed belief in 'one man one vote'.<sup>57</sup> He held contrary views to those of Grey and advised his colleagues: 'although I hope to see the [property] qualification for members done away with, I earnestly trust that with regard

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<sup>56</sup> *WAPD*, 22 January 1891, vol. 1, pp. 47-52.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 9 December 1891, vol. 2, p. 21.

to the franchise we shall never see that fatal principle of one man one vote introduced'.<sup>58</sup> He continued to urge 'practical legislation and the actual development of our resources without bringing about another period of turmoil and agitation such as existed during the three or four years preceding Responsible Government'.<sup>59</sup> His opinion at that time was similar to those of other Legislative Council members. Such behaviour did not drastically change for over a century until the 2001 State election. Until then, due to its excessive vote-weighting in certain electorates in which the voting system favoured it, the conservative government retained power in the chamber.

Hackett again rose in the Address-in-Reply debate in November 1892 and spoke of the gains achieved in the colony over the previous two years, especially following the discovery of gold: 'which will be the backbone of this great colony'.<sup>60</sup> He then concentrated the remainder of his speech on the limited franchise rights in force in Western Australia, compared with those in other Australian colonies. He told his colleagues: 'We cannot forget that those we invite to come to us, both from the other Australian colonies and from England, are in possession of this very power which is denied them here'.<sup>61</sup> It is interesting to note that, although a strong advocate of male suffrage, not once in his speech did he mention the women's vote. This latter reform was to take a further seven years, by which time he favoured the change.

As the member representing a country electorate, in the Address-in-Reply debate of 1894 Hackett spoke of the advantages of railways over roads. He considered a rail system between country centres and Perth to be fundamental for the survival of such

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<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 3 November 1892, vol. 3, p. 4.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5.

towns, for railways encouraged people to trade with each other, not only for the necessities of life, but excess stock and produce could be marketed outside the region. Although it would be some time before road transport displaced the railway in popularity, Hackett mistakenly considered that ‘railways would supersede roads, bringing passengers, produce and mails in a space of time which would seem like a flash as compared with the present time of transport’.<sup>62</sup>

The last time Hackett spoke in the Address-in-Reply debate, in 1898, he included an explanation of the importance of the Observatory and its newly installed sophisticated equipment.<sup>63</sup> He did not speak in the Address-in-Reply debates for the last eighteen years of his parliamentary career as the more he grew in confidence and stature, the less he felt the need to speak on such occasions.

### **Political reform**

Hackett’s liberal reformist position became evident when he discussed parliamentary salaries. By 1900 when the topic of payment for members was debated, he approved that his colleagues be remunerated by saying:

As long as I can remember I have claimed to be democratic, but from my earliest days I have not been able to gather how democratic institutions could be successfully worked unless the members who are admitted to do the people’s work in Parliament are paid for their services.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 26 July 1894, vol. 6, p. 21.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 23 June 1898, vol. 12, pp. 153-158.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 13 November 1900, vol. 18, p. 1592.

He also mentioned that the forthcoming Bill enacting the Commonwealth of Australia provided payment for Federal parliamentarians. He described the limitations that existed in the colony of Victoria, where Legislative Council members were unpaid, as being like that of ‘an angel guarding the gates of Paradise with a sword of flame, to prevent any democratic measure passing the law’.<sup>65</sup> By comparison, he had high praise for the system in South Australia that not only paid Upper House members, but also provided allowances for the Lower Chamber. This, he stated, led to a more democratic Upper House as members could forgo seeking supplementary income from outside sources.

In view of the fact that Ministers were currently receiving £1,000 annually, Hackett considered £100 was totally inadequate for payments for Legislative Council members (although they were mostly property men). He compared the pitiful proposed payments to members with that of the behaviour of animals at the Perth Zoo, of which incidentally he was then President:

The insulting reference of £100 per year is thrown to members here as one throws a piece of meat to a lion at a garden not far from this place, hoping that it will keep him quiet for a little while; giving him a little provender, not perhaps as much as he wants, but at all events while he is eating it he will hold his tongue.<sup>66</sup>

Hackett was adamant that prospective candidates for the Legislative Council, provided that they had the required qualifications, should have the same opportunity as Assembly members. However, prospective Council candidates were still ‘required to be at least

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<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1593.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1594.

30 years of age and to have been in Western Australia for at least two years'.<sup>67</sup>

Considering that many Western Australians would not qualify on this basis, he did not appreciate the difficulties of people who aspired to stand for the Council.

Four years after Council members received their £100 increase, the North-East Province member Charles Sommers introduced a motion to reduce payment to Council members by the same amount. Again, Hackett was at the forefront attempting to defeat such action. In his speech he ridiculed Sommers' attempt by repeatedly quoting parts of the latter's speech of four years earlier when he had vigorously supported payment for members. It was such an onslaught that Sommers meekly offered to withdraw the motion. His offer was rejected and eventually, the motion to reduce salaries was defeated on Member's voices.<sup>68</sup>

In fighting for payment for members, Hackett also indicated his concerns for perspective members of parliament. No doubt he was influenced by his unsuccessful 1880 experiences in Victoria, especially on the second occasion when Dr John Madden used his influence and more importantly his wealth to win the election by a mere thirty-one votes. Now a prosperous man, he saw the need for parliamentarians to have a reasonable salary, but he was still oblivious to the dilemmas of ordinary people if they wished to be elected to Parliament.

In 1899 women in Western Australia finally obtained the vote and Hackett spoke passionately in parliament in favour of women's franchise. He revealed that he had long been a supporter of women's rights and argued: 'their vote will ultimately be used

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<sup>67</sup> de Garis, 'Self Government and the Emergence of Political Parties, 1890-1911', p. 69.

<sup>68</sup> *WAPD*, 30 November 1904, vol. 26, pp. 1510-1516; *WAPD*, 1 December 1904, vol. 26, 1573-1577.

in the true progress of social improvement and social enlightenment'.<sup>69</sup> However, when the franchise issue had been previously debated seven years earlier in an Address-in-Reply debate, he extolled the virtues of an extended franchise for men, but not once during that speech did he mention women's suffrage.<sup>70</sup> Since then, the Western Australian population had exploded and public attitudes, including his own, had gradually changed. In advocating the right for women to vote, he submitted 'that in this nineteenth century the women are only endeavouring to recover the ground which they lost something like a couple of thousand years ago'.<sup>71</sup> Throughout his speech, several members who considered that such a decision should be first put to the people repeatedly interrupted him, but he scorned such suggestions and named some of the places where women already had the vote, such as at municipal elections in the United Kingdom. He also asserted that 'some of the finest sovereigns have been women sovereigns', such as those in England and Spain.<sup>72</sup> He condemned the arguments of those members who did not wish to see women obtain the vote, suggesting their contentions that women would in the future be 'dragged through the mire of politics' and that they should be refused the vote 'because only some of them are likely to use it' were illogical.<sup>73</sup> Although the debate was taken seriously, in one light-hearted exchange his single status was mentioned, only for one colleague to interject perceptively: 'Oh, you will be "hooked" yet'.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, 17 August 1899, vol. 14, p. 946.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 3 November 1892, vol. 3, pp. 4-6.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 17 August 1899, vol. 14, p. 947.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 949.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 948-949.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 948.



## Social reform

Most of Hackett's views on social issues can be characterised as 'enlightened'. In respect to divorce, he wanted women to be on more equitable terms when divorce occurred. On a second issue, he wanted people who were institutionalised in asylums to be humanely treated. However, on a third social issue, to prohibit hawkers from Perth streets, he was pragmatic for he realised that whatever the result of the debate he was in a no-win situation. Lastly, he was also passionate about the management of the environment. In this section the above four issues will be examined indicating his views on each piece of legislation.

Hackett perceived that the 1899 Divorce Bill was too wide-ranging and he was 'offended by the fact that divorce should be permitted on any ground whatever'.<sup>75</sup> He argued against such widespread change, although he entirely agreed that the then current legislation, which had been in force since 1863, was totally outdated. Whilst admitting that divorce was allowed under his Christian beliefs: 'On the ground of adultery, numbers of commentators and scripture writers were agreed that divorce was permitted by biblical law',<sup>76</sup> he did not push for extensive changes to the legislation as he believed that any incoming Federal government was likely to centralise the laws.

In this instance Hackett's social values can be classified as conservative in the sense that he did not wish for divorce to be made easier, but he was concerned that when it happened it should be on a more equitable basis between the two involved parties. He spoke of his determination not to diminish 'the position of the marriage tie' and

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<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, 13 September 1899, vol. 14, p. 1248.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, 3 October 1899, vol. 15, p. 1514.

considered that liberalisation of the current divorce laws would only weaken the matrimonial knot with possible consequences leading ‘to a great increase of gross immorality’.<sup>77</sup> He added: ‘Like the grave, all is taken and nothing given back’.<sup>78</sup> He argued that each divorced partner should be on an equal footing and considered that the legislation under discussion was inequitable:

this law, giving the man superior privileges, and placing the woman’s morality in a different condition from the man’s is a law made by man for women, in which women have had no voice whatever. Therefore, [it is ] in a very sense of shame that a law should be passed which presses more hardly on the weaker sex.<sup>79</sup>

He particularly disapproved of two sections of the legislation providing for grounds for a divorce: insanity and desertion. With regard to the former, he pointed out that if the man or woman were classified as insane, a fair trial could not take place as it was essential that both parties be able to state their case and to understand what was taking place in the courtroom. An insane person, he claimed, was unlikely to be able to do either. With reference to desertion, he argued that if the husband eventually returned, even after the seven years allowed before a divorce was enacted with ‘a just excuse’, it could possibly lead to a ‘highly undesirable, not to say disgraceful state of things, that a woman has really two husbands and two families’, as both could claim rights in respect to their children.<sup>80</sup> Although this was not a particularly liberal nor enlightened belief on his part, he was eventually successful in having both causes removed.

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<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, 13 September 1899, vol. 14, p. 1248.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1246.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1247.

Hackett's enlightened views on social issues were also portrayed towards people who found themselves incarcerated in asylums. During his frequent visits to Victoria, he admitted having visited most of the institutions in that State and although he considered many to be in a pitiful condition, there was 'nothing more dreadful or nothing more terrible than what might have been seen in the Fremantle Asylum', which was not properly equipped for its purpose and was overcrowded.<sup>81</sup>

The first building in Western Australia to be used as a mental hospital was not constructed until the early 1860s and was built to serve Fremantle Prison. By the 1890s the facility had become overcrowded and government officials commenced looking for an alternative location, whilst a site at Whitby Falls was utilised as a short-term measure. Both Mundijong and Claremont were considered as potential locations, the latter with its 400 acres [162 hectares] of available land winning preference, because of its then isolation and close proximity to a railway line.<sup>82</sup>

In 1901 Dr Sydney Montgomery had arrived on the ship *Oceana* to take up his position as Superintendent of the Fremantle Lunatic Asylum. He was the first doctor in Western Australia 'to possess formal qualifications in "Lunacy" and was well aware of the importance of an efficient architectural therapeutics'.<sup>83</sup> In 1902 the construction of a Hospital for the Insane commenced and was completed five years later.<sup>84</sup> In designing

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<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, 18 August 1903, vol. 23, p. 532.

<sup>82</sup> Neville Hills, *Asylum to Mainstream. Replacing a Psychiatric Hospital for the Elderly: An Account of the Closure and Replacement of Swanbourne Hospital*, Perth: Shenton Park Psychiatric Services for the Elderly, 1996, pp. 12-13.

<sup>83</sup> Peter McClelland, 'Contours of Madness: Montgomery's Claremont – Quickly Falls The Shadow', *Studies in Western Australian History: Historical Traces*, 1997, no 17, p. 62.

<sup>84</sup> The hospital's architect was John Henry Grainger, father of the Australian pianist and composer, Percy Grainger. The hospital became better known as Claremont Mental Hospital and is today called Graylands Hospital.

the building, Montgomery had followed the latest design and practices from Britain.<sup>85</sup> In 1903 he was appointed Inspector-General of the Insane, whilst in the same year the Lunacy Act Amendment Bill was introduced into parliament.

The Lunacy Act dealt largely with those people who suffered from dementia and the consequent requirement for them to be incarcerated. After discussing the history of mental illness, Hackett congratulated the government for making the amendments, which included the introduction of ‘licensed houses or private houses’ to deal with the illness.<sup>86</sup> He pointed out that in many other countries, this innovation was ‘entirely condemned and in every way discouraged or absolutely prohibited’.<sup>87</sup> One of the advantages, he suggested, was that relatives and friends of people who suffered from dementia could have them cared for in an appropriate manner. Also, within such homes some patients would be provided with specialist treatment, in the hope that they would ‘not only be subject to a control which is adequate but a supervision which is reasonable and they can be made the object of humane and even hopeful experiment’.<sup>88</sup> He considered the new proposed arrangements as ‘perhaps the most valuable of the proposed additions to our lunacy law’.<sup>89</sup> However, he raised a concern that some people might be apprehensive of the proposed legislation, but reassured the public that the homes would be suitably prepared to deal with dementia. The legislation stipulated that when doctors visited patients it would be more than just ‘conversing with the superintendent across the door-step, hearing that all was right, and driving away’, as

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<sup>85</sup> Hills, *Asylum to Mainstream*, p. 13.

<sup>86</sup> *WAPD*, 18 August 1903, vol. 23, p. 532.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, 19 August 1903, vol. 23, p. 574.

medical reports would have to be completed and signed.<sup>90</sup> Most importantly, the patients would not ‘degenerate by long and perfunctory confinement’.<sup>91</sup> This issue was a further indication of Hackett’s concern for the less fortunate in life. As well as assisting with the destitute during the gold rush era by donating monies and sitting on committees that assisted the poor, he realised that the people who suffered from dementia could not help themselves and required certain places, such as asylums, where individual supervision could be provided.

In 1892 legislation regulating pedlars on Perth streets was introduced. Hackett was realistic enough to appreciate that whichever way he voted it was not going to make any difference to an existing problem. The Government had been forced to act when the Legislative Assembly initially decided to amend the relevant legislation to exclude ‘Asiatic and African aliens, or inhabitants of the African or Asiatic continents’ from the legislation,<sup>92</sup> which led to the Government being urged to completely abolish the legislation in order to avoid the inclusion of the amendment. Hackett wished for a total ban on hawking and peddling as he thought the suggested amendments unworkable and the trade abhorrent, but was realistic enough to recognise that the occupation would continue to flourish, despite any proposed amendments. He summed up the amendments as: ‘doing away with one evil, to create two greater ones’, as it would ‘add enormously to the privileges which certain monopolists already possess’.<sup>93</sup> He was referring to storeowners, who would reap the benefits from such legislation and that public opinion hoped to see hawkers and pedlars continue their trade. His feelings on this matter were not uncharacteristic, as he foresaw any eventual result as impossible to

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<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, 18 August 1903, vol. 23, p. 532.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, 16 March 1892, vol. 2, p. 917.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 918.

enforce. He possibly thought that such people would be less of a liability to society by continuing their meagre livelihood rather than ending up begging on the streets.

### **Environmental concerns**

Hackett having experienced a short and disastrous period on the land, leasing 'Wooramal Station in the early 1880s, was especially concerned for the fragile environment of Australia's dry continent and was to become a passionate environmentalist, although many of his ideas were ignored. He was one of the first Western Australians to understand how the rudimentary principles of conservationism and environmentalism worked. His attempts to warn his fellow citizens of the ominous consequences ahead for the environment if people's habits did not change went unheeded (as did subsequent warnings by others to later generations). Some of his views on pollution will be explored, such as his stance on drought, fish stocks, tree felling and his concerns for the future of the agricultural industry.

During the debate of the Pollution of Rivers Bill in 1898, Hackett became aware that the people who drafted legislation sometimes transferred large segments of legislation from Imperial Acts which occasionally resulted in inappropriate definitions being applied to Australian conditions. For instance, he told his colleagues 'a stream in the United Kingdom meant a running body of water which could be used for domestic purposes, the watering of stock, and many other purposes'.<sup>94</sup> He considered the word 'stream' unsuitable for the Western Australian conditions, as occasionally streams were dry. Alternatively he suggested "water-courses". However, alternative language such as: 'prevent farmers from permitting the liquid drainage of their farmyards from running

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<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, 12 July 1898, vol. 12, p. 369.

down into water-courses ...[and] would not be possible to deal with the refuse of steamers' could also result in unforeseen repercussions.<sup>95</sup>

Another section of the legislation that irked Hackett was in fact that it only applied to Perth and excluded Fremantle waters. He stated that: 'Ships were birds of passage'<sup>96</sup> and that the Fremantle section of the river 'was the most likely part to the river to become polluted'.<sup>97</sup> Hackett therefore saw no advantages in excluding Fremantle. The legislation eventually passed the Committee stage, although he also had doubts about other sections of it.<sup>98</sup>

In 1912, when debating the Rights in Water and Irrigation Bill, Hackett explained the consequences of water wastage in his own electorate:

[I]n the South West, where millions of tons go to waste every winter, during the summer the whole country is dried up and its productiveness destroyed to such an extent that, in the case of sheep, they are seriously limited in number by the drying up of the feed ... [W]e must look after the waters of the State. The day is not next year or the year after, but this very year, when every cubic foot of water should be accounted for, under the surface or over the surface of the country ... to see that there should be no waste of those enormous volumes of water which run down to the sea each winter.<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, 16 August 1898, vol. 12, p. 964.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 966.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, 12 November 1912, vol. 44, p. 3178.

As well as being concerned about the pollution of rivers, he was also concerned about Western Australia's dwindling fish stocks. Late in the 19<sup>th</sup> century he was one of those few people who realised that world fish stocks were already being seriously depleted:

We cannot for one moment shut our eyes to the fact that our fisheries in the more settled portions of the colony are diminishing in importance and value almost yearly, and any step this House can take ... to prevent this deterioration going on will be service well done in the interests of the country. What we desire at present is to prevent the destruction of fish and the ruin of our fishing grounds in order to preserve a truly valuable asset to the colony, and to afford means for a most wholesome and interesting recreation to members of the community.<sup>100</sup>

His foresight was extraordinary, especially considering what is known today with improved technology.

Conservation of the colony's forests was another issue that Hackett tackled. In 1899, while debating the Truck Bill, he emphasised the importance of the timber industry:

Our timber is disappearing, we have one of the most magnificent assets in Australasia in our forests. We are told that our forests are worth scores of millions of pounds, and at present our timber is disappearing with such a rapidity that in the course of a generation we shall see the forests non-existent.<sup>101</sup>

He again raised the issue in 1909 while discussing further erosion of the State's "A Class" reserves, which had largely been designated as National Parks. He was

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<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, 21 November 1899, vol. 15, p. 2381.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, 29 August 1899, vol. 14, p. 1027.



concerned that many parks were slowly being truncated and consequently, would eventually disappear. He pointed out: 'It is a good old principle obtaining [sic] in some countries that where you cut down a tree you are compelled to plant two others' and suggested that people who wished to deplete forests 'should feel that their duty impelled them to set apart two acres for every one sacrificed'.<sup>102</sup> Later in the debate he stressed that: 'Members should take care not to put it in the hands of Ministers to abolish a national park whenever they thought fit'.<sup>103</sup> As history reveals, the felling in Western Australian forests has continued until today and remains a controversial issue.

Hackett by this time had been a country representative in Parliament for nineteen years and was alarmed at the continual destruction of regional forests, especially in his own electorate. On 11 February 1909, on the first day of the Royal Commission held to discuss the viability of establishing a university in Western Australia it came as no surprise to his friends and colleagues that because of his extensive interest in agriculture, Hackett announced that he would endow one of the initial chairs at the University, that of Agriculture.<sup>104</sup> When no suitable overseas candidate for the position could be found (and to the embarrassment of his fellow Senators) he decided to interview the Australian applicants himself.<sup>105</sup>

His sustained interest in agriculture was substantive proof of his support for people on the land, as he had witnessed his electorate expand from 402 people in 1894, to 5,070 during his career.<sup>106</sup> It was obvious to him that the agricultural industry required

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<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, 20 December 1909, vol. 37, pp. 2422-2423.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, 21 December 1909, vol. 37, p. 2516.

<sup>104</sup> Alexander, *Campus at Crawley*, p. 30. In 1894 a Bureau of Agriculture was established in the colony, which became the Department of Agriculture in 1898.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 56.

<sup>106</sup> Black, *Legislative Council of Western Australia*, pp. 27, 94.

continual research and development if it was to advance, especially with the additional competition from the mineral industry.

### **Industrial and economic infrastructure**

It has already been observed that Hackett was totally committed to the advancement of Western Australia. Early in his parliamentary career he told his colleagues: ‘The House must bear in mind that, if the colony is to progress as a whole, it must stand together as a whole’.<sup>107</sup> He realised that before the colony could progress the infrastructure had to be put in place and he enthusiastically promoted all projects that he considered would benefit the colony’s economy: the goldfields water pipeline; the expansion of railway routes; the development of Fremantle Port; a new Parliament House; and the installation of telephone lines. In this section the above five issues will be examined.

One of the great engineering feats in Western Australia was the construction, under the supervision of O’Connor, of the 560 kms water pipeline between Perth and Kalgoorlie. The pipeline initially provided 22,500 kilolitres of water per day, together with storage facilities for 9,000 kl, to the Goldfields region of Western Australia.<sup>108</sup> For a region that had previously only a rudimentary water supply, such a project must have seemed a godsend for its residents. Unfortunately, its construction did not come without controversies. For the Chief Engineer in the colony, C. Y. O’Connor, to complete his extraordinary engineering feats, he would require Parliamentary approval. Hackett was to be one of O’Connor’s unwavering supporters.

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<sup>107</sup> *WAPD*, 26 July 1894, vol. 6, p. 21.

<sup>108</sup> *Kalgoorlie Miner*, 24 January 2003, p. 1.

E. S. Heath, a Victorian engineer, had first raised the possibility of a pipeline from the Darling Ranges to Coolgardie in November 1893. He had experience with such schemes while working with Field Marshal Kitchener's forces in the Sudan. On 8 July 1896, in the Governor's Speech to Parliament the Forrest government announced for the first time a commitment to the construction of the pipeline and a few days later the Coolgardie Goldfields Water Supply Bill was presented to Parliament.<sup>109</sup>

Hackett was a strong supporter of the water pipeline. One of the topics he chose to discuss in the Address-in-Reply debate two days earlier was the question of water supplies to the Goldfields region:

It seems to me that if gold is the arch on which our prosperity is built, the keystone to that arch is a water supply on the fields ... unless we are willing to tackle this matter in a liberal spirit, not only in the interests of better life on the goldfields, but in the interests of Western Australia as a whole ... I see disaster on the country, not in years to come but in months.<sup>110</sup>

He continued to emphasise that if sufficient water were not supplied to the region it would not survive and urged 'that everything that can be done both by private and public enterprise should be done to supply these fields'.<sup>111</sup> He considered that even if no other public works were proceeded with after the Governor's speech 'prosperity will be ensured' for Western Australia.<sup>112</sup> Discounting the possibility of obtaining artesian water in the region, he remarked:

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<sup>109</sup> Anthony G. Evans, *C. Y. O'Connor: His Life and Legacy*, Nedlands: UWA Press, 2001, pp. 164-165.

<sup>110</sup> *WAPD*, 7 July 1896, vol. 9, p. 8.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*

There are many persons who believe that the North Pole is surrounded with [a] tropical climate, and others expect to extract sunbeams from cucumbers, and it is quite as reasonable to extract sunbeams from cucumbers as to expect to obtain an artesian supply [from the goldfields]. Artesian water can only be expected where we know that minerals are not found.<sup>113</sup>

He concluded his speech by emphasising that if artesian water were to be extracted by drilling, such a method would be an exorbitant cost to the colony.

Initially, construction of the goldfields pipeline progressed smoothly with little criticism until O'Connor's earnest ally, Premier Sir John Forrest, transferred from State to Federal politics in 1901. Forrest's successor as Premier, George Leake had been a vocal opponent of the government loan-financed work whilst he had been in opposition. Political instability followed Forrest's departure, with O'Connor having to deal, in quick succession, with three Ministers of Works in Kingsmill, Quinlan and Rason.<sup>114</sup> It is not appropriate here to describe or analyse in detail the public outcry about the completion of the water scheme, but simply to state that it culminated on 29 January 1902 with F. T. Crowder, a Goldfields member of the Legislative Council, moving a motion for the scheme's early completion. In the debate that followed he attacked O'Connor's management.<sup>115</sup>

Hackett could not allow Crowder's denunciation go without a response. He was not only disgusted by the attack on the Chief Engineer, but was astounded that government members sat 'silent after the charges levelled by the mover' and was even more amazed that no government member attempted to provide 'some explanation and some reply in

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<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 8-9.

<sup>114</sup> Martyn Webb, 'Death of a Hero: the Strange Suicide of Charles Yelverton O'Connor', *Early Days*, 1995, vol. 11, no. 1, pp. 87-90.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 95.

regard to the extremely serious allegations made by Mr Crowder'.<sup>116</sup> It was one of those rare moments when during a parliamentary debate, Hackett appeared to be extremely annoyed:

I cannot refrain from expressing my sense of disgust that a motion of this kind, with charges of so serious a description – which charges, moreover, the hon. member making them assures us are *bona fide* and such as he has good basis for making – should be simply met on the part of the Government by tacit assent. I have never heard of such a similar occurrence in this or any other House.<sup>117</sup>

He continued to uphold O'Connor's integrity and considered him 'a gentleman not only of high reputation, but a gentleman as jealous and tender of that reputation as any member of this House can be of his own reputation'.<sup>118</sup>

The above interpretation of Hackett's speech differs from that of Professor Martyn Webb's explanation in the journal *Early Days*.<sup>119</sup> Webb canvasses the possible reasons behind O'Connor's death, including the suggestion that Hackett:

gave aid and comfort to those who wished to destroy O'Connor's credibility by not only conceding that Crowder had made a number of *valid* [author's emphasis] criticisms which deserved to be answered, but also, by making the *following extraordinary statement* [author's emphasis], made it plain that he no longer supported without reservation "The Chief".<sup>120</sup>

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<sup>116</sup> *WAPD*, 29 January 1902, vol. 20, pp. 2591-2592.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2591.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2592.

<sup>119</sup> Webb, 'Death of a Hero', pp. 81-111.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 96.

There is no justification for Webb's criticism of Hackett. There are two points to be raised about his allegations. Firstly, in respect of the word 'valid', Hackett did not concede that Crowder had made a number of valid criticisms that deserved to be answered, as part of Hackett's speech (not quoted in Webb's article) stated: 'For my part, I wish the mover [Crowder] had continued his speech to much greater length, and had given us all the instances of mismanagement he can allege, and everything else he can adduce'.<sup>121</sup> This latter sentence indicates that Hackett was not convinced that O'Connor was guilty of mismanagement, especially on the evidence provided by Crowder, and more importantly he required further details before he was going to make any final judgement on the issue.

Secondly, the words 'following extraordinary statement' misrepresents Hackett's speech, especially as in the sentence immediately before the quoted passage Hackett tells his colleagues: 'I really did expect to hear the leader of the Government apply for an adjournment of the debate, in order that he might have an opportunity of meeting [t]he serious allegations made by Mr Crowder'.<sup>122</sup> This sentence added to Webb's quoted passage drastically alters his interpretation of events, as it clearly indicates once again that Hackett was not yet convinced of the new allegations. O'Connor was in South Australia at the time of the above debate, but on his return from Adelaide (and possibly after reading the *Hansard* debates and subsequent critical news reports, especially in the *Sunday Times*), he took his own life on 10 March 1902 at a beach near Robb's Jetty, south of Fremantle.<sup>123</sup>

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<sup>121</sup> *WAPD*, 29 January 1902, vol. 20, p. 2591.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2592.

<sup>123</sup> Webb, 'Death of a Hero', p. 81.

Following the completion of the pipeline, Hackett took a continued interest in its development and was not afraid to speak his mind. In 1907 he complained in a lengthy parliamentary speech that the goldfields water supply should be self-supporting, saying that the water 'supply to the metropolis is a disgrace and the water supply to Fremantle is a still greater disgrace ... Both supplies, especially when the bore water predominates, are unfit for human supply'.<sup>124</sup> He suggested that there were two immediate issues to investigate. Firstly, although water was considered to be inexpensive in the Goldfields region, he felt that supplies should be obtained from an alternative source with an improved quality. Interwoven with the first suggestion was another, that any additional system should also be financially self-supporting. He suggested that there had been moves to obtain supplies from the Canning River and rumours that Legislative Assembly member, Frank Wilson, had some financial interests in the suggested site. He thought the rumours pernicious and warned: 'If that is the way the Government seek to coerce the private judgement of public men, then they are very stupid and very new at the game'.<sup>125</sup> All this was an indication that he was not afraid, no matter which political party was in power (including the then dominant Liberal Party, under the leadership of [later, Sir] Newton James Moore), to criticise the government.

Hackett then summarised the current predicaments of the State's water supplies and discussed possible solutions that came mainly from the recently held Government Commission and a soon-to-be-published report. He considered most of the recommendations could be disregarded as being impracticable, but suggested that any final decision should not connect the old and new schemes. As a result, he suggested,

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<sup>124</sup> *WAPD*, 5 December 1907, vol. 32, p. 1286..

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1287.

people would have an alternative source in case of a breakage. He concluded his speech with his thoughts in respect of the advantages and disadvantages of developing either the Canning or Helena sites and expressed his favouritism towards the former as he considered it a more economical proposition.

Hackett's annoyance over to the water issue was apparent in his speech as in his conclusion he again chastised the government for not having 'taken steps in the direction of properly managing the scheme. It was absurd to allow this huge business to practically manage itself and to run along as best it can'.<sup>126</sup> This was a further instance of what he believed to be a mismanaged project and his publicly saying so.

Today the goldfields pipeline is considered 'the longest freshwater pipeline in the world'.<sup>127</sup> It can currently boast of having 'twenty pumping stations, compared to the eight it started with in 1903' and 'has the capacity to pump 39,000 kilolitres of water everyday'.<sup>128</sup> This is yet another scheme that can be associated with Hackett's support as he was one of its few constant proponents throughout its construction. In 1905 he fondly recalled: 'I remember the day when the Goldfields Water Scheme, with which it is one of my proudest boasts to have been associated, was championed by only three or four persons in this State'.<sup>129</sup>

Another important achievement of the late nineteenth century was the establishment of railways with steam-powered trains. Although they initially required an abundance of capital for their construction, they fostered a flourishing economy and revolutionised

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<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1293.

<sup>127</sup> *Kalgoorlie Miner*, 24 January 2003, p. 1.

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 8.

<sup>129</sup> *WAPD*, 23 December 1905, vol. 28, p. 930.



passenger travel. Not surprisingly, Australia followed her colonial master with most of its railway engineering technology imported from Britain. The first locomotive-hauled train appeared in Victoria in 1854, followed by New South Wales, South Australia and Queensland in 1855, 1856 and 1865 respectively. Western Australia and Tasmania, in 1871, were the last colonies to introduce railways.<sup>130</sup> Rail gauges were either 1,600 mm (broad gauge), 1,434 mm (standard gauge), or 1,067 mm (narrow gauge).<sup>131</sup> Western Australia settled for the latter due to its lower construction and operational costs.<sup>132</sup>

By the 1870s, Western Australia was the only mainland State not to possess a railway network. The main reason for this was that between the end of convict transportation in 1868 and the discovery of gold, few public works projects were completed because of the colony's precarious finances. Private timber companies built the first three railway lines in Western Australia in order to transport their product from their mills to ocean jetties. The first company was the Western Australian Timber Company whose line opened in June 1871 and was nineteen kilometres in length. A year later, two further companies also constructed lines for transporting timbers from the southwest region.<sup>133</sup> With Hackett being the local parliamentary member and with Jarrah and Tuart timbers being the major export from the district, it was not surprising that he enthusiastically supported improved transport communications for his electorate. For him railways were required 'to encourage families to go on the soil and raise the products which it can so

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<sup>130</sup> "Railways". In *Technology in Australia 1788-1988* [on line]  
<<http://www.austehc.unimelb.edu.au/tia/448.html>> Accessed 8 February 2003.

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>132</sup> G. J. Higham, *One Hundred Years of Railways in Western Australia 1871-1971*. Third Printing. Perth: Australian Railway Historical Society, WA Division Inc., 1991, p. 4.

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 3-4.

well grow' and he regarded the non-construction of lines as a condemnation of government as it was stifling the colony's economical development.<sup>134</sup>

One of the major issues that Hackett tackled throughout his parliamentary career was the development of railways, particularly in his own South West electoral region. For example, in 1894, when canvassing for votes in the Blackwood district of his electorate, he realised that there were less than 110 property owners in the area, which he suggested would be further reduced if an adequate railway system was not constructed: '[i]f a producer is to complete successfully, he must live within five or ten miles [eight to sixteen kms] of a railway'.<sup>135</sup> A recurring theme throughout his speeches for the development of railways was that they would benefit Western Australian agriculturalists by making additional land available for cultivation. Railway routes supported by him included Boyup to Kojonup, Bridgetown to Wilgarrup, Donnybrook to Bridgetown and lines to Esperance, Jandakot and Midland.

Before Hackett raised the proposal for 41kms of railway line between Boyanup and Busselton in parliament in 1892, he personally made a comprehensive inspection of the district 'backwards and forwards, and zig-zag about', so when he spoke on the subject he was well familiarised with the issues at hand and could understand the predicament of the 1,300 constituents in the Sussex district.<sup>136</sup> He discussed the region's environment, which had in the past twenty-four years averaged 37 inches [94 centimetres] in rainfall and provided cattle, both for slaughter and dairy stock, together with various fruits, potatoes, onions, rye and miscellaneous cereals. He then

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<sup>134</sup> *WAPD*, 4 October 1894, vol. 7, p. 908.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*, 9 October 1895, vol. 8, p. 1277.

<sup>136</sup> *WAPD*, 5 January 1892, vol. 2, p. 167; I have taken distances between towns from *Distance Book*, published by Main Roads, Western Australia, realising that railway lines vary slightly in length from road distances.

emphasised: 'Where we have made railways the old towns have gone ahead and new ones have sprung up, but where we have withheld railway communication the districts were either at a standstill or were going back'.<sup>137</sup> He stressed the latter point by saying he was not surprised that at the 1891 census count, compared with ten years earlier, the region had decreased in population and suggested the most probable cause was the lack of railway routes throughout the district.

Hackett's constituents also advised him that a railway line would increase the variety of fresh produce being regionally grown and subsequently marketed. With the government having to import any shortfall in agricultural products, on behalf of his constituents, he argued that most crops could be home-grown, so importation of some foodstuffs was an unnecessary expense and delay. He also estimated construction costs for a railway line to be less than '£100 per mile', which he considered an excellent investment.<sup>138</sup>

Constituents also complained that existing transportation for produce was unsuitable as steamers usually came to the region fortnightly, but sometimes they arrived at inappropriate hours for farmers to dispatch their goods to port. The combination of these uncertainties resulted in decaying produce.

Two years later, in 1894, when debating a Loan Bill, Hackett reiterated the deficiency in funds provided for railway construction, in particular the Donnybrook to Bridgetown route. To illustrate his point, he drew his colleagues' attention to the fact that in the past ten years since 1884, the colony had imported butter, cheese, potatoes and oats to a total value of £388,000, all of which could have been obtained from Western Australian regional areas but for the fact that the colony did not have an adequate railway system to

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<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 168.

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 169.

provide the service.<sup>139</sup> His passionate speech nevertheless failed (by twelve votes to six) to convince his colleagues for the construction of the railway route.<sup>140</sup> It would take a further year for him to reverse this decision.<sup>141</sup>

Not only did Hackett wish to assist his constituents to export produce from the region, he also encouraged property owners to sub-divide their lands, which was a further indication of his 'liberal radicalism', as it was usual for parliamentarians to safeguard or promote the interests of property owners (including themselves). A fine example of this was when in 1892 Hackett urged the sub-division of land in his electorate so that it could provide 'the inhabitants of the Sussex districts the want of that which they ascribe to their backward condition - a cash market'.<sup>142</sup> Eleven years later, in 1903, when debating the construction of the Jandakot railway, Hackett suggested that if landowners refused to sell their land for that purpose, they should be compelled to do so. He continued: 'The settlers were crying out for the railway, and it was not right that one or two persons should be allowed to traffic on the energies and enterprise of their neighbours'.<sup>143</sup> In 1909, with Hackett now owning both farming properties at 'Cherrydale' near Donnybrook and 'Dinninup Vale' between Boyup Brook and Kojonup, he pressed for the connection line between Boyup and Kojonup to be completed, it seems so that both his properties could be serviced more efficiently (although not openly admitting it).<sup>144</sup> This was one of those rare occasions when his speeches did reflect self-interest similar to the behaviour of some of his colleagues.

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<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*, 4 October 1894, vol. 7, p. 909.

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 911.

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.*, 9 October 1895, vol. 8, pp. 1274-1278.

<sup>142</sup> *WAPD*, 5 January 1892, vol. 2, p. 170.

<sup>143</sup> *Ibid.*, 17 December 1903, vol. 24, p. 2895.

<sup>144</sup> *Ibid.*, 9 December 1909, vol. 37, pp. 1989-1991.

In 1901 Hackett, as Vice-President of the Royal Celebrations Committee which arranged the Royal visit of the Duke (later King George V) and Duchess of York, aimed for as many people throughout the State to have the opportunity to see the Royal couple, including those living in the remote goldfields. He considered the return rail fare between Kalgoorlie and Perth was exorbitantly high and attempted through a parliamentary debate to have the charge reduced. The following day a settlement for a lower fare was agreed upon.<sup>145</sup> This was a further indication of his determination to obtain what he thought best for Western Australians. He had previously applied unsuccessfully for this reduction to the General Manager of the railway authorities. Consequently, he used his parliamentary influence to request that such a decision be made by the responsible Minister, thereby overriding the senior civil servant.

The growth of railways did not always proceed smoothly and Hackett did not hesitate to criticise any person or organisation when he felt this to be deserved. For instance, in the 1890s the Midland Railway Company had difficulty in raising capital for a line to Geraldton, even with a substantial loan from the colonial government. As a result the loan resulted in a parliamentary inquiry. Whilst debating the Inquiry Report in 1902, an annoyed Hackett stated: 'The history of the Midland Railway Company of Western Australia was a chapter almost unmatched in fiction or romance, wearing a fictitious halo of fraud'.<sup>146</sup> These sentiments however were completely contradictory to those he had stated in 1891, when the Company was attempting to raise the finance. The then optimistic parliamentarian had told his unconvinced colleagues:

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<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.*, 3 July 1901, vol. 19, p. 74; *Western Australia Parliament Votes and Proceedings [WA V & P]*, vol 1, 1901-1902, 4 July 1901, p. 16.

<sup>146</sup> *WAPD*, 28 January 1902, vol. 20, p. 2550.

It must be remembered, of this £60,000 going out of the colony, every farthing of it goes towards adding to the national assets of this colony, for it is to be all spent here. Even suppose the Company to [sic] fail, this is such a national work that the Government must finish it, and in this way we shall have £60,000 worth more of the work done.<sup>147</sup>

Hackett's change of mind could be taken as a *volte-face*, but it can also be attributed to the increased business acumen and wisdom he had accrued in the intervening years. In these remarks, he revealed the same characteristics that marked his own business affairs. Ernest Le Souef, the inaugural Director of Perth Zoo, would also suffer from Hackett's determination to complete tasks efficiently and economically – and more importantly, in the manner that he felt to be appropriate.<sup>148</sup>

Hackett was not always fully supportive of railway line extensions, as in late 1902 when discussion took place on the proposed Esperance-Norseman line. People in the Esperance region were pushing for the line, arguing that the distance of 202 kms would be far more practical and economical for exporting minerals from the goldfields than sending them to Perth. Although he reluctantly supported the proposed line, he mentioned that he was more concerned at the lack of suitable agricultural lands that would be serviced by the route and thought that the line might eventually become a drain on the State's finances.<sup>149</sup> However, like many other Western Australians, he was probably apprehensive about encouraging a line towards South Australia, a prospective trade competitor.

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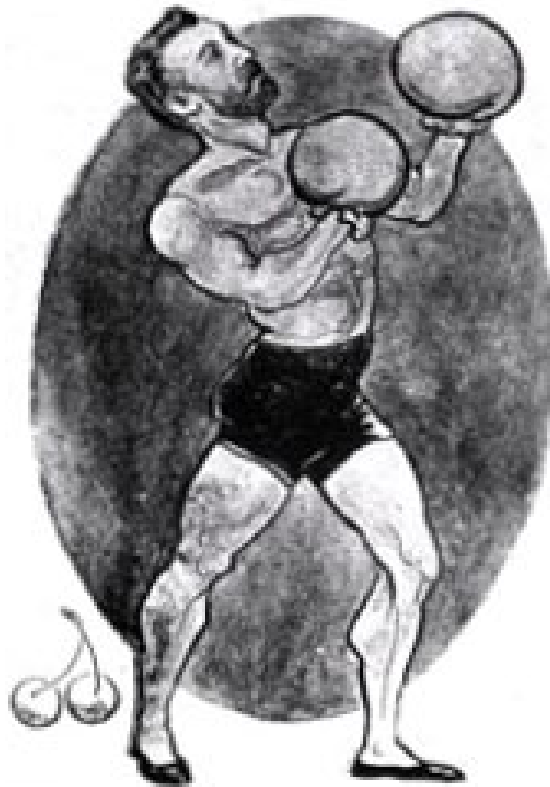
<sup>147</sup> *Ibid.*, 9 December 1891, vol. 2, p. 21.

<sup>148</sup> For Le Souef views on working under Hackett as President of Perth Zoo, refer to Mildred Manning, 'Ernest Albert Le Souef', *Early Days*, 1965, vol. 6, no. 4, pp. 75-93.

<sup>149</sup> *WAPD*, 10 December 1902, vol. 22, pp. 2804-2806.

All matters to do with railways interested Hackett, especially if they also concerned the State's economy. In 1907 he spoke of his disappointment that the Railway Department was not collecting its water supplies from the Mundaring Reservoir, as he felt it was for the perverse reason of showing 'an improvement in the railway balance-sheet'.<sup>150</sup>

Those people who favoured the alternative source, the Canning River, he considered as 'some occult force' and also suggested the water quality from the river to be 'unfit for human supply'.<sup>151</sup>



#### Caricature

1907 Winthrop Hackett in a sporting pose. Artist is Y.A.S.  
Referring to his combative nature. Continually fighting  
for the interests of Western Australia.  
Acknowledgment: The Mirror, 16 February 1907.

Hackett was not only interested in regional railways and together with Sir John Forrest was a constant supporter of the construction of the Trans-Australian rail line. In 1902,

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<sup>150</sup> *Ibid.*, 5 December 1907, vol. 32, p. 1292.

<sup>151</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1286.

he admitted that he was ‘one of those sanguine creatures who think that within five years the Transcontinental [sic] line will be commenced, if not half constructed’.<sup>152</sup> A year later he admitted that South Australia was against the proposal as they considered such a project could threaten their trade interests.<sup>153</sup> His premature optimism was misplaced and he did not live to see the line finished, dying a year before its completion in October 1917.<sup>154</sup> The line was eventually constructed between Kalgoorlie and Port Augusta in South Australia, thereby connecting two coasts of Australia, but was only achieved when Western Australia and South Australia agreed upon a standard gauge line, thus settling their long-standing differences.

It is significant to note that during Hackett’s parliamentary career in Western Australia, ‘the Goods tonnage carried rose from 255,839 [259,932 tonnes] to 2,454,021 [2,493,285 tonnes]; the number of passenger journeys from 1,022,248 to 18,635,327; and the train mileage from 997,540 [1,596,064 kms] to 5,404,814 [8,647,702 kms]’.<sup>155</sup> This, in part, can be attributed to Hackett’s persuasive powers and his determination to see rail services enlarged, not only between Perth and country regions, but also between various regional centres that were not always in his electorate. However, early in the twentieth century a perceptive Hackett, reflecting upon the introduction of the motor vehicles, envisaged the day ‘when even railways will be antiquated institutions’ and would eventually be replaced.<sup>156</sup>

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<sup>152</sup> *Ibid.*, 10 December 1902, vol. 22, p. 2805.

<sup>153</sup> *Ibid.*, 23 September 1903, vol. 23, p. 1155.

<sup>154</sup> F. K. Crowley, *Big John Forrest 1847-1918: A Founding Father of the Commonwealth of Australia*, Nedlands: UWA Press, 2000, p. 453.

<sup>155</sup> Higham, *One Hundred Years of Railways in Western Australia 1871-1971*, p. 9.

<sup>156</sup> *WAPD*, 23 December 1905, vol. 28, p. 932.



It was not only water supplies and railway developments with which Hackett concerned himself. As well as gold discoveries, the Western Australian economy was thriving as a result of other mineral finds. In 1909 Hackett extolled the success of coal discoveries made earlier in the decade in his own electorate of Collie:

surely one of the most important that has ever occurred in Western Australia. I am one of those who believe that its importance is only beginning to be recognised. There are even now in the laboratories of scientific men schemes for the employment of second class coals which, there is the highest probability, will entitle them to rank with the best ... Without this Collie coal we should be absolutely at the mercy of certain people not given to merciful feeling where profits are concerned.<sup>157</sup>

Nevertheless, he realised that both coal and gold were finite resources and understood that any additional mineral finds would be beneficial to the State's future finances.

### **Fremantle harbour**

It has previously been observed that Hackett was never reluctant to say what he considered best for Western Australia and such speeches were characterised by his determination and obstinacy for any project he thought viable. One of his consistencies throughout his time as a parliamentarian was that he ceaselessly promoted his adopted homeland. His various struggles were usually not only fought out in the Legislative Council, but frequently extended to his editorials in the *West Australian*. That is not to say he won all his skirmishes, as on rare occasions he did lose a debate, but he was mature and pragmatic enough to accept any final decision. One instance of a defeat was when deliberations took place to locate Fremantle's new harbour.

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<sup>157</sup> *Ibid.*, 14 December 1909, vol. 37, p. 2154.

In 1891, the government of Western Australia was searching for a suitable site for an inner harbour in Fremantle. Forrest had aspirations to build an artificial harbour making 'Fremantle the Brindisi of Australia', which Hackett described as 'one formidable lion in the path of public works policy'.<sup>158</sup> Both men hoped that the port would eventually become the major gateway for passengers and mail ships travelling to and from England, replacing Albany as Western Australia's principal harbour. Until this time, for ships wishing to unload goods at Fremantle, there was the cumbersome, time consuming and expensive exercise of firstly transferring their goods to smaller vessels off Gage Roads.<sup>159</sup>

The eminent British marine engineer, Sir John Coode, was invited to Western Australia to recommend to the government where they should construct a new harbour.

Subsequently, in August 1891, Coode recommended that

[a] channel through the Parmelia Bank, by reason of its sheltered position, would probably be found sufficient, if formed with a bottom width of 250 feet [76.20 metres] and a depth of 33 feet [10.06 metres] below summer low-water level. The length of this channel would be about one sea mile [1.85 kms], whereas that through the Success Bank would be nearly two miles [3.70 kms] in length.<sup>160</sup>

Both Hackett and Forrest disagreed with Coode's assessment for the site of the harbour, with Hackett editorialising: 'we have been unfortunate in our advisers' and suggesting that Coode had offered Fremantle 'a second rate harbour in Gage Roads'.<sup>161</sup> The

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<sup>158</sup> F. K. Crowley, 'Forrest the Politician: 1890-1918 - An Assessment', *Early Days*, 1988, vol. 9, no. 6, p. 16; *WA*, 25 September 1891, p. 4.

<sup>159</sup> Gage Roads (also known as Success Bank) is the sea channel in the Indian Ocean offshore from Fremantle. It is currently used as a shipping lane and anchorage for most sea traffic for Fremantle. (e-mail from Fremantle Ports to author, 22 January 2007)

<sup>160</sup> *WA V & P*, 1891, No. 17, 'Correspondence "Provision of a Safe and Commodious Harbor"', p. 6.

<sup>161</sup> *WA*, 25 September 1891, p. 4.

editorial continued: ‘The proposals for opening up the river belong, in all probability to a later period of our history ... they commit the colony to too high an expenditure’.<sup>162</sup>

However, O’Connor agreed with Coode’s recommendation and when in early 1892, the matter was debated in Parliament, Coode also had the support of Henry Venn, the Minister for Railways and Public Works. Venn, like O’Connor, realised that Fremantle urgently required an inner harbour and felt that the sooner it was constructed, the more economical the project would be. Eventually, Forrest lost his motion for the development of the new harbour to be located at Owen Anchorage, between Fremantle and Woodman Point. To assist Forrest, and to delay any final decision, Charles Harper (Hackett’s business partner) moved a motion in parliament that a Joint Select Committee be formed to inquire into prospective harbour works. Not unexpectedly, Harper was one of ten members chosen to sit on the Committee and during one sitting subjected O’Connor to ‘an abrasive barrage of questioning’.<sup>163</sup>

The public debate became bitter in January 1892 when a *West Australian* editorial (probably written by Harper, by virtue of the editorial’s concise nature) comprehensively compared the costs of the two suggested locations, but then personally attacked Coode’s Melbourne adviser, a Mr Wardell, suggesting that he had ‘been best known as an architect, and whose marine work will probably not find a place in history’.<sup>164</sup> A month later, the Select Committee recommended that Coode’s suggested position for Fremantle Harbour be accepted. Forrest withdrew his Owen Anchorage plans. For Hackett and Forrest, it was one of their rare joint political defeats, both adamantly maintaining their defeated proposed site as a preferred alternative.

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<sup>162</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>163</sup> Evans, *C. Y. O’Connor*, p. 130.

<sup>164</sup> *WA*, 2 January 1892, p. 4.

## **Parliament House**

Hackett was also to play a pivotal role in the resolution that any new Parliament House would be situated at its present site at the western end of St Georges Terrace. The first home of the Legislative Council of Western Australia between 1832 and 1870 was in a government office building in St Georges Terrace, where the City of Perth Council building currently stands. In 1870, with an increased parliamentary representation, the Council moved to the Town Hall Chambers in Barrack Street.<sup>165</sup>

In 1890 with the introduction of a bicameral legislature in Western Australia, the Legislative Assembly remained in the Town Hall Chambers, while Legislative Council members were forced to use the government offices in St Georges Terrace. Not surprisingly, members were dissatisfied with their new arrangements, in particular with communicating between the two Houses, as messages had frequently to be despatched between them. It was not until 1894 that members of both chambers discussed the construction of new premises, but Assembly members considered such a suggestion too expensive and extravagant.

It took a further three years for the Forrest Government to appoint a Commission to inquire into a suitable site, with Hackett and Sir George Shenton being the sole Council representatives to sit on the seven-man Commission. The Commission reported that there were two suitable sites for a new Parliament House, one being where the Council was currently situated, whilst the other was in Harvest Terrace. The majority of Commission members thought the St Georges Terrace site more suitable as Harvest Terrace was considered too far removed from the central position of Perth, being

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<sup>165</sup> This building was eventually demolished in 1968 when the Rural and Industries Bank of Western Australia decided to extend their Head Office with a thirteen-storey building.

1,400 yards [1,280 metres] from the General Post Office, and would not fulfil any of the conditions which the Commission deems to be necessary. Beyond being in an elevated position, and having an extensive view, it possesses no recommendations as a site for new Houses of Parliament.<sup>166</sup>

Hackett, together with George Leake, entered a minority report suggesting that Harvest Terrace should be the site. The debate at the Committee stage in the Council became quite tense, with Hackett suggesting the present site was ‘a swamp’, and with George Randell, representing Metropolitan Province, retorting that it was ‘the healthiest spot in Perth’.<sup>167</sup> Hackett then spoke of some of the disadvantages of the current site, including the lack of ventilation, the noise of the city, and the accumulation of dust ‘which sweeps up and down St Georges Terrace, and which would be destructive to the archives, papers and books in a Parliamentary building’.<sup>168</sup> He asked members:

to picture to themselves a splendid building ... raised on that hill, and approached by terraces: an ornament to the city; the cynosure of the surrounding country; surrounded by parks and terraces to which the place lends itself most admirably ... we have preserved a unique and splendid site for the Parliamentary buildings of Western Australia.<sup>169</sup>

Not for the first time Hackett, in an eloquent and persuasive speech, changed his colleagues’ opinions on the proposed site, although Randell was stubborn to the end in opposition to the new location, forlornly stating that the gradient of the site from central

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<sup>166</sup> Cited by John Bertram Roberts, ‘The History of the Parliament House Site’, Perth: unpublished, 1968, p. 5.

<sup>167</sup> *WAPD*, 20 December 1897, vol. 11, p. 1172.

<sup>168</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>169</sup> *Ibid.*

Perth was ‘about one in six. The building would be away from the sea breezes, which are so pleasant at night’.<sup>170</sup> The resolution for the new Parliament House to be located in Harvest Terrace was eventually passed on members’ voices.

On 11 September 1897, the site bounded by Harvest Terrace, Malcolm Street, St Georges Terrace and Hay Street was reserved for public buildings and three years later on 23 March 1900 was classified for the new Parliament House.<sup>171</sup> In 1900, Hackett was given the honour of moving the motion in the Legislative Council to appoint members from that chamber to form a Joint Committee with Assembly members ‘to advise the Government during the progress of the work connected with the erection of the new Houses of Parliament’.<sup>172</sup> He again stressed the importance of a new building: ‘We are parting with autonomous government, and it is a particularly felicitous idea to mark the wonderful progress which we have made in the last ten years by erecting a permanent and suitable building’.<sup>173</sup>

An unrepentant Randall was unyielding in his resistance to the end, this time giving the building’s cost as an ‘unjustifiable expenditure’.<sup>174</sup> A national design competition was organised with seventeen entries being submitted. However, all were disqualified as none had complied with the condition that the project should be limited to £100,000. Nevertheless, when the building was finally occupied in 1904 the eventual cost had risen to £140,000.<sup>175</sup> No doubt when Hackett first sat in the new Chambers at the

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<sup>170</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1173.

<sup>171</sup> Roberts, ‘The History of the Parliament House Site’, p. 8.

<sup>172</sup> *WAPD*, 3 December 1900, vol. 18, p. 2070.

<sup>173</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2071.

<sup>174</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>175</sup> Roberts, ‘The History of the Parliament House Site’, pp. 9-11.

beginning of Western Australia's fifth Parliament in July 1904, he would have been very proud of the achievement, considering that seven years earlier he was one of only two committee members who had voted for that particular site.

Surprisingly, after such a strong advocacy for the Harvest Terrace site, Hackett, seven years later, had second thoughts on the location. During the 1911 debate on the University Bill, which legislated for the first university in the state, he proposed that the new university buildings should be on the site of Parliament House. J. W. Langsford MLC was astounded by such a proposal. He interjected his colleague's speech by rhetorically inquiring: 'Would you abolish Parliament'?<sup>176</sup> In his reply, Hackett stated that:

We would give Parliament a more suitable site and save hon. members the climb up these steps. Parliament is for the aged and the University is for the young ... we may be left with a building stranded on the top of a hill.<sup>177</sup>

Hackett lived at 248 St. Georges Terrace (near Milligan Street). Was he starting to feel his age? Two days after this speech he'd be 63 years old. It is impossible to avoid the thought that there must have been some sincerity in his comments. Five decades later Alexander would comment: 'Hackett's strong sense of responsibility precluded the rashness which sometimes sparks thought into action among others'.<sup>178</sup> However, on this occasion Hackett was to experience another one of his rare failures, with the university eventually being established at Crawley.

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<sup>176</sup> *WAPD*, 2 February 1911, vol. 40, p. 3644.

<sup>177</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>178</sup> Alexander, *Campus at Crawley*, p. 33.

## **A new appliance**

Hackett was constantly looking out for new inventions, not only for his own newspaper business but also for the various public institutions with which he was associated, as he wanted his fellow Western Australians to work with the most modern equipment possible. Telephones were a good example. During 1878, Melbourne commenced the first telephone services in Australia. Also in the same year, long distance telephone calls were demonstrated between Semaphore and Port Augusta, South Australia, whilst Melbourne commenced building Australia's first telephone exchange that was opened two years later.<sup>179</sup>

In 1894 an incident occurred during the debate on the Hospital Bill, which shows that whilst Hackett had kept himself informed of the latest inventions, some public servants were still apprehensive about new equipment. The legislation was attempting to make public hospitals less reliant on government funding by encouraging public subscription. For this, donors would be allowed to become hospital management board members, with £1 being suggested as the annual subscription.<sup>180</sup> Hackett was fully supportive of the idea and referred to an incident a few years earlier when he requested 'that a little appliance' - a telephone - be used in all public offices.<sup>181</sup> To his astonishment he was 'informed that the authorities did not consider it was wanted, and that when it was it would be used'.<sup>182</sup> He did not wish for this episode to be repeated and considered that if donors were to be part of management, such a decision was unlikely to recur. A century

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<sup>179</sup> Robin Brown, *Collins Milestones in Australian History: 1788 to the Present*, Sydney: William Collins Pty Ltd, 1986, p. 316.

<sup>180</sup> *WAPD*, 26 September 1894, vol. 6, p. 744.

<sup>181</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 743.

<sup>182</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 744.



later the amusing aspect of this incident is recognised, but for Hackett at the time, it was no laughing matter.

The first interstate telephone line in Australia was opened in 1902 between Mount Gambier, South Australia and Nelson, Victoria.<sup>183</sup> In September of that year, Hackett attempted to influence his colleagues of the benefits of the installation of telephone lines. A motion in the Legislative Council by the Hon. C. A. Piesse, representing South East Province, requested the extension of lines throughout country regions of Western Australia. Hackett had no hesitation in supporting Piesse, as he understood how such technology would benefit his own South West electorate and his own newspaper business. However, doubts were raised about whether State or Federal authorities, would be responsible for construction costs. Although the motion was eventually withdrawn (due to insufficient information), Hackett enthusiastically remarked that members should disregard any potential expense of installation as: '[t]he cost of establishing, however cheaply, a long line of wire for telephones purposes would be great'.<sup>184</sup> This is a further example of his aspirations for the technology available in Western Australia to be equal to that of other States. He not only recognised the benefits of the telephone himself, but more importantly, for those people who lived in isolated communities, including his own electorate.

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<sup>183</sup> Brown, *Collins Milestones in Australian History*, p. 412.

<sup>184</sup> *WAPD*, 1 October 1902, vol. 21, p.1327.

## **Industrial relations**

Hackett wished to make certain that the Western Australian economy remained in a healthy condition, not only currently, but also more importantly for its future.

He was a progressive thinker in his economic planning, as although the initial costs of developing the region's infrastructure might have appeared exorbitant to some of his colleagues, such expenditure would ultimately seem insignificant, especially once a particular project became operative. In this section Hackett's opinion of the Conciliation Bill will be examined. The legislation aimed at assisting both employer and employee in wage disputes. To him, no legislation was too large or too small totackle.

In respect to industrial legislation, Hackett, as a newspaper owner, had firm ideas. When debating the 1900 Conciliation Bill, he agreed with the proposed legislation, emphasising that it was introduced in order to get 'rid of strikes, or it endeavours to get rid of strikes'.<sup>185</sup> He suggested such legislation was in the interests of both employers and employees and the Bill, which was similar to one recently introduced in New Zealand, would benefit both capitalists and workers. He also considered that there were more benefits for the worker in the legislation than the employer, as he considered that the employee had the employer 'in the hollow of its hand'.<sup>186</sup>

One obstacle which faced the state government in respect of such legislation was that judges complained that they did not wish to make what they perceived as a political decision in their judicial duties. They considered that such an issue would raise a conflict of interest. Hackett, with his legal background, disagreed, for he saw no

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<sup>185</sup> *Ibid.*, 16 October 1900, vol. 17, p. 1002.

<sup>186</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1005.

problem in combining the two areas, especially as the judiciary were the appropriate people to ‘listen to the evidence, probe it to the foundation, and decide according as they believe the balance of that evidence to be on the one side or the other’.<sup>187</sup>

However, Hackett also saw anomalies in the Conciliation Bill. With regard to people who were expected to be covered under the legislation, he could not understand the logic that excluded railway employees. By providing two examples, he expressed his bewilderment at how similar tasks were now to be covered by separate awards. So that an operator in a signal box would be dealt with differently to an operator in a telegraph office as would a person who delivered mail to homes, from a person who carried a person’s luggage from a cab to a railway carriage. It was ‘a ludicrous point that an artificial barrier should not be removed by the very means that created it’ he said, ‘let him [Colonial Secretary] get into no fool’s paradise’.<sup>188</sup>

Generally, Hackett acknowledged the legislation as an ‘industrial revolution’, in that Western Australia had never previously introduced such regulations.<sup>189</sup> He admitted that the new laws would override the previous obsolete legislation whereby ‘undue power naturally fell into the hands of the employer or the capitalist’.<sup>190</sup> However, he thought the law would eventually lower wages, as an independent body would make decisions on such matters, thereby destroying existing individual contracts. Any future employer would be compelled to accept the Arbitration Court’s decision and consequently, if the Court’s judgment were not implemented, employers would be liable to pay substantial fines.

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<sup>187</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1004.

<sup>188</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>189</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>190</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1005.

Although Hackett saw more benefits for workers in this legislation, he realised that the Arbitration Courts would be impartial, as they would have to ‘satisf[y] themselves of the justice of the claims made by the industrial union’.<sup>191</sup> More importantly, Hackett concluded his speech by hoping the legislation would be passed:

because I believe the Bill will take those disputes away from the region of caprice and lawlessness, and will introduce rule and legality where at present we have nothing but friction, suspicion, and something stronger, namely, enmity between employer and employed.<sup>192</sup>

Although an employer, he was not apparently concerned about his own situation and saw in the Conciliation Bill benefits for both sides of an industrial dispute, with the long-term benefits of improved co-operation between the two disputing parties. His attitude can be considered both radical and exemplary, for although he saw there were increased disadvantages for people such as himself in the short term, he optimistically foresaw that in the future he too would benefit from the proposed legislation because he would not have to deal directly with agitated workers.

Throughout his parliamentary career Hackett not only took a keen interest in the larger industrial projects of the State, such as the development of Fremantle Harbour, but was also concerned with smaller issues that affected his widespread rural constituency. For instance, in the committee stage of the Rabbit Pest Bill, he suggested the introduction of rabbit-trapping, because he considered the program a good revenue earner, as: ‘The destruction of rabbits could not be secured on a sufficiently comprehensive scale unless the motive of self-interest were introduced, by permitting persons to make a profit by

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<sup>191</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1006.

<sup>192</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1007.

selling them'.<sup>193</sup> He also envisaged benefits to the State's revenue and referred to some communities in the eastern states being supported by such an industry. One could not accuse him of being self-indulgent in respect of this issue, although it is not known whether he experienced rabbit infestation on either his 'Cherrydale' or 'Dinninup Vale' properties.

## **Conclusion**

Western Australians have much for which they need to thank Hackett, member of the Legislative Council. It has been argued that his achievements included an enlarged electoral role, although admittedly, it was not as comprehensive as it is today. His environmental vision was well ahead of his time and the State would not have had Parliament House standing majestically at the western-end of St. Georges Terrace. Last but not least, the extensive rail routes throughout the State's South West region of Western Australia, at least in part, resulted from his constant urging for the expansion of such infrastructure.

Although today some of his ideas may seem archaic, such as the treatment of the mentally ill, there is no doubt that in his era he was an effective and influential parliamentarian whose aspirations were only enhanced after his time by improved knowledge and technology. He was not interested in aligning himself with any political faction, as he aspired to develop Western Australia for all those people who lived in it.

It has been observed that Hackett discussed a variety of issues during his parliamentary career and these were not confined to a particular side of the political arena. He brought a sense of independence into the Legislative Council and frowned upon any

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<sup>193</sup> *Ibid.*, 8 December 1902, vol. 22, p. 2732.

misbehaviour amongst his parliamentary colleagues: 'I trust the next time there is a crowded House, it may be in another chamber where the conditions of life will be a little less pestilential than in this room at present'.<sup>194</sup>

It was only fitting that from 22 May 1906 until his death, as the longest-serving member of the Legislative Council, he became Father of the House.<sup>195</sup> This was some modest recognition for his life in the public glare. It has been previously mentioned that he was one of the Western Australian delegates who throughout the 1890s attended the Federal Conventions that culminated in the Colony joining Federation. His involvement at these Conventions will be examined in the next chapter.

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<sup>194</sup> *Ibid.*, 16 October 1900, vol. 17, pp. 1001-1002.

<sup>195</sup> Black and Mandy, eds., *The Western Australian Parliamentary Handbook*. 20<sup>th</sup> edition, Perth: Western Australia Parliament, 2002, p. 245.

## CHAPTER FIVE: ROAD TO FEDERATION

*'Give it a trial, Rome wasn't built in a day'.*

- J. W. Hackett, October 1903.

### Introduction

One of the defining moments in Australian history occurred on 1 January 1901 when six separate colonies united to create the Commonwealth of Australia. In this chapter it will be argued that Hackett not only wanted a federation, but was also determined that Western Australia would enter as one of its original members and would strive to secure the most advantageous admission conditions for the colony. This is evident in various sources such as personal letters, speeches in the Western Australian Parliament and at the various National Australasian Conventions held throughout the 1890s.

Hackett's two main reservations concerning Western Australia's entry into federation were that the colony might lose much of its financial independence and secondly, in order to compensate for the proportional power of members from larger states sitting in the House of Representatives, he hoped that Western Australia would enter federation with equal representation in the Senate. However, by 1898, with federation almost a certainty, after positive outcomes of referenda in Tasmania, Victoria, New South Wales and South Australia, he realised that not all of his expectations were achievable. Only then did he reluctantly accept what was being offered to Western Australia. He acknowledged that there were benefits for those colonies that entered as original members, which would not be available after the establishment of federation. For instance, original states would have no less than six senators each, whereas such a provision could not be guaranteed for those who joined subsequently.

This chapter will examine Hackett's role in the establishment of Federation. Firstly, his friendship with Alfred Deakin will be discussed, followed by an explanation of how Western Australia was governed prior to Federation. Hackett's participation at each of the four Conventions (Sydney in 1891, Adelaide 1897, Sydney 1897 and Melbourne 1898) will be scrutinised, as will the eventual outcome of Federation for Western Australia and his reactions to the early years of the Commonwealth.

### **Alfred Deakin**

The most comprehensive collection of correspondence between Hackett and another person that survives is his correspondence with Alfred Deakin, commencing in May 1898. It was fortunate that the latter was Prime Minister for a lengthy period, because there is no surviving correspondence between the two following Deakin's leaving office in April 1910. That is not necessarily to say that the two men did not continue to write to each other, but no additional correspondence has been discovered. It is because of the scarcity of Hackett's personal correspondence that there are frequent references in this chapter to these letters rather than *West Australian* editorials. From correspondence between the two men before the establishment of federation, it is possible to verify that Hackett strove ceaselessly to improve the colony's conditions of entry to Federation, in particular the fiscal considerations.<sup>1</sup> Another fact, which emerges from an examination of these letters, is that the two men were not only close as political allies, but also personal friends.

Deakin and Hackett shared many qualities and this was probably one of the reasons why the two continued to stay in touch. Deakin was Australia's Prime Minister three

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<sup>1</sup> Hackett to Deakin. Refer letters dated 23 May 1898, 20 June 1898, 27 June 1899, 10 October 1899, 7 November 1899, 5 December 1899, 26 December 1899, 2 March 1900, *National Library of Australia* [NLA], MS 1540 file.



times, first from 24 September 1903 to 27 April 1904; then from 5 July 1905 to 13 November 1908; and finally from 2 June 1909 to 29 April 1910. Deakin, also known as ‘Affable Alfred’, studied law at Melbourne University and in 1879 entered the Victorian Parliament Legislative Assembly as a Liberal Member for West Bourke. Whilst holding high public office Deakin was a fine debater and a tireless reader and writer, and his enjoyment of writing included anonymous contributions to the *London Morning Post*. Between 1883 and 1890 he served in the Victorian Cabinet, but following the government’s defeat returned to the Victorian Bar. He then also began to devote himself to the formation of an Australian federation and was to be known for his sensitivity when dealing with less populated colonies by compromising behind the scenes.<sup>2</sup>

Although it cannot be verified, it seems probable that the two men first met between 1876 to 1882. Deakin did not pass his final law examinations at Melbourne University until 1877, while Hackett lectured in law and political economy at Trinity College (which was affiliated to Melbourne University from April 1876<sup>3</sup>). In 1878 Deakin, through his friendship with David Syme became a regular contributor to Melbourne’s newspaper *The Age*, while Hackett was an occasional writer for the same paper. This of course raises the question as to whether or not Deakin assisted Hackett in obtaining his position. It can only be surmised that as the men held comparable interests, that Deakin did help Hackett, especially if he knew the latter held down an unpaid position at Trinity.

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<sup>2</sup> Joanne Holliman, *Century of Australian Prime Ministers*, pp. 14-15; Helen Irving, ed., *The Centenary Companion to Australian Federation*, Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 1999, pp. 352-353; *Biographical Register of the Victorian Legislative 1851-1900*, p. 52.

<sup>3</sup> E-mail from Geoff Browne, Research Assistant to the Warden of Trinity College to author, 3 November 2004.

The similarities between the two men did not end there. Both were also excellent debaters. Deakin entered the Victorian Legislative Assembly in 1879, whilst as has already been alluded to, Hackett twice attempted and failed to enter the same House the following year. It certainly appears that their paths did cross during Hackett's six years residency in Melbourne. It was a friendship that lasted a lifetime.<sup>4</sup> Politically Hackett and Deakin also had much in common. As lawyers and talented writers both foresaw that Australia would eventually be united in a federation and put their mutual talents to effective use in that cause. The main difference was that Hackett remained in state politics, whilst Deakin moved on to the federal sphere.

The correspondence between the two confirms Hackett's ceaseless support of federation. In May 1898 Hackett told Deakin: 'I am as strong a federationist as ever I was',<sup>5</sup> but he did not wish to publicly admit this as he was still attempting to improve the conditions for Western Australia's entry. Although, after 1903, he was able to reach the pinnacle of Federal government by writing directly to the Prime Minister, he was ultimately unsuccessful in improving Western Australia's financial arrangements. By incessantly pushing the limits to improve Western Australia's fiscal circumstances, he displayed his continuous passion for his adopted home.

Federation was not the only topic Hackett covered in his numerous letters to Deakin. Other topics included: federal-state relations; the Western Australian secession movement; his reasons for rejecting a knighthood; his feelings regarding Forrest's parliamentary performance; and family matters. Most of these issues are dealt with elsewhere in this thesis.

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<sup>4</sup> *ADB*, vol 8, pp. 248-256.

<sup>5</sup> Hackett to Deakin, 23 May 1898, *NLA MS 1540/11/55*.

## Western Australia, pre-Federation days

On the 31 July 1900 Western Australian electors were the last to vote in a referendum on whether they should join the five other colonies in the formation of federation. It is not the task here to document in detail the various episodes that led to this significant occasion. However, the important part played by Hackett in these events will be examined, especially as he was one of Western Australia's delegates<sup>6</sup> to the conferences that led to the formation of the Commonwealth of Australia and was also one of the colony's most influential newspaper proprietors and editors.

Throughout the 1890s Hackett became a crucial Western Australian delegate to the Conventions, for initially the public perception (though incorrect) was that he seemed to be an anti-federalist, mistaking his constant pressing for improved fiscal arrangements for the colony as thinly disguised anti-federalism. In the concluding stages of the campaign he openly supported the colony's thrust to federate but until now his role in the establishment of federation has yet to be fully examined, especially his role as editor of the *West Australian* and confidant of Forrest.

Forrest, like Hackett, was a passionate supporter of federation but also like Hackett, held similar reservations about entry. In an election campaign speech in November 1890, Forrest stated: 'I am strongly in favour of the Federation of Australia, but not under any conditions'.<sup>7</sup> The two men only differed in some minor details of how federation should be implemented. Whilst both men realised that Western Australia would lose some of its sovereignty, they were also concerned with the colony's future

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<sup>6</sup> Craven writes (vol. 6, p. 89) that members attending Federal Conventions in 1891 were officially termed as "Delegates", while by 1897-1898 members were known as "Representatives". For consistency throughout this thesis the word "Delegates" has been used.

<sup>7</sup> Cited by Crowley, *Big John Forrest 1847-1918*, p. 84.

fiscal arrangements, notably, that any distribution of revenue under federation was unlikely to replace the colony's shortfall, in no longer being able to collect their own custom revenues. Just as important was the representation of less populated colonies. Delegates from such colonies argued for a creation of a Senate with equal state representation, thus hoping that it would counterbalance the power of members from larger states sitting in the House of Representatives.

Hackett and Forrest differed mainly on their emphasis on what was required for the colony to enter federation. Because of Western Australia's isolation from the remainder of Australia, Forrest pushed for the construction of a trans-Australian railway, which he considered to be an essential link between the eastern colonies and the west. Such a link, he believed, would also help with Australia's defence, as he thought the state would otherwise be vulnerable to attack. Although Hackett thought likewise, he did not vigorously push for the railway's construction. Without openly admitting it, both men realised that Western Australia desired the railway far more than people on the eastern seaboard. Particular reasons for wanting the rail link included the export of the colony's agricultural produce, minerals and timber.

Though few letters survive between Forrest and Hackett on the topic of federation, it is most probable that the two men understood and respected each other's perspective on this matter. They had sufficient time to discuss the relevant issues, particularly whilst at the Conventions but also in the corridors of parliament, during sea voyages between the west and eastern colonies and at various social functions. Importantly, both aspired for Western Australia to be included in a federation.

Not everyone in Western Australia supported entry into federation. Those who opposed it mainly lived in rural areas. For the referendum vote in 1900, these opponents of federation established themselves into the National League. As Anne Partlon explains,

settlers in the 'coastal regions and rural southwest were frankly alarmed by the rapid changes taking place around them, and resentful of 't'othersider' influence'.<sup>8</sup>

Ironically, Hackett's business partner Charles Harper, who held the Legislative Assembly seat of Beverley, was one of the League's most prominent members.<sup>9</sup>

One of the League's concerns was that a fully protective federal tariff system would result in an expansion of the manufacturing industry which in turn they feared would lead to higher prices for farm equipment. Western Australian farmers considered this as potentially catastrophic, as they also foresaw that it would inevitably also result in more expensive primary produce. With the additional cost of sending produce across the Nullarbor Plain, local farmers considered that they would be in no position to compete with their counterparts in the eastern states. Furthermore, it was also anticipated that any eastern states ascendancy would almost certainly return Western Australia to pre-responsible government days when a domineering British Colonial Office controlled the colony.

The National League demanded several conditions for entry in order to preserve the power of the country voter, but finally obtained only limited success, notably an annual reduction in tariffs over a five-year period. It was impossible for Hackett to have ignored his South West Province electorate, as this was a region where the majority of people were farmers, or associated with the agriculture industry. He had to be seen to support his own electorate. In his attempts to do so, Hackett continually endeavoured to improve Western Australia's conditions of entry.

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<sup>8</sup> Anne Partlon, 'How the West Was Won: John Waters Kirwan and the "Separation for Federation" Campaign', *Australian Journal of Irish Studies: Remembered Nations, Imagined Republics*, 2004, vol. 4, p. 106.

<sup>9</sup> Brian de Garis, 'Western Australia', in Helen Irving, ed., *The Centenary Companion to Australian Federation*, Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 1999, p. 320.

Although the Australian federation was not created until 1 January 1901, the seeds for this momentous day had been planted for over a decade. In the 1880s both Germany and France attempted to expand their empires into the Pacific region and the then six Australian colonies, who operated as separate provinces had no concerted defence strategy. They therefore became concerned for their security as they had no real means of defending themselves effectively. Also, during this time, the Australian Natives' Association encouraged national identity by promoting 'Australian literature and lobbied for the teaching of Australian history in schools'.<sup>10</sup> Consequently, in 1883 all colonies, except New South Wales, met to discuss the likelihood of a federation. The Western Australian Colonial Secretary, Malcolm Fraser, represented the colony at this conference, as it was still governed from Britain.<sup>11</sup> However, without any actual authority the colonies made no substantial progress, except to lay down the idea of a federation. In October 1889 Sir Henry Parkes, Premier of New South Wales, suggested that all colonies, as well as New Zealand, should meet to discuss federation.<sup>12</sup> Consequently, thirteen delegates met in February 1890 in Melbourne. The Western Australian delegate was Sir James Lee Steere, Speaker of the Legislative Council. Evidence suggests that he was not enthusiastic about the idea as the proposals discussed at this meeting would be financially detrimental to the less populated colonies, including Western Australia.<sup>13</sup> As will be seen, Hackett, although not in attendance, held similar concerns. However it was at this gathering that the concept of a federated Australia became a reality.

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<sup>10</sup> John Hirst, *The Sentimental Nation: The Making of the Australian Commonwealth*, Victoria: Oxford University Press, 2000, p. 39.

<sup>11</sup> de Garis, 'Western Australia', p. 287.

<sup>12</sup> Hirst, *The Sentimental Nation*, p. 99. Hirst writes that the New Zealanders attended as observers. Although they participated in proceedings, they were not interested in federating with Australia.

<sup>13</sup> Kathleen Dermody, *A Nation at Last: The Story of Federation*, Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service, 1997, pp. 1-10; Hirst, *The Sentimental Nation*, pp. 36-43.

As de Garis writes, one of the recurring problems for the Western Australian delegation throughout the Federal Conventions was that members did not vote as a caucus, because ‘although elected by Parliament its members were free to speak and vote as they saw fit’.<sup>14</sup> This inconsistency began at the 1891 Sydney Convention.<sup>15</sup> For instance, when discussing the contentious issue of the Senate’s power and money bills, it resulted in the proposal: ‘that while the Senate would not have the power to amend money bills, it might at any stage return them to the House of Representatives requesting that house to make changes to the bill’.<sup>16</sup> The deal was to be known as ‘the compromise of 1891’.<sup>17</sup> Out of five Western Australian delegates who voted in the division, Hackett was the only one to vote in favour of the compromise.<sup>18</sup> The undisciplined trend in voting procedures continued throughout each Convention, although at the 1897 Adelaide session it only occurred once.<sup>19</sup> Later that year in September, during the Sydney Convention, out of thirty-one divisions, eighteen were divided, whilst colonial delegates only voted in unison three times.<sup>20</sup> Finally, this disunity persisted at the subsequent session in Melbourne when ‘[o]nly once did all ten of the contingent vote together’.<sup>21</sup> It was apparent that the Western Australian delegation was unlikely to achieve maximum results for improved entry conditions into federation, especially as their members were in disarray at divisions.

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<sup>14</sup> de Garis, ‘Western Australia’, p. 300.

<sup>15</sup> *Convention Debates*, various dates, vol. 1, pp. 584, 640, 652, 659, 706, 755, 864, 881, 900.

<sup>16</sup> Dermody, *A Nation at Last*, p. 17.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>18</sup> *Convention Debates*, 6 April 1891, vol. 1, p. 755.

<sup>19</sup> *Convention Debates*, 13 April 1897, vol. 3, p. 482. At the 1897 Adelaide Convention, Western Australian delegates only voted on opposite sides once in a division, as they were only in attendance for a brief period.

<sup>20</sup> de Garis, ‘Western Australia’, p. 300.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

## Sydney, 1891

The first National Australian Convention was held in Sydney between 2 March and 9 April 1891. Forrest headed the Western Australian delegation, with Hackett being one of six other colonial delegates.<sup>22</sup> Sir Henry Parkes, Premier of New South Wales and President of the Convention considered the men assembled as: ‘beyond all dispute the most august assembly which Australia had ever seen’.<sup>23</sup> This first Convention dealt mainly with various resolutions which had been drafted by Parkes. These included such items as the powers and privileges that would be conferred upon future states, with financial matters being the major subject of discussion. Then the delegates divided into three select committees to discuss fiscal matters, a federal judiciary (of which Hackett was a member<sup>24</sup>) and the provisions to be considered for a constitution bill.<sup>25</sup> Included amongst discussions was the matter of the equal representation of states in the Senate. Most delegates were in agreement on the issue, excepting H. B. Higgins and representatives of the liberal nationalists.<sup>26</sup> Therefore one of the major potential stumbling blocks for Western Australia entry into federation was settled early in proceedings. Although Hackett hardly spoke at this Convention, he did impress Alfred Deakin who considered that his speeches:

were more on the English model than those of any of his fellows, admirable both in diction and delivery and in finish of

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<sup>22</sup> *Convention Debates*, vol. 1, p. v.

<sup>23</sup> Cited by J A Nauze, *The Making of the Australian Constitution*, Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1972, p. 29.

<sup>24</sup> de Garis, ‘Western Australia’, p. 291.

<sup>25</sup> Dermody, *A Nation at Last*, pp. 11-14.

<sup>26</sup> Brian Galligan and James Warden, ‘The Design of the Senate’, in Gregory Craven, ed., *The Convention Debates 1891-1898: commentaries, indices and guide*, Sydney: Legal Books Pty Ltd, 1986, vol 6, p. 90.



style. Though rarely on his feet he was certainly one of the most well-informed, critical and capable members in the Convention.<sup>27</sup>

Two decades after his university days Hackett had retained all his remarkable debating skills. Now these skills were of vital importance to his adopted home, as opposed to the arena of undergraduate competition.

During the Convention, Hackett pessimistically stated: '[E]ither responsible government will kill federation, or federation ... will kill responsible government'.<sup>28</sup>

By this he was implying that under the proposal for a federated Australia, there would be some substantial difficulty in reconciling the proposed federation with responsible government, but more importantly, in making the combined arrangements operate successfully. When commenting on Western Australian delegates who attended this session La Nauze asserted, other than a 'well-educated and articulate' Hackett, the delegation 'carried no weight in the Convention except their seven votes'.<sup>29</sup> On analysing other parts of Hackett's speeches during and after Sydney, the perceived impression is that he realised the difficulties ahead even if Western Australia were to enter on realistic terms. He had a fondness for comparing people with animals. This time he contrasted some delegates' behaviour with that of lions:

It is true that there is something of the semblance of a "lion in the path," and for two or three days that obnoxious beast has been lashing his tail about, and has been roaring not a little terribly; and to judge by the direction from which its cries

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<sup>27</sup> Alfred Deakin, *'And Be One People': Alfred Deakin's Federal Story*, Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1995, p. 39.

<sup>28</sup> *Convention Debates*, 12 March 1891, vol. 1, p. 280.

<sup>29</sup> La Nauze, *Making of the Australian Constitution*, pp. 81-82.

proceeded, I should say that the lion was couched somewhere in the direction of that doorway; but we have ceased to fear him.<sup>30</sup>

Hackett understood that each colony had a variety of differences unique to its own regions. However he hoped in time that these would ‘vanish, and there will be no more loyal or determined member of the federation than Western Australia’<sup>31</sup> and that one day federation would be ‘not only a union of hearts, but a union of hands’.<sup>32</sup> Hackett pointed out that the reason for the Western Australian delegates’ late arrival was that they had to travel for a week to reach Sydney.<sup>33</sup> Consequently, one of the major objectives of the Western Australian delegates was for the construction of a railway across Australia. On being interviewed whilst travelling through Adelaide on his return to Perth, Hackett pointed out that before the recently held Convention, Western Australia had not given much thought to federation, as until a year earlier, colonial politicians had been busy creating responsible government. However, he optimistically summed up his feelings when he stated: ‘I am strongly in favour of the federation of Australia, and I believe that if it is adopted on fair and equal lines ... it will benefit Western Australia, at least as much as any of the other colonies’.<sup>34</sup>

It was at this 1891 Convention that Western Australia’s fiscal problems were first discussed. The problem for the colony was that any proposed custom duties were going to be severe, for around half of the colony’s income arose from such taxes. Sir James Lee Steere estimated that the colony’s contribution to federal funding would ‘be more

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<sup>30</sup> *Convention Debates*, 12 March 1891, vol. 1, p. 276.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 281.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 275.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>34</sup> WA, 15 April 1891, p. 3.

than double the amount per capita in any Colony except Queensland'.<sup>35</sup> Also, much of Western Australia's imports arrived from the eastern seaboard, the import duties derived from which amounted to 'one-third of its customs revenue'.<sup>36</sup> Ultimately, other colonies realised Western Australia's predicament. At the 1898 Melbourne Convention, it was eventually agreed that the colony would be allowed 'to continue to impose inter-colonial duties during the five-year period at a gradually reducing rate of one-fifth each year'.<sup>37</sup> Hackett was not pleased with this outcome and in subsequent years, as will be explained, he tried to improve the fiscal arrangements, even after the creation of federation, but to no avail.

When reporting on the conference some months later to his parliamentary colleagues Hackett was still in a buoyant mood: 'I came away with the conviction that whatever the result might be hereafter, the interests of Australia would be perfectly safe in the hands of such men'.<sup>38</sup> However, as it will be shown, there would be another decade of acrimony amongst delegates before they arrived at an agreement, and even then, not all, especially the Western Australians, were satisfied with the final outcome.

In December 1892, in a speech to the Legislative Council, Hackett discussed some of his anxieties for the colony's future if they were to enter federation. His reservations concerned both the fiscal arrangements and the defence of Western Australia by a federal government. With regard to finance, he foresaw that the colony would lose much of its fiscal independence, only recently achieved through responsible government, and questioned his colleagues:

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<sup>35</sup> Cheryl Saunders, 'The Hardest Nut to Crack: The Financial Settlement in the Commonwealth Constitution', in Gregory Craven, ed., *The Convention Debates 1891-1898: commentaries, indices and guide*, Sydney: Legal Books Pty Ltd, 1986, vol 6, p. 162.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>38</sup> *WAPD*, 9 December 1891, vol. 2, p. 20.

I ask the House, is it right, is it wise, to give a blank cheque to the Federal Council to fill up as they like, and under which they may make what regulations they choose, leaving Western Australia with no voice whatever in them?<sup>39</sup>

Hackett also had doubts about any new defence systems being controlled from the eastern seaboard: 'it is not to be thought for one moment that this colony will be content to hand everything over to another Commandant, another Governor, and another colony'.<sup>40</sup> In hindsight, some people might have considered him correct, especially with the conception of the 'Brisbane Line' military plan during World War Two.<sup>41</sup>

The Federal Council of Australasia had been established in 1886 with the aim of persuading a sceptical Australian public towards federation. Unfortunately, it had several weaknesses, one being that not all colonies were involved, notably populous New South Wales, but more importantly, although the Council was to meet every two years, their recommendations were not enforceable. In a further bid to weaken its effectiveness, the Council that met in Hobart in 1895 was held at the same time as a Premiers' Conference was also taking place in the same city.<sup>42</sup>

Hackett was not a man to mince his words and in 1893 in a parliamentary speech strongly criticised the Federal Council of Australasia:

[T]he reason why there is no business [at the Federal Council of Australasia] is that it has no executive power, and no means of raising money. It may pass voluminous laws; but it cannot

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<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 16 December 1892, vol. 3, p. 419.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 20 December 1892, vol. 3, p. 456.

<sup>41</sup> There was a military strategy during World War Two to defend the industrial areas of Australia in the event of Australia being attacked. However, there is no evidence to support the popular belief in the existence of 'The Brisbane Line' and the effective abandonment of the Northern Territory and Western Australia in that contingency. (Derek J. McDougall, *Australian Foreign Policy: Empire, Alliance and Region*, 2nd ed., Prentice Hall, Sydney, NSW, 1987, p. 44.)

<sup>42</sup> Irving, *The Centenary Companion to Australian Federation*, pp. 361-362.

enforce one of them ... [as] it cannot raise a sixpence for its own ordinary expenses.<sup>43</sup>

Two years later, in 1895, Hackett's views had not altered and he reiterated his reservations: 'The Federal Council has done good work, but it is, as it always has been, in a helpless condition. It has no machinery at all. It may pass resolutions, but it has no power to carry them out'.<sup>44</sup> So, it was not surprising that in January 1897 he abstained from a crucial vote during a Federal Council meeting. Queensland had wished to strengthen the Council by having its delegates chosen by the electorate in each colony instead of being nominated by their own parliaments, thereby gaining a popular mandate. Queenslanders thought they would have the support of Western Australian delegates, but had probably not approached Hackett in respect of his intent. When the decisive vote was taken, Hackett abstained, so the motion failed. As a result, Queensland was conspicuous in its absence from the following Adelaide Convention, whilst Western Australia attended.<sup>45</sup>

Queensland delegates might have been confused about Hackett's intentions, but were willing to take the risk of a vote. Two years earlier he had told his parliamentary colleagues:

I distrust any Federal body not based upon popular representation ... I should like to see the selection made by the people – not a selection by this House or the other, or the two in conjunction, but by the constituencies, which represent the popular will.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> *WAPD*, 14 September 1893, vol. 5, p. 776.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 11 July 1895, vol. 8, p. 256.

<sup>45</sup> Geoffrey C. Bolton, *Edmund Barton: The One Man For The Job*, Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 2000, pp. 138-139.

<sup>46</sup> *WAPD*, 11 July 1895, vol. 8, p. 257.

However, a year later, for no apparent reason Hackett expressed a conflicting view, stating that if parliamentarians did not select Council delegates, ‘this House will have no further control over them, and the members will be able to do pretty much as they please without anyone being in a position to call them to account’.<sup>47</sup> No one knows why he avoided the 1897 Federal Council vote. Could it have been an accident? For the Queensland delegates, it can only be conjectured as to why he was absent. He might have been unsure of how to vote on the issue and may have considered abstention the best avenue to take.

The only Western Australian region where people were initially in favour of federation was the Eastern Goldfields. Realising in late 1895 that there was little chance of the remainder of the colony wishing to unite with the other Australian colonies, several meetings were held in the region where resolutions were passed in favour of separating from the remainder of the colony. Initially, enthusiasm for such a scheme was limited although the grievances remained: notably the lack of a railway line between the region and its nearest port of Esperance and the inadequate representation of the region in the colony’s parliament.<sup>48</sup>

With the vast gold discoveries made in the colony in the early 1890s, Hackett recognised that the colony had changed irrevocably and could not opt out of any impending federation, even if the colony were to be economically worse off. In his 1896 Address-in-Reply speech, he acknowledged the fiscal benefits from the goldfields region and admitted that the region’s representation was essential: ‘we owe to the great

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<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 26 August 1896, vol. 9, p. 497.

<sup>48</sup> Sir John Kirwan, ‘How Western Australia Joined the Commonwealth’, *Early Days*, 1950, vol 4, no. 2, p. 10.

industry of the colony, for it has made us what we are, and will make us greater still'.<sup>49</sup> He continued to emphasise the importance of a united Australia and that Western Australia should not stand aloof from other colonies, but share any burdens of a future united nation. This is yet a further indication of his determination that Western Australia should accept federation, although admitting that the ongoing negotiations were demanding. Such a speech again also indicated the resolute nature of the man, because many of his parliamentary colleagues did not wish to sacrifice colonial income, especially its gold revenue.

### **Adelaide, 1897**

In addition to the Queensland delegates missing the session of the National Australasian Convention held in Adelaide between 22<sup>nd</sup> March and 5<sup>th</sup> May 1897, Hackett also provided his apologies for five days due to unspecified 'urgent private affairs'.<sup>50</sup> He did not speak during the preliminary debate on the topic of general constitutional principles, the reason being that Western Australian delegates' also planned to depart the Convention early to return home for the concluding stages of a general election held between 27 April 1897 and 26 May 1897.<sup>51</sup> Consequently, Forrest was assigned to be the colony's sole speaker. This session once again was initially split into three select committees: constitutional; finance; and judiciary, with Hackett assigned to the constitutional one.<sup>52</sup> Subsequently, a drafting committee met to incorporate the recommendations from each committee.<sup>53</sup> Unfortunately, this left only two complete

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<sup>49</sup> *WAPD*, 7 July 1896, vol. 9, p. 8.

<sup>50</sup> *Convention Debates*, 8 April 1897, vol. 3, p. 408.

<sup>51</sup> Black and Mandy, eds., *The Western Australian Parliamentary Handbook*, p. 358.

<sup>52</sup> *Convention Debates*, vol. 3, p.396.

<sup>53</sup> de Garis, 'Western Australia', p. 296.

days for general discussion before the Western Australian delegation departed the Convention. Despite their brief stay, there was sufficient time for Hackett to provide the *West Australian* with a progress report at the end of the first week of proceedings:

In the complexities that the subject presents the position of West Australia is at least clear. The chances of here entering the Federation from the start are, as everyone must recognise, of a decidedly slender description ... The presence of our delegates cannot do harm. Almost to a certainty it will exercise a beneficial influence ... We shall in all probability have to remain outside, as some of the Canadian provinces did, until the time is ripe for us to fall into line with a movement that has none the less our sympathy.<sup>54</sup>

In other words, Hackett was attempting to keep his options open on the issue in order to be able to attempt to improve the conditions of entry for Western Australia in any future discussions.

Between the first and second sessions of the National Australasian Conventions, the Commonwealth Bill was debated in the Legislative Council. Hackett was more forthright in his feelings when speaking to his colleagues. He spoke of the progress already made which he considered was principally due to the efforts of the Western Australian delegates and emphasised that any future Senate should be resilient:

We look on the Senate as the citadel of the federal power: it is the keystone of the arch resting on the States, holding the States together, keeping in their place all parts of the fabric ... [W]e must take care, above all things, that we create a Senate which will be a powerful, permanent, and fearless body; and, above all, we must give it sufficient rights ... [W]e must see that the

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<sup>54</sup> WA, 26 March 1897, p. 4.



Senate is not made such a weak and feeble thing that its opinions can be disregarded, that its sword can be parried and its shield beaten down'.<sup>55</sup>

But why, in 1897, should Hackett have raised the issue of the strength of the Senate?

His reasons were forthcoming in a speech the following month at the Sydney Convention, for he was taking no resolutions for granted.

After his initial caution, Hackett informed his colleagues that it was almost certain that the colony would eventually join a federation: 'There are dangers and difficulties before us which have to be carefully weighed before joining or throwing in our lot with the other colonies'.<sup>56</sup> He then asked rhetorically: '[I]s federation coming or not? Is there one in this House who doubts for a moment that he sees a glimpse of it, however distant or indistinct'?<sup>57</sup>

Hackett had a vision of how federation would affect the colony's inhabitants and in his closing remarks advised his colleagues of his future vision for the country:

'[F]ederation seems incomparably the grandest movement in which men of Australian birth, or who have made their home in Australia, have engaged since that great achievement of first settling the desert wastes of this great continent'.<sup>58</sup>

This speech, made in August 1897 indicated that Hackett still saw the inevitability of federation. However, he was still striving for Western Australia to obtain the best fiscal concessions possible from the populous colonies of New South Wales and Victoria before any final agreement. Two days previously, writing in the *West Australian*, he provided similar views: 'federation is the goal on which our eyes are fixed, and the

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<sup>55</sup> *WAPD*, 20 August 1897, vol. 10, pp. 107-108.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 105.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 106.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 112.

maintenance of a united, and therefore a great Australian nation is still a hope, though at the present moment in the judgment of many not a practicable one'.<sup>59</sup>

### **Sydney, 1897**

Hackett attended the second session of the National Australasian Convention, held in Sydney between 2 and 24 September 1897, with thirteen other Western Australian delegates.<sup>60</sup> By this time of the year both Forrest and Hackett must have been weary of travel, for between the Adelaide and Sydney Convention both men had travelled to London to celebrate the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria's reign. Furthermore, to make matters worse, this session was also shortened, as it was the turn of Victorian delegates to return home early to campaign in their general election, which was to be held on 14 October.<sup>61</sup> A further session was proposed for early 1898 in Melbourne. Forrest was not amused and forthrightly stated so: 'You know we are too far away to be coming here every fortnight'.<sup>62</sup> Undoubtedly, Hackett held similar feelings. This Convention debated the various amendments recommended by the various colonial parliaments, which after all the overlaps was condensed to 130 alterations.<sup>63</sup> However, due to the brevity of the session, only the first seventy sections of the Constitution were discussed.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> WA, 18 August 1897, p. 4.

<sup>60</sup> *Convention Debates*, vol. 2, p. v.

<sup>61</sup> de Garis, 'Western Australia', pp. 298-299; Thomson and Serle, *A biographical register of the Victorian Legislative, 1851-1900*, p. 236.

<sup>62</sup> Cited by de Garis, 'Western Australia', p. 299.

<sup>63</sup> de Garis, 'Western Australia', p. 299.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*

By 1897, Deakin's admiration for Hackett's had increased. However, Deakin conceded that Hackett was seriously constrained as he was 'well able to take part in the discussions, [but] was suppressed owing to his sense of the little likelihood there was that his colony could as yet enter into any union'.<sup>65</sup> Hackett spoke twice during the Convention. The first time he addressed delegates for slightly over half an hour on his concerns in respect of fiscal matters. He repeated his concern that future federal governments would be appropriating custom duties, which was Western Australia's major method of collecting income. In this, he noted that colonies would have very few opportunities of collecting their own revenues, excepting 'aristocratic luxuries'<sup>66</sup> when federal custom duties were imposed. The only other alternative would be to raise existing state taxes.

Hackett pointed out that he had been provided with figures indicating that Western Australian residents would be likely to be paying 'about £1 per head'<sup>67</sup> to a federal government 'for services rendered',<sup>68</sup> which was much more than any other colony would be asked to contribute. After providing figures to supplement his argument, he concluded by informing delegates it was unfair for his colony 'to go into this union blindfold'<sup>69</sup> and warned there was a strong possibility of Western Australia staying out of the original federation if the fiscal conditions remained unaltered.

The second time he spoke at the Convention (this time for eleven minutes) he inexplicitly raised the issue of equal representation for states in the Senate. He was reiterating the opinions of smaller states when he stated:

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<sup>65</sup> Deakin, *'And Be One People'*, p. 60.

<sup>66</sup> *Convention Debates*, 7 September 1897, vol. 2, p. 151.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 153.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 155.

The concession of equal representation may mean much, or it may mean absolutely nothing. It depends entirely upon the powers and rights which are conceded to the body which is invested with equal representation. To what purpose is it to invite five men to a dinner, and then to muzzle three of them?<sup>70</sup>

Considering that this matter had been agreed upon six years beforehand (and had been mentioned a few weeks earlier in the Legislative Council), Hackett explained his reason for raising this issue once more: ‘we cannot accept any vote of this body as a final one, or as committing us permanently to one view or another’.<sup>71</sup> So, he was taking nothing for granted throughout these Conventions. He may well have been influenced by the fact that between the Adelaide and Sydney sessions, the various colonial legislatures had submitted 286 amendments for discussion.<sup>72</sup>

Although Hackett played only a minor role in proceedings at the Sydney Convention, his speeches indicate that he was continually fighting for his colony. He even admitted to differing on occasions from his close colleague, Sir John Forrest, who by late 1897, felt that Western Australia did ‘not need exceptional treatment’ to enter federation.<sup>73</sup> This is a further indication of his determination, for although he sometimes slightly disagreed with his Premier, he supported him as they both had the colony’s future uppermost in their minds.

After the Sydney Convention, Hackett, writing in the *West Australian*, gave the public impression that he was pessimistic in respect to the colony’s entry. He considered that

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<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 14 September 1897, vol. 2, p. 516.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 515.

<sup>72</sup> La Nauze, *The Making of the Australian Constitution*, p. 180.

<sup>73</sup> *Convention Debates*, 7 September 1897, vol. 2, p. 154.

‘the matter at the moment was hung up between heaven and earth [and it] would be a courageous man who would venture to prophesy what the results of the third meeting in Melbourne would be’.<sup>74</sup> He stressed that the current situation presented ‘a barrier of a very grave character in the realisation of the federal hope, unless some unexpected and, in his opinion, phenomenal occurrence took place’.<sup>75</sup> Although bluffing, it was the approach he used to obtain the best possible conditions for Western Australia.

### **Melbourne, 1898**

With nine of his colleagues Hackett again attended the third session of the Convention held in Melbourne between 20 January 1898 and 17 March 1898.<sup>76</sup> Forrest, as usual, headed the Western Australian delegation. The debate that took up the majority of time during this Convention was of little interest to Western Australia for it concerned ‘federal powers over rivers and railway rates’.<sup>77</sup> This session was intolerable for many delegates due to the incessant heat, including one period of seven consecutive days when the temperature reached over 100°F [37.8°C].<sup>78</sup> It was little wonder that amongst delegates ‘frayed tempers became evident and towards the end business was rushed in a desire to have done and get home’.<sup>79</sup>

Despite the oppressive heat, it was at this Convention that Western Australia’s fiscal arrangements were finally agreed, that is, inter-colonial custom duties were to be

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<sup>74</sup> WA, 4 October 1897, p. 5.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>76</sup> *Convention Debates*, vol. 4, p. iv.

<sup>77</sup> de Garis, ‘Western Australia’, p. 300.

<sup>78</sup> La Nauze, *The Making of the Australian Constitution*, p. 203.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*

gradually reduced over a five-year period. Even on this motion, moved by Hackett's confidant Deakin, two Western Australian delegates, George Leake and Frederick Crowder, opposed the provision.<sup>80</sup> Hackett intentionally did not speak during this two-month session. It was not until October 1898, when Legislative Council members debated how to select delegates to future federal Conventions (which ironically never occurred) that he told his parliamentary colleagues the reasons for not doing so:

I remained absolutely silent. I did not open my lips at the Convention, and I am not ashamed to confess it. I have been a warm and ardent federationist ... I came to the conclusion that the interests of Western Australia would not be safe in case a Federal Constitution was adopted by other colonies.<sup>81</sup>

He continued to express his disappointment of what was being discussed 'in certain quarters outside the Convention'<sup>82</sup> by some delegates from the eastern colonies and warned his colleagues that he considered it unsafe in the current climate to join the federation: 'The Convention is no longer a part of our constitution'.<sup>83</sup>

What was Hackett attempting to achieve with the above comments? A few months earlier in letters to Deakin, he also expressed his misgivings in respect of Western Australia's entry conditions.<sup>84</sup> Was Hackett possibly having a last throw of the dice for improved conditions of entry? In June 1898 the people of New South Wales, Victoria, Tasmania and South Australia would vote to accept federation in a referendum.

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<sup>80</sup> de Garis, 'Western Australia', 301.

<sup>81</sup> *WAPD*, 25 October 1898, vol. 13, p. 2589.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>84</sup> Hackett to Deakin, 23 May 1898, 20 June 1898, *NLA MS 1540*.

Western Australia however, seemed unlikely to sanction it, as Hackett informed Deakin in May 1898: 'I feel bound to point out that the operation of the bill is so full of possible mischief'.<sup>85</sup> He was still apprehensive about the fiscal arrangements, although it had been proposed back in February 1898 that there would be a five-year respite for Western Australian taxpayers. He considered this to be:

useless owing to the diminishing scale which will tend far more to frighten the producer than to give him confidence ...  
[because] we shall have a burden of customs taxation running up to at least £8 a head, far greater than we can bear, or the country will submit to.<sup>86</sup>

It is also interesting to note, as previously mentioned, that when discussing finances at the Australian Federal Convention some seven months earlier, Hackett had estimated the likely cost as being a meagre £1 per head for each Western Australian. Did he have a change of mind, or was he just attempting to emphasise this point more strongly to Deakin? It was probably the latter scenario. Hackett continued his letter by expressing his anxieties regarding any prospects for newly arrived colonists:

I am as strong a federationist as ever I was, but how could I ask these men to sacrifice the new careers they have just entered upon. They have come here from the east to better themselves, am I to lead them to commit suicide just as new heart is being put into them?<sup>87</sup>

He concluded this forthright letter by reiterating that he had the support of Western Australians as they 'trust me to tell them what to do, and I think even more than they do

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<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, 23 May 1898, NLA MS 1540/11/54.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, MS 1540/11/55.

Forrest. Should I do otherwise than I am doing'?'<sup>88</sup> It is debatable whether he had more influence than Forrest, but as the part-owner and editor of the colony's major newspaper, he was sufficiently self-assured to claim that to be the case.

### **The final push for federation in Western Australia**

In mid-1898, there was a dramatic change in Hackett's public attitude towards Western Australia's entry into federation, for he had dramatically (or at least apparently so) changed his stance on the matter. This was certainly due to the fact that all the other colonies that had participated in the referendum, apart from Western Australia, had voted to establish a federation. In June 1898 therefore, Hackett's tone to Deakin was more positive:

Whether federation comes this year or next, or is delayed a little longer, there is always the inspiring knowledge that it is now a certainty ... [I]t may do you good to know that at any moment ... this colony is ready to fall into line. Of this I am very confident.<sup>89</sup>

He had finally realised that the fight for improved conditions for Western Australia's entry was all but over, so any further brinkmanship would be futile. Within a matter of days he told his colleagues in a parliamentary speech that he considered the Commonwealth Bill 'one of the highest efforts of legislative genius that has ever been presented to the world'.<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, 20 June 1898, *NLA MS 1540/11/77*.

<sup>90</sup> *WAPD*, 28 June 1898, vol. 12, pp. 154-155.



With Western Australians experiencing contrasting living conditions throughout the vast colony, it did not surprise Hackett that other people held different views to his own. This concerned him:

To my mind the colony voting as a whole would not produce delegates who would be quite representative of the colony ... All I desire to say is that the entire colony would have to submit to the choice of the electors of four centres, Coolgardie, Kalgoorlie, Fremantle, and Perth, and I would point out that the people in these centres have not all decided to make this colony their permanent settling place yet.<sup>91</sup>

By 1898 Hackett almost certainly didn't mind people speaking out, as by his own admission he had then considered federation a foregone conclusion.

In February 1899, in a *West Australian* editorial, he again expressed reservations in respect to the colony's entry:

Our first duty, however, is to our own colony, and, if it should be judged expedient in its interests to remain outside the Commonwealth for a time, to the mortification of being unable to participate in a movement which must assuredly command our sympathies, there will not be added the reproach of hindering the consummation of Australian unity.<sup>92</sup>

Was he playing the devil's advocate with his readers, as in the previous year he had acknowledged, both publicly and privately, that the colony would most likely be a founding member of federation? A few months later in a lengthy letter to Deakin he even admitted: 'I should welcome Federation if it were only to enable us to divide this

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<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.* 25 October 1898, vol. 13, p. 2589.

<sup>92</sup> WA, 7 February 1899, p. 4.

most unwieldy colony, north from south, leaving north to be experimented on by Federation'.<sup>93</sup> He continued to emphasise to Deakin the vast size of the colony and disclosed some of the anticipated problems:

[O]ur huge undeveloped territory of a million square miles, our scattered settlements, the fact that the means of civilisation – schools, hospitals, police, courts of law, have to be supplied everywhere, not to speak of provision for roads, bridges, tanks ... if the colony is to advance.<sup>94</sup>

Hackett translated the problem into financial terms, which he reckoned would be an estimated loss of revenue of around £300,000 annually, and pleaded for extra monies for the colony.<sup>95</sup> He correctly predicted that the federal government would gradually gain control over finances and warned that it was important 'to prevent centrifugal influences gaining strength'.<sup>96</sup> There is no doubt that by now he was reconciled to Western Australia entry into federation as an original state, but this did not stop him pleading his case to Deakin in the hope that the latter could influence others to be more benevolent towards Western Australia. He pointed out that if federation was forced upon the colony it could risk 'intense distrust, and even dislike'<sup>97</sup> amongst the people with the possibility of federation being rejected and of newly arrived immigrants abandoning Western Australia to return to their former colonies. Was he correct to assume the possibility of federation being rejected? As de Garis writes, 'the landed and commercial élite who were accustomed to running Western Australia did not wish to

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<sup>93</sup> Hackett to Deakin, 27 June 1899, *NLA MS 1540/11/91*.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, *MS 1540/11/93*.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, *MS 1540/11/92*.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, *MS 1540/11/96*.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, *MS 1540/11/94-95*.

risk losing control of their colony through the votes of Johnny-come-latelies'.<sup>98</sup> Hackett was part of the colony's élite and no doubt realised t'othersiders were unlikely to reject federation when it was eventually offered to them. Five months later he confessed that a referendum on federation was inevitable and again expressed the hope that the colony would be one of the original states.<sup>99</sup>

A few weeks later, in late November 1899, Hackett recommended to the Legislative Council that a referendum be held on the issue, explaining that federation was too important an issue for parliamentarians alone to resolve: 'I shall certainly vote in favour of taking the sense of the people of Western Australia on the question'.<sup>100</sup> He then placed a proviso: 'What I desire is that the colony shall go into the federation by practically a unanimous vote'.<sup>101</sup> He voiced his concern as he considered a divided vote 'would sow the seed of lasting discord and do more harm to us than all the federation under the most favourable circumstances'.<sup>102</sup> He reiterated his stance: 'I hope that with federation we shall begin to recognise each other as brethren and to be proud of the Commonwealth',<sup>103</sup> although he still had some lingering doubts, especially in respect to any fiscal protection. He cautioned: 'I do not wish, after this fraternal union is accomplished, to see it mocked by Western Australia being a seething mass of discount'.<sup>104</sup> Politically, he was also nervous for the colony, as it had only been granted responsible government nine years earlier after many years of struggle.

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<sup>98</sup> de Garis, 'Western Australia', p. 306.

<sup>99</sup> Hackett to Deakin, 7 November 1899, *NLA MS 1540/11/129,131*.

<sup>100</sup> *WAPD*, 30 November 1899, vol. 15, p. 2694.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2710.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2716.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*

On most subjects upon which he spoke, Hackett always had Western Australia's interests uppermost in his thoughts. A further problem he envisaged was the possibility of the colony finding itself without suitably qualified people to represent the state in a federal parliament: 'Where are those eleven men [five in the House of Representatives and six in the Senate] to be obtained? Are we to send our eleven best, our eleven second-best, or our eleven third-best'?<sup>105</sup> The only ones he considered suitable were 'leisured men of whom we have so few'.<sup>106</sup> Even with these doubts, however, he was a pragmatic person and considered there was not an 'impenetrable barrier between us and the other colonies'.<sup>107</sup> When the final vote was taken on 30 November 1899, he was one of only five Council members who voted for the proposition of a popular vote to join the Commonwealth, eleven members having voted against the motion.<sup>108</sup> Had members taken his speech too literally and voted on the side of caution instead of submitting the question of entry to the electors?

Within the week Hackett wrote to Deakin to explain what had occurred in the Legislative Council, disingenuously explaining that 'they had mistaken the question ... and had voted with the majority in error'.<sup>109</sup> He desperately yearned for Western Australia to be one of the original states and some pessimism and frustration once again showed in his writing:

I am almost now tempted to believe that we shall have to wait until the Commonwealth is formed and see what that body will concede to us ... I am most anxious [Western Australia] should

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<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2713.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2726.

<sup>109</sup> Hackett to Deakin, 5 December 1899, *NLA MS 1540/11/136*.

be as an original State, but I really fear we can do little more in this colony at present'.<sup>110</sup>

Hackett, continuing in a dejected mood, wrote of the possibility of a separate goldfields region entering into federation alone and all the associated problems that this would cause in future years. However, he was not a person to succumb easily, especially on an issue about which he felt so passionately. By the end of his letter the tone had dramatically changed, writing optimistically that he still expected that Western Australia would be an original state. A few weeks later he advised Deakin that he and Forrest were still working on a scheme to find 'some way out of the maze without inflicting another referendum on the East'.<sup>111</sup>

In an article dealing with the goldfields response to federation, Anne Partlon writes that in August 1899 Walter James, then a Legislative Assembly member for East Perth, had suggested to John Kirwan, the editor of the *Kalgoorlie Miner*, that the latter write to the eastern colonies press with the aim of pressuring Forrest to go to the people in respect to a decision on the Commonwealth Bill. James also advised Kirwan of how the goldfields could possibly separate from Western Australia to be part of federation if the remainder of the colony wished to remain adrift. He predicted that Forrest would detest such exposure and intimated that if the issue went public, both Hackett and Forrest might become more susceptible to federation.<sup>112</sup> As previously mentioned, a year earlier in June 1898, Hackett had already changed his mind concerning federation, when several colonies voted in favour of federation in a referendum. From then on, he was convinced that federation was inevitable, although in some instances his utterances implied otherwise.

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<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*, MS 1540/11/137.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, 26 December 1899, NLA MS 1540/11/140.

<sup>112</sup> A. Partlon, 'Champion of the Goldfields: John Waters Kirwan', *Studies in Western Australian History: The Irish in Western Australia*, 2000, no 20, p. 106.

In the *West Australian*, in April 1900, Hackett was dismissive of the Separation Movement. He estimated that, excluding children, there were about 70,000 adults on the goldfields who could have signed the petition for separation from the remainder of Western Australia. Considering that only around 28,000 signatures were obtained he questioned whether the remaining 42,000 people were either 'hostile or indifferent' on the issue.<sup>113</sup> He dismissed such people by referring to the movement as 'like a separation comedy'<sup>114</sup> and its members as 'wayfarers'.<sup>115</sup> He was hopeful that such opposition would only be a minor obstacle in the way of federation.

In March 1900 Hackett pleaded with Deakin that on his forthcoming trip to London he should ask Joseph Chamberlain, the British Colonial Secretary, for his assistance to solve the local impasse:

[I]f only that Australia may be a united continent when the Commonwealth is established ... Surely a practicable key can be found to the trouble ... I can pledge the best efforts of the *West Australian* to press forward Federation should this opening be given us.<sup>116</sup>

When the federation issue was again discussed in the Legislative Council in June 1900, the Bill was read for a second time and passed without dissent.<sup>117</sup> The probable reason was that most members realised that the result on referendum day, 31 July 1900 would be a foregone conclusion. Nevertheless this did not stop Hackett continuing to express his dislike for the conditions of entry during the debate:

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<sup>113</sup> *WA*, 23 April 1900, p. 6.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*, 21 March 1900, p. 4.

<sup>116</sup> Hackett to Deakin, 2 March 1900, *NLA MS 1540/11/372-373*.

<sup>117</sup> *WAPD*, 7 June 1900, vol. 16, p. 295.

I say that I once more venture to voice my regret that we are going to adopt federation without some more favourable terms for the colony ... it seems to me that Western Australia is at present time too weak, that we are too distant, and will be altogether too-weighted to make that due impression in the councils of federation ... I venture to say it is barely safe for Western Australia to enter the Commonwealth.<sup>118</sup>

When Hackett spoke of: 'more favourable terms for the colony' he was referring to possible improved fiscal arrangements for Western Australia, although these had been agreed upon two years previously. He was also taking into consideration Forrest's demand for the construction of a trans-Australian railway.

It is puzzling why, at this late stage, Hackett would again speak out against the formation of a federation, especially so close to referendum day which was to be held the following month. He admitted: 'We shall have federation under the terms prescribed in the Commonwealth Bill'.<sup>119</sup> He later confirmed that: 'I have never concealed my conviction that federation has enormous advantages to offer us' and will 'not hesitate for a moment to give my suffrage in favour [of federation]'.<sup>120</sup> By predicting the inevitability of Western Australia's entry as an original state, he was however anticipating numerous difficulties ahead. Whilst Council members had been discussing the issue, the British Colonial Secretary Joseph Chamberlain in the House of Commons in May 1900 had introduced the Commonwealth Bill, which was passed on 25 June 1900 and received the Royal Assent on 9 July 1900.<sup>121</sup>

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<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 293.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 294.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>121</sup> Dermody, *A Nation at Last*, pp. 60-61.

When the Commonwealth Bill was being debated in the House of Commons in June and July 1900, the Western Australian government sent former parliamentarian Stephen Parker to London in a final endeavour to represent its concerns. His task was not only to meet with other Australian delegates, but also with Chamberlain. Parker ‘wanted them to understand the financial hardship that Western Australia would suffer should it join the Commonwealth under the existing terms’,<sup>122</sup> especially with clause 95 that dealt with the state’s custom duties.<sup>123</sup> All of Parker’s efforts fell on deaf ears, so consequently Western Australia reluctantly acquiesced to a referendum.

On referendum day, 31 July 1900, Hackett wrote in the *West Australian*: ‘It is probably true to say that nothing else which has occurred in the colony has aroused the interest of its population like the Referendum which is to be taken today’.<sup>124</sup> On the day, people voted overwhelmingly in favour of entering federation with 44,880 voting in favour and 19,691 against.<sup>125</sup>

Hackett could not conceal his exhilaration at the result. In an editorial the following day he acknowledged:

For good or ill, Western Australia has declared her desire by an overwhelming proportion of her people to enter the Commonwealth of Australia in union with her sister colonies to the east. The vote taken yesterday places beyond a doubt the resolution of her people, and seals the bond which gives a united Australia to the world and launches a new nation on its historical career. It is, perhaps, the most splendid victory which has been

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<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 61.

<sup>123</sup> *Australia’s Constitution*. Revised reprint 1<sup>st</sup> ed., Clause 95.

<sup>124</sup> *WA*, 31 July 1900, p. 4.

<sup>125</sup> Wendy Hillman, ‘The 1900 Federal Referendum in Western Australia’, in Lyall Hunt, ed., *Towards Federation: Why Western Australia joined the Australian Federation in 1901*, Perth: Royal Western Australian Historical Society (Inc.), 2000, p. 161.



won in this cause, and those who have borne the burden and the heat of the struggle may well be pleased at the result, and proud of the triumph which has crowned the labours of many months.<sup>126</sup>

Several days after the poll, Chamberlain granted Western Australia one of their demands. The port of Fremantle officially replaced Albany as the port for Royal Mail steamers arriving from, or departing to Europe. This was the colony's initial reward for concluding successfully the establishment of federation.<sup>127</sup>

### **Hackett's reaction to Federation**

With federation achieved, Hackett continued to strive to improve Western Australia's circumstances. During the first decade of federation he had two close friends in federal Cabinet: Deakin, three times Prime Minister and Forrest, who held a variety of prominent ministerial positions. In correspondence with them both he continuously provided his thoughts on how Western Australia should be treated by the federal government.

What emerges from an investigation of Hackett's surviving letters is that he still held high hopes for a successful federation, as in 1903 he wrote to Forrest:

The feeling of distrust and fear of the Commonwealth is growing so fast here that it would not be very difficult to get a band wholly pledged to fight federation and Commonwealth in a sort of blind despair. There is no one now who says a good

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<sup>126</sup> WA, 1 August 1900, p. 4.

<sup>127</sup> de Garis, 'Western Australia', p. 322.

word for it. All that is said is “Give it a trial, Rome wasn’t built in a day”.<sup>128</sup>

Unfortunately, what Forrest’s private feelings were will never be known, although as a federal government minister, it might be reasonable to assume that his sympathies lay with the success of federation.

Hackett had written the above remarks to Forrest a few days after Australia’s Federal Parliament had been prorogued, with an election pending. A few days earlier he had told his *West Australian* readers that Parliament had not finished in a ‘blaze of success’ and its latter proceedings were ‘marked by a long succession of measures brought to a certain stage of completion and then abandoned’.<sup>129</sup> After mentioning several failures, including the lack of enthusiasm amongst parliamentarians for the construction of the trans-Australian railway, he suggested that: ‘Prime Minister [Barton] must have been more than pleased to get into recess’.<sup>130</sup> A week later, on 30 October 1903, he warned that the state ‘is at the present moment in a critical position’.<sup>131</sup>

However, Hackett considered the predicament was not solely the responsibility of the federal government, for he felt in part, that the current Western Australian parliamentarians were at fault as well, as they were: ‘without an effective fighting and united force in the Federal Parliament, partly through the divisions in her own ranks’.<sup>132</sup> This in turn led to a minimising of their influence and to a ‘state of disintegration’.<sup>133</sup>

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<sup>128</sup> Hackett to Forrest, 26 October 1903, *BL MN 34, 766A, Box 3, file 2, item No. 275.*

<sup>129</sup> *WA*, 23 October 1903, p. 4.

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>131</sup> *WA*, 30 October 1903, p. 4.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*

To counteract this breakdown, he suggested voters must select future candidates carefully at the forthcoming election, otherwise it would be detrimental to the state's interest, particularly as the Western Australian economy was indicating some growth.

However, Hackett was not given to criticising a situation without offering some solutions. He proposed four: firstly, that future locally elected federal members should be 'prepared to give [their] views boldly, persistently, and patriotically' in protecting state's rights;<sup>134</sup> secondly, members should support the construction of the trans-Australian railway line; thirdly, members must fight for an equitable distribution of surplus revenue when in three years time the state's subsidy on custom duties would expire; and finally, local parliamentarians should encourage other states to use Fremantle harbour more frequently.<sup>135</sup> All four matters related to Western Australia's position within the Commonwealth. Although federation by this time was nearly three years old, he was still both publicly and privately continuously endeavouring to advance Western Australia's interests.

By 1906 Western Australia was becoming desperate about the share of revenue it received from the Commonwealth. For instance, in 1898, the state had negotiated entry on the proviso that federal tariffs would be paid on a reduced scale over a period of five years. The period had now ended. To make matters worse, gold production in Western Australia had peaked in 1903 with the state producing 64,229 kgs of gold.<sup>136</sup> After that, production had steadily declined, thereby reducing the export taxes received by the state.

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<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>136</sup> Geological Survey of Western Australia, *Gold in Western Australia*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., Perth: Geological Survey of Western Australia, 1995, p. 1.

In April 1906 Hackett, in a lengthy letter to Prime Minister Deakin, pleaded for additional finance. He wrote that current funding was being:

divided between four of the sister states ... after all, it is West Australian [sic] money that is to be distributed. As regards its effects upon our own finances, when you deduct the absolutely essential services, such as medical, educational, police, and the like, with the interest on the debt and the railway expenditure, you will find that if a very much less sum than half a million is taken from us, we shall be in a state of absolute beggary.<sup>137</sup>

Hackett was not exaggerating when he stated that Western Australia would be in a state of absolute beggary. An examination of the State's fiscal records for the year ending 30 June 1905, reveals that the excess of expenditure over revenue amounted to £126,559.<sup>138</sup> Interest payment on loans amounted to £570,847,<sup>139</sup> whilst railway expenditure for the year totalled £358,007.<sup>140</sup> The above expenditures total £1,055,413. Therefore, when half a million pounds was added to existing payments, the state's deficit would significantly increase. However, as on previous occasions, his plea was ignored.

Hackett's fury continued in the same letter when he wrote of a feeling in the local community that pervaded like 'a place in times of great stringency, and of little hope for the future'.<sup>141</sup> This is further evidence of Hackett's passion for Western Australia overflowing into his writings, for he concluded his letter with an apology:

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<sup>137</sup> Hackett to Deakin, 24 April 1906, *NLA MS 1540/15/526*.

<sup>138</sup> *Statistical Register of Western Australia for the year 1905 and previous years*, pt II, p. 19.

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 31.

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 28.

<sup>141</sup> Hackett to Deakin, 24 April 1906, *NLA MS 1540/15/526*.

‘[Y]ou would pardon this long letter, and excuse the energy with which, it may be, I have written on his matter’.<sup>142</sup> Throughout the year many of his letters to Deakin mentioned the hardships that Western Australians faced.<sup>143</sup>

In August 1906 Hackett had thoughts of the state possibly being divided into smaller controllable portions:

As to the North-West [of Western Australia], there are no doubt many advantages to be gained by a separation of that corner, or its amalgamation in a large northern state ... If the labour difficulty can be solved, and it can be shown to be possible for white men to labour in the field at a remunerative rate and which will allow them to complete in outside markets, there is an undoubted future for our northern lands [sic].<sup>144</sup>

Hackett wrote such sentiments as a secessionist lobby group was being formed in Western Australia and he wanted to counteract such action before the movement actually took hold. Two months later he warned Deakin: ‘If there is anything done by the next Parliament which to the West Australian [sic] mind savours of injustice to this State, the movement will become a very distinct reality’.<sup>145</sup>

This was no veiled threat to Deakin, as Hackett’s warning was given in October 1906, eight days after the Legislative Council had debated a motion to withdraw from federation. In that debate Hackett spoke fervently against the motion by stressing the advantages of remaining within the Commonwealth, whilst at the same time

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<sup>142</sup> *Ibid.*, MS 1540/15/527.

<sup>143</sup> Refer to letters from Hackett to Deakin dated 18 July 1906, 6, 24 August 1906, 12, 24 September 1906 in the National Library of Australia files, MS 1540.

<sup>144</sup> Hackett to Deakin, 24 August 1906, *NLA* MS 1540/15/584.

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.*, 24 October 1906, *NLA* MS 1540/15/626.

acknowledging the state's difficulties.<sup>146</sup> He optimistically believed that Western Australia would eventually be treated with justice and fairness by other states. Despite his plea, the Council voted seventeen votes to six to withdraw from federation.<sup>147</sup> The following day the Assembly noted the Council's resolution, which 'elicited applause from a number of members'.<sup>148</sup>

A few days after the completion of the Council debate on secession, Hackett advised his *West Australian* readers that he realised that secession was not possible: 'in view of the contract obligations which this State entered into when it joined the union',<sup>149</sup> but he was taking the challenge seriously as it was 'weak to ignore an act of real hostility', especially with the possibility that the cause 'may easily develop into something approaching a conflagration'.<sup>150</sup> Although he did not agree with secession, he had sympathy with those people who did, for he well understood their resentment, considering how unjustly Western Australia was currently being treated. The defeat of the Bill that recommended surveying the railway route between Port Augusta in South Australia and Kalgoorlie was only a minor irritation. More importantly he argued, the state 'had lost the control of our own finances, that we were subjected to pin-pricks innumerable, that we were unable to foster by direct means, such as bounties and bonuses according to the Federal Constitution, the productions of the Western State'.<sup>151</sup>

So, not surprisingly people were angry. Hackett told his *West Australian* readers that he felt that if the electorate voted on the issue, the result would 'be carried by a majority of

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<sup>146</sup> *WAPD*, 16 October 1906, vol. 30, pp. 2241-2247.

<sup>147</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2271.

<sup>148</sup> *WAPD*, 17 October 1906, vol. 30, p. 2334.

<sup>149</sup> *WA*, 18 October 1906, p. 6.

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>151</sup> *Ibid.*

two, if not three, to one'<sup>152</sup> favouring secession. However, constantly at the back of his mind throughout this crisis was the knowledge that secession could not succeed, as the Commonwealth Act would ultimately not permit it.

In December 1906, when Premier Newton James Moore was asked during question time by Harry Brown, MLA for Perth, whether the Federation Referendum Bill was likely to be discussed again in the present session of parliament, Moore nonchalantly replied that he doubted it, as the current session was shortly to be concluded.<sup>153</sup> There the matter ended. As well as Hackett, Moore also realised the futility of such a motion. This was later proven in 1933, when a referendum in Western Australia on the issue was carried, but secession did not eventuate, as the Australian Constitution had no provision for any state to leave the Commonwealth.<sup>154</sup>

A year later in 1907, Hackett continued to indicate his disillusionment with federation. In a letter to Walter James in London (who had recently relinquished his position as Western Australian Agent-General to London), he expressed disquiet about the downturn in the state's gold yield, as he felt people on the eastern seaboard were indifferent to the difficulties of Western Australians. He told James that he also held doubts about the state having benefited economically since federation and expressed continual frustration for the future construction of a railway across the Nullarbor Plain. He also alluded to his dissatisfaction with Sir John Forrest as Federal Treasurer, for he felt that although he was a Western Australian, the former Premier was not sufficiently looking after the financial interests of the state.<sup>155</sup>

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<sup>152</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>153</sup> *WAPD*, 6 December 1906, vol. 30, pp. 3474-3475.

<sup>154</sup> Black and Mandy, eds., *The Western Australian Parliamentary Handbook*, pp. 373-374.

<sup>155</sup> Hackett to James, 9 May 1907, *Royal Historical Society of Victoria [RHSV]*, MS 17652 17715, Box 12/2.

However, by the end of 1909 Hackett's mood had completely changed, for in December of that year he congratulated Deakin on 'the first truly Federal Session that the Commonwealth Parliament has put in and look to seeing great results from it'.<sup>156</sup> One reason for his jubilation was that in early November 1909, he had received the state's fiscal results for the first four months of the financial year. It revealed that the state's revenue for the period in question had increased by £51,817, whilst expenditure was down by £19,000 compared to the same period for the previous year.<sup>157</sup>

Uncharacteristically, he admitted that 'there is every reason to feel complacent over the present appearance of the finances'.<sup>158</sup>

Hackett's euphoric mood continued throughout 1910, for he witnessed significant progress both at the state and commonwealth level. In April 1910, he acknowledged federation: 'a revolution has been effected'.<sup>159</sup> By the end of the year, he reflected on Western Australia sharing in Australia's prosperity as a result of: '[p]henomenal progress of land settlement, great increase in our agricultural areas, and the re-establishment of immigration on a large scale are symptoms of the strong life that pulsates through the State'.<sup>160</sup> The Commonwealth had 'never felt more fully the thrill of success or more pleasurably realised its capacity for great things'.<sup>161</sup> Immigrants were being encouraged to settle in all states, excepting Tasmania, with 741 having arrived in Fremantle on 27 December 1910.<sup>162</sup>

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<sup>156</sup> Hackett to Deakin, 24 December 1909, *NLA MS 1540/15/951*.

<sup>157</sup> *WA*, 2 November 1909, p. 6.

<sup>158</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>159</sup> Hackett to Deakin, 22 April 1910, *NLA MS1540/15/992*.

<sup>160</sup> *WA*, 31 December 1910, p. 6.

<sup>161</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>162</sup> *Ibid.*



In April 1910, Andrew Fisher commenced his second term as Australia's Prime Minister.<sup>163</sup> By the end of the year Hackett was full of praise for the new Labour leader and his federal achievements, especially, as in today's society Hackett would have been referred to as a 'radical conservative'. In an end of year report written in the *West Australian*, he approvingly wrote: 'One of the great events of the year was the extraordinary manner to which Federal power, never completely trusted to any party in the past, was unhesitatingly put into the hands of the Federal Labour Party'.<sup>164</sup> To illustrate this point he noted several Commonwealth achievements which included: legislation approval for a ten year fiscal agreement with states; Canberra's selection as Australia's parliamentary headquarters and the production of bank notes. Projects in progress included: the upgrading of Australia's defence forces; the introduction of postage stamps and the modernisation of mail steamers. Last but not least, plans at last had been implemented for the construction of the trans-Australian railway.<sup>165</sup> Therefore, it was of little surprise that Hackett was ecstatic, given that he could finally anticipate that several key federation reforms had eventually been implemented, whilst others were about to be activated. After years of talking and writing despondently about the hardships of federation, he finally acknowledged that both the commonwealth and its constituent states were now working towards mutual concerns.

In 1911, again writing in the *Western Australian*, he discussed a matter that had arisen from the annual conference of the Political Labor Leagues of New South Wales, where a suggestion had been made to abolish the High Court. As a delegate to the Australasian Federal Conventions that had suggested the Court's creation, he was

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<sup>163</sup> Holliman, *Century of Australian Prime Ministers*, pp. 20-21.

<sup>164</sup> WA, 31 December 1910, p. 6. Only from 1912 did the Australian Labor Party consistently use the name 'Labor', replacing the word 'Labour'. (Ross McMullin, *The Light on the Hill: The Australian Labor Party 1891-1991*, Melbourne, Victoria: Oxford University Press Australia, 1991, p. ix)

<sup>165</sup> *Ibid.*

astounded by such a proposal and defended its continued existence. He emphasised that by removing the High Court, scrutiny of legislative powers in Parliament would disappear and thereby one of the principal characteristics of the Constitution would also cease.<sup>166</sup> This was a further instance of his determination to defend a cause that he felt deeply committed to. The High Court still exists today.

## **Conclusion**

Hackett was always in favour of federation, but as has been argued, he was not in agreement with the conditions of Western Australia's admission, specifically in respect of the fiscal arrangements and Senate representation. He and his Western Australian colleagues achieved equal representation in the Senate early in proceedings, but he remained apprehensive about the state's future fiscal arrangements, even though reduced annual tariffs in Western Australia were in force from federation for a five year period on a reducing scale. After June 1898, he reluctantly recognised that Western Australia's entry conditions could no longer be improved, especially when the other colonies appeared willing to omit it as one of the original states. Even after Western Australia's entry, he continued to work to improve the state's fiscal circumstances, using his contacts in the eastern states. As in all matters, he had the people of Western Australia uppermost in his thoughts and he would to try by whatever means possible to enhance their living standards.

The Federation issue provided Hackett with an opportunity to be recognised by people throughout Australia. Also, through his participation at these conventions, his status in Australian society also grew, especially amongst some of the influential participants at the convention. An additional benefit from these proceedings was the beginning of his

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<sup>166</sup> *Ibid.*, 14 February 1911, p. 4.

lifelong friendship with the future Australian Prime Minister, Alfred Deakin.

Federation was not the only political matter on his mind during the 1890s, as on the local scene, he was the pivotal player in the campaign to abolish state aid to religious schools. His participation in this crusade will be examined in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER SIX: THE ABOLITION OF STATE AID

*'If the education atmosphere has been undisturbed in the past, it is all too clearly charged with electric clouds for the future, which will not settle themselves until in Western Australia we too see the system established which has become part of the life of every other Australian community'.*

– J. W. Hackett, October 1893.

### Introduction

This chapter will examine the episode in Western Australian colonial history that eventually culminated in the abolition of state aid to religious schools in 1895. It will concentrate on Hackett's participation in the campaign and it will be argued that he was the pivotal force in its abolition through his editorials in the *West Australian* and as a member of the Legislative Council. The Anglican Church, although supporting the idea, was only a minor player in this affair, having introduced the necessary resolutions through their annual Synod meeting in order to allow Hackett to pursue a public campaign. The chapter will also explain the nature of the education system before Hackett started to campaign and follow the legislative process through the Western Australian parliament between 1893 and 1895.

In contrast, it will also be illustrated how the Catholic Church, mainly through its head Bishop Matthew Gibney, and *The W.A. Record*, the public mouthpiece for the local Catholic community, opposed such legislation, but were overwhelmed by a bombardment of Hackett-penned newspaper articles. The chapter concludes by examining the effects that the new legislation had on the Catholic Church in Western Australia, and in particular on Gibney.

Mossenson writes that the period of the Colony's educational history between 1872 and 1885 could be called one of 'interlude, dull and unadventurous', as education was not a contentious issue within the community.<sup>1</sup> The 1871 Elementary Education Act authorised state aid to denominational schools, the main beneficiary being Catholic schools as Anglicans (as will be later explained) did not take full advantage of the legislation. With the influx of Catholic immigrants during the late 1880s to the goldfield regions, Protestant opposition to this system gradually increased, although many Protestant parliamentarians who belonged to the colonial élite were initially uninterested in seeing the system changed. However, Hackett, as a prominent lay-member of the Anglican Church, had other ideas.

This episode in colonial history has been extensively covered in Mossenson's *State Education in Western Australia, 1829–1960* and Woods' thesis, 'The State aid issue in Western Australia, 1885-1895'.<sup>2</sup> Mossenson writes that: 'Hackett was the central figure and that the *West Australian* was a chief instrument in the destruction of the dual system were [sic] freely recognized by Hackett's contemporaries'.<sup>3</sup> Woods agreed with Mossenson's assessment, writing: 'Hackett waged an almost non-stop campaign to bring about the amendments to the education system which he had been mooting for some years'.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Mossenson, *State Education in Western Australia 1829-1960*, p. 49.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 71-87; John D. Woods, 'The State Aid Issue in Western Australia, 1885-1895', M.Ed. Thesis, UWA, 1979.

<sup>3</sup> Mossenson, *State Education*, p. 81.

<sup>4</sup> Woods, 'The State Aid Issue in Western Australia', p. 56.

## Background

Before examining Hackett's actions in relation to these events it is necessary to briefly explain the background to the introduction of the legislation that led to the abolition of state aid. One question is: how had Roman Catholics attained their monopoly in instructing their young in religious beliefs? As Joan Carney suggests, there were several measures that created this situation. In April 1869, delegates to the Second Provincial Council of Australian Catholic Bishops in Melbourne criticised 'mixed schools' as detrimental to the Catholic faith and recommended that 'separate education for Catholic children be everywhere propagated'.<sup>5</sup> This led to a petition being presented by the Catholic Church to the Western Australian Legislative Council in July 1869 asking that legislation be enacted to bring this about.<sup>6</sup> However, with parliamentary members being predominantly Protestant, the petition was not accepted. In September 1869 Frederick Weld became Governor. As a staunch Catholic, it was not surprising that he was a passionate supporter of 'a dual system where government support would be provided for churches accepting educational responsibilities'.<sup>7</sup>

The successful parliamentarians who were elected in 1870 'had declared themselves unequivocally opposed to grants for denominational schools',<sup>8</sup> so Catholics had little chance of changing the system. However, Weld was not deterred by this initial failure. Indeed, as Mossenson has remarked, Weld was pivotal to 'the educational imbroglio of 1861-71'.<sup>9</sup> With the Governor's perseverance and with some amendments provided by

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<sup>5</sup> Cited by Joan Frances Carney, 'The Many Missions of Matthew Gibney', BA Honours Thesis, Murdoch University, 2000, p. 34.

<sup>6</sup> Mossenson, *State Education*, p. 38.

<sup>7</sup> Carney, 'The Many Missions of Matthew Gibney', p. 34.

<sup>8</sup> Mossenson, *State Education*, p. 41.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 39.

the Anglican Bishop Hale, the Elementary Education Act was eventually passed in 1871. This legislation ‘proposed secularisation of the government schools at the same time as the state-aided church schools were to be spared interference’.<sup>10</sup> Alice Lovat in her biography of Weld asserts that the Act was only approved after passing through ‘many vicissitudes in the hands of a suspicious Opposition who detected a Popish plot in every paragraph’.<sup>11</sup> The issue lay dormant until Hackett decided to overturn the 1871 Act.<sup>12</sup>

The 1871 Act provided for ‘a central board of education, elective district boards of education, and government and assisted (church) schools’, thus establishing a single government authority.<sup>13</sup> In contrast, in the eastern colonies, ‘dual Boards of Education were set up to enable national schools to supplement the activities of state-aided church schools’.<sup>14</sup> However, by the time Western Australia moved to abolish state aid, both Victorian and New South Wales governments had ceased financial assistance to church schools – in 1872 and 1880 respectively.<sup>15</sup>

In 1895, when state aid to denominational schools was abolished in Western Australia, the ratio between government schools, church schools and private schools was 5:1:3.<sup>16</sup> The government’s expenditure on non-government schools, including private ones, amounted to around 33% of available funding compared to that spent on government

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<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 44.

<sup>11</sup> Alice Lovat, *The Life of Sir Frederick Weld GCMG: A Pioneer of Empire*, London: John Murray, 1914, p. 198.

<sup>12</sup> Carney, ‘The Many Missions of Matthew Gibney’, pp. 33-44; Mossenson, *State Education*, pp. 36-48.

<sup>13</sup> Mossenson, *State Education*, pp. 43-44.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 12.

<sup>15</sup> A. G. Austin, *Australian Education 1788-1900: Church, State and Public Education in Colonial Australia*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., Melbourne: Pitman Pacific Books, 1972, p. 218; p. 223.

<sup>16</sup> Cited by Boyce, ‘The First Archbishop’, p. 61.

schools.<sup>17</sup> Although some private schools were secular, many were run by people with religious persuasions but not necessarily by any particular church authority.

Prior to any discussion of the abolition campaign in Western Australia, it should be noted that it was not fuelled by the same motives as had been the case in the eastern colonies. There, liberal secularists, who strongly believed that ‘religion must be excluded from the curriculum of the nation’s schools’, were the driving force.<sup>18</sup> In Western Australia, however, Hackett was anxious to abolish state aid for different reasons. First and foremost, in 1895 only two out of twenty-one state-aided denominational schools were Anglican.<sup>19</sup> With this disparity, resulting from the lack of any priority on the part of the Anglican authorities to teach the children of its own faith, except the children of the wealthy, Anglican families were sending their children to Catholic schools, mostly in Perth, with ‘over 600 protestants [sic]’ enrolled at Catholic schools in a Protestant community of around 50,000 people.<sup>20</sup>

Related to this inequality was the fact that many Catholic teachers were unpaid members of the teaching orders while Church of England schools, not having similar human resources, were obliged to pay their teaching staff. Also, Catholic education was directed at all levels of society, not just the social élite as was mostly the case in Anglican schools. However, as well as teaching, these educators (usually nuns) naturally attempted to convert non-Catholic children to their own faith. As Catholic schools were not paying their teachers, Bishop Gibney (who is portrayed later in this chapter) was shrewd enough to use his allocation of state aid to build schools in

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<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>18</sup> Austin, *Australian Education 1788-1900*, p. 189.

<sup>19</sup> Boyce, ‘The First Archbishop’, p. 61.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*



different parts of the colony, including the goldfields region. Hackett considered the situation abhorrent and searched for some way to reverse this imbalance.

Bishop Gibney was also skilful in future planning of Catholic schools. From the 1880s he consolidated their schools in populous locations. By closing their smaller schools they were attempting to be more resourceful, with the aim of improving their education performances. As Woods argues, from 1885 Catholic schools did improve their public examination performances, which led to the perception that their schools were a threat to those run by the government.<sup>21</sup>

Hackett was probably motivated to change the education system as a result of his own Irish upbringing. He came from a staunch but embattled Irish Protestant background and was fully aware of the possible repercussions for his own faith from Catholic dominance. He realised that in comparison with the less numerous Catholics, his own congregation in Western Australia was complacent in organising the education of their own children. After several years in the colony witnessing the organisational inertia of his Church, he considered that the only means of halting the apathy was to rectify the problem himself. In his native Ireland, Anglicans were in the minority and with the influx of Catholic immigrants to Western Australia during the gold rush era he was determined not to find himself in a minority in the country of his adoption. In Britain, the Church of England was the Established Church, with the reigning monarch as its head, a situation that could not be replicated in Australia. However, Hackett was determined that the Anglican Church would remain the dominant one in the colony. If no one else would take up the cudgels, he would do so himself. As Woods observed,

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<sup>21</sup> Woods, 'The State Aid Issue in Western Australia', p. 3.

‘the influence that Hackett had upon the abolition movement became increasingly obvious’.<sup>22</sup>

Lastly, although not openly mentioned, the leading Anglican parishioners, including Hackett, constituted the social élite of Western Australia. In contrast, Catholics were largely working class, notably the more recent gold-seeking immigrants. Hackett, as a parliamentarian and newspaper editor, was in a prime position to lead any attempt to overturn an education system that he considered unjust. He needed to exercise this influence, as during the campaign there appears to have been no public meetings or much correspondence in the *West Australian* in favour of the abolition of state aid. No one else campaigned vigorously on the issue other than Hackett himself. Consequently, it seems that it was Hackett who convinced the Anglican Church that the abolition of state aid would be beneficial to them.

By the early 1890s, Hackett wanted Western Australia to follow the eastern colonies on the education question. Its eastern counterparts had already rejected state aid to religious schools as being ‘inimical to both the harmony of the state and vitality of religion’<sup>23</sup> and had the appropriate section removed from their legislation. Therefore, by the time Western Australia gained responsible government in 1890 it was at variance with other Australian colonies. George Simpson MLA told his Legislative Assembly colleagues: ‘you had to come to Western Australia to prospect for and to discover this old fossilised [educational] system of State aid to religion’.<sup>24</sup> As James Bourke has remarked, a further incentive for uniformity was that throughout the nineteenth century, ‘free churches, with smaller proportions than Anglicans and Roman Catholics, became

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<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 46.

<sup>23</sup> Aveling, ‘Western Australian Society’, p. 596.

<sup>24</sup> *WAPD*, 10 January 1893, vol. 3, p. 640.

strong proponents of a single government education system'.<sup>25</sup> However, as will be made clear, this section of the community only played a minor role in the Western Australian campaign to remove state aid. Above all, the discovery of gold in the colony in the early 1890s witnessed an influx of immigrants from the eastern colonies, many of them Catholics.

As Laadan Fletcher asserts, these new arrivals made the colony quickly 'mindful of its sister colonies and less subservient to the traditions of Westminster' and consequently 'it was not surprising that Protestants who arrived from the east should question a system which was adverse to their interests and contrary to their experience'.<sup>26</sup> The three years it took to amend the statute were eventually described by John Forrest as one of most challenging 'differences, and dissensions, and disputations' he had experienced.<sup>27</sup> He talked of the bitterness in the debate as one of 'religious prejudices and bigotry shown, not by one side only, but by both sides of this question ... It is too firmly ingrained in them, but it has to be got rid of ...'.<sup>28</sup> Hackett was at the forefront of these efforts to change the legislation and was one of the 'bigots' described by Forrest. Not only did Hackett use the parliamentary forum to vent his opposition to the existing legislation, he was even more vindictive in the editorial columns of the *West Australian*.

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<sup>25</sup> James Bourke, 'Matthew Gibney: Promoter and Defender of Catholic Schools', in Laadan Fletcher, ed., *Pioneers of Education in Western Australia*, Nedlands: UWA Press, 1982, p. 108.

<sup>26</sup> Fletcher, 'Education of the people', p. 566.

<sup>27</sup> *WAPD*, 18 September 1895, vol. 8, p. 1038.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1041.

## Matthew Gibney

Hackett's main antagonist in the education debate was Matthew Gibney. Born in Co. Cavan, Ireland, in 1839, he was ordained a priest in June 1863 and arrived in Western Australia later the same year aboard the ship *Tartar*.<sup>29</sup> After being appointed to the Roman Catholic See of Perth in November 1886, he was subsequently consecrated as Bishop on 7 January 1887.<sup>30</sup> He was described as 'tall, strong, clear-eyed ... [and] develop[ed] a capacity for sustained, if rather aggressive, controversial writing'.<sup>31</sup> Such attributes were clearly essential, especially in his approaching clashes with Hackett. The census of 1861 showed that of the colony's total population of 15,593, Catholics comprised 3,786 people or 24.28%.<sup>32</sup> Before Gibney arrived in Western Australia in December 1863, what little assistance Catholic schools obtained from the colonial government, based on known religious affiliations in the population, had been withdrawn by Governor Arthur Kennedy in late 1856. The reason for this was that he 'sought to reconcile general and religious educational aspirations of parents in a religiously-mixed community'.<sup>33</sup> In the last year Catholic schools received £137 from a total expenditure of £932.<sup>34</sup>

Gibney's work in education commenced shortly after his arrival when he established orphanages in both Perth and Subiaco.<sup>35</sup> Frederick Weld's appointment as Governor on

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<sup>29</sup> Bourke, 'Matthew Gibney', p. 101.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 103.

<sup>32</sup> D. F. Bourke, *The History of the Catholic Church in Western Australia*, Perth: Archdiocese of Perth, 1979, p. i.

<sup>33</sup> Bourke, 'Matthew Gibney', p. 108.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 107.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 109.

30 September 1869<sup>36</sup> was a blessing for Gibney as the two had been corresponding over several years and their relationship was known to be ‘warm and personal’.<sup>37</sup> Therefore, it came as no surprise that with Bishop Gibney’s encouragement (not that Weld required it), the 1871 Elementary Education Act was passed. There followed years of consolidation of the Catholic school system with Gibney and Joseph Thomas Reilly establishing the Catholic newspaper the *Record* in 1874, firstly as a monthly and subsequently as a weekly.<sup>38</sup>

Before 1895, Gibney had provided sites and staff for his teaching orders. These were spread throughout Western Australia. For example, in May 1891, at the request of Gibney, the Presentation Sisters established themselves in the colony.<sup>39</sup> He aimed to make Geraldton the centre for Catholic education in that region by assisting with the cost of bringing religious teaching sisters from Ireland, although, as Ruth Marchant James has stressed, ‘it was an expense he could ill afford’.<sup>40</sup> Other Catholic religious orders established within the province including, in 1892 the Christian Brothers, who opened a College in St. Georges Terrace, Perth; the Oblate Fathers, who in 1894 established themselves in Fremantle; while a year later the Sisters of St John of God establish themselves in Kalgoorlie.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Black and Mandy, eds, *The Western Australian Parliamentary Handbook*, p. 5.

<sup>37</sup> Bourke, ‘Matthew Gibney’, p. 111.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 112.

<sup>39</sup> Ruth Marchant James, *Cork to Capricorn: A History of The Presentation Sisters in Western Australia 1891-1991*, Perth: The Congregation of the Presentation Sisters of Western Australia, 1996, p. 52.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 53.

<sup>41</sup> Bourke, ‘Matthew Gibney’, p. 119. For other schools that Gibney established, refer to Bourke, *The History of the Catholic Church in Western Australia*, pp. 139-140.

## The struggle begins

It was Hackett, as a committed Anglican, who originated the issue to abolish state aid to schools in a critical editorial in the *West Australian* in December 1889 when he wrote that the current Education Act had:

outlasted its usefulness and requires superseding. There are not wanting men of intelligence and foresight who boldly express the opinion that the dual system now in operation must eventually be abandoned, and that the colony will have to choose between denominationalism pure and simple and the State system as carried out in the other colonies of the group.<sup>42</sup>

At this early stage of proceedings, he realised the fight ahead of him: 'We should deplore the fight, more or less fanatical, which would probably precede any such change',<sup>43</sup> he wrote in December 1889, suggesting that the District Board of Education 'must be prepared to accept the responsibility of possibly re-opening the education question as a whole and destroying the comparative harmony which upon this subject has hitherto maintained'.<sup>44</sup> However, in this early stage of the campaign there is little doubt that even Hackett could have imagined that the debate would persist for a further six years. Several further editorials then described the current legislation as 'one-sided to a disgraceful degree'.<sup>45</sup> It was this continuous pressure and persistence that eventually resulted in a revolutionary transformation in Western Australia's educational system.

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<sup>42</sup> WA, 6 December 1889, p. 2.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 19 December 1892, p. 4. Other articles in the *West Australian* on the education debate included: 14 December 1889, p. 2; 18 October 1890, pp. 3, 13 December 1892, p. 2. *Western Mail* articles included: 18 October 1890, pp. 13, 10 September 1892, p. 20.

The Church of England authorities in Western Australia commenced their campaign to change the colony's education system when the Synod met in September 1892. The Dean of Perth, Frederick Goldsmith, moved a motion that it was desirable that 'ministers of religion should be permitted to give religious instruction to the children of their own communion during [government] school hours'.<sup>46</sup> The motion was carried unanimously. Not surprisingly, the meeting was extensively reported in Hackett's subsidiary weekly paper, the *Western Mail*. After Goldsmith spoke, he was followed by Canons Louch, Brown and Groser and Reverends Clairs and Garland.<sup>47</sup> It did not take long for the *Record* to respond to the Synod's motion by describing attacks on the system as 'dishonesties, defalcations and endless swindlings of men'.<sup>48</sup>

What was surprising about the debate was that Hackett was conspicuous by his absence in the Church's discussions. He left that to the clergy. Nevertheless, with his passion to see the education system altered, it seems that he used his influence and persuasive powers behind the scenes with the hierarchy, with the result that he eventually galvanised the Church on the issue. He realised that his future role would be to promote the cause through his newspaper editorials and the Legislative Council.

### **The serious debate commences**

In December 1892, the *West Australian* reported that the Member for Geraldton, George Simpson, had failed on the voices of parliamentary members to have the Education Act amended in respect to remuneration and employment conditions of

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<sup>46</sup> *WM*, 10 September 1892, p. 20.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>48</sup> *The W.A. Record [Record]*, 15 September 1892, p. 7.

teachers in government schools.<sup>49</sup> The rejection of the motion was sufficient cause for Hackett to once more reignite the education issue. In an editorial a few days later, he questioned the logic of those people who wished to retain the current policy: 'It seems, however, a matter of more than questionable policy for the State with one hand to establish purely Government Schools, and with the other to subsidise others to cut out their own institutions'.<sup>50</sup> Here, without directly expressing it, he was admitting that Anglican schools were not as well organised as Catholic ones, who were using their grants more skilfully. Then sarcastically he noted that the 'only recommendation which our present system of education [in Western Australia] appears to have is the somewhat doubtful one of antiquity'.<sup>51</sup> What he considered even worse was the condition around him: 'No one sitting upon a barrel of gunpowder cares to apply a match to the lid'.<sup>52</sup> He was prepared to take up the challenge, not only to improve the conditions of government schools, but in particular to abolish state aid.

What was the quality of teaching in Western Australian schools in 1893? Government schools were funded on the basis of performance through examination results. As previously mentioned, Catholic schools imported their usually unpaid but dedicated teachers either from overseas or from the eastern colonies, which compensated for the fact that they were usually unqualified. Mossenson and Woods both assert that government schools had generally inexperienced teachers, which produced stagnating schools with under-achieving children.<sup>53</sup> This eventually led to a commission of inquiry

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<sup>49</sup> WA, 13 December 1892, p. 2.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 19 December 1892, p. 4.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>53</sup> Mossenson, *State Education*, p. 74; Woods, 'The State Aid Issue in Western Australia', p. 47.



whose objective was to look ‘into the failure of the government schools to increase in size in accordance with the growth of population’.<sup>54</sup>

Hackett’s attack on the education system accelerated to maximum velocity with the release of the Education Commission report in April 1893, which appeared in the columns of the *West Australian*. A few days later he responded to the results. He summarised that the key findings of the report were that the Education Act had not been enforced; competition between private schools had increased; and government teachers were not paid enough.<sup>55</sup> He rejected these explanations and dismissed the report as irrelevant and ‘superfluous’.<sup>56</sup> In a counter-argument he emphasised that other colonies, including New South Wales in 1880, had come to the conclusion that it was impossible for both government and state-aided denominational schools to run effectively together. He also wrote that by supporting both systems the government’s efforts were similar to those ‘evil effects of ... robbing “Paul to pay Peter” [sic] system’.<sup>57</sup> He continued to argue that Western Australia’s government education institutions were becoming inferior, the salaries insignificant, and consequently teachers were of an unacceptable quality. One remedy he suggested was that if church schools went unfunded, the surplus funds could be reallocated to government schools, which would result in increases in school attendances and children receiving improved instruction.<sup>58</sup>

Hackett did not represent the School Commission fairly. For instance, he claimed that New South Wales and Victoria had both discontinued state aid with the aim that schools in those colonies would run more effectively. As previously explained, the key reason

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<sup>54</sup> Mossenson, *State Education*, p. 75.

<sup>55</sup> WA, 3 April 1893, p. 4.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*

for the two colonies withdrawing state aid from religious schools was that there should be a strict separation of church and state.

Five days later the *Record* responded to Hackett's attack on the Commission, asserting that the *West Australian* could have at least acquired 'a modicum of exact information concerning the Education Act of the colony and existing educational conditions'.<sup>59</sup> The *Record* responded to what it regarded as 'erroneous impressions and loose statements'.<sup>60</sup> It defended the Catholic schools' excellent results, and stated that these facts were as 'patent as the noonday sun'.<sup>61</sup> The writer laid the blame squarely in the hands of the colonial government, whom it accused of under-funding government schools.

Hackett did not allow the matter to rest and a month later responded to these criticisms. However, he did not directly reply to any specific accusations but instead decided to vent his anger upon the Central Board of Education, which he accused of being both a 'totally irresponsible body' and 'unworkable', having 'no beacon to warn it from mistakes and no friendly light to guide it to its goal of good'.<sup>62</sup> He saw no value in the Inspector of Schools, James P. Walton, reporting to the Board because from 1892 the Board had not accepted any of his advice. A recurring theme in this editorial was to claim that the government education system was 'doomed to destruction'.<sup>63</sup> This is an excellent example of Hackett using the newspaper to get his message through, not only to his fellow parliamentarians, but also to the public. No doubt he believed that if he

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<sup>59</sup> *Record*, 8 June 1893, p. 7.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>62</sup> *WA*, 24 July 1893, p. 4.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*

wrote often enough about what he considered the educational disparities, sooner or later other people would arrive at a similar conclusion.

As part of the Anglican hierarchy, Bishop Henry Hutton Parry probably supported Hackett in his attempts to abolish the dual system, although he died in November 1893 at the start of the parliamentary campaign to abolish state aid. Some years earlier, speaking at the Anglican Synod in December 1890, Parry had expressed his feelings that the current education system was generally satisfactory, although whatever changes were to be made, he favoured retaining religious teaching in government schools.<sup>64</sup> However, as John Tonkin asserts, Parry's main concerns while he was head of the Church in Western Australia were social problems such as alcohol abuse, but his foremost preoccupation was with the preparations for building St George's Cathedral.<sup>65</sup>

### **1893 The Elementary Education Act Amendment Bill**

The education question was one subject on which Hackett and his friend John Forrest held differing views. Considering that Forrest held a progressive outlook for the colony, similar to that of Hackett, especially in the establishment of public institutions, it was an unexpected disagreement. As Mossenson suggests, a possible reason for the divergence of views could have been that Forrest was known to have held a 'long and friendly association' with Bishop Gibney.<sup>66</sup> In this instance, the Premier probably thought that it was politically sensible to support the *status quo*. On 28 September 1893, the Colonial Secretary, Stephen Parker, introduced the Elementary Education Act

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<sup>64</sup> Woods, 'The State Aid Issue in Western Australia' pp. 40-41.

<sup>65</sup> Tonkin, *Cathedral and Community*, p. 37.

<sup>66</sup> Mossenson, *State Education*, p. 83.

Amendment Bill in the Legislative Assembly.<sup>67</sup> During the Second Reading of the Bill on 10 October 1893, members discussed the proposal to abolish the Central Board of Education and replace it with an Education Department. However, Forrest could see no need to alter the existing system:

I think that the system of education which was established over twenty years ago and which they [Roman Catholics] have availed themselves of to a large extent – and which any other religious section of the community can avail themselves of, if they like – should not be interfered with, except for some very good reason, or some very great pressure indeed.<sup>68</sup>

Hackett thought differently and was determined to introduce a strong, centralised government education system into Western Australia, which he believed would eventually generate a multitude of additional social benefits:

I am one of those who believe that if a thoroughly efficient system of education were introduced, we should have to spend less on our police, on our magistrates, and on our courts, and that the virtue and morality of our people would be raised to a degree we have never yet realised in any age in the world's history.<sup>69</sup>

Crowley asserts that Forrest eventually changed his mind only when he realised that there was a growing 'public and parliamentary opinion' to abolish state aid.<sup>70</sup> However, two years later, in 1895, he continued to have misgivings about amending the Act.

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<sup>67</sup> WAPD, 28 September 1893, vol. 5, p. 951.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, 10 October 1893, vol. 5, p. 1107.

<sup>69</sup> C.L., 'A Great Triumvirate: Lord Forrest, Sir J.W. Hackett and Archbishop Riley (6)'; Royal Western Australian Historical Society, John Forrest cutting file no. 1/1847/3 (*Sunday Times* article, n.d.).

<sup>70</sup> Crowley, *Big John Forrest 1847-1918*, p. 157.

When speaking on the Assisted Schools Abolition Bill in September 1895 he told his colleagues that:

I have lived in this country all my life, and I have never heard any fault found with the manner in which the Roman Catholic body conduct their schools, unless it be that they are too eager, in the eyes of some people, to look after and conserve the interests of the religion they profess.<sup>71</sup>

It was one issue over which Hackett and Forrest would continue to disagree.

In anticipation of the Elementary Education Act Amendment Bill being debated in parliament later in the year, the Catholic community held a meeting on 21 July 1893 to discuss the proposed amendments under the chairmanship of Timothy Quinlan MLA at St Patrick's Hall, Irwin St.<sup>72</sup> Naturally, every speaker supported the retention of the current education system, with Frederick Moorhead attacking 'the Wesleyan, Methodist and Presbyterian Churches [for] opposing the education system'.<sup>73</sup> He explained to the sympathetic audience that he considered that such people's 'ignorance of this subject was only equalled by the recklessness of their statements'.<sup>74</sup>

Another speaker, J. F. O'Callaghan, referred to an article in the *West Australian* (thus making a direct attack on Hackett, without mentioning his name) as having been written by a person who 'knew something of the Elementary Education Act, and by his deliberately deceitful arguments and misrepresentation endeavoured to mislead the

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<sup>71</sup> *WAPD*, 18 September 1895, vol. 8, pp. 1043-1044.

<sup>72</sup> Quinlan was orphaned at an early age and Bishop Gibney persuaded J. T. Reilly to raise him. (Harry C. J. Phillips, *Speakers & Presidents of the Parliament of Western Australia*, Perth, WA.: Western Australian Parliamentary History Project Publications, 2004, p. 121.)

<sup>73</sup> *Record*, 27 July 1893, p. 8.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*

public'.<sup>75</sup> He argued that what made the matter worse was that '[n]inety-nine out of one-hundred accept the statements of a newspaper as facts'.<sup>76</sup> The meeting was a rallying call, for by then its supporters had some realisation that they were fighting an uphill battle to retain the dual system. There was a motion for a deputation to meet the Premier to advise him of the feeling of the meeting.

In August 1893 Hackett told his readers of the intention of the proposed legislation. He wrote that the amendments were 'manifestly grounded upon justice, expediency, and sound experience, that it can hardly fail to become law'.<sup>77</sup> He also considered it was 'the right of the clergy to give religious teaching to all children of the members of their respective communions'.<sup>78</sup> By explaining the bill's aims in the *West Australian*, he had reached out to more people than just those who had attended the St Patrick's Hall meeting and the readership of the *Record*. He had been astute enough to understand that it was only a matter of perseverance and time before sufficient people would be persuaded by his arguments. However, he would not have realised that the struggle would take a further two years to finalise.

Two months later, on 2 October 1893, the day the education question was to be debated in parliament, in a further editorial Hackett reiterated the benefits of the proposed amendments in the hope that parliamentarians would 'give us some idea of what their desires may be as to the Government and legislation of the future'.<sup>79</sup> The timing of this

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<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>77</sup> WA, 10 August 1893, p. 4.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, 2 October 1893, p. 4.

article was again no coincidence, for later that day the bill passed its second reading in the Council.<sup>80</sup>

During the committee stage of the bill there was a motion to delete Clause 25, which stipulated that no new assisted schools should be established but that the existing ones should continue to be supported. The Premier, John Forrest, was the key speaker for the clause's deletion, stating that '[h]e did not intend to assist anyone in fomenting discord and dissension amongst our various religious bodies' and added that 'he had no sympathy with anyone [referring to Hackett] who tried to pit one religion against another and to disseminate discord amongst the community'. He saw no reason why the current system should be changed, especially as there had been no community agitation for change.<sup>81</sup> William Marmion, a Roman Catholic and also the Commissioner of Crown Lands, supported Forrest. In opposing the clause's deletion, Alexander Richardson, the member for De Grey, argued that the government should not meddle in such matters and allow 'religious toleration in the broadest, kindest, and most comprehensive form'.<sup>82</sup> Clause 25 of the bill was eventually removed by eleven votes to four and the lower house consequently passed the bill.<sup>83</sup> Hackett was furious at the outcome.<sup>84</sup> He angrily told his colleagues that 'a fight on the question of the continuation of assistance to these schools must take place'.<sup>85</sup> In retrospect however, it had not been an entire defeat for him, as some vital amendments had been passed, notably the establishment of a Ministry of Education and the abolition of the Board.

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<sup>80</sup> *WAPD*, 2 October 1893, vol. 5, p. 982.

<sup>81</sup> *WAPD*, 11 October 1893, vol. 5, p. 1152.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1153.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1155; *WAPD*, 12 October 1893, vol. 5, p. 1172.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, 11 October 1893, vol. 5, p. 1156.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, 12 October 1893, vol. 5, p. 1166.

Hackett expressed his disgust to his *West Australian* readers, advising them that Clause 25 had not been inserted into the Education Act. His resentment overflowed in his writings when he described the opposition to it. He remembered only too well the Catholic Church in his youth in Ireland and told his readers that opposition came ‘from the descendants of a people who for generations have been filling the air with their cries against the peculiar religious privileges accorded to one-fourth of the inhabitants of Ireland in opposition to the wishes of the other three-quarters’.<sup>86</sup> His fury continued:

We have been asleep, stagnant, in a condition of lethargy, of coma, not for twenty but for fifty years ... [b]ut if the signs of the time are to be trusted this “peacefulness” has departed and it is to be hoped for ever ... On this subject [education] there will be peace no longer. If the education atmosphere has been undisturbed in the past, it is all too clearly charged with electric clouds for the future, which will not settle themselves until in Western Australia we too see the system established which has become part of the life of every other Australian community.<sup>87</sup>

In the broad non-Catholic community there does not seem to have been any interest in the cause, which explains why there was little public debate on the issue. One exception was Reverend George Rowe who had been appointed head of the Wesleyan faith in Western Australia earlier in 1893.<sup>88</sup>

On 5 October of that year at Wesley Church, Rowe gave an address on the education issue. Predictably, Hackett reported the meeting as the minister held similar views on the issue to his own and again reiterated that ‘no question deserved more consideration

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<sup>86</sup> WA, 12 October 1893, p. 4.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>88</sup> Whittington, *Gold and Typhoid*, p. 17.



at the hands of Parliament than the education question'.<sup>89</sup> Rowe suggested that part of the current legislation had been defeated because it had been too close to the prorogation of Parliament to be adequately debated. He, like Forrest, considered Western Australia's religious debate very difficult: 'Nowhere had he met more religious bigotry or ecclesiastical assumption [sic] than he had in West Australia'.<sup>90</sup> However, he was pleased that the Central Board of Education was being replaced by the appointment of an Education Minister.

Rowe emphasised that the current system required changing, stressing, however, that any amendments should not only benefit the Anglican or Catholic churches: 'Surely the people outside these parties were entitled to some consideration'.<sup>91</sup> In conclusion, he hoped that some day 'the conditions of both State and Assisted schools [be] equal, and the State school teacher would stand a fair chance'.<sup>92</sup> One method he suggested as a way of doing this was to distribute 'Government money for Government schools and noothers'.<sup>93</sup>

As editor and part-owner of the colony's most popular daily newspaper, and its weekly subsidiary the *Western Mail*, Hackett realised the influence he had on his readers and unashamedly used it to express his personal views on a regular basis. This can be seen with any event of public significance, notably in the discussions on Federation and also with the education debate. This type of 'immediate publicity' was not available to his detractors. Predictably, he rarely published the opinions of his critics, although when

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<sup>89</sup> WA, 7 October 1893, p. 3.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*

he did so he also published his own immediate response beneath the article.<sup>94</sup> The *Record* was published each Thursday and was therefore not capable of an instant response. In respect of the education debate, the *Record* did not, and importantly *could* not respond comprehensively to Hackett's assertions.

It was not until 26 October 1893 that the newspaper reprinted Marinus Canning's 'thoughtful and finished deliverance' speech from the Assembly of 10 October - sixteen days after the actual speech - as he was one speaker who advocated that Clause 25 be expunged from the legislation.<sup>95</sup> Canning, an Anglican, argued that the Roman Catholic Church should be encouraged to continue 'to develop its system, and to enable it to carry out the excellent work it is engaged in, in connection with the training of youth, to the utmost possible extent'.<sup>96</sup> However, the *Record* had no writer who could compete with Hackett's eloquence, except possibly Gibney, who ran the *Record* and, just as significantly, could not respond with the same regularity.

Bourke asserts that three factors put pressure on the Catholic education system during the 1890s. Firstly, with the gold discoveries in the colony during that period, the Catholic population grew. In 1891 it was estimated to be 12,602, while ten years later it had increased dramatically to 41,893, although the percentage of Catholics in the total population had slightly decreased to 22.75%.<sup>97</sup> However, in the eastern goldfields region of the colony, the percentage was considerably higher, with the Catholic population comprising 29% of the region's total.<sup>98</sup> The increase dramatically amplified

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<sup>94</sup> Refer to Gibney's letter to *West Australian*, 6 April 1895, p. 6 and Hackett's response beneath it.

<sup>95</sup> *Record*, 19 October 1893, p. 9; 26 October 1893, p. 8; *WAPD*, 10 October 1893, vol. 5, pp. 1108-1109.

<sup>96</sup> *WAPD*, 10 October 1893, vol. 5, p. 1109.

<sup>97</sup> Bourke, *The History of the Catholic Church in Western Australia*, p. i.

<sup>98</sup> Bourke, 'Matthew Gibney', p. 115. This would have been the only region in the colony where state aid to schools would have had considerable support.

Gibney's workload by placing a strain on all Catholic services such as 'communications, housing, health and ... education'.<sup>99</sup> Secondly, as will be explained and expanded upon, Gibney persevered with his campaign to retain state aid to religious schools and finally, Bourke contends that after 1895, as will also be made clear later in this thesis, despite the end to state aid, Gibney recklessly continued to expand Catholic schools and religious orders.<sup>100</sup>

The protagonists in the education imbroglio did not stop discussing the issue after the amendments to the Act were passed in October 1893. They continued through their respective newspapers to espouse their opinions, although there was not to be another debate in parliament for a further year.<sup>101</sup> The attacks by the *Record* on Hackett became personal. One example was in February 1894 in an eloquent editorial containing a thinly disguised attack on him. In part the editorial noted:

It is instructive to consider the character of its assailants. Almost to a man they are newcomers, almost to a man they are unmarried and childless or occupy such positions that they would hardly send their children to free elementary schools, almost to a man they are devoid of the smallest particle of knowledge of the matter in hand. Indeed, it becomes clear from a very brief study of their words and acts that their chief qualification to meddle with the education question is an ignorance so profound that it fears nothing.<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>99</sup> Bourke, 'Matthew Gibney', p. 115.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>101</sup> *WA*: 4, 7, 12 December 1893, 12 February 1894, 5 March 1894, 23, 29 May 1894, 10, 25 July 1894; *WM*: 17 March 1894, 26 May 1894, 2 June 1894; *Record*: 22 February 1894, 15 March 1894.

<sup>102</sup> *Record*, 22 February 1894, p. 7.

The article went on to accuse the Catholic Church's assailant of being 'deliberately misleading' in some of his assertions.<sup>103</sup> There is little doubt that the author (probably Gibney) was referring to Hackett. Yet again, Hackett handled the *Record's* criticism by reiterating how outdated the education structure in Western Australia had become and that state aid to church schools had already ceased in other colonies. His response concentrated on the existing twenty-three-year-old system that had been introduced into Western Australia in 1871:

Just because old Western Australia with its progress, its ideas, its political life, and its social conditions which are some couple of generations behind the rest of Australia, may have approved of this dual system, for that very reason we conceive a fair presumption is raised against it. New Western Australia requires new bottles for its new wine.<sup>104</sup>

Not satisfied with attacking Hackett, the *Record* also turned its fury on other parliamentary adversaries (although not naming them), such as Assembly members George Simpson and Robert Sholl, claiming 'Not one of these men probably had read the Act through, and certainly not one of them had mastered its provisions'.<sup>105</sup> The article continued in an embittered tone accusing the 'rank and file' of being opponents to state aid:

For want of an argument they made up by loudness of assertion, advancing unfounded charges and extravagant demands with a vigour which, perhaps, served at least to strengthen their own convictions. Meanwhile the cool-

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<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>104</sup> *WA*, 5 March 1894, p. 4.

<sup>105</sup> *Record*, 22 February 1894, p. 7.

headed public could smile at their impotent vehemence,  
their audacious ignorance, their childish confidence ...<sup>106</sup>

The article continued in a similar vein. In contrast, the *Record* considered supporters of the existing system such as Assembly members Marinus Canning, Thomas Molloy and Timothy Quinlan as being ‘characterised by a fairness, practical spirit and intimate acquaintance with their subject wonderfully refreshing after the floods of rant and misrepresentation’.<sup>107</sup> Catholics were determined that their opinions would be read, especially by those of their own faith, as there was little likelihood of their views being printed in the *West Australian*.

### **The 1894 parliamentary debate**

When the issue was again debated in parliament in October and November 1894, there were several significant factors that had improved the case for ending the dual system. Firstly, in June and July of that year colonists had voted in new parliamentarians.<sup>108</sup> This was important, as in 1890 Western Australia had attained responsible government, releasing it from the supervisory authority of the Governor. With the discovery of gold the colony’s population rapidly increased from 46,290 in 1890 to 82,072 by the end of 1894.<sup>109</sup> Many t’othersiders settled in the goldfields regions with the consequence that three new Legislative Assembly goldfield electorates, Nannine, Pilbarra<sup>110</sup> and Yilgarn, were established. Furthermore, in 1893 manhood suffrage was introduced and then a

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<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.* Canning was of the Church of England faith, while Molloy and Quinlan were Roman Catholic.

<sup>108</sup> Black and Mandy, eds., *The Western Australian Parliamentary Handbook*, pp. 358-359.

<sup>109</sup> Seddon and Ravine, *A City and its Setting*, p. 279.

<sup>110</sup> This was the correct spelling for the region at the time.

year later the nominated Legislative Council was replaced with an elective one.<sup>111</sup> The combination of all these factors created an atmosphere in favour of the abolition of state aid because with the dramatic increase in the colony's population, many of the new settlers were accustomed to the state and religion being separated in their school education systems.

When the new Elementary Education Act Amendment Bill had its brief second reading in the Legislative Council it was notable that Hackett did not speak.<sup>112</sup> However, there is little doubt that he was working behind the scenes persuading his fellow parliamentarians to implement the necessary amendments. Stephen Parker, the Colonial Secretary, was the key speaker who explained to his colleagues that there were two objects, the first being to 'enable the Education Department to increase the fees and allowances of teachers in Government Schools' and secondly to have 'compulsory education in both Government and Assisted Schools'.<sup>113</sup> Frederick Crowder, a Catholic member, attempted to have the bill delayed by six months; however, his amendment failed and consequently the bill was passed.<sup>114</sup>

Predictably, the usual flurry of editorials appeared around the time of the debates. Also, the Catholic community were determined to be well prepared for the imminent tussle. On 6 October 1894, two days before the parliamentary debate commenced in the Assembly, a deputation of Catholics met the Premier. This was followed four days later with a meeting of the newly established Catholic Association held at the Mechanics'

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<sup>111</sup> Mossenson, *State Education*, p. 83.

<sup>112</sup> *WAPD*, 22 November 1894, vol. 7, pp.1524-1527.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 1524-1525.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1525; p. 1527.

Institute in Howick St, Perth. The keynote speaker at the gathering was Bishop Gibney.<sup>115</sup>

On 8 October 1894, Simpson (a gold mining speculator) moved a motion in the Assembly that ‘it is undesirable to further extend the system of State aid to Assisted Schools’.<sup>116</sup> Once more the motion failed to advance, when it was defeated by fourteen votes to eleven.<sup>117</sup> Members who supported the Bill included: Robert Sholl, George Randell and Walter James. Simpson argued that with the exception of ‘a weekly sheet belonging to a particular denomination, every newspaper in this country is in favour of the abolition of the present dual system’.<sup>118</sup> However, those who managed to defeat the motion included Catholic members, Francis Conner, William Marmion and Charles Moran, together with Protestant members, the influential brothers John and Alexander Forrest.<sup>119</sup> The Premier was still convinced that no change should take place. He again argued that since the Act had been in force since 1871 it had ‘worked fairly well on the whole from that time up to this, and, I believe, given satisfaction to the majority of the people of the colony’.<sup>120</sup>

Hackett was livid at the defeat of the bill and two days later told his *West Australian* readers that Catholics had ‘no scruples of conscience’ when debating the issue.<sup>121</sup> In contrast, Catholics were euphoric: ‘The defeat which the *West Australian* and its henchmen have sustained is of such a decisive character that the assumption of a bold

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<sup>115</sup> *Record*, 18 October 1894, p. 9.

<sup>116</sup> *WAPD*, 8 October 1894, vol. 7, p. 935.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 974.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 935.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 974.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 947.

<sup>121</sup> *WA*, 10 October 1894, p. 4.

front becomes no easy matter'.<sup>122</sup> However, the *Record's* jubilation was short lived. Again, Hackett used his editorial columns to persuade the public of his own convictions. He uncharacteristically personally attacked Bishop Gibney who he considered was a man 'with earnestness and evident conviction, but with that singular inaccuracy and a disregard of future correction, which it has to be regretted have been too conspicuous among the clerical and other advocates of this cause'.<sup>123</sup> He continued his rage against the Bishop, accusing him of demanding 'that the assisted authorities should be permitted to choose their own school literature reveals at once the lofty pretensions of the Catholic Church, and the impossibility of this or any other Australian Government ever coming to terms with it'.<sup>124</sup> He concludes the editorial by warning that the 'Catholic Association with its projectors, is treading on perilous ground both for the State and for itself'.<sup>125</sup> This is a further illustration of the manner in which Hackett exercised his influence in Western Australia.

In mid-October 1894, Hackett once again strategically published an editorial explaining the advantages of the current amendments before parliament. Yet again it was no coincidence that the adjourned debate of the Second Reading on the Elementary Education Act Amendment Bill in the Assembly was to be continued on the day the article appeared in the paper.<sup>126</sup> Again he aimed to increase public support for the legislation.

During the parliamentary debate, Hackett allowed 'PRINCIPLE', a supporter for changes to the education system, to express his/her views on the subject in the

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<sup>122</sup> *Record*, 11 October 1894. p. 7

<sup>123</sup> *WA*, 15 October 1894, p. 4.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*, 18 October 1894, p. 6; *WAPD*, 18 October 1894, 7, pp. 1148-1154.



correspondence columns of the *Western Mail*: '[I]f any religious body wishes to provide themselves with religious schools for the benefit of their children, it has a right to do so at their own expense'.<sup>127</sup> This episode reflected Hackett's increasing influence in Western Australia in his capacity as part-owner of two influential local newspapers. It showed that at any time he could allow other people to support him on any issue he was promoting. In contrast, again, the *Record* could only respond to events belatedly.

The *Record* continued to attack several other parliamentarians, notably George Simpson, George Randell and George Leake, for their stance on the issue.<sup>128</sup>

Meanwhile, Hackett persisted by continuing to condemn the structure itself 'as the bastard system of education, with the defects of many systems and the advantages in their truest sense of none'.<sup>129</sup> These comments were tactically placed in the press, as the previous evening had seen the final reading of the Elementary Education Act Amendment Bill in the Assembly, and the final debate in the Council was due on the following day, 22 November.<sup>130</sup> The Bill was finally passed on the members' voices.<sup>131</sup>

Following the legislation being passed, discussion on the issue continued in the press.<sup>132</sup> In early 1895 Hackett realised that the tide was steadily moving towards his objective of total abolition. In February he wrote another of his scathing editorials, once more directing his outrage at the luckless Bishop Gibney. He described Gibney's approach as one which indulged 'in abuse and insinuation of a kind which, though it might pass unnoticed in an irresponsible and obscure individual, cannot but be regretted, coming as

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<sup>127</sup> *WM*, 20 October 1894, p. 9.

<sup>128</sup> *Record*, 25 October 1894, p. 4, 15 November 1894, p. 7.

<sup>129</sup> *WA*, 21 November 1894, p. 4.

<sup>130</sup> *WAPD*, 20 November 1894, vol. 7, p. 1508.

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*, 22 November 1894, vol. 7, p. 1527.

<sup>132</sup> Refer *WA*: 31 December 1894, 1, 2 January 1895.

it does from the head in this colony of a powerful and historic church' and alleged that such statements were 'old Pagan tactics'.<sup>133</sup> Then Hackett hypocritically offered Gibney an olive branch: 'There is no wish on the part of the opponents of the dual system to make the question one of Protestants against Roman Catholics'.<sup>134</sup> In writing this, what did Hackett consider the controversy to be about, if it did not relate to religion? He continued: '[L]et the leaders on either side refrain as far as they as they are able from language which may offend the religious susceptibilities of their opponents'.<sup>135</sup> He warned Gibney: 'Should it unhappily come to pass that at the next general election the cry of "No Popery" is raised, Bishop Gibney will only have himself to blame', especially in the 'use of violent and exaggerated language'.<sup>136</sup>

The above editorial is a further outstanding illustration of Hackett's eloquence and even hypocrisy. In one instance he criticised his opponent, then he dramatically changed his tone to a conciliatory one. What was probably more infuriating to Gibney, was that the issue was essentially lost. Consequently, the impression is gained that Hackett not only yearned to triumph, but importantly for himself, desired to drive his defeated rival into oblivion.

### **Mission achieved**

In May 1895, Hackett was still unwavering in his quest to make the appropriate legislative amendments. He considered that the dismantling of the denominational system was 'the pressing problem of the hour' and stressed that until it was abolished

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<sup>133</sup> WA, 9 February 1895, p. 4.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*

‘the development of the material welfare of the colony’ would suffer.<sup>137</sup> He consciously kept the topic at the public forefront:

The [education] matter is the only one which is now prominently before the country. Nay, it will be generally admitted that until it is settled practical politics must be reduced to an inferior position. This is always the penalty which has to be paid when a great principle of the first order has to be determined.<sup>138</sup>

He was relentless in the pursuit of his cause until once again the issue had its annual parliamentary discussion. On the day of the debate in the Assembly, two letters appeared in the *West Australian*. One, headed “COMPROMISE”, assertively claimed: ‘Only dead men and fools never change their opinion’.<sup>139</sup> Part of the Assisted Schools Abolition Bill introduced in September 1895 read: ‘That the contribution from public funds towards the maintenance of Assisted Schools shall cease on the 31<sup>st</sup> December 1895’.<sup>140</sup> Only the matter of compensation, mostly to Catholic schools for the loss of funds, was to be determined.

The Premier had finally changed his mind and in doing so admitted that the whole issue had exhausted him: ‘the last two or three years, differences and dissensions, and disputations have arisen, perhaps more in regard to this question than to any other, especially during our Parliamentary elections’. He hoped that the passing of the Bill would eventually result in ‘a good deal of quiet and peace, [especially] at any rate for some time to come, in our Parliamentary elections’.<sup>141</sup> After a lengthy debate, the

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<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*, 21 May 1895, p. 4.

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*, 18 September 1895, p. 9.

<sup>140</sup> *WAPD*, 18 September 1895, vol. 8, p. 1039.

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1038.

resolution was passed the following day by twenty votes to ten and completed its successful third reading on 1 October 1895.<sup>142</sup> Two days later, the Bill passed its second and third readings in the Council.<sup>143</sup>

It was not all trouble-free for those parliamentary members whose aim was to abolish state aid. During the committee stage of the Bill, a division was interrupted as the lights went out in the chamber.<sup>144</sup> Then, a day later, the committee debate resumed on the issue of compensation to be paid to assisted schools for their loss of funds from the public purse. There was a majority of only a single vote when members voted to reduce the compensation amount of £20,000.<sup>145</sup> Subsequently, during the third reading of the Bill on the following day, 26 September, the Assembly allocated £15,000 for compensation for the loss of the funds.<sup>146</sup>

In an editorial dated 27 September 1895, Hackett gloated over the decision. He mentioned the compensation amount, optimistically hopeful that the Catholic community would ‘accept the settlement in the spirit of conciliation and acknowledgment of past services’.<sup>147</sup> Speaking from the victor’s perspective, he expressed his feelings that ‘many a hard knock [had been] given and taken, [it] need leave not a trace of bitterness behind, nor the least ground for recalling with resentment the part played by any of the actors’.<sup>148</sup> However, with a dispute that had lasted several

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<sup>142</sup> *Ibid.*, 19 September 1895, vol. 8, p. 1088; *WAPD*, 1 October 1895, vol. 8, p. 1158.

<sup>143</sup> *Ibid.*, 3 October 1895, vol. 8, pp. 1205-1206.

<sup>144</sup> *Ibid.*, 24 September 1895, vol. 8, p. 1095.

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.*, 25 September 1895, vol. 8, p. 1132.

<sup>146</sup> *Ibid.*, 26 September 1895, vol. 8, p. 1149.

<sup>147</sup> *WA*, 27 September 1895, p. 4.

<sup>148</sup> *Ibid.*

years, was Hackett being the ultimate optimist? Catholics would definitely not be forgetting the bitter animosity overnight, especially as they had lost the argument.

Meanwhile, in February 1895 Charles Riley had taken up his post as head of the Anglican Church in Western Australia. Throughout nearly the entire campaign to abolish state aid to religious schools there was no permanent head of the Church of England. For this reason there is no doubt that during this period Hackett seized the opportunity to be the unofficial *de facto* leader on this issue on behalf of the Church, although between Parry's death in 1893 and Riley's arrival in 1895, Hackett's nemesis, Dean Frederick Goldsmith, was the administrator of the diocese.<sup>149</sup> The Dean had initially 'identified himself publicly with the defence of the dual system' early in 1894;<sup>150</sup> however, by the end of the year, realising he had isolated himself on the issue, he reversed his opinion in support of the abolition of state aid.<sup>151</sup> It seems that Riley was not too interested in the concluding stages of the debate as he correctly realised that Hackett was in full control of the situation. As Boyce asserts, Riley was satisfied 'so long as the state guaranteed the clergy access to government schools during school hours, and he chastised those clergy who neglected their responsibilities in state schools'.<sup>152</sup>

The *Record* decided to issue a final verdict on the matter by claiming in an editorial that neither party could claim a decisive victory. The writer considered that assisted schools could 'retire from the field with all the honours of war – with drums beating and flags flying'.<sup>153</sup> Mention was made of assisted schools' past achievements: 'they have always

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<sup>149</sup> Tonkin, *Cathedral and Community*, p. 63.

<sup>150</sup> Mossenson, *State Education*, p. 79.

<sup>151</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>152</sup> Boyce, 'The First Archbishop', p. 62.

<sup>153</sup> *Record*, 12 October 1895, p. 8.

maintained the highest standard of efficiency'.<sup>154</sup> Then the editorial switched its attention to the recent parliamentary debates, in which their opponents were described as misrepresenting 'the position and objects of the Catholic body' and was generally characterised by 'men whose objects in life are petty, sordid and selfish'.<sup>155</sup> What was the writer attempting to achieve in the editorial, for Catholics had truly been humiliated? It was hardly likely that Protestants would forget the issue quickly, especially when the *Record* admitted the fight had been 'an arduous and long-sustained struggle'.<sup>156</sup> The likely explanation was that the writer had been endeavouring to place a brave face on events, which had finished as an unmitigated defeat for the Catholic Church.

Bourke wrote that 'Gibney emerged from a losing battle with his courage and determination enhanced, if not his capacity for coherent argument'.<sup>157</sup> From the evidence just provided, this statement must be disputed. Gibney, through his belief 'that the best defence of his position was attack'<sup>158</sup> was totally outgunned by Hackett's incessant bombardment of eloquent editorials on the subject. The *Record* was in no position to respond immediately. Moreover, when the paper did react, it retorted with spiteful remarks directed towards its accusers.

Gibney was devastated by the abolition of state aid. He continued to behave as if nothing had happened and persisted with his expansionist programme of Catholic schools. By 1909, there were 6,969 children attending 80 Catholic schools.<sup>159</sup> By then

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<sup>154</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>155</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>156</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>157</sup> Bourke, 'Matthew Gibney', p. 119.

<sup>158</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 117.

<sup>159</sup> Bourke, *The History of the Catholic Church in Western Australia*, p. 127.

the Western Australian Catholic diocese was experiencing acute financial difficulties and as a result Gibney was forced to retire on 14 May 1910.<sup>160</sup> Unfortunately for Gibney, as Bourke writes, his personality had been more practically inclined ‘rather than of a scholarly bent’.<sup>161</sup> He had been overpowered by Hackett’s rhetoric. As has been illustrated, this was an enormous handicap in his bitter exchanges with the articulate and acrimonious Hackett.

## **Conclusion**

With the abolition of state aid to church schools in 1895, Western Australia was left with a Ministry of Education that centrally controlled all facets of the colony’s education system. This included providing non-denominational religious instruction in government schools by existing teachers, while visiting churchmen provided specific denominational teaching. It also resulted in some religious schools becoming private elementary schools, whereupon they were ‘relieved of all the restrictions regarding religious instruction and freed from the inspection of their secular work’.<sup>162</sup> Another result of the withdrawal of state aid to religious schools was that some Protestant parents withdrew their children from Catholic schools as they realised more financial assistance would be directed to state schools.

The struggle to abolish state aid had been lengthy and acrimonious. It had been Hackett’s motivation, perseverance, and ruthless determination that had stirred the sectarian feeling which eventually achieved his aims. He created public opinion on the issue only when he realised that the Anglican Church was not going to act.

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<sup>160</sup> Bourke, ‘Matthew Gibney’, p. 124.

<sup>161</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 103.

<sup>162</sup> Mossenson, *State Education*, p. 87.

He could not have achieved the desired outcome without the barrage of newspaper editorials, together with his work behind the scenes with both his parliamentary colleagues and the church hierarchy. The episode further cemented his status in local society, especially as the majority of the population were Protestants. He could now return to concentrate his energies on his newspaper.



## CHAPTER SEVEN: THE NEWSPAPER MAN

*'Everyone eagerly peruses his [Hackett's] newspaper. It preserves the purity of public life and disarms oppression, inspires the spirit of patriotism, does homage to the brave, the good, the true, and makes vice ashamed'.*

- W. B. Kimberly, 1897.

### Introduction

Hackett's principal employment in Western Australia derived from his association with Charles Harper, which began when their joint ownership of the *West Australian* began in 1883. A year later Hackett was appointed the newspaper's business manager<sup>1</sup> and subsequently became its editor following the resignation of Thomas Cockburn-Campbell in July 1887. He held this position until his death and, following Harper's death in 1912, was also the newspaper's sole proprietor.

It has been argued throughout this thesis, that Hackett not only strove for power and status, but also had aspirations to develop Western Australia. His role at the helm of the *West Australian* was his main means of accomplishing some of these objectives. This chapter will analyse his role at the newspaper and examine his motivations, achievements and legacies as a newspaperman.

The chapter begins with a brief outline of the newspaper's history prior to Hackett's involvement and is followed by an explanation of some of the major technological advances in printing during the latter half of the nineteenth century, which he was only too willing to support. Some of the key issues that occurred during his time will be scrutinised, including the major litigation cases in which both he and the newspaper were implicated. These involved Fienberg and Rogers Real Estate, followed by a

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<sup>1</sup> O. K. Battye, 'The West Australian', ch. 6, p. 24.

dispute with the outspoken Aboriginal rights supporter John Gribble. Then, in 1888, Charles Harper and Hackett petitioned the Legislative Council, complaining of Chief Justice Onslow's long-standing bias against them.

Hackett's influential editorials will also be examined and it will be argued that these were frequently intended to convince readers of his views on certain legislative matters before parliament. The people with whom he most often associated, the local ruling élite, considered him an outstanding newspaperman while his opponents, especially those from the goldfields regions, wrote of their revulsion towards him. Finally, the proceedings taken by two of Harper's sons against a belligerent Hackett will be examined. They took legal action to obtain a more realistic price for the *West Australian* shares left to them in their father's estate than Hackett had in fact offered them.

Until Hackett became involved in the *West Australian* in 1883, the newspaper had a chequered history. The first edition was published on 5 January 1833 as a weekly called *The Perth Gazette and Western Australian Journal* under the part-ownership of editor Charles Macfaull. Before 1883, when Hackett joined Charles Harper in partnership, the *West Australian* experienced frequent name changes and increases in size.<sup>2</sup>

### **Hackett enters the newspaper business**

By 1882, the *West Australian* was reputed to have a circulation of between 700 and 800 copies.<sup>3</sup> Later that year Hackett took possession of the lease of a sheep station in

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<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Chapters 1 to 6.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, ch. 6, p. 23.

Western Australia's Gascoyne region, but due to drought conditions the venture failed and within a few months he left the area.

Hackett had met Charles Harper, probably at the Weld Club, and according to O. K. Battye in his unpublished history of the *West Australian*, it was at one of these meetings that Harper offered Hackett an equal partnership in the newspaper.<sup>4</sup> In 1883 Hackett took up the offer and brought 'an unknown amount of capital to the firm'<sup>5</sup> and a year later he was appointed business manager. It was a decision that would affect the remainder of Hackett's life, especially after he became the newspaper's editor, a position in which he revelled, because he was not only able to exercise his outstanding writing skills, but also utilised the power of the position.

The partnership lasted until Harper's death in 1912. When celebrating the newspaper's hundredth anniversary in 1933, an unidentified writer claimed the partnership was one in which the two men 'were in complete accord in believing that by promoting the prosperity of the colony and the well-being of its people, their own economic interests would be best served'.<sup>6</sup> For Hackett, the partnership was an opportunity that he could have only fantasised about a few years earlier.

In the early nineteenth century, the collection and circulation of news in Australia was laboriously slow, especially as overseas news arrived spasmodically by ship from England. By the end of the 1860s the laying of telegraph cables and the invention of

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<sup>4</sup> As will be discussed later in this chapter, records indicate that both Harper and Hackett held 18,738 shares each. Shortly before Harper's death, he transferred 1,000 shares each to his three sons from his own allotment.

<sup>5</sup> Battye, 'The West Australian', ch. 6, p. 24.

<sup>6</sup> WA, 5 January 1933, p. 3.

wireless telegraphy had ‘greatly increased the potential for domestic news distribution. ‘Hot’ news was now possible, though only as brief items’.<sup>7</sup>

Shoesmith asserts that the *West Australian* was ‘perceived as the mouthpiece of the local establishment comprised of landed and commercial interests, [and] became the dominant newspaper. All other newspapers were founded in opposition to the *West Australian*’.<sup>8</sup> Such newspapers included *The W.A. Record*, the *Kalgoorlie Miner* and the *Sunday Times*. As will be discussed later in this chapter, these rival newspapers were usually weekly publications, which were no threat to the influence of the *West Australian* with Hackett’s articulate and persuasive editorials. Moreover, some journals that opposed the *West Australian*, such as *The W.A. Freeman’s Journal*, were short-lived.<sup>9</sup> As Karen Byers succinctly states in a brief article on the *Sunday Times* from 1897 to 1905, the

establishment presented a monologue in which progress in Western Australian was measured in terms of an expedient support of the status quo, paternalism and an economic development which regarded “the people” as a faceless mass who were there to serve the interests of the state. Any threats to conservative views were marginalised as radical and outside the mainstream of Western Australian thought and interests.<sup>10</sup>

Byers emphasised that it was because of the *West Australian*’s monopoly that the *Sunday Times* was established in 1897 in the belief that ‘its civic duty was to expose

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<sup>7</sup> Bill Bonny, ‘Media and the People’, in Verity Burgmann and Jenny Lee, eds., *Constructing a Culture: A People’s History of Australia since 1788*, Melbourne: Penguin Books Australia Ltd, 1988, p. 146.

<sup>8</sup> Brian Shoesmith, ‘Introduction: Media, Politics and Identity’, *Studies in Western Australian History: Media, Politics and Identity*, 1994, no. 15, p. 2.

<sup>9</sup> *The W.A. Freeman’s Journal* lasted from 10 May 1902 to 6 September 1902.

<sup>10</sup> Karen Byers, ‘The Goldfields come to Perth: The *Sunday Times* 1897-1905’, *Studies in Western Australian History: Media, Politics and Identity*, 1994, no. 15, p. 45.

breaches of public responsibility by those individuals entrusted with leadership and particularly to demonstrate the ineligibility and incapacity of Western Australia's ruling class'.<sup>11</sup>

Hackett was a principal target for these criticisms, not only in his position at the *West Australian*, but also as a Legislative Council member. His successful campaign to abolish state aid to schools has already been extensively discussed, but this chapter will also illustrate two incidents where Hackett attempted to trample on two outspoken citizens: first when he reacted against John Gribble's condemnation of Aboriginal working conditions on pastoral stations in the Gascoyne region; and secondly in 1888 when the radical John Horgan became a member of the Legislative Council following a by-election.

From the time Hackett arrived in Australia, he had his mind set on becoming a journalist. Shortly after his arrival in Sydney in 1875, he confided to Leeper: 'I have an idea (only an idea) ... for a year or so I wish I could get some literary employment'.<sup>12</sup> He thought that the *Sydney Morning Herald* would not be a prospective employer as it was 'crowded with applications from scribblers. I am thinking of trying some of the others [newspapers]'.<sup>13</sup> Whilst residing in Melbourne he contributed articles to the *Melbourne Review*.<sup>14</sup>

By the time Hackett became the editor of the *West Australian*, communications had progressed considerably since the establishment in July 1858 of the inter-colonial

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<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 48.

<sup>12</sup> Hackett to Leeper, 8 June 1875. *TCM*, Alexander Leeper's Correspondence files, Packet 14.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> *WA*, 5 January 1933, p. 5.

telegraph,<sup>15</sup> with network traffic commencing the following month between some eastern colonies.<sup>16</sup> In 1869, the West Australian Telegraphic Company, with the assistance of convict labour, constructed a telegraph line between Perth and Fremantle,<sup>17</sup> whilst a year later the Electro-Magnetic Telegraph Company was ‘authorised [with] the construction of lines between Perth and Albany, Bunbury, York and Toodyay’.<sup>18</sup> By the early 1870s cable was available for overseas news,<sup>19</sup> and on 8 December 1877 Western Australia was officially linked with the eastern Australian colonies.<sup>20</sup> With the advent of gold discoveries in the 1890s, Eucla, situated on the Western Australian border with South Australia, ‘became the busiest telegraph station in Australia outside the capital cities’.<sup>21</sup>

At the time Harper purchased a share in the newspaper the population of Western Australia in 1879 totalled 29,139 people.<sup>22</sup> Perth streets were ‘roughly ribboned through the sand, footpaths scarcely existed, street lamps were few and entirely oil lit’.<sup>23</sup> Hackett, too, witnessed the vast changes and as editor of Western Australia’s major newspaper would take full advantage of new technology, notably the telegraph and telephone, whilst in 1898 the work of hand compositors was replaced by the linotype machine.<sup>24</sup> Three years later a Foster machine was installed which could not only print

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<sup>15</sup> Kevin T. Livingston, *The Wired Nation Continent: The Communication Revolution and Federating Australia*, Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1996, p. 51.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 52.

<sup>17</sup> Telecom Australia, *Linking the West: The Story of Telegraphs in Western Australia*, 1986, p. 3.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.* Toodyay was then still known as Newcastle.

<sup>19</sup> Livingston, *The Wired Nation Continent*, p. 52.

<sup>20</sup> Telecom Australia, *Linking the West*, p. 4.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5.

<sup>22</sup> Seddon and Ravine, *A City and its Setting*, p. 277.

<sup>23</sup> Mercer, *The life of Charles Harper of “Woodbridge”*, p. 199.

<sup>24</sup> Stannage, *The People of Perth*, pp. 324-325.

three copies simultaneously, but also had the capacity of producing 24,000 newspapers per hour.<sup>25</sup>

It was not surprising that in 1883 Hackett joined Harper and Thomas Cockburn-Campbell in the newspaper business. All three were members of the Weld Club.<sup>26</sup> As Stannage notes, the Weld Club ‘provided men of substance an opportunity to meet and discuss the affairs of the day, to read the latest British and colonial newspapers, and to try their hand at billiards’.<sup>27</sup>

All three men had initially been pastoralists, although Hackett’s experience had been brief and unsuccessful.<sup>28</sup> Furthermore, both Harper and Cockburn-Campbell were well-established parliamentarians. Cockburn-Campbell had been a Member of the Legislative Council since 1872,<sup>29</sup> while Harper became nominated as a member in 1878 and from 1890 to his retirement in 1905 was a member of the Legislative Assembly member for Beverley.<sup>30</sup> Hackett, as has been noted, had twice been an unsuccessful election candidate in Victoria. He was renowned as an incessant and convincing talker, so it was no surprise that he eventually persuaded his new acquaintances that he would be the most suitable person to join them in their venture.

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<sup>25</sup> Frost, ‘Early West Australian Newspapers’, p. 81.

<sup>26</sup> Serville, *3 Barrack Street*, p. 71.

<sup>27</sup> C. T. Stannage, *The People of Perth: A Social History of Western Australia’s Capital City*, Perth: Perth City Council, 1979, p. 2.

<sup>28</sup> Cockburn-Campbell was a pastoralist near Mt. Barker, while Harper had spent 20 years intermittently working as a pastoralist throughout Western Australia before purchasing the *West Australian*.

<sup>29</sup> David Black and Geoffrey Bolton, *Biographical Register of Members of the Parliament of Western Australia [BRMPWA]*, 2 vols, Perth: Western Australian Parliamentary History Project, 1990, vol 1, pp. 48-49.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 90. Coincidentally, both Hackett and Harper became ‘Father of the House’, Hackett in the Legislative Council, and Harper in the Assembly.

The affinities between Hackett and Harper did not stop there, for both were involved in advancing agricultural and educational knowledge in the colony. Above all, both had an insatiable interest in the development of Western Australia. As Mercer writes, the relations between the two men ‘were based on a clear understanding of respective responsibilities and, for the most part, were entirely harmonious’.<sup>31</sup> The friendship endured for twenty-nine years, only brought to an end by Harper’s death.

Charles Harper was born in Newcastle (from 1911 known as Toodyay<sup>32</sup>), Western Australia in July 1842. His parents had arrived in the colony on the *Eleanor* in 1837. Before purchasing the *West Australian* in 1879 he had experienced an assortment of occupations, including as agriculturist at Beverley, exploring the Yilgarn district, and, between 1867 and 1871 had worked in the pearling industry. From 1871 to 1878 he was in partnership with McKenzie Grant and John Edgar in the ‘De Grey’ Station in the Pilbara region where he became proficient in one of the local Aboriginal dialects.

In March 1879, Harper married Fanny de Burgh and decided to return to live in Perth. The couple settled at the 190-hectare farm, ‘Woodbridge’, near Guildford. Besides an orchard, the land supported sheep and cows. The property became renowned for its agricultural progressiveness, notably as the first place in the colony to use artesian water for irrigation. The results of Harper’s numerous agricultural experiments were duly published in the *West Australian*.<sup>33</sup>

Shortly after returning to Perth, Harper purchased the *West Australian Times*, including its equipment, for £1,100.<sup>34</sup> As he was totally inexperienced in the newspaper business

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<sup>31</sup> Mercer, *The Life of Charles Harper*, p. 212

<sup>32</sup> Rica Erickson, *Old Toodyay and Newcastle*, Toodyay: Toodyay Shire Council, 1974, p. 356.

<sup>33</sup> *BDWA*, vol 2, p. 1367; *ABD*, vol 4, pp. 348-349; Black and Bolton, *BRMPWA*, vol 1, p. 90.

<sup>34</sup> Mercer, *The life of Charles Harper*, p. 199.



he appointed Thomas Cockburn-Campbell MLC, an experienced journalist, as editor.<sup>35</sup> The newspaper was then printed twice weekly on Tuesdays and Fridays and did not become a daily until 1885,<sup>36</sup> the same year that Charles Hall and John Slattery discovered gold at Hall's Creek.<sup>37</sup> A dramatic increase in Western Australia's population, consequent upon gold discoveries, guaranteed that the newspaper would have a sizeable readership, especially if the journalism was of an acceptable quality. After Cockburn-Campbell's retirement as editor, Hackett ensured that the first-rate standard of journalism continued.

### **Newspapers in Western Australia**

There were several other newspapers circulating in Western Australia when Hackett became editor of the *West Australian* in 1887. According to the statistical records of Western Australia for the year, there were eleven principal publications, including the *West Australian* and its weekly subsidiary the *Western Mail*.<sup>38</sup> However, many of them were either weekly publications or newspapers that enjoyed only limited lifespans. Such publications were of little threat to the *West Australian*. For instance, the metropolitan weekly, *W. A. Bulletin*, commenced on 4 February 1888 and ceased publication on 2 August 1890.<sup>39</sup>

Despite the brief existence of such newspapers, there were several that continued long enough to be a thorn in the side of the *West Australian*. Such newspapers included the

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<sup>35</sup> *West Australian Newspaper Limited Quarterly Bulletin*, vol 1, no. 3, p. 6.

<sup>36</sup> Mercer, *The life of Charles Harper*, p. 202.

<sup>37</sup> Ken Spillman, *A Rich Endowment: Government and Mining in Western Australia 1829-1994*, Nedlands: UWA Press, 1993, p. 46.

<sup>38</sup> *Western Australia Blue Book for the year 1887*, p. 176.

<sup>39</sup> Alan Charles Frost, 'Early West Australian newspapers and their editors', p. 131. The paper was formerly known as the *Pioneer Possum* that had commenced publication 30 July 1887.

*Inquirer & Commercial News*, the *Sunday Times*, the *Kalgoorlie Miner*, and *The WA Record*. However, the readership of these papers represented sections of the community that the *West Australian* did not fully embrace, including the working classes, residents of the goldfields region and practising Roman Catholics.

Perhaps the most serious competitor to the *West Australian* was the *Inquirer & Commercial News*, a weekly newspaper that had commenced publication in 1840 and survived to June 1901 when it was incorporated with the *Daily News*.<sup>40</sup> The paper was, according to Battye's *The Cyclopaedia of Western Australia*, a 'devoted adherent to the people's cause'.<sup>41</sup> This was exemplified in January 1886, when the *Inquirer* published extensive extracts from Gribble's diaries recounting his first three turbulent months in the Gascoyne region.<sup>42</sup> The second paper that was a detractor of the conservative *West Australian* was the *Sunday Times*, first published in Perth in December 1897.<sup>43</sup> As previously stated, this paper constantly challenged the views expressed in the *West Australian*.

The third publication of consequence that confronted the views of the *West Australian* was the *Kalgoorlie Miner* which was sympathetic to the interests of the residents of the eastern goldfields. The paper supported the region's development, siding with the eastern colonies rather than with the people of Perth. This was because the region's residents were t'othersiders. Issues raised included agitation for railway lines to be extended throughout the region and, in 1898, a successful campaign to abolish the

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<sup>40</sup> *Ibid*; -, *Twentieth Century Impressions of Western Australia*, Perth: P. W. H. Thiel & Co., 1901, pp. 163-178.

<sup>41</sup> James Sykes Battye, *The Cyclopaedia of Western Australia*, vol. 1, pp. 584-587.

<sup>42</sup> *The Inquirer and Commercial News*, 13 January 1886, p. 2.

<sup>43</sup> Alfred Henry Chate, Graham Bruce *et al.*, *Date It! A Western Australian Chronology to 1929*. Perth: Friends of Battye Library, 1991, pp. 29-30.

regulations that restricted alluvial miners from digging deeper than ten feet in search for gold.<sup>44</sup>

The fourth newspaper that opposed the *West Australian* was *The W.A. Record*, the public mouthpiece for the local Catholic community, established in 1874 by the Reverend Matthew Gibney.<sup>45</sup> This publication came to prominence during the 1890s when Hackett campaigned to abolish state aid to church schools. All four newspapers expressed their own particular views but were never a serious challenge to the *West Australian*'s circulation. With the dramatic increase that occurred in the colony's population during the 1890s the daily *West Australian*, more than any other colonial newspaper, was able to take advantage of the increased potential readership. This was because the majority of its readers resided in the metropolitan area so that the paper's circulation was not affected by population transience, as was the case throughout the goldfield regions.

### **The Fienberg and Rogers libel case**

In the 1880s journalists at the *West Australian*, including Hackett, conveyed their forthright feelings on issues irrespective of the outcome. However, by the end of the decade, having experienced several defamation cases, the newspaper became less aggressive in its reporting. The owners probably realised that they could improve their financial position if they did not have to defend themselves in various defamation cases. In the two libel cases outlined below, Fienberg and Rogers and subsequently, John Gribble defamation case, Hackett and Harper needed to defend the prestige of their newspaper. In a small community this was important, especially for Hackett who had

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<sup>44</sup> Battye, *The Cyclopedia of Western Australia*, vol 1, pp. 588-590.

<sup>45</sup> *BDWA*, vol 2, p. 1187.

aspirations of becoming a politician. In the first case, the newspaper might technically have lost the case, but with damages awarded to the plaintiffs of a farthing, Fienberg and Rogers could not exactly claim a triumph. As will later be discussed, these two cases were part of a series of judgements in which Chief Justice Onslow was accused by Hackett and Harper of being biased against the press defendants.

In July 1885, Fienberg and Rogers Real Estate advertised in the *Morning Herald* and the *Daily News* that land was for sale in the Bayswater estate. However, for reasons that are not clear, the same advertisement was not placed in the *West Australian*. The land sale in total was for five acres [2.02 hectares], which had been divided into numerous blocks. After the first successful auction, the agents decided to hold a further one a week later in an attempt to sell the unsold lots. On 7 August 1885, the day of the second auction the *West Australian* printed an article written ‘in a vein of banter or humor [sic]’<sup>46</sup> claiming that the sale had the ‘characteristics of a huge practical joke’.<sup>47</sup> The article refuted the claim made by the advertisement that the vacant land had a railway and river running through the blocks and ‘that every purchaser would get the advantage of it’.<sup>48</sup> It then went on to describe the land in question. The agents were not amused and sued the newspaper for £2,000, claiming land sales significantly declined after publication of the article.

With damages of a farthing eventually awarded against the *West Australian*, Hackett and Harper could claim a moral victory. In an article published within days of the court decision, the defendants continued to assert their innocence: ‘we still fail to see how

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<sup>46</sup> *WA V & P*, 1889, Document E, Paper 4, p. x. This was according to the Attorney General Alfred P. Hensman in his opening address in the libel case held in November 1895.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, p. xi.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, p. xxiii.

this line can be supported either as a matter of law or not'.<sup>49</sup> They were pleased with the paltry amount awarded against them, for they had brought facts into the public sphere which they held to be a matter of community interest. They called the judgement an 'elaborate judicial harangue'.<sup>50</sup> In the latter part of the article they criticised Chief Justice Onslow for his handling of the case, especially from the second afternoon of proceedings when they considered: '[a] rush of feeling seemed to take possession of the faculties of the CHIEF JUSTICE, and apparently swept away in an impetuous current, all power of passive reasoning, and impartial deliberation'.<sup>51</sup> This would not be the last time that Chief Justice Onslow and the defendants would clash. At the conclusion of the article, Harper and Hackett acknowledged their belief in 'the personal uprightness and judicial honesty of His Honor [sic] to be above suspicion'.<sup>52</sup> This was undoubtedly written to placate Onslow who otherwise might have considered libel action or a charge of contempt of court.

### **The John Gribble libel case**

The second libel case involved the John Gribble. In 1884 Gribble had been invited to Western Australia to carry out missionary work. A year later, in September 1885, he established a mission in the Gascoyne region but within weeks of its opening, local station owners were concerned at some of his comments about the dreadful working conditions of Aboriginals. The two sides began a bitter conflict that eventually resulted in the *West Australian* being sued by Gribble for libel. This episode has been

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<sup>49</sup> WA, 14 November 1885. Cited in *WA V & P*, 1889, Document E, Paper 4, p. xxxv.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, p. xxvi.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*

extensively covered, especially in Hunt's thesis: "The Gribble affair": A study of Aboriginal-European labour in the north-west Australia during the 1880s'.

Consequently, this analysis will concentrate on Hackett's involvement in the affair, mainly through newspaper articles and the interpretation of the judgement of the Supreme Court case. The repercussions of the verdict for both Hackett and Gribble will then be discussed.

John Brown Gribble was born in Cornwall, England in 1847, the son of a miner. A year later the family moved to Australia and settled in Geelong, Victoria where Gribble spent his childhood. After serving for a brief period in 1876 as a minister in the United Free Methodist Church, he transferred to become a home missionary in the Congregational Union of Victoria. In 1879, with the assistance of his wife Mary, he established an Aboriginal mission at Darlington Point, New South Wales. Ten years later, in 1881, he was created a deacon of the Church of England and two years later became a priest. In 1884, Bishop Parry in Perth invited Gribble, a 'colourful and dogmatic man, filled with religious zeal',<sup>53</sup> to Western Australia, where in 1885 he established Ebenezer Mission on the Gascoyne River.<sup>54</sup> Subsequently in 1886, the *Daily News* in Perth published *Dark Deeds in a Sunny Land*, which told of the plight of Aboriginal workers in the region.<sup>55</sup> This, together with public comments he made on the issue, was the main cause of Gribble's troubles in the colony.

As Hunt explains, in the 1880s settlers in the north-west region of Western Australia came to rely on the Aboriginal workforce. The Aboriginal population in the north of

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<sup>53</sup> Su-Jane Hunt, 'The Gribble Affair: a Study in Colonial Politics', *Studies in Western Australian History*, 1984, no 8, p. 44.

<sup>54</sup> Neville Green, 'Aborigines and white settlers in the nineteenth century', in C. T. Stannage, ed., *A New History of Western Australia*, Fourth impression, Nedlands: UWA Press, 1987, p. 102.

<sup>55</sup> *ABD*, vol 4, p. 299.

Western Australia was estimated to be around 11,000,<sup>56</sup> and in 1886 a Magistrate in the Gascoyne region estimated that ‘over 1,000 Aborigines were employed on the thirty sheep stations in the district, as well as more employed in the Carnarvon township’.<sup>57</sup> Hunt notes that the colonial government realised the importance of the indigenous workforce and legislated to enforce their exploitation, notably the system whereby Aborigines were provided with rations instead of wages.<sup>58</sup> The situation was very similar to that when convict ticket-of-leave labour was exploited in the colony between 1850 and 1868. Of the twenty-nine local parliamentary members between 1885 and 1887, fifteen held financial interests in the north-west and ten of these owned pastoral properties in the region.<sup>59</sup> Several prominent church laymen in Perth also held financial interests in the north west.<sup>60</sup> Consequently, it was not surprising that when Gribble commented on what he considered abhorrent Aboriginal living conditions, his pleas received a hostile reception. His criticism was seen as a threat ‘not only [to] the self-esteem and moral standing of frontier settlers but their economic survival as well’.<sup>61</sup>

Any cordiality between Gribble and the Gascoyne community was short-lived. Within a matter of days of his arrival in Carnarvon he had visited nearby stations and was appalled at the squalid conditions of white workers and commented on them.<sup>62</sup> He was also distressed at finding seven Aborigines ‘chained to each other “like so many dogs”’ at a police station.<sup>63</sup> On his return to Carnarvon, settlers held a public meeting, which

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<sup>56</sup> Su-Jane Hunt, “The Gribble affair”: a study of Aboriginal-European labour relations in north-west Australia during the 1880s’, History (Hons) Thesis, Murdoch University, 1978, p. 7.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 8.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 86.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9.

<sup>61</sup> Henry Reynolds, *This Whispering in our Hearts*, Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1998, p. 142.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 143.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 144.

resulted in a petition being forwarded to Bishop Parry calling for Gribble's immediate removal from the region. The request was rejected but as a consequence Gribble's life in the Gascoyne became both physically and mentally intolerable.

In January 1886, after Gribble had spent three months in the Gascoyne region, *The Inquirer and Commercial News* published extensive sections of his diaries. These included tales of the mistreatment of Aborigines on various stations.<sup>64</sup> This only aggravated the tense situation. Soon afterwards Gribble returned to Perth to fight charges laid by the Missions Committee of the Church of England who had passed a motion criticising him for publishing such accounts.<sup>65</sup>

The furore continued over subsequent months and on Saturday 12 June 1886, Gribble delivered a speech to a capacity audience at St George's Hall, Perth, entitled: 'Light on the Native Question'. This was extensively covered by *The Inquirer* newspaper over two editions.<sup>66</sup> Early in his speech he repeated his previous claims that 'natives had been wilfully neglected with callous indifference'.<sup>67</sup> He argued '[t]hey had been treated with the most glaring injustice, cruelty, and unpardonable oppression, which had attained their horrible climax in the deepest degradation and wholesale extermination of the natives'.<sup>68</sup>

In August 1886, in the correspondence columns of the *West Australian*, 'A SUBSCRIBER' suggested a parliamentary commission should be established to

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<sup>64</sup> *The Inquirer and Commercial News*, 13 January 1886, p. 2.

<sup>65</sup> John Harris, *One Blood: 200 Years of Aboriginal Encounter with Christianity: A Story of Hope*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Sydney: Albatross Books Pty Ltd, 1994, p. 418.

<sup>66</sup> *The Inquirer and Commercial News*, 16, 23 June 1886.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 16 June 1886, p. 2.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*



investigate Gribble's accusations or otherwise the prestige of the colony would suffer.<sup>69</sup> The following day, the matter came to a climax when, in the 'News and Notes' column of the *West Australian*, Gribble was called 'a lying canting humbug'.<sup>70</sup> Gribble's patience had reached its limits. He decided to take defamation action against the *West Australian* and sued for £10,000. Although the following day an article appeared in the newspaper apologising to the missionary 'for the terms used towards him',<sup>71</sup> the admission was too little too late as Gribble was determined to carry out his intention.

The accusations made by Gribble against the pastoralists occurred at an important time in the colony's development, just a year after Hall and Slattery's gold discoveries in the Kimberley region. Consequently, the colony's population had substantially increased. At the same time the colony was attempting to obtain responsible government, and as Neville Green argues, such a move 'could be jeopardized if Gribble's accusations of slavery were upheld'.<sup>72</sup> Both Hackett and Harper were strongly identified with pastoral interests and there is no doubt that Gribble had chosen the wrong men to challenge, especially Hackett, for the latter's character was strong enough to defend such actions and he thrived on controversy.

As Chief Justice Onslow was not in the colony, the trial was delayed. It was later claimed by the defendants in a petition that the delay occurred because Onslow desired to hear all cases that involved the men's newspapers.<sup>73</sup> The action commenced on 16 May 1887 with Gribble testifying for the first eight days of a case that lasted for

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<sup>69</sup> WA, 23 August 1886, p. 3.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 24 August 1886, p. 3.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 25 August 1886, p. 3.

<sup>72</sup> Green, 'Aborigines and white settlers in the nineteenth century', p. 106.

<sup>73</sup> WA V & P, 1888, part 2, A1, p. 1.

twenty. The defence counsel attempted to prove that the plaintiff ‘was generally “hysterical”, prone to exaggeration, and a liar and a “canting humbug.”’<sup>74</sup> Hackett was the final witness in the case and testified that, on the basis of his own experiences in the Gascoyne region, Gribble’s accusations were untrue, although he thought such events could have happened years earlier.<sup>75</sup> While a packed public gallery looked on, judgement was delivered on 27 June 1887 in favour of the *West Australian* proprietors.

The next day, an ecstatic Hackett could not conceal his feelings.<sup>76</sup> In an editorial, he extravagantly claimed that the libel case brought by Gribble ‘was one of the most terrible which has been made in any period of the world’s history’.<sup>77</sup> His anger was still burning inside him when he criticised Chief Justice Onslow, without mentioning his name, saying that the judge allowed any testimony into the case, even if it was not relevant.<sup>78</sup> He then turned his attack on Gribble by accusing him of encouraging ‘tales which might well make a decent Australian shrink from all contact with the inhabitants of this den of ghestliest and unexcelled infamy’.<sup>79</sup> He concluded his article in a buoyant mood, claiming that ‘every genuine son of Western Australia will rejoice that his [Gribble’s] foul career of slander has at last been effectually barred by the unanswerable command of the Supreme Court’.<sup>80</sup>

Five days later Hackett was still incensed about the libel action and continued his attack on Gribble. He accused him of being ‘guilty of the most revolting falsehoods, that he

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<sup>74</sup> Hunt, ‘The Gribble affair’, 1984, p. 55.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 54-62.

<sup>76</sup> It was three days before Hackett officially became the newspaper’s editor.

<sup>77</sup> WA, 28 June 1887, p. 2.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*

had uttered these deliberately and knowingly, and that he had given these monstrous concoctions to the world in the hypocrite's garb of missionary zeal and a pious charity'.<sup>81</sup> He continued to lambast the plaintiff's evidence throughout the editorial, accusing Gribble of providing 'his own unsupported fiction, vamping it up by such casual evidence as he might find straying about the purlieus of the Supreme Court'.<sup>82</sup> The editorial was such a relentless attack on Gribble that the reader gains the impression that Hackett, instead of directing his editorial towards his readers, was addressing an imaginary jury (which incidentally was absent in this libel case). Hackett optimistically hoped Gribble would depart the colony 'abashed and ashamed of himself'.<sup>83</sup> He obtained his wish, for shortly after the conclusion of the case a despondent and ruined Gribble clandestinely left the colony, with his family, for Sydney without paying court costs.<sup>84</sup>

It was not only moral support that the defendants received from their acquaintances. Three prominent lawyers – Alfred P. Hensman, Edward Stone and Septimus Burt – had represented Harper and Hackett in the case.<sup>85</sup> In October 1887, the two defendants received £30 from some sympathetic supporters. Attached to a cheque from Anderson and Grant of 'Newmarracarra' homestead (between Geraldton and Mullewa) was a note: 'If other settlers who have native servants under employ [sic] have subscribed proportionally we trust the proprietors of the "West Australian" will not have lost much by advocating the cause ably and truly'.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, 2 July 1887, p. 2.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.* p. 3.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>84</sup> Hunt, 'The Gribble Affair', 1984, p. 63.

<sup>85</sup> Su-Jane Hunt, 'The Gribble Affair', History (Hons) Thesis, p. 54.

<sup>86</sup> Anderson & Grant to Charles Harper, 29 October 1887, *BL MN 94 Acc 3706A/6*.

Was it appropriate for Hackett to be so antagonistic towards Gribble? Three days after the judgement, on 1 July 1887, he was appointed editor of the *West Australian* and he continued to use his editorial columns to declare personal views on a variety of matters, principally supporting the development of Western Australia, but also denouncing state aid to church schools. However, he attempted to avoid further offensive personal attacks such as the one he had made on Gribble.

What motivated Hackett to rub salt into Gribble's wounds when the latter had already lost his libel case? One reason was that he, as part of the local élite, considered Gribble a threat to the hitherto excellent relationship between the Anglican Church, the colonial government and pastoralists. With such a disruptive force within the community, the Church, with Hackett's approval, wanted Gribble to be silenced. It is intriguing to note that Gribble's son, Ernest, was confidentially advised in 1927 by Harold Stirling, a former editor of the *Inquirer*, that 'Bishop Parry and the Diocesan Committee had sacrificed Gribble rather than alienate those who were contributing money for the construction of the new cathedral'.<sup>87</sup> Such an interpretation is supported by Tonkin's revelation that within weeks of Parry's arrival in the colony in 1877, he had called a public meeting to consider a new cathedral and immediately committed himself to the project.<sup>88</sup>

The Gribble libel case took place in the era when Aboriginal welfare was of little significance to the colonial élite. They were treated merely as cheap labour. This was emphasised when Forrest became the colony's first Premier in 1890. His sympathy and concerns remained with 'European life and European property'.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> Green, 'Aborigines and white settlers in the nineteenth century', p. 102.

<sup>88</sup> Tonkin, *Cathedral and Community*, pp. 36-38.

<sup>89</sup> Elizabeth Goddard and Tom Stannage, 'John Forrest and the Aborigines', *Studies in Western Australian History: European-Aboriginal Relations in Western Australian History*, 1984, no. 8, p. 56.

## Appointment as editor

When Harper purchased the paper in 1879, Thomas Cockburn-Campbell was appointed the newspaper's editor.<sup>90</sup> By 1886, he was in poor health and, as part-owner of the newspaper, it was Hackett's responsibility to find a replacement. Cockburn-Campbell eventually resigned on 1 July 1887,<sup>91</sup> a few days after the *West Australian* had won its libel case against Gribble. This raises the question of whether he delayed his retirement until the case was concluded, or was the timing just a coincidence? It seems the former was the case. The retiring editor was highly regarded by his associates, as a person of 'unwearying assiduity and ... [of] high integrity'.<sup>92</sup> Had Cockburn-Campbell retired earlier, it seems he might have been thought to be abandoning his responsibilities during the libel case.

How genuine was the search for a replacement newspaper editor? What emerges from an investigation of the available material is that Hackett did attempt to employ a journalist from another colony, but not from Western Australia. This does not mean that a local recruitment drive was not organised however, but what records *do* indicate is that, in December 1886 an advertisement for an editor was placed in the *Sydney Morning Herald*. As a consequence Thomas Goodwin, College Clerk of Trinity College, Melbourne, wrote to Hackett with the names of three prospective candidates, John Warde, A. Learney and Alfred Beavan, together with their respective testimonials.<sup>93</sup> This was followed up two days later with a further seven applications in response to advertisements in both Melbourne's *Argus* and, once again, the *Sydney*

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<sup>90</sup> Battye, 'The West Australian', ch. 8, p. 1.

<sup>91</sup> WA, 1 July 1887, p. 2.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>93</sup> TCM to Hackett, 18 December 1886. TCM, Alexander Leeper's Correspondence files, Packet 40.

*Morning Herald*.<sup>94</sup> Eventually, with none of the would-be replacements considered suitable, Hackett became editor on 1 July 1887.<sup>95</sup>

There was a possibility that Hackett's trusted Melburnian friend Alexander Leeper played a part in the selection of Hackett as editor. It is worth remembering that Leeper had known since 1875 that Hackett held ambitions to become a journalist,<sup>96</sup> and that the two men had worked closely with each other from 1876 to 1882. Because of a lack of written evidence there can only be speculation as to what might have happened. Leeper may have restricted the applications being sent from Trinity College to improve the chances of Hackett's appointment, and there was also a possibility that he may have written to Charles Harper directly suggesting his friend for the position. Of course, he may not have interfered with the selection at all. Unfortunately, the precise means by which Hackett won his appointment as editor of the *West Australian* is one of those irrecoverable details of the past.

### **The campaign against John Horgan**

Although Hackett was usually persuasive in his arguments, he did not always win his skirmishes. An example of this occurred in 1888 when a by-election was held after Stephen Parker was forced to relinquish his Perth parliamentary seat after a company of which he was a director was placed into liquidation. Into the fray came Irish-born John Horgan, who stood for the 'immediate introduction of responsible government, payment of parliamentary members, manhood suffrage, a land tax, and single chamber

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<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, 20 December 1886. *TCM*, Alexander Leeper's Correspondence files, Packet 40.

<sup>95</sup> There are no records available to indicate if Trinity College, Melbourne or Hackett carried out interviews with any of the prospective applicants.

<sup>96</sup> Hackett to Leeper, 8 June 1875. *TCM*, Alexander Leeper's Correspondence files, Packet 14.

legislature'.<sup>97</sup> To the frustration of the colony's élite he was also a constant critic of the government and was not reluctant to denigrate established institutions such as the Weld Club, describing it as a 'Pot House'.<sup>98</sup>

Two years earlier, on the death of the member for Perth, Luke Leake, Horgan had contested the ensuing by-election and managed a creditable second place.<sup>99</sup> This time his opponent was Septimus Burt, 'son of the former Chief Justice, a lawyer, an Acting Attorney General in Broome's Government, and pillar of the Anglican Church'.<sup>100</sup> Burt was thus considered part of the local establishment. As well as being a member of the Weld Club, he was supported by 'most of the prominent businessmen of the town, as well as many senior civil servants'.<sup>101</sup> Predictably, the *West Australian* was a staunch supporter of Burt, especially as he had been one of the newspaper's defence lawyers in the Gribble libel case.

The by-election for the Legislative Council seat of Perth was held on 28 May 1888. Not all the press supported Burt. *The W.A. Bulletin*, on 19 May 1888 published a poem supporting Horgan's candidature, penned by 'Our Original Gumsucker':

Western Sons, are forty thousand,  
Ever to be ruled by One,  
Backed by servile daily paper,  
Making of starvation fun?  
Will you always be contented,  
Western Sons, Awake! Awake!<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>97</sup> Stannage, *The People of Perth*, p. 196.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 197-198.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 199-200.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 200.

<sup>102</sup> *The W.A. Bulletin*, 19 May 1888, p. 8.

On Friday 18 May 1888 Horgan held a campaign meeting with a capacity audience. Four days later Hackett, ferociously attacked Horgan's candidature in an editorial: 'Years have only added to his apparent incapacity to judge of any public question apart from the dictates of a fierce unreasoning prejudice or personal feeling'.<sup>103</sup> He then turned his attention on those who supported Horgan, notably the Member for Greenough Alfred Hensman, and concluded:

Surely if it were Mr. HENSMAN'S object to punish West Australians for the consequences of his own faults and follies, to induce the electors of the capital to submit to the degradation of sending this hare-brained demagogue as their representative to Parliament would be the very subtlety of revenge.<sup>104</sup>

Hackett was in no mood to accommodate Horgan's attempt to win a parliamentary seat, especially because of the latter's support of the working class. The situation was even more infuriating for Hackett, because he also held aspirations to enter parliament. In addition to the editorial, there was an extensive account of a meeting held the previous evening by Burt supporters in the Town Hall.<sup>105</sup> Two days before polling day, on 26 May, Hackett again attacked Horgan, suggesting that any support he received 'will be given him not for his merits or abilities, but in spite of his demerits and disabilities'.<sup>106</sup> On election day, the *West Australian* continued to berate Horgan, asserting that he was unfit to occupy such a prestigious position.<sup>107</sup> While clearly

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<sup>103</sup> WA, 22 May 1888, p. 2.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, 26 May 1888, p. 3.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*, 28 May 1888, pp. 2, 3.



indicating its preferred candidate for parliament, the newspaper's attitude on Horgan was ferocious and relentless.

The *West Australian's* support for Burt was to no avail. Horgan won a close contest obtaining 420 votes, just three more than Burt's 417.<sup>108</sup> Hackett was in an unforgiving mood. The day after the election he observed that Horgan 'had shown himself incapable of little beyond unreasoning prejudice and strong personal antipathies'.<sup>109</sup> He argued that the new member's presence would prejudice Western Australia's chances of obtaining self-government. On 30 May 1888, a still furious Hackett emphasised that not even Horgan's staunchest supporters 'have ventured to allege that he is a man of ability, a man possessing talents which could be usefully applied to his adopted country in Legislative work'.<sup>110</sup> He was not the sole dissident indicating disgust at Horgan's selection, for the *West Australian* printed several letters in support of his views. One voter from Bunbury was saddened by the electors' choice of 'a ranting incapable politician',<sup>111</sup> while a sickened York resident was fearful for the colony's future stability and pleaded: 'Settlers! Weep for all the evils and extravagances of the other colonies are closing upon us'.<sup>112</sup> Significantly, however no correspondence appeared in the *West Australian* that supported Horgan's views.

Various newspapers provided postscripts to the election result. Not all newspapers held similar views to the *West Australian*. The *W.A. Record* and the *W.A. Bulletin* considered that Horgan's cause was a positive one.<sup>113</sup> However, in general, journalists

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<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, 29 May 1888, p. 3.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*, 30 May 1888, p. 3.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, 4 June 1888, p. 3.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>113</sup> Stannage, *The People of Perth*, p. 202.

considered the result was due to the deluge of immigrants to the colony and considered that the local élite would gradually lose their political dominance.<sup>114</sup> Although on this occasion Hackett's preferred candidate was defeated by a candidate championing the working class, he no doubt hoped his open opposition would advance his own political prospects. Late in 1890, he was nominated to be a member of the Legislative Council after Western Australia gained responsible government. It is questionable whether he would have trusted his fortune in a further election campaign, especially after his Victorian failures.

Hackett's attempt to block Horgan's entry into parliament is another example of his willingness to use the *West Australian* to exercise influence within the local community. He may have realised that if Horgan became a parliamentarian, it would encourage other working class people to do likewise. This, he considered, would eventually threaten the dominance held by the colony's élite. He used the same technique that he would use successfully in the 1890s to discontinue state aid to church schools. On this occasion he failed. Even so, he persisted after Horgan's victory in advising his readers of the newly elected member's perceived flaws.

Horgan's parliamentary life was brief. He was defeated at the next general election held on 22 January 1889. With two members to be elected, Horgan came in a close third, five votes behind Edward Keane.<sup>115</sup> This election, compared to the one held eight months earlier, was subdued. Hackett comprehensively reported Horgan's meeting at the Town Hall on 11 January 1889,<sup>116</sup> and a few days later lashed out at him in an editorial, stating that his tenure as a parliamentarian had been 'utterly tactless, utterly

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<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 204-205.

<sup>115</sup> Black and Bolton, *BRMPWA*, vol 1, p. 15; *WA*, 23 January 1889, p. 3.

<sup>116</sup> *WA*, 12 January 1889, p. 3.

indiscreet, utterly morose, utterly egotistic ...[and] utterly a failure'.<sup>117</sup> When the election outcome was known, Hackett described it as a 'gratifying',<sup>118</sup> while *The Inquirer* meekly stated that Horgan had 'quietly accepted the result'.<sup>119</sup>

### **The Broome-Onslow affair**

From 1884 Hackett became involved in a *cause célèbre* which later became known as the Broome-Onslow affair. Sir Frederick Broome was Western Australia's Governor at the time, while Alexander Onslow, 'a very short solemn faced dark man',<sup>120</sup> was its Chief Justice. It was not the first time that Onslow had found himself in strife with a governor. Under the previous incumbent, William Robinson, he had been considered 'arrogant and dictatorial'<sup>121</sup> and Robinson had 'broken off all but the formal relations with him'.<sup>122</sup> Peter Boyce asserts that this problem could have been avoided in 1880 when Governor Harry Ord advocated two additional puisne judges; however, his advice went unheeded and only one was appointed.<sup>123</sup>

The dispute between Broome and Onslow first became significant in 1884 when Onslow failed to advise Broome about an appeal which related to a remission of sentence. Broome referred the matter to Henry Holland, the British Secretary of State for the Colonies, who eventually sided with Onslow whilst opining that when further appeals arose the Chief Justice should be obliged to advise the Governor. When this

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<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*, 15 January 1889, p. 2.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, 24 January 1889, p. 2.

<sup>119</sup> *The Inquirer and Commercial News*, 23 January 1889, p. 3.

<sup>120</sup> Hillman, *Hillman Diaries*, p. 455.

<sup>121</sup> B. K. de Garis, 'Self-government and the Emergence of the Political Party System 1891-1911' in C. T. Stannage, ed., *A New History of Western Australia*, Fourth impression, Nedlands: UWA Press, 1987, p. 329.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>123</sup> P. J. Boyce, 'The Governors of Western Australia under Representative Government, 1870-1890', *University Studies in History*, 1961-1962, vol 4, no 1, p. 120.

did not occur, Broome threatened to suspend Onslow. The latter then contemptuously provided the Governor with only selected petitions, but more disturbingly, with no other advice. Broome then accused Onslow of retaining official documents and the latter was requested 'to show cause why he should not be suspended'.<sup>124</sup> Onslow not only appealed to the Secretary of State in respect to the altercation, but also mischievously provided correspondence between himself and Broome to the local press, which was published in September 1887 by both the *Inquirer* and the *West Australian*.<sup>125</sup> The correspondence indicated that Onslow was making serious allegations against Broome, including that of insulting and harassing behaviour towards himself. This infuriated the Governor who requested an apology that did not eventuate.

Finally, in December 1887, the Executive Council suspended Onslow and appointed George W. Leake to the position of Acting Chief Justice.<sup>126</sup> At several public meetings in Perth, crowds set fire to effigies of Broome and 'a band played the "Dead March" outside Government House'.<sup>127</sup> The crowd called for the proposed suspension of Onslow to be lifted, whilst also demanding the Governor's dismissal. The public generally supported the beleaguered Onslow. Stannage writes that the Chief Justice's suspension was seen as 'a grave infringement of the independent status of the judiciary and the rights of the people'.<sup>128</sup>

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<sup>124</sup> James Sykes Battye, *Western Australia: A History from its Discovery to the Inauguration of the Commonwealth*, Nedlands: UWA Press, Facsimile edition, 1978, p. 345.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 346-347.

<sup>127</sup> Stannage, *The People of Perth*, p. 199.

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*

The whole matter was ultimately sent to the Privy Council in London for a decision. In May 1888, it established that no judicial responsibility had been broken and decided to rescind Onslow's suspension. It found that the Chief Justice had only been guilty of providing confidential information to the newspapers.<sup>129</sup> To the delight of the legal fraternity, Onslow returned as Chief Justice but, he was warned that any future friction 'between Governor and Chief Justice was very prejudicial to the government of the colony'.<sup>130</sup>

### **Parliamentary petition accusing Onslow of bias**

During Onslow's enforced absence, Alfred Hensman had won damages in a libel case against the *West Australian*. Hensman, a lawyer, had represented Onslow throughout his dispute with Broome. The newspaper owners requested a new trial, but this was rejected. At the time, only two judges presided over disputes, so if the two were in dispute a final judgement needed to be made by Chief Justice Onslow. Hackett and Harper accused Onslow of showing partiality not only in this decision, but also in the Gribble case. On 15 October 1888 the proprietors presented a petition to the Legislative Council and sent a memorial with similar wording to the British Colonial Office.<sup>131</sup>

In the petition, Hackett and Harper claimed that Onslow had insisted on presiding over any action taken by or against the *West Australian*, and of using 'every effort to induce the jury to share his view'.<sup>132</sup> All this was

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<sup>129</sup> Battye, *Western Australia*, 347.

<sup>130</sup> Boyce, 'The Governors of Western Australia under Representative Government', p. 122.

<sup>131</sup> *WA V & P*, 1888, part 2, A1.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1.

calculated to inflict a grievous wrong on certain of Her Majesty's loyal subjects; to destroy confidence in the administration of justice; to stain the honor [sic] and good name of the Colony; and lastly to embitter and disturb all social and political relations and peace and welfare of the whole community.<sup>133</sup>

The petitioners alleged that the practice had continued for five years and claimed that if such behaviour continued, their livelihoods would be placed at risk. The petition then provided comprehensive details of some incidents that had occurred since 1883. In December 1883, for example, as a result of comments made by the *West Australian* on the jury system after the *Davies v Randell* case, Onslow had described Hackett as 'an utter quack and a charlatan'.<sup>134</sup> The petitioners stated that in several cases they had not challenged court decisions because the Chief Justice heard all appeals; they considered objections futile due to Onslow's bias against them. On the occasion of Hensman's writ against the petitioners in June 1888, the plaintiff who was an intimate friend of Onslow had also waited 'for more than six months afterwards, until the Chief Justice was again sitting on the Bench'.<sup>135</sup> The petitioners stressed that they 'believed it incredible that any British Judge would sit in a case in which there was so much that affected his own personal prejudices and predilections'.<sup>136</sup> Lastly the two men pleaded for an appointment of a third judge in case the two existing judges disagreed. The petition was then shown to Onslow for his response. Predictably, Onslow retorted by accusing Hackett and Harper of making a malicious declaration. Early in 1889, the Executive Council held an inquiry into the matter, only to refer a decision to the Colonial Office.<sup>137</sup> After the matter had done the rounds between the Governor,

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<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 8.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>137</sup> Battye, *Western Australia*, p. 349.

Executive Council, Colonial Office and Legislative Council for approximately six months, the petition was again returned to the Western Australian Parliament, but not until the Colonial Secretary, Sir Henry Holland, had suggested to the Council they were ‘simply shirking their duties’ if they could not resolve the matter themselves.<sup>138</sup>

Before the issue was once more debated in the Legislative Council in April 1889, Hackett could not resist expressing his opinions, admitting that the petitioners had ‘waited until hostile and rival newspapers had made their observations’.<sup>139</sup> Once more it was a strategically timed editorial, for the topic was to be discussed in parliament ten days later on 16 April 1889. The editorial summarised the reasons for the petition and repeated several of the Chief Justice’s vituperative comments towards Hackett and Harper. In defending the petition, Hackett pointed out that he and his partner had ‘declined to identify themselves with the arts of the pimp, or to call to their aid the services of the talebearer’.<sup>140</sup> He concluded the editorial by stating that he considered the ‘trials were above all things calculated – we will not say conceived – to intimidate the WEST AUSTRALIAN’.<sup>141</sup> He was clearly making a final effort to convert his readers to his views on the subject.

When the issue was debated in parliament, Septimus Burt suggested the dispute was tearing apart the Perth community and ‘endangered the welfare of the whole State’.<sup>142</sup> Onslow, he explained, was considered the ally of the ordinary people, while the second

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<sup>138</sup> *WAPD*, 16 April 1889, vol. 15 (os), p. 310.

<sup>139</sup> *WA*, 6 April 1889, p. 2.

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.

<sup>142</sup> *WAPD*, 16 April 1889, vol. 15 (os), p. 323.

Judge, Edward Stone, supported society's élite.<sup>143</sup> As a consequence, Burt suggested, antagonism between the two judges transferred to the public sphere through the press.<sup>144</sup>

Not all parliamentarians were Hackett supporters. Alexander Forrest inflamed the situation when he attempted to take the focus away from Onslow and turned it towards Hackett:

Who is it that has been making all this noise and this mischief? Take one of the petitioners, Mr Hackett. There's the man that has got up all this row, and made this place a place that is almost impossible to live in. I say he's the man. If you want some more, go to two or three others; but don't go to the Chief Justice.<sup>145</sup>

Forrest concluded his speech by suggesting that this petition was the first against any of the colonial judiciary. Realising he had ruffled a few colleagues he promptly ceased talking and sat down (Hackett was later to refer to this speech as the 'only blot of the debate'.<sup>146</sup>). After lengthy deliberations, members resolved that the Chief Justice had used inappropriate language; that he had been biased in the *Gribble v West Australian* judgement; that Onslow was on friendly terms with Hensman; and that his language and conduct as a judge were not befitting his position. The motion was eventually passed by ten votes to seven.<sup>147</sup>

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<sup>143</sup> Stone was the first Western Australian-born person to reach the bench and had established a law partnership with Septimus Burt. (Geoffrey Bolton and Geraldine Byrne, *May it Please Your Honour: A History of the Supreme Court of Western Australia from 1861-2005*, Perth: The Supreme Court of Western Australia, 2005, pp. 101-102.)

<sup>144</sup> *WAPD*, 16 April 1889, vol. 15 (os), p. 323.

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 333.

<sup>146</sup> *WA*, 18 April 1889, p. 2.

<sup>147</sup> *WAPD*, 16 April 1889, vol. 15 (os), p. 335.



Once again the Legislative Council abdicated its responsibility to decide the Chief Justice's punishment and once more forwarded the relevant details to the Secretary of State for the Colonies for a decision. Hackett was left incensed at the parliamentarians' indecisiveness. Within two days he remarked in an editorial that he had thought the debate would end the matter, but '[u]nhappily it has turned out otherwise'.<sup>148</sup> However, he did have some sympathy with the legislators because of the longevity of the affair, for he considered it 'was beyond all comparison the most painful which had ever been debated in the House'.<sup>149</sup>

Was Hackett's sense of self-importance resurfacing again? Such remarks must be considered to have been egocentric, for the Legislative Council had existed in Western Australia since 7 February 1832.<sup>150</sup> An abundance of issues had passed before it, which at the time would have been considered significant or painful by serving members. His editorial criticised Lancel De Hamel's parliamentary speech for containing a 'remarkable series of inaccuracies'.<sup>151</sup> For instance, he alleged that De Hamel had concluded his speech with the 'false proposition that the Legislative Council "was not competent" to decide the legal and judicial questions contained in the Petition'.<sup>152</sup> Optimistically, he concluded his editorial by calling upon the Privy Council to remit its decision and conclude the protracted affair.

Eventually, the Secretary of State for the Colonies decided that Onslow should not be removed from his position.<sup>153</sup> However, whilst this decision was being considered,

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<sup>148</sup> WA, 18 April 1889, p. 2.

<sup>149</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>150</sup> Black and Mandy, *The Western Australian Parliamentary Handbook*, p. 383.

<sup>151</sup> WA, 18 April 1889, p. 2.

<sup>152</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>153</sup> Battye, *Western Australia*, p. 349.

Onslow had taken leave to go to England.<sup>154</sup> On his return to Western Australia in 1891, the colony had gained responsible government. Broome had been replaced as Governor by William Robinson and in 1892 Alfred Hensman was appointed a third judge of the Supreme Court. Thus the antagonists had been separated from each other and the appointment of a third judge alleviated any possible contingency of the Chief Justice having to make a casting vote.<sup>155</sup>

This affair was a further indication of the influence and power that Hackett held in Western Australia. It was an extraordinary case. He took on the Chief Justice and an unsupportive Legislature and eventually obtained the desired outcome. If he could not win a cause through his newspaper columns, he used a combination of other means to do so. His eloquence was enduring, as some years later, in an article written anonymously in the *Sunday Times*, it was recounted that during this episode the ‘incisive, lucid and vigorous pen of Hackett was revealed. The dignified manner which he always maintained was also very apparent’.<sup>156</sup> He had well-connected friends, notably his partner, Charles Harper, and the former *West Australian* editor, Thomas Cockburn-Campbell, who were both parliamentarians. He had arranged the parliamentary petition, but unfortunately for him the issue was kept in the public arena longer than expected, for local parliamentarians were indecisive in their handling of the matter. However, after 1890 his influence within the community was reinforced, following the introduction of responsible government, when he became one of the first nominated members to be appointed to the Legislative Council. It might also be

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<sup>154</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>155</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 344-350; Boyce, ‘The Governors of Western Australia under Representative Government’, pp. 120-123.

<sup>156</sup> C.L., ‘A Great Triumvirate: Lord Forrest, Sir J.W. Hackett and Archbishop Riley (3)’; Royal Western Australian Historical Society, John Forrest cutting file no. 1/1847/3 (*Sunday Times* article, n.d.).

suggested that after such an experience with Onslow, he wished to enter politics in an attempt to right what he considered to be wrongs. However, it is safe to assume that his long-standing desire to enter politics, especially after his two unsuccessful attempts in Victoria, was still his primary motive.

After Hackett's experience with Onslow, it was predictable that in 1892 he would speak in favour of a third judge when the issue arose in parliament. He pointed out to his colleagues that the Third Judge Bill had a threefold aim: as an effective appeal court; the formation of circuit courts for Western Australian country regions; and finally it would be useful for the imminent establishment of a Bankruptcy Court. His satisfaction with the appointment of an extra judge (although it was to be a *bête noire* in Alfred Hensman) was expressed when he congratulated the Government 'for taking steps to put an end to this anomalous state of things'.<sup>157</sup> Seven years later, during the Second Reading debate on the Supreme Court Criminal Sittings Bill, he also extolled the virtues of appointing a fourth judge, especially as he considered it would assist people awaiting trial in custody who were forced to wait months because of the shortage of judges.<sup>158</sup>

### **Letter writing**

Hackett was a prolific writer. Not only did he gain pleasure from his passion in life as a newspaper editor, but also it appears that much of the little leisure time he had was spent exchanging views with political colleagues and friends. When corresponding with influential friends he often asked them their opinions about various issues, as well as keeping them up to date with Western Australian current affairs. The sparse extant

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<sup>157</sup> *WAPD*, 14 January 1892, vol. 2, p. 241.

<sup>158</sup> *Ibid.*, 15 August 1899, vol. 14, pp. 858-859.

remnants of Hackett's correspondence consist mainly of letters that were written to Alfred Deakin during his time as Prime Minister and to Walter James when the latter was Western Australia's Agent-General in Britain. It seems that he persistently asked James when he would be likely to resign from his overseas position.<sup>159</sup> Not that Hackett wanted his position. He was probably attempting to find out if James was likely to re-enter state politics.<sup>160</sup> In his correspondence with the Prime Minister, he seems to have pressed him for his intentions on a variety of issues. For instance, in July 1906 he pushed Deakin for his personal political plans as he had heard rumours that he might possibly 'withdraw from politics altogether'.<sup>161</sup> In the same letter, Hackett went on to summarise his own predictions for several Western Australian electorates in the impending federal general election.<sup>162</sup> He concluded by apologetically acknowledging:

I know how busy you are, and I am loth to trespass upon your time, but if you could write me however short a note, telling me in the roughest outline what you think of this letter, it will be acceptable.<sup>163</sup>

Apparently not receiving a satisfactory reply to the above, Hackett pursued Deakin a month later:

I hardly like writing to you, because it seems to raise the obligation of a reply, and I cannot understand how you find time for answers of this kind in the midst of your crowded work.

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<sup>159</sup> Hackett to James, 8 December 1905, *ML MSS 412*, vol 7, item 77 and 9 July 1906, *MSS 412*, vol 7, item 377.

<sup>160</sup> James made an unsuccessful attempt to re-enter state politics in 1910 when he contested the Beverley by-election.

<sup>161</sup> Hackett to Deakin, 18 July 1906, *NLA MS 1540/15/560*.

<sup>162</sup> The election was held on 12 December 1906.

<sup>163</sup> Hackett to Deakin, 18 July 1906, *NLA MS 1540/15/563*.

Do not give yourself the trouble to answer at any greater length than could be included in a telegram form.<sup>164</sup>

When once again he received no response, Hackett persisted: 'a brief line will be welcome, and, I think, advisable'.<sup>165</sup> It is not known whether Hackett received a reply, but in December 1906, Deakin was re-elected as Prime Minister for another term in office.<sup>166</sup>

Hackett's determination to obtain a reply reveals his enthusiasm for writing, and more particularly, his desire to be noticed by people in high public office. In one letter he even admitted being criticised: 'I have got "sooling on" letters from both you [Deakin] and Forrest'.<sup>167</sup> From this it can be deduced that there may have also been several motives for requesting such information. As well as receiving personal information, there was the possibility of using the material in future editorials. He once explained to Deakin that he just felt 'absolutely in the dark'<sup>168</sup> in Western Australia about certain issues, and required additional opinions to evaluate various topics. In this context, his perseverance in trying to elicit a response may indicate that he simply believed that it was his job to obtain newsworthy material from a variety of sources. As no replies to his correspondence have been preserved, how Hackett treated the information can only be speculated upon. It is reasonable to assume that he alone decided if a subject was printable, understanding that his influential sources would dry up if he violated their

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<sup>164</sup> *Ibid.*, 24 August 1906, *NLA MS 1540/15/584*.

<sup>165</sup> *Ibid.*, 24 September 1906, *NLA MS 1540/15/596*.

<sup>166</sup> "Prime Ministers of Australia". In Parliament of Australia, Department of the Parliamentary Library [on line] <http://www.aph.gov.au/library/parl/hist/primmins.htm>. Accessed 24 June 2004; "Election dates". In Parliament of Australia, Department of the Parliamentary Library [on line] <http://www.aph.gov.au/library/handbook/elections/dates.htm>. Accessed 26 April 2003.

<sup>167</sup> Hackett to Deakin, 9 October 1906, *NLA MS 1540/15/598*.

<sup>168</sup> *Ibid.*, 12 September 1906, *NLA MS 1540/15/588*.

confidentiality. Deakin's failure to reply to some of Hackett's questions suggests that the Prime Minister may have had concerns of this nature.

Hackett's letters establish that he was confident and proud of his influence in Western Australia. At the first state parliamentary elections held on 24 April 1901, Barrington Wood lost his Legislative Assembly seat of West Perth.<sup>169</sup> Apparently, Wood had mentioned to people the lack of support he received from the *West Australian*. Hackett was not amused, and expressed his displeasure in a letter to John Forrest:

[Wood MLA] may say if he pleases [,] I gave him not the least help. Let me tell you as a fact that were it not for the support his friends gave him and I among the rest, he would have been scores if not hundreds of votes weaker. But I did not flare out in the WA [*West Australian*]. Had I done so I am convinced the rush would have gone against him. Surely you give me some credit, after seventeen years experience, of knowing how to steer a newspaper *and score a victory*.<sup>170</sup>

He then suggested the reasons he thought Wood lost his parliamentary seat, which included the latter's 'many weak and foolish speeches'.<sup>171</sup>

Hackett's letters also showed an awareness that, as the editor of a major newspaper, he was in the position to pursue or reject any subject that arose. For example, in September 1906, he wrote to Deakin about the forthcoming Federal election and the prospects of John Forrest initiating a new political party. He considered that if the

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<sup>169</sup> Black and Bolton, *BRMPWA*, vol 1, p. 208.

<sup>170</sup> Hackett to Forrest, 8 May 1901, *BL MN* 34, 766A, Box 3, file 1, item No. 231. My emphasis.

<sup>171</sup> *Ibid.*

former Premier went through with such a scheme it would have a detrimental outcome for some other electorates in Western Australia. He told the Prime Minister: ‘Now I can take a beating as well as most men: but I have, and very naturally, an almost insuperable reluctance to making myself and the *West Australian* ridiculous by supporting an impossibility either of candidates or programmes’.<sup>172</sup>

### **Influential editorials**

There were numerous occasions when the *West Australian* - or, more precisely, Hackett - pursued issues that he considered important enough to warrant enhancing public awareness. Such issues included the 1895 Copyright Bill; the expansion of telegraph coverage throughout Western Australia; the provision of funds for railway construction; and, finally, the correction of inaccurate reporting in other publications.

In 1895, a Copyright Bill was introduced into parliament. The lack of such legislation in Western Australia, he explained, had resulted in some unscrupulous newspaper owners taking full advantage of such an omission. This had created some problems for the *West Australian*:

The newspaper with which I am connected, always allows the full market value for contributions – either in the shape of separate articles or serial stories – but, although we do so, we know we have no rights over them when once they are published.<sup>173</sup>

He provided an example of one newspaper that was 90% made up of pirated material and explained that the current laws in Western Australia were powerless to prevent such

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<sup>172</sup> Hackett to Deakin, 24 September 1906, *NLA MS 1540/15/545-596*.

<sup>173</sup> *WAPD*, 19 September 1895, vol. 8, p. 1062.

action. He explained that the *West Australian* was losing thousands of pounds in income because, as soon as an article was published in the newspaper, it could be freely used by others. A third party could subsequently publish that material again in another colony and utilise its copyright laws.

Although his publication was a major beneficiary of the Copyright Bill, Hackett's opinion on this subject was not only shaped by self-interest. The *West Australian* was not the only newspaper in the colony, and the bill also proposed to protect numerous people including book authors, theatrical and musical writers, and artists.

The second issue related to the unpredictability of telegraph communications. Being in the newspaper business, Hackett relied heavily on the telegraph and not only spoke in parliament on the issue but also told his readers of his concerns.

In 1868, Edmund Stirling, the proprietor of *The Inquirer and Commercial News*, had approached Frederick Barlee, the Colonial Secretary, about the establishment of a telegraph line between Perth and Fremantle. As a result James Coats Fleming, a convicted Scottish swindler and telegraphist who had been transported to the colony four years earlier, was given the task of supervising the construction of the eighteen kilometres of telegraph. The first message was tapped out on 21 June 1869.<sup>174</sup>

However, twenty-five years on, in October 1894, Hackett was worried at the deterioration of telegraph lines, suggesting that a breakdown would be catastrophic. Hewas alarmed at the situation for two reasons. Firstly, the colony's population had dramatically increased, causing frequent delays in sending telegraphs. Secondly, the telegraph line to the eastern colonies, completed in 1877, had become dilapidated due to 'injurious atmospheric influences', as it had been constructed along Australia's

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<sup>174</sup> Telecom Australia, *Linking the West*.



southern coast.<sup>175</sup> He pleaded for an additional line because ‘a complete stoppage for several days would, under existing conditions, assume the dimensions of a public calamity’.<sup>176</sup> He wrote this editorial as he held strong views on the subject and had vast personal experience of handling telegrams. It could be said that he wrote the editorial for his own benefit but in his public life he was involved in a diverse range of issues and clearly saw the wider advantages of improved communications for every Western Australian citizen.

The third issue that illustrates the persuasive power of Hackett’s writing concerned the construction of the Bridgetown to Donnybrook railway line. In early October 1894 Hackett attempted to ensure that sufficient funds were provided for its development. A motion for the railway line’s construction was soundly defeated in the Legislative Council by twelve votes to six.<sup>177</sup> Not to be deterred by this setback he arranged for Cecil H. Jones, the surgeon in Bridgetown, to write a letter to the *West Australian* in favour of the proposed line. The letter was much longer than the average published contribution, extending to an entire column, and was printed within weeks of the parliamentary rejection. It was persuasive, even for those not familiar with the region. Charles Harper, the Legislative Assembly member representing Beverley (and Hackett’s newspaper partner) also entered the debate by indicating his revulsion at the bill’s rejection in the Council. In a letter printed in the *West Australian* he placed the blame directly on the inexperience of members of the newly elected Upper House.<sup>178</sup>

This issue provides an excellent example of Hackett’s response after having been defeated on what he considered to be a vital piece of legislation. The publication of

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<sup>175</sup> WA, 19 October 1894, p. 4.

<sup>176</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>177</sup> WAPD, 4 October 1894, vol. 7, p. 911.

<sup>178</sup> WA, 20 October 1894, p. 9. Members for the Legislative Council were elected on 16 July 1894.

letters from Jones and Harper, he realised, would gain the project even more public support than an editorial penned by himself. It was no coincidence that a new Bill to construct the railway line was eventually passed a year later.<sup>179</sup>

The final issue to be examined relates to Hackett's need to stop inaccurate reporting in overseas publications. Before 1890, while Western Australia struggled to gain responsible government, people had a variety of ideas about how the colony should be managed and occasionally Hackett used the *West Australian* to report the more frivolous suggestions. His main concern was that the British might receive inaccurate impressions of Western Australia and therefore reject the colony's application for self-government. Such an instance occurred in 1888 when a British periodical, the *St James Gazette*, published an article titled: 'The Pretensions of Western Australia'. He suggested that the writer had gathered the facts 'from a conversational or literary acquaintance with the Australian settlements, added to the experience of a brief visit'.<sup>180</sup> The author of the distasteful article had suggested that

a small piece about the size of Victoria might be carved out [of Western Australia], and handed over to the Legislative Council as a basis of a colony under self-governing conditions, and here "the bulk of the inhabitants" might disport themselves as they pleased.<sup>181</sup>

Hackett was aghast that someone could think of such a scheme and warned his readers that the proposal 'would instantly prove fatal'.<sup>182</sup> However, it was of more concern to him that such opinions were being circulated overseas. By raising the matter in the

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<sup>179</sup> *WAPD*, 9 October 1895, vol. 8, p. 1278.

<sup>180</sup> *WA*, 23 August 1888, p. 3.

<sup>181</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>182</sup> *Ibid.*

*West Australian* he showed his determination to negate such outlandish suggestions, especially if he thought they might be detrimental to the colony's future growth.

In 1894, while providing extensive coverage of proceedings of the Anglican Synod, he apologised to his readers for excluding other essential news from the newspaper, reassuring them that:

while Perth though growing steadily still remains of small dimensions the tide of events of general moment is rising so rapidly that efforts have to be made to supply the reading public with at least a synopsis of what is going on.<sup>183</sup>

Hackett's sense of humour occasionally surfaced when discussing his editorship. In December 1905, during a debate in parliament on the delay of several railway bills, he was interrupted by Matthew L. Moss, the member representing West Province, who quizzed: 'I have heard it said that you never read the *West Australian*'.<sup>184</sup> Hackett jovially retorted: 'Sometimes I read it; but so large a number of other persons read it that I can always pick up, by conversation, a good knowledge of its contents'.<sup>185</sup> Two years later, when again interrupted, he commented: '[A]n excellent digest has appeared in the newspapers'.<sup>186</sup> So although he was seen having a primarily serious temperament, he did occasionally reveal jocular attributes, particularly when he praised himself.

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<sup>183</sup> WA, 25 October 1894, p. 4.

<sup>184</sup> WAPD, 23 December 1905, vol. 28, p. 931.

<sup>185</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>186</sup> WAPD, 5 December 1907, vol. 32, p. 1288.

There is no evidence that Hackett was active on the Stock Exchange. It is doubtful if he traded in shares for he was aware of unethical practices within the system. Graeme Adamson argues in his history of the Western Australian Stock Exchange, that it was not surprising that fraudulent activities occurred in the industry because the investing public, ‘with dreams of quick and substantial profits at times of market booms ... [were] only too eager to be seduced by mining entrepreneurs interested more in money than in metal’.<sup>187</sup> Adamson also suggests that when the downturn in the economy occurred in the eastern colonies in the 1890s, sharebrokers transferred their soliciting for business to a booming Western Australia. Hackett realised there was skulduggery at work in the local Stock Exchange, but was unable to point his finger at a particular business or person. Interviewed by the British publication, the *British Australasian*, in 1902, he admitted his annoyance at how the mining market had been manipulated:

Although, as a newspaperman on the spot, I have unusual facilities for finding out the condition of the mines, and for obtaining first hand information, I have long since ceased to invest any money in Westralia’s [sic] gold. While it is easy enough to get at the position of depth in the mine, it is quite impossible to fathom the depth of the market manipulators.<sup>188</sup>

Even though he publicly denounced the practices of sharebrokers, it was notable that he did not attempt to expose such practices in parliament. He knew that fellow parliamentarians were involved in share dealings and possibly felt from past experiences there was little likelihood of regulations changing. For example, George Simpson, a former Legislative Assembly member for Geraldton had been the first

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<sup>187</sup> Graeme Adamson, *Miners and Millionaires: The First One Hundred Years of the People, Markets and Companies of the Stock Exchange in Perth 1889-1989*, Perth: Australian Stock Exchange (Perth) Ltd, 1989, p. 19.

<sup>188</sup> WA, 16 June 1902, p. 7.

Secretary of the Stock Exchange. A dispute occurred over his purchase of shares in Uphill Gold Mining Company in 1890. Under the then rules of the Stock Exchange he could only be censured, but not dismissed for ‘unbusinesslike’ behaviour.<sup>189</sup>

When the Legislative Council was in disagreement with the Legislative Assembly, Hackett saw himself as a mediator between parliamentarians and the public. One example of this occurred early in his career when a dispute arose between the two Houses over a Loans Bill. He thought people might gain the wrong impression about the altercation, so he diligently attempted to clarify for his readers the basis of the disagreement. By explaining the practical workings of State Parliament, his intentions were to improve the public image of politicians.

The case referred to above happened in October 1894 when the Legislative Council returned a Loan Bill to the Assembly, suggesting that the provision for the construction costs of two railway lines be omitted. The Assembly did not agree and promptly returned the bill to the Legislative Council with a request for an explanation. Hackett told his readers not to be alarmed by the situation because, although such occurrences were infrequent in the Westminster parliamentary system, there was little chance of a deadlock between the two Houses. He assured his readers: ‘The foundation of this form of government rests upon that instinct of moderation and conciliation, on what might be called the faculty of political compromise, which have made our own the foremost of constitutionally ruled nations’.<sup>190</sup> Each branch of the Legislature, he continued to explain, had powers which were not used because, if enforced, ‘the days of constitutional government are numbered, and either despotism or anarchy must take

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<sup>189</sup> Black and Bolton, *BRMPWA*, vol 1, p. 179; Adamson, *Miners and Millionaires*, p. 12.

<sup>190</sup> *WA*, 29 October 1894, p. 4.

place'.<sup>191</sup> He proceeded to outline the workings of parliament and the responsibilities of both the Legislative Assembly and Council, emphasising that the latter's task was to review and question legislation admitted to the chamber.

It is interesting to note that Hackett voted with the minority, that is, for the loans to be approved so that the railway lines would be constructed. He probably took this stance because the two proposed lines were in his electorate, and as an independent member he felt no obligation to support either side of the House. Although disappointed by the defeat, he sensed it was his responsibility to provide unbiased advice to the public of the constitutional position between the two Houses. He summarised the situation by asserting that it was healthy to have robust debate on legislation before rather than after it became law.

### **How other people viewed Hackett**

Thus far this chapter has concentrated on how Hackett used the newspaper mainly for his own benefit. However, just as importantly, he also utilised the newspaper to encourage infrastructural development throughout Western Australia for the benefit of the colony's residents. His contemporaries, especially those from within the local social élite, considered him to be an outstanding man of his time. In 1897, American author Warren Bert Kimberly published his *History of West Australia* with the assistance of Melbourne journalist J. J. Pascoe<sup>192</sup> and included brief observations of prominent citizens, including Hackett. Although the publication was subsidised by the 'Forrest government representing the old colonists',<sup>193</sup> the author cited outstanding

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<sup>191</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>192</sup> G. C. Bolton, 'Western Australia reflects on its past', in C. T. Stannage, ed., *A New History of Western Australia*, Fourth impression, Nedlands: UWA Press, 1987, p. 679.

<sup>193</sup> *Ibid.*

t'othersiders who had also made their mark in their adopted homeland. Kimberly immediately recognised the importance of newspapers in society: 'The mirror of the newspaper reflects in its pages every relationship of life, from the cradle to the grave'.<sup>194</sup> He discussed briefly the attributes he considered to be essential for a successful newspaper editor:

[a] brilliant writer may be invaluable in a newspaper corps, but much more is required of the capable commander-in-chief. A disciplinarian versed in knowledge of the world; a keen judge of men, quick to perceive talent, and to set it to its proper task; a worker himself of untiring industry, who can "outwatch the bear"; to maintain the highest efficiency in every department; of even temper, and discriminating, equable judgment.<sup>195</sup>

He had no hesitation in substantiating that Hackett displayed the above virtues and portrayed him in glowing terms:

[E]veryone eagerly peruses his newspaper. It preserves the purity of public life and disarms oppression, inspires the spirit of patriotism, does homage to the brave, the good, the true, and makes vice ashamed. No other institution has so many functions; none performs it works with greater fidelity or zeal; no agency is better organised, or is directed with a larger share of intellectual power.<sup>196</sup>

The praise did not end there, as Kimberly continued:

[T]he progress made by the *West Australian* since 1888 emphatically represents his [Hackett's] life. It was now that all his latent energy and literary ability were brought into action,

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<sup>194</sup> Kimberly, *History of West Australia*, pp. 21-23.

<sup>195</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>196</sup> *Ibid.*

and he so impressed his personality on his paper as editor and manager that it represented the aspirations of the people of the colony. He saw whither Western Australia was tending, and his useful pen constantly advocated the cause of responsible government.<sup>197</sup>

It seems that while the author was recounting Hackett's achievements, he was also attempting to please his paymaster, the Western Australian colonial government.

J. Frost, who was the Fremantle Branch Manager of the *West Australian*,<sup>198</sup> has provided us with another perspective of Hackett. He authenticated a report provided in 1905, that Hackett not only pushed himself to the limit, but also required maximum effort from his employees: 'It is certain that Hackett enjoyed an insatiable capacity for mental work. His office light was often burning at midnight and ... he was never satisfied unless he was sitting on a dozen committees at once'.<sup>199</sup> As well as expecting his staff to 'display initiative at all times', Frost also remembers that his chief was:

cordial and patient to his staff. He could control his temper, but his tongue was incisive. Nevertheless he was probably too trusting. Two of his staff absconded, but he did not prosecute and both Perth and Fremantle managers indulged in shady transactions with apparent impunity.<sup>200</sup>

Hackett's reputation as an editor travelled to England. In 1902 whilst attending the coronation of King Edward VII in London he gave an interview to the weekly

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<sup>197</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>198</sup> P.J. Boyce, 'The Hon. Sir J. Winthrop Hackett K.C.M.G. Hon LL.D.: His Life and Times', BL, PR14514/HAC. item 3, p. 12.

<sup>199</sup> The initial report was provided in 'Truthful' Thomas, *Through the spy-glass: short sketches of well-known Westralians as others see them*. Perth: WA.: Praagh & Lloyd, 1905, p. 28. Cited in Boyce 'The Hon. Sir J. Winthrop Hackett KCMG. Hon LL.D.: His Life and Times', BL PR14514/HAC. item 3, p. 3.

<sup>200</sup> Boyce, 'The Hon. Sir J. Winthrop Hackett KCMG. Hon LL.D.: His Life and Times', BL PR14514/HAC. item 3, pp. 3-4.



newspaper, *British Australasian*, which was reprinted the following month in the *West Australian*. Introducing the newspaperman, the article recognised that: ‘Australian journalism can boast of no more cultured representative than Mr Winthrop Hackett of Western Australia’ and described the *West Australian* as ‘the “Times” of the Golden West’.<sup>201</sup>

Another writer, published in the *Sunday Times* during the 1930s, reminisced about the turbulent times during the colony’s gold rush era and recalled the leading articles in *West Australian* as being organised by a man who was

[p]ossessed of the imagination of the Irishman, he was never satisfied with momentary triumph. When relationships between parties became strained and heated, he did all in his power to cool them down. He was never biased, and was always constructively critical. He was ever ready to give the keenest review to both sides of a question.<sup>202</sup>

Hackett’s behaviour during the Broome-Onslow imbroglio makes the claim that he was never biased or ‘did all in his power to cool them down’, highly questionable. However, on most occasions his views and opinions were premised upon any potential future benefits for Western Australia.

Hackett also had his detractors. During November 1895, he and John Forrest toured the Eastern Goldfields region of Western Australia, including Kalgoorlie, Coolgardie and Southern Cross. Both men gave speeches to the newly formed Goldfields National League, an association established to promote the interests of the area.<sup>203</sup> Their

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<sup>201</sup> WA, 16 June 1902, p. 7.

<sup>202</sup> C.L., ‘A Great Triumvirate: Lord Forrest, Sir J.W. Hackett and Archbishop Riley (4)’; Royal Western Australian Historical Society, John Forrest cutting file no. 1/1847/3 (*Sunday Times* article, n.d.).

<sup>203</sup> Martyn and Audrey Webb, *Golden Destiny: The Centenary History of Kalgoorlie-Boulder and the Eastern Goldfields of Western Australia*, Kalgoorlie: City of Kalgoorlie-Boulder, 1993, pp. 427-428.

audiences were chiefly concerned about the lack of water supplies in their district and campaigned for the construction of the railway line from Perth to the region. Hackett realised his trip to the region would be controversial. A few days beforehand he admitted in an editorial that '[t]he state of things which now calls for redress [in the region] is not two years old, and there can be no reasonable doubt that before a similar period has passed by the grievance will be fully redressed'.<sup>204</sup> Some Eastern Goldfields residents were riled by such general comments and wanted specific answers to their problems. One person who was not receptive to Hackett's speech or to the *West Australian* was 'MINERS RIGHT' who vented his anger in the *Coolgardie Miner*:

Returning to the ungrateful Hackett. Scared evidently by his bibulous outburst of good intentions at Hannan's and the indignation of his political chief, he has shamelessly rattled, and returned to his congenial task of bullying the people of the goldfields, whose great offence is their ignorance of the past history of the colony with which Mr Hackett has such an intimate acquaintance. I do not know why we goldfields people should be the recipients of his vulgar abuse unless it is that we don't buy his literary garbage, and don't believe in his political joss.<sup>205</sup>

It was not surprising that Forrest and Hackett received a hostile reception from some Coolgardie residents, as their visit came a month after the Great Fire of 10 October 1895, when previously flourishing businesses in the town were left with 'nothing but cinders and distorted galvanised iron and smouldering heaps of stuff'.<sup>206</sup> The correspondent in the *Coolgardie Miner* was pleased the newspaperman had left the region: 'In due course Mr Hackett returned to his smellful city, and lost no time

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<sup>204</sup> WA, 19 November 1895, p. 4.

<sup>205</sup> *Coolgardie Miner*, 21 November 1895, p. 3.

<sup>206</sup> M. and A. Webb, *Golden Destiny*, p. 429.

exhibiting with his pen how much reliance can be placed in him and his advocacy'.<sup>207</sup>

There is no evidence that Hackett responded to such outbursts as he probably took this type of criticism in his stride, realising that his principal audiences were his *West Australian* readers together with his South West electorate and not the residents of the remote Eastern Goldfields.

Another critic of Hackett was part-time writer Mollie Skinner. One of her articles had been rejected by the editor of the *West Australian* and she recalled the rebuff when Hackett had looked at her 'in a visionary way, handed back my script and indicated that journalism was not for me'.<sup>208</sup> Although she later considered herself 'an intimate friend' of Deborah,<sup>209</sup> she was occasionally unflattering in some of her reminiscences of the newspaperman. For instance, she considered him to be:

something of a recluse. Few people were on intimate terms with him and most were more than a little in awe of him. No one, as far as I know, ever called him John except his wife, but he had the power of inspiring many he met with a passion for culture and a desire to further it in the young State.<sup>210</sup>

It was questionable whether Hackett was a recluse. It must be remembered that, as well as his newspaper commitments, he served on a number of community committees. Skinner was not only biased against Hackett for rejecting her article, but she had been employed by the *Morning Herald* for some years as a social writer.<sup>211</sup> The *Herald* was in opposition to the *West Australian*. Also, early in the twentieth century, Alfred Carson, the associate editor to Hackett, secretly employed Skinner to write articles

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<sup>207</sup> *Coolgardie Miner*, 21 November 1895, p. 3.

<sup>208</sup> Skinner, *The Fifth Sparrow*, p. 47.

<sup>209</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 42.

<sup>210</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 41.

<sup>211</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 46.

under the *nom-de-plume* of 'Echo' at the *West Australian*.<sup>212</sup> Carson had promised to guard her identity. In all likelihood Hackett probably never knew of Skinner's appointment.<sup>213</sup>

The Roman Catholic community also detested Hackett, which was predictable, particularly after his part in the abolition of state aid to church schools. During Hackett's absence in Europe during 1902, *The W.A. Freeman's Journal*, an Irish nationalist newspaper, took a swipe at him, speculating on when he might be returning to the state:

Has the mighty Hackett arrived [home] yet? is [sic] a question often asked for the past few days. That the chief goat and trick rider of this important State could come back without a flourishing of trumpets is impossible. Hence the rumour that he has must be a rumour only.<sup>214</sup>

Whatever Hackett's supporters or rivals thought about him, Kimberly's assertion that Hackett took full advantage of his personal circumstances, especially after the uncertainty of his first few years in Australia, is difficult to dispute. 'Destiny', Kimberly wrote, 'leads us blindly to a goal'.<sup>215</sup> When he outlined Hackett's achievements in 1897, he could not have foreseen the influential and significant role Hackett he would still play in the future development of Western Australia, not only during his lifetime but, through his bequest, also well beyond it.

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<sup>212</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 49-50.

<sup>213</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 50.

<sup>214</sup> *The W.A. Freeman's Journal*, 16 August 1902, p. 5.

<sup>215</sup> Kimberly, *History of West Australia*, pp.21-23.

## Charles Harper's death

Charles Harper died on the 20<sup>th</sup> April 1912.<sup>216</sup> In December 1910, Harper realised that he had limited time to live and warned his partner, Hackett:

In the interests of your family and mine I write on a matter which calls for early attention. It is quite a common phase of humanity that when a man of exceptional ability gets in control of an organisation, be it political or commercial, the tendency is to grasp at the details and try to hold on to them. The strain involved, of course, increases with time, while human capacity deceases. Sometime it half, or wholly, kills the man and in the end, impairs the organisation. With the newspaper company the danger point is rapidly approaching ...<sup>217</sup>

With Hackett about to leave on a trip to England, Harper also warned: 'during your absence a strenuous effort will be made by a combination of those who are jealous of the success of the *West Australian* to undermine its influence and annex some of its revenues'.<sup>218</sup> Harper was concerned at the possibility of advertisers deserting the newspaper for a rival one and inquired what arrangements his partner had made. He then advocated remedies to counteract such challenges. How far Hackett complied with his partner's advice is not known. What is clear is that, in March 1911, Harper provided each of his three sons, Charles Walter, Harcourt Robert and Gresley Tatlock with an additional 1,000 shares, which resulted in each son having a total of 1,001

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<sup>216</sup> *ADB*, vol 4, pp. 348-349.

<sup>217</sup> Charles Harper to Hackett, 20 December 1910, *BL MN* 94, Acc 1973A/10.

<sup>218</sup> *Ibid.*

shares.<sup>219</sup> The agreement between Hackett and Harper also stated that if one director died, ‘the remaining or surviving Director shall have the absolute power at his option’.<sup>220</sup> It may be deduced that Hackett was confident in obtaining full control of the company because, on 31 May 1912 (just over a month after Harper’s death), he offered to purchase all the shares held by Harper’s sons.<sup>221</sup>

Of the twenty-six shareholders holding 37,500 *West Australian* shares as at the end of March 1911,<sup>222</sup> Harper’s three sons held a total of 3,003 shares; Charles Harper himself held 15,738 shares; Hackett held 18,738 shares; whilst twenty-one other people held one solitary share each.<sup>223</sup> Unfortunately, Harper’s sons and Hackett could not agree on a purchase price for their shares. On 23 December 1912 two of Harper’s sons, Charles Walter and Gresley Tatlock, issued a Supreme Court writ against Hackett and West Australian Newspapers Co. Ltd., claiming that amongst other matters they be paid dividends and bonuses until the price of the shares was agreed upon.<sup>224</sup>

Hackett challenged the writ, although in a letter to Charles Walter Harper, he revealed misgivings about his action. On hearing of the illness of Charles Harper’s widow, he asked if he could visit her, although acknowledging that ‘this question between us is at

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<sup>219</sup> Agreement between Charles Harper, his three sons and Hackett, 4 March 1911, *BL MN 94*, Acc 1973A/10 and Statement of shareholders of the *West Australian* as at 31 March 191\* (specific year not noted), *BL MN 94*, Acc 1973A/10. Although the precise year is not noted, it would be either have been 1911 or 1912, between when Charles Harper will was amended in March 1911 and the court case that commenced in December 1912. I have taken the year to be 1911. It was shortly after Harper provided his sons with an additional 1,000 shares each.

<sup>220</sup> Agreement between Charles Harper, his three sons and Hackett, 4 March 1911, *BL MN 94*, Acc 1973A/10.

<sup>221</sup> Battye, ‘The West Australian’, Chapter 11, p. 4.

<sup>222</sup> Statement of shareholders of the *West Australian* as at 31 March 191\* (specific year not noted), *BL MN 94*, Acc 1973A/10. Refer also to reference no. 219.

<sup>223</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>224</sup> Supreme Court Writ, 23 December 1912, *BL MN 94*, Acc 1973A/10.

the root of it'. He considered Mrs Harper to be 'one of the oldest and best friends I have had' and continued: 'I should not readily forgive myself for doing anything which might cause your mother pain'.<sup>225</sup> Almost certainly the motive for this conciliatory letter was that he had received correspondence from John Forrest 'giving me two pages of scolding for allowing any "coolness to take place between Hacketts and Harpers after so many years of friendship"'.<sup>226</sup> Hackett, feeling a tinge of remorse and simultaneously hoping to appease Forrest, probably thought that a pacifying note would do no harm. The attempt failed, for both parties continued their acrimonious dispute.

During their fall out with Hackett, the Harper family had suspicions concerning some of his activities. For instance, in December 1913, the Harper family Perth lawyers Parker & Parker requested William Densham of Melbourne to find the reason for Hackett's visit to Sydney. It was to no avail, for Densham's report stated that Alexander Jobson (Densham's Sydney agent) had 'been totally unsuccessful in getting any information as to what Hackett did in Sydney'.<sup>227</sup> Unbeknown to Jobson, Hackett was probably innocently spending his usual Christmas break on the eastern coast with his long time friend Alexander Leeper and his extended family.<sup>228</sup>

The Harpers' lawsuit against Hackett was not settled until June 1914. The three Harper sons had their total shares valued at £80,000 after the 'family's interests were finally submitted to an arbitrator from South Australia'.<sup>229</sup> Jobson explained to Walter Harper

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<sup>225</sup> Hackett to Walter Harper, 29 August 1913, *BL MN 94*, Acc 1973A/10.

<sup>226</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>227</sup> William Densham to Parker & Parker, 23 December 1913, *BL MN 94*, Acc 1973A/10.

<sup>228</sup> Although Leeper lived in Melbourne, Hackett usually visited Sydney while on the eastern seaboard to see the Allen family, relatives of Leeper's first wife, Adeline. Hackett had known the family since his arrival in Australia in 1875.

<sup>229</sup> In Harper family papers, *BL MN 94*, Acc 1973A/10 there is an account from lawyers, Parker and Parker to the Executors of Charles Harper, Account No. 63/377, dated 24 September 1914. On an item dated 25 June 1914 there is a charge for five shillings which was for a task carried out 'to know date when the £80,000 would be paid to you'. Author F. R. Mercer, incorrectly had noted the award as £88,000. Mercer, *The Life of Charles Harper of "Woodbridge"*, Guildford, Western Australia, p. 214.

that this was £10,000 more than had been offered to Hackett as a settlement amount six months earlier.<sup>230</sup>

The struggle over the value of the newspaper shares lasted for twenty-six months.

Hackett was presumably annoyed at having to pay the value of the shares estimated by the arbitrator. However, in all probability, he was also delighted to have become the sole owner of the *West Australian*. Following his death in 1916, Hackett's beneficiaries were to reap extensive riches from this asset.

## **Conclusion**

By scrutinising some of the major issues that occurred during Hackett's role at the helm of the newspaper, this chapter has provided further insights into his character. The litigation cases reveal his motivations. He used them to enhance his political fortunes and enforce his personal beliefs. At the time of the Fienberg and Rogers's litigation case in 1885, he held ambitions to enter parliament. He thought that bringing the issue of misleading advertising to the public's attention would benefit his cause. With regard to the defamation action taken by Gribble, he not only sought to defend himself, but also saw the action as an attack on society's élite. At the end of the case, he had achieved his intended purpose by forcing the troublesome Gribble to depart the colony.

Hackett's attempt to block Horgan's entry into parliament is another example of an instance when his editorials were used to thwart someone else's election prospects. On this occasion he failed. However, the episode shows that he was shrewd enough to use the *West Australian* on an issue he felt passionate about. The newspaper was a powerful instrument in the days before radio, television and the internet and he

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<sup>230</sup> Alex Jobson to Walter Harper, 10 June 1914, *BL MN 94*, Acc 1973A/10.



repeatedly used this method of persuasion. For example, in the Broome-Onslow affair and, when he was a parliamentarian, he regularly attempted to convince readers of his views on legislative matters by means of newspaper column inches. The power of the newspaper is indicated again when Hackett and Harper petitioned the Legislative Council in October 1888 complaining of Chief Justice Onslow's alleged bias behaviour towards them. As well as the accusations against Onslow, both men realised the court system itself was inefficient and in taking action against Onslow, the two proprietors also expected to increase the number of judges who sat on the bench, although this did not occur until 1892.

Another of Hackett's characteristics was his persistence in obtaining information. His prolific letter writing is an indication of this. What little remains of his correspondence, chiefly to Deakin and James, indicates his determination to obtain newsworthy items from influential people.

There are no longer any records of how Harper and Hackett agreed to be newspapers partners and later, when Cockburn-Campbell retired as editor, Hackett was in the right place at the right time to replace him. When Harper died in 1912, Hackett saw his opportunity to seize full control of the *West Australian*. Eventually, he managed to do so, but not without a two-year legal struggle and at a cost of £80,000. Nevertheless, he would have been thrilled at the outcome as it left him in a powerful position as the solitary owner of the major newspaper in Western Australia. In spite of various difficulties during Hackett's term at the helm of the newspaper, when he died he had personally achieved more than he could have originally imagined. He had started work at the *West Australian* as a virtually unknown; however, by the time of his death he was its sole owner as well as its editor.

There was to be an unexpected twist in Hackett's will in that he did not leave sufficient funds to cover his bequests. In order to fulfil his intentions in this connection, one of his executors, Alfred Langler was left to find ways to discharge his intentions. This episode will be scrutinised in detail in Chapter Ten. In the meantime, some aspects from his personal life will be discussed in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER EIGHT: FRIENDS, FAMILY AND CIVIC AWARDS

*'I find it simply impossible to get through my work now that I have added to my responsibilities and cares. Did you find that marriage took at least a couple of hours out of your working day? It is my experience'.*

- J. W. Hackett to Walter James, December 1905.

### Introduction

Hackett was a tireless worker who was kept busy professionally editing the *West Australian* and by his parliamentary duties and his numerous community involvements and church commitments. He found time for recreational activities, which he undoubtedly enjoyed, although such occurrences were a rarity. However, even in his private life and when at leisure he still strove to elevate his status, recognition and acceptance in society. This chapter will examine how Hackett handled life outside the sphere of employment.

In 1875, Hackett had emigrated to Australia with his university companion, Alexander Leeper, and it is through Leeper's diaries and correspondence that it is possible to explain some of Hackett's personal interests. The two men were to remain close friends until death. With Hackett not marrying until late in life, the Leepers became his *de facto* family. He consolidated his status in Western Australian society with membership of the Freemasons and of the Weld Club. Hackett's palatial home in St Georges Terrace, and his 'Cherrydale' and 'Dinninup Vale' properties were also intended as status symbols. He even made his marriage one of convenience and status. Although not openly admitting it, he considered the union as a further means to gain acceptance into Perth's society.

Finally, two other events in Hackett's life will be examined. Firstly, he was awarded an Honorary Doctorate from the University of Dublin, Ireland and secondly, after fourteen years of declining a knighthood, he eventually accepted the honour. These two incidents indicate different aspects of his character. The first indicated his stoicism, while the second shows his tenacity in that he held out for an honour which deep down he considered his right.

### **Hackett's friendship with Alexander Leeper**

When Hackett left Melbourne in 1882 to reside in Perth, his friendship with Alexander Leeper continued and the relationship merits some exploration. This was because Hackett's private life contrasts markedly to his hectic professional one. His disappointment with Melbourne was nothing to do with his friend. He was not being paid at Trinity College and was unable to find other paid employment. After Hackett's departure, his name appeared regularly in Leeper's diaries and it was a friendship that Leeper frequently turned to in hours of need. He acknowledged his trusted friend's support in 1903 when he named his youngest son Geoffrey Winthrop Leeper.<sup>1</sup> Hackett was not married then, so Leeper hoped that part of Hackett's name would survive. Previously, in 1887, Hackett had been godfather to Leeper's eldest son, Allen.<sup>2</sup>

From the time Hackett arrived in Western Australia, Leeper never completely gave up his attempts to attract his friend back to Melbourne. Trinity College had experienced some turbulent times, culminating in a public inquiry in 1890. With hindsight, it is doubtful whether Hackett would have seriously contemplated a return to Melbourne from his Perth power base and as Leeper's biographer, John Poynter, candidly admitted,

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<sup>1</sup> Poynter, *Doubts and Certainties*, p. 282.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 261. Leeper's eldest son was named Alexander Wigram Allen. However, he was always known as Allen. (Poynter, *Doubts and Certainties*, p. 128.)

Hackett's stay in Western Australia ultimately benefited the University of Western Australia at the expense of Trinity College.<sup>3</sup> Any hope that Leeper had of Hackett's return completely ended when Leeper noted in his diary in December 1892:

A clergyman tells me that H[ackett] is quite the first man in W.A. – that he shapes all the policy of the country – is the best speaker there – and could simply have any office he cared for – from the Premiership down. You may be proud of your friend.<sup>4</sup>

As discussed previously, on arrival in Australia, Hackett had lived briefly in Sydney, followed by six years in Melbourne where he became very good friends with Leeper's in-laws, the Allens'.<sup>5</sup> Although he had no relatives in Australia, he treated the Leepers as his own flesh and blood. During Christmas 1892, Hackett was in Sydney visiting the Leepers shortly after Adeline's (Leeper's first wife) mother had died, and Adeline herself was gravely ill. He was still a confidant of the family. Leeper noted in his diary: 'Darling AML [Adeline] v[ery] tired – she + JWH [Hackett] had long talk in study'.<sup>6</sup> Nearly two years previously, in April 1891, 'Adeline had an operation to remove a growth' from a gland.<sup>7</sup> A few months later her family persuaded her to convalesce in Sydney, but she never fully recovered and died in June 1893.<sup>8</sup> On a visit to Sydney in February 1895, Hackett visited her graveside and was 'greatly touched + shed tears'.<sup>9</sup> He frequently spent Christmas periods on the eastern seaboard, not only

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<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* p. 189.

<sup>4</sup> Alexander Leeper's Diaries, 10 December 1892. Cited by Poynter, *Doubts and Certainties*, p.460, fn. 7.

<sup>5</sup> Refer to Chapter Two, in respect to Hackett's relationship with the Allen family. The Allens' were Adeline Leeper's family - Leeper's first wife.

<sup>6</sup> *TCM*, Alexander Leeper's Diaries, 11 January 1893.

<sup>7</sup> Poynter, *Doubts and Certainties*, p. 192.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 229.

<sup>9</sup> *TCM*, Alexander Leeper's Diaries, 13 February 1895.

for business purposes but also for pleasure. For instance, in 1894 he joined the Allen and the Leeper families holidaying in the Blue Mountains.<sup>10</sup>

An instance of Hackett's generosity to the Leeper family was shown in early February 1897 when Hackett arrived in Melbourne for Leeper's second marriage to Mary Moule, the daughter of a leading Melbourne solicitor. Within a day of his arrival for the happy occasion, the financially strapped Leeper inquired about a loan of £200 from his good friend. After some discussion, and to Leeper's amazement, he instead offered to pay for the education of Leeper's son, Allen.<sup>11</sup> The offer was accepted, and this benevolence would cost him considerably more than the original request.

It was not always financial assistance that Leeper required. In December 1897 Hackett was again in Melbourne when Sir Anthony Brownless, the University of Melbourne's Chancellor, died. His successor was Sir John Madden who had been Hackett's opponent in July 1880 when he had unsuccessfully contested the Victorian Legislative Assembly seat of Sandridge. Leeper became involved in a war of words in the *Argus* newspaper over the proposed replacement on the University Council. After several spiteful letters between various correspondents, Hackett came to his friend's aid by assisting him to draft a suitable reply to one of the letters. The controversy only ended when, late in January 1898, the *Age's* editor decided not to publish any further letters on the topic.<sup>12</sup>

On the rare occasions that Leeper and his family travelled through Perth, Hackett fêted them. In March 1908, Leeper travelled to Europe on the SS *Bremen* with his wife Mary and their son, Allen.<sup>13</sup> They stopped over at Fremantle, which provided Hackett with an opportunity to show the family around Perth during the day and entertain them in the

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<sup>10</sup> Poynter, *Doubts and Certainties*, p. 243.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 261, 263

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 268-269.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 328.

evening. According to Leeper, Hackett 'met us and gave us a splendid day'.<sup>14</sup> After a rough return voyage to Australia on the SS *Roon* in December 1908, Hackett was again on hand at Fremantle to provide his guests with a day of sightseeing, followed by a meal at his residence in St Georges Terrace.<sup>15</sup>

Hackett provided considerable financial assistance to Alexander Leeper's children. After providing for Allen's education, and while Allen was attending Oxford University, he gave him £50 in 1910 towards a summer holiday in various European countries.<sup>16</sup> Two years later, he gave Allen a further £100 in the hope that he would remain at Oxford to complete his First in History. This was one of his rare failures, as Allen would abandon the degree to accept a position at the British Museum.<sup>17</sup> He also provided assistance to Leeper's second eldest daughter, Katha. Upon hearing that Katha was living in poverty in Germany, he attempted to help her by passing money on through one of her relatives.<sup>18</sup>

### **The Freemasons and the Weld Club**

Hackett was a member of two influential Western Australian clubs. As a Freemason he was Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Western Australia of Antient, Free and Accepted Masons from 1901 to 1904.<sup>19</sup> Boyce suggested there were three possibilities why he became a member of the brotherhood. He wonders if Hackett was 'motivated

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<sup>14</sup> *TCM*, Alexander Leeper's Diaries, 31 March 1908.

<sup>15</sup> Poynter, *Doubts and Certainties*, p. 332; *TCM*, Alexander Leeper's Diaries, 5 December 1908.

<sup>16</sup> Poynter, *Doubts and Certainties*, p. 339.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 342.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 336.

<sup>19</sup> Collins in his authorised history of Freemasons in Western Australia, *Golden Jubilee History*, states on page eleven, that Hackett was Grand Master for only two years (1901-03). However, the Honour Board at the Freemasons headquarters in Burswood, Western Australia states he held the position for three years (1901-1904).



Grand Master of the Grand Lodge  
1903 Hackett dressed in his robes as Grand Master of the Grand  
Lodge of Western Australia of Antient, Free, and Accepted Masons.  
Acknowledgment: Freemasons Grand Lodge of Western Australia

by a sense of Christian duty ... [or] a thirst for public distinction ... [or] a yearning for honorable [sic] companionship'? Boyce came to the conclusion that 'it was probably a combination of all three motives'.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Boyce, 'Hackett', p. 7.



Another place where Hackett elevated his status and recognition was through his membership of the men's-only Weld Club. Surviving records do not indicate when Hackett joined the Club.<sup>21</sup> However, given the people he associated with, such as John Forrest and Charles Harper, it might reasonably be presumed that he joined shortly after he settled in Perth in 1882. The Club was a significant colonial institution and it was no surprise that, when the colony gained responsible government in 1890, all fifteen members of the Western Australian Legislative Council, including Hackett, were members.<sup>22</sup> Predictably, during the prosperous decade of the 1890s the Club became a focal point for Western Australia's élite, including those people with newly-found wealth. As a result 'the Club gained a reputation for power and influence'.<sup>23</sup> Hackett would have visited the Club not only to meet socially with fellow businessmen, but also to gather newsworthy items for the *West Australian*.

### **Hackett's residence**

Hackett was continuously thinking about means of raising his status and eminence in Western Australia. Besides his parliamentary duties and business obligations, another indication of his wealth was a three-storied house that most people would envy. His first known residence was near the Pensioner Barracks at the western end of St Georges Terrace, Perth, bounded by Milligan St and George St. He lived there until he built his new lavish home in 1897 at 248 St Georges Terrace, Perth.<sup>24</sup> The opulent new residence consisted of twenty-five rooms, the largest one being a ballroom, measuring

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<sup>21</sup> Telephone conversation with Paul De Serville, 1 February 2002.

<sup>22</sup> De Serville, *3 Barrack Street*, p. 67.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 91.

<sup>24</sup> *SROWA*, City of Perth Cons. 3460, Rate Book of the Perth Municipality, West Ward, 1897, p. 171; Skinner, *The Fifth Sparrow*, p. 41. The QV1 building is presently located on this site.

six by twelve metres. A further feature of the house was its ornate balustrade staircase, carved from mulga wood.<sup>25</sup>

Hackett was to live there alone until his marriage in 1905, and would certainly have been aware that the house's size and architecture confirmed his status in local society. He wanted to be recognised as the equal of such families as the Forrests and Lee Steeres. The house was a public display of his wealth and, following his marriage, it became a centre for sumptuous social gatherings. As Skinner observed, Hackett 'entertained with old world courtesy and lived, as far as possible, the life of an Irish gentleman'.<sup>26</sup> He hired a housekeeper, whose duty it was to supervise several servants, and a coachman.<sup>27</sup> He frequently invited visitors from the eastern states to stay at his home. In 1904, Australian High Court Judge Richard O'Connor was a guest.<sup>28</sup> In June 1908, on hearing speculation that Alfred Deakin could be retiring as Prime Minister, he invited him to stay at his home: 'We have added a few rooms to the house, and can set you up in a corner by yourself with a bed room [sic] and sitting room where you shall be wholly your own master'.<sup>29</sup> After his death, his widow lived there until the end of World War One when the building was converted into self-contained flats.<sup>30</sup>

### **Country properties**

Another status symbol was to own a country property and Hackett in fact owned several. The one he frequently publicised was 'Cherrydale', which was near

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<sup>25</sup> *BL RN*, no. 558, Miss Lukis, 'Hackett Home'.

<sup>26</sup> Skinner, *The Fifth Sparrow*, p. 41.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>28</sup> Hackett to Deakin, 20 May 1904, *NLA MS 1540/15/1142*.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 10 June 1908, *NLA MS 1540/15/817*.

<sup>30</sup> *BL RN*, no. 558, Miss Lukis, 'Hackett Home'. The building was eventually demolished in 1958.

Donnybrook, 209 kms south of Perth and appropriately situated in his South West Province electorate.<sup>31</sup> In a speech to Parliament in 1909 he said about it:

I have a few thousand acres of land swarming with poison [weed], with dogs howling round it every night and morning of their lives; I planted myself there 3½ years ago and am now proving that it is possible to carry 5,000 sheep on 8,000 acres [3,238 hectares]. This is what I have done already and I have determined, if the thing is possible, to show that the land will carry one sheep to the acre before another two years are over.<sup>32</sup>

In the same speech he advised his colleagues that he had purchased other properties in the names of his nephew and godson whom he hoped one day would settle in Western Australia.<sup>33</sup> This information about his property holdings was made to emphasise to his colleagues that as well as being a Perth businessman, he also owned the country properties that were 'mandatory' for a gentleman.

Hackett also owned the 20,000 [8,084 Hectares] 'Dinninup Vale' (now renamed 'Denninup Vale'), near Boyup Brook from 1898 to 1913. Records do not indicate that he frequently visited the property, although he seems to have invested a substantial amount into it.<sup>34</sup> In 2000, Leonie Moore, the then owner of the property, noted:

Large numbers of men were contracted to clear and establish the property and around five to seven were kept in permanent employ [sic]. Several 5,000 acre [2023 Hectares] clearing

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<sup>31</sup> A. C. Frost, *Green Gold*, p. 75.

<sup>32</sup> *WAPD*, 9 December 1909, vol. 37, pp. 1990-91.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*. There is no evidence that these two ever settled in Western Australia.

<sup>34</sup> June Lacy, *Off-Shears: the Story of Shearing Sheds in Western Australia*, Perth: Black Swan Press, 2002, p. 150 and telephone conversation with Leonie Moore, 21 December 2005.

contracts were given out, fencing erected and homestead, stables, barns and shearing shed built between 1905 and 1913.<sup>35</sup>

‘Dinninup Vale’ was yet another property in his electorate and was again used to cement his acceptance into Perth’s society.

A third property Hackett owned was in Mandurah Terrace, Mandurah, a ‘substantial weatherboard and iron dwelling’.<sup>36</sup> It was likely that he purchased this property as holiday home, but he seems to have used it rarely – probably as a consequence of his hectic lifestyle.

### **Status and marital status**

Hackett held strong views on the issues of being single, marriage and divorce. For example, in 1902 when he was still single at the age of 54, there was debate in parliament on ways to increase immigration to Western Australia. The motion, introduced by Charles Piesse MLC, member for the South-East Province, encouraged married men to the state by offering them land, the amount depending on how many children under the age of sixteen the family brought with them.<sup>37</sup> This suggestion infuriated Hackett, who defended the rights of single people:

Francis Bacon says that single men have made the world, and he works out that paradox in a most ingenious and satisfactory manner. At all events I protest against the theory that married people are to have all the consolation and good things of this life, and that unmarried men are to be put under a ban almost, whether they are to lead a cheerless or barren existence, or

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<sup>35</sup> Lacy, *Off-Shears*, p. 150.

<sup>36</sup> Ronald Richards, *Murray and Mandurah: A Sequel History of The Old Murray District of Western Australia*, Shire of Murray and City of Mandurah, 1993, p. 222; J. W. Hackett’s Will, *SROWA*, consignment no. 3436, item 1917/393, clause 7.

<sup>37</sup> *WAPD*, 1 October 1902, vol. 21, p. 1314.

whether they are to go to the country ... If the hon. member will not give the unmarried men a fair chance in this country I am astonished at it, and the only thing is that they must go to some other State. Through grief and sorrow you drive them out of Western Australia. I again urge that the unmarried man's life is the better lesson of the two.<sup>38</sup>

Hackett clearly considered Piesse's proposal to be crude and fortunately his colleagues thought likewise, with the motion eventually being withdrawn.<sup>39</sup> Even if he had been married, it is unlikely that he would have supported the motion. He had not considered marriage until he had become firmly established as a business leader, and evidently held the view that a person did not have to be married to be professionally successful. In the 1902 parliamentary debate, he also defended being single by stating that: 'Bachelors live the life of neuters, labouring to store up honey in order that the drones and married folk may feed upon it'.<sup>40</sup>

In spite of his views on the worth and rights of single people, Hackett also believed strongly in the institution of marriage. His values on divorce derived from his unflinching Christian beliefs. His views were espoused in 1911 when amendments to the Divorce Bill were debated in parliament. The bill aimed to place both married parties on a more equal footing when dealing with divorce. To do this, legislation was tabled in order to provide certain rights to women that already existed for men. For instance, the amendment stated that marriage could in future be dissolved not only because of the wife's indiscretions, but also because of the husband's adultery.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1318.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1319.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1318.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 28 November 1911, vol. 41, p. 467.

At the outset of his speech, he nominated the bill as ‘the most important matter that has ever come before this Chamber’.<sup>42</sup> He considered the family one of the two impregnable pillars of social society (the other being private property), telling his colleagues that ‘if we attack the family [,] all that is best in our civilization must wither and decay’.<sup>43</sup> Although a strong churchman, he was pragmatic enough to admit that divorce was an unfortunate necessity of life. However, from a religious perspective he felt that any amendments making it easier for a couple to divorce should be resisted: ‘The marriage law exists to preserve the state of marriage’ he told the House, ‘and marriage is formed for something infinitely higher than what must be uppermost in every man and woman’s feelings when they deal with the divorce law, mere passion’.<sup>44</sup>

In an attempt to avoid any final decision being made on the bill, Hackett even suggested that such a law ‘should be reserved for the Federal Parliament alone, otherwise we shall have six statute-books’.<sup>45</sup> Probably reluctantly, he concluded: ‘I am prepared to support the Bill’.<sup>46</sup> It was one of those rare occasions where his religious beliefs differed greatly from public opinion. Then (as still is the case today), Evangelicals did not encourage divorce and it was only condoned under very limited circumstances. Significantly, on this occasion he sided with community opinion, conceding that most Council members would vote for the amendment. He was correct – twenty members voted for the amendment, whilst only four voted against it.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 5 December 1911, vol. 41, p. 596.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.* p. 597.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 598.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 670.

By the time he reached his middle-fifties, Hackett considered himself to be established in Western Australia. He was part-owner and editor of the *West Australian*, a property owner, and an established parliamentarian. In 1905 he decided to marry Deborah Vernon Drake-Brockman, a member of one of Western Australia's most established families. The age difference was 39 years, he being 57 years old, while she was eighteen.

Deborah's mother was Grace Bussell, a member of the Bussell family after whom the coastal town of Busselton was named.<sup>48</sup> Grace had gained fame herself when at Calgarnup in December 1876, together with a stockman, she helped rescue fifty people from the sinking steamer *Georgette*. She was sixteen at the time and was awarded the Silver Medal by the Royal Humane Society.<sup>49</sup> On Deborah's father's side, the Drake-Brockman family could be traced back to John Brockman, who in 1390 was granted land in England by King Richard II.<sup>50</sup> William Locke Brockman, Deborah's great-grand father, arrived in Western Australia with his wife Ann in January 1830 on the *Minstrel*. Deborah's father, Frederick Slade Drake-Brockman, was born in 1857 and was a noted surveyor and explorer.<sup>51</sup>

Deborah was the fourth child and third daughter of seven children of Frederick and Grace Vernon and was born in West Guildford on 18 June 1887. She had been described as 'an individualist from an early age' who 'possessed a most pleasing delicacy of feature, and dark, blue eyes and raven hair. She also had fire and a quick

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<sup>48</sup> A.W. Reed, *Place Names of Australia*, pp. 50-51

<sup>49</sup> Alan Jackson, *Brockman & Drake-Brockman Family Tree: The Australian Branch 1830-1993*, Perth: Alan Jackson, 1994, p. 28.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 13.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 24, 26. In 1909, Grace's husband, F. S. Drake-Brockman was to name Lake Grace after her. (John Bird, *Across the Lake: A History of Lake Grace*, Perth: Bookmark Publishing House, 1992, p. 1.)

mentality' and married Hackett at St Mary's Anglican Church, Busselton on 3 August 1905.<sup>52</sup>

A century on, it can only be speculated as to why Hackett married someone so young. There seems to have been four possible explanations. He himself provided the first and most probable reason. A few weeks before the wedding day in a forthright letter to Walter James, Western Australia's Agent-General in London, he explained:

Perhaps you may have heard I am to be married on August 3<sup>rd</sup>. The place is so dull, and life so monotonous that I absolutely must have a new experience. Hence this determination. It seems to me as good a reason as most men have for marrying. What do you think? This is in the strictest sense a 'marriage de convenience'. You may believe as much of this as you please. I do not set bounds to your credulity, but the marriage on August 3<sup>rd</sup>, bar accidents, is a certainty.<sup>53</sup>

There is no record of James' reaction to this letter.

Secondly, as Ronayne suggests, it would have been the classic example to show 'the propensity of the Anglo-Irish to make good strategic alliances'.<sup>54</sup> After twenty-three years in Western Australia Hackett possibly still considered himself to be 'an outsider'. This was possibly an underlying reason, especially since he associated with prominent local families such as the Leakes, Lee-Steeres and Cliftons. Such people were members of pioneer families and were gradually creating family dynasties. Deborah was connected to the Drake-Brockman and Bussell families, who before the state's four-fold increase in population during the gold rush days, were considered to be amongst the most influential pioneering families in the colony. Hackett could not have wished to

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<sup>52</sup> *ADB*, vol. 9, pp. 149-150.

<sup>53</sup> Hackett to James, 15 July 1905, *ML MSS* 412, vol. 6, item nos. 421, 423.

<sup>54</sup> Ronayne, *First Fleet to Federation*, p. 205.



have married into a more distinguished Western Australian family, nor could he have hoped for his wife to have a better pedigree than Deborah's.



Deborah Vernon Hackett  
1910 Dressed for a Court presentation.  
Acknowledgment: Batty Library, Western Australia, Ref: 1913B

The third probable reason was that Hackett was a well-respected businessman. He probably felt some awkwardness at not being part of the established landed-gentry community. By marrying Deborah, he joined that select group. In the last eleven years of his life, he would have certainly felt more accepted in society and together with his acceptance of a knighthood in 1911 (upgraded in 1913), he must have felt very satisfied with life, especially upon learning that Deborah was to produce an heir.

The fourth and last possible reason for the marriage was that Hackett was physically drawn to Deborah who, surviving photographs confirm, was an attractive woman and, as previously mentioned, she also possessed a lively personality. Perhaps Hackett found Deborah's youth and individuality a breath of fresh air.

Hackett seems to have previously mentioned his aspirations of marriage to several people, including Alfred Deakin, who seems belatedly to have found someone that he felt would be to Hackett's liking. The latter inquisitively responded: 'Your own search for a wife on my account was, alas, too late in its results. But you must at least let me see the lady ideal your letter painted, when next I go to Melbourne'.<sup>55</sup> However there is no record indicating that Hackett did see the mystery woman.

With the thirty-nine year age difference between Hackett and his new bride, there was some disapproval of the marriage from family members. Geoffrey Drake-Brockman, Deborah's older brother, initially protested. However, after the marriage his views changed and he was later to admit that he was initially wrong in his assertions and subsequently came to 'appreciate my distinguished brother-in-law and to regret my

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<sup>55</sup> Hackett to Deakin, 9 July 1905, *NLA MS 1540/15/394*.

youthful and ungracious past attitude'.<sup>56</sup> Mollie Skinner recalled that other Drake-Brockman family members were also horrified at the prospect of having Hackett as a future son-in-law. They considered that 'no matter how brilliant, wealthy and charming he might be [,] the fact remained that he was not a member of one of the State's precious "first families" and no one quite knew what he was about'.<sup>57</sup> When Deborah's mother, Grace Bussell, was engaged to Frederick Drake-Brockman, there had been protests from one of Drake-Brockman's elder sisters, Bessie, to their marriage.<sup>58</sup> So, when Deborah became engaged to Hackett, history was simply repeating itself.

Another person to vent his disapproval at the forthcoming marriage was Alexander Leeper. In his diary, in February 1905, he noted despondently: 'JWH [Hackett] then told me about Deborah Brockman [sic]. I tried to dissuade him'. A week later Leeper, his wife and Hackett discussed the betrothal again<sup>59</sup> but Hackett was determined to marry. However, there was some evidence that the Leeper family later came to accept Deborah. During one of Hackett's regular visits to the eastern states in early 1906, Deborah was introduced to the Leepers. The following day, Deborah returned to the Leepers' home alone and had a two-hour conversation with Leeper's wife, Mary.<sup>60</sup> No mention of the content of their tête-à-tête was made in Leeper's diaries.

Initially, Hackett experienced some difficulties adjusting to married life. In a letter to James in December 1905, he commented:

I find it simply impossible to get through my work now that I have added to my responsibilities and cares. Did you find that

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<sup>56</sup> Geoffrey Drake-Brockman, *The Turning Wheel*, Perth: Paterson Brokensha Pty Ltd, 1960, pp. 36-37.

<sup>57</sup> Skinner, *The Fifth Sparrow*, p. 42.

<sup>58</sup> Hillman, *The Hillman Diaries 1877-1884*, pp. 230-231

<sup>59</sup> *TCM*, Alexander Leeper's Diaries, 23 February 1905, 4 March 1905.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 7 February 1906, 8 February 1906.

marriage took at least a couple of hours out of your working day? It is my experience.<sup>61</sup>

Seventeen months later, in May 1907, Hackett was still experiencing difficulty in adjusting to married life, although admitting Deborah was thoroughly enjoying her new status:

We are having the usual round, an endless one, of entertainments, sometimes four in a day. It has become quite noxious to me, but my wife enjoys it with the whole-hearted delight of a young woman to whom everything is unfamiliar and delightful.<sup>62</sup>

This was confirmed by Deborah in 1955 when she recalled that her marriage to Hackett had been 'blissfully happy'.<sup>63</sup>

### **Honorary Doctorate**

The major reason for Hackett's trip to Europe in 1902 was to collect an honorary doctorate from the University of Dublin. This must have been a momentous occasion for him. It was his first return to his homeland since he had emigrated to Australia in 1875. He also intended to be present at the coronation of Edward VII on 26 June of that year. However, the King was stricken with appendicitis, forcing postponement of the ceremony until 9 August 1902.<sup>64</sup> This did not stop Hackett mingling with international dignitaries who had gathered for the occasion.

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<sup>61</sup> Hackett to James, 8 December 1905, *ML MSS* 412, vol. 7, item No. 77.

<sup>62</sup> Hackett to James, 9 May 1907, *RHSV MS* 17652 17715, Box 12/2.

<sup>63</sup> Boyce, 'The Hon. Sir J. Winthrop Hackett KCMG Hon LL.D.: His Life and Times', *BL*, PR14514/HAC, item 3, p. 9.

<sup>64</sup> Simon Heffer, *Power and Place: The Political Consequences of King Edward VII*, London: Phoenix Giant, 1999, p. 126.

On 1 July 1902, Hackett was in Dublin. It should have been a pleasurable event, especially with the possibility of some Irish relatives and friends in the audience. However, students had been made aware of his support, some three years previously, for female franchise in Western Australia. Consequently, he was made ‘to run the gauntlet[,] for the students made the most of a bachelor being the champion of a female cause’.<sup>65</sup> Hackett’s reaction to this incident is not recorded.

The Public Orator of the University of Dublin, Dr Tyrrell, introduced Hackett by acknowledging his achievements in Western Australia, saying that he had: ‘played a great part in forming and civilising that most flourishing colony’.<sup>66</sup> Tyrrell briefly referred to the scuffles that greeted the guest by rhetorically asking:

What again shall we say of the fact that he has ever championed with all his powers that amiable sex which is called gentler than the other, and is certainly more charming, and has resolutely opposed those hardened beings who would refuse the franchise to women?<sup>67</sup>

Tyrrell concluded his speech by acclaiming: ‘His Alma Mater is rejoiced to welcome again to her bosom, with well-deserved honours, a son so fortunate, so illustrious and so potent in the accomplishment of good’.<sup>68</sup> Despite the rowdy aspects of his reception, Hackett would have thoroughly relished the occasion. After twenty-seven years in Australia, he was being publicly recognised in his homeland.

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<sup>65</sup> C.L., ‘A Great Triumvirate: Lord Forrest, Sir J.W. Hackett and Archbishop Riley (7)’; Royal Western Australian Historical Society, John Forrest cutting file no. 1/1847/3 (*Sunday Times* article, n.d.).

<sup>66</sup> *The Irish Times*, 2 July 1902, p. 6.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*

Both before and after the ceremony, Hackett attended functions associated with the postponed coronation. On 10 July 1902 he attended a reception for Commonwealth visitors at St James Palace, hosted by the Prince (later George V) and Princess of Wales. As well as European royalty, hundreds of people from throughout the Empire attended the function, including John Forrest and Edmund Barton (Australia's first Prime Minister).<sup>69</sup> He would have been in his element amongst the large gathering of luminaries.

### **Knighthood**

In 1897 Hackett was offered an imperial honour – a Companion of the Order of St Michael and St George (CMG).<sup>70</sup> However, he refused it, having anticipated being offered a Knight Commander of the Order of St Michael and St George (KCMG). This was a higher category of award in the Imperial honours and therefore more prestigious.

When he declined a CMG again in 1902, a columnist in the Irish nationalist newspaper the *W.A. Freeman's Journal* was offended that a Western Australian had been denied the higher honour:

Most people wonder and naturally, too, why this last trifle [honour] was not given to him [Hackett]. Speaking from my own personal knowledge of the King, I know he is very jealous in his choice for honors [sic], and particularly hard on narrow-gutted individuals. I presume that in sighting Hackett's eye on the bias he hurriedly and wrongly, concluded that his mind was biased also ... Anyhow Western Australia should resent this cavalier treatment of Mr Hackett.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> *The Times*, 12 July 1902, p. 12.

<sup>70</sup> Hackett to Deakin, 20 May 1904, *NLA MS 1540/15/1141*.

<sup>71</sup> *The W.A. Freeman's Journal*, 5 July 1902, p. 5.

A few months later, in a letter to Joseph Chamberlain, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, a frustrated John Forrest wrote:

I am very grateful to you for the fresh consideration given by you to my old recommendations for honours, but I regret that Mr Hackett, after bothering me for years, has declined because he wanted a KCMG instead of a KB [Knight Bachelor] ... “One should not look a gift horse in the mouth” is all I have to say in regard to Mr Hackett’s foolish action.<sup>72</sup>

There is no record of Chamberlain’s reaction to this letter; however the following day in a letter to John Forrest, Hackett candidly explained his reasons for rejecting the Knight Bachelor’s award:

I am more than ever sorry that you will have some trouble about my KB. Somehow all the pleasure of the thing is gone for me now. You say truly that the KCMG is kept for Premiers and the like. This is scarcely quite so, is it. [sic] But in any case it makes the KB a poor thing indeed. It is true that Judges etc accept it and have done so from time immemorial. But they dignify the title not the titles them. And the names you mention in Melbourne!!! [sic] The old point about having to ascend through the CMG was played before, you will recollect. Is it possible that only KCMGs are to be given as a rule to men who have graduated through the companionship [sic]. If so [,] it must chiefly consist of the thirds and fourths who have had their initiation in it. I have a strong fancy that had you been here you would have persuaded me, and forgive me if I say it, have made me very unhappy. As to promotion from the KB you and I know that it hardly ever comes. See Shenton and others.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> Forrest to Joseph Chamberlain, 24 November 1902, *Birmingham University*, JC17/2/5.

<sup>73</sup> Hackett to Forrest, 25 November 1902, *BL MN 34*, 766A, Box 3, file 2, item 243.

This letter illustrates Hackett's stubbornness and determination. It had been five years since the initial offer and at this stage in his life, at the age of 54, he felt let down by Forrest. Throughout his life, he had aimed at the pinnacle in whatever responsibilities he undertook. He considered the offer of a Knight Bachelor to be beneath him, especially given his standing in the community.

In 1904, the saga continued. An annoyed Hackett wrote to the recently deposed Prime Minister, Alfred Deakin:

The Colonial office [sic] wrote a most angry letter to Forrest[,] over it winding up with a petulant burst that "of course it would never do to ask Mr Hackett to again [sic] change his mind". They will not give what would seem a reward for my rebellion. Then there would be the struggle with other papers, who would not forgive them singling me out. Seven years ago when Forrest mentioned my name for the CMG, the answer at once was "not to a newspaper man". But I am not a whit the less grateful to you because I do not rate the chances of success highly.<sup>74</sup>

This letter reveals two points. Firstly, the last sentence indicates that Deakin supported (and possibly nominated) Hackett for a KCMG. Secondly, the letter provides the possible cause why the Colonial Office was reluctant to award him a KCMG. They considered him simply 'a newspaper man'. However, as it has already been noted, he was much more than that in Western Australia. In all probability, his determination to reject the CMG award was because of his awareness of his own public record. This included representing the colony during the 1890s at conventions that established the Australian Federation.

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<sup>74</sup> Hackett to Deakin, 20 May 1904, *NLA MS 1540/15/1141*. Deakin's first term as Prime Minister of seven months ended on 27 April 1904.



The following year a still angry Hackett wrote to Walter James:

I have to thank you for the kind mention you made of the Kthood [sic]. I doubt if anyone can make much way with the Col[onial] Office over this matter. It is a delightful instance of their determination to punish someone, and of their “spitefulness” as an ex-prime minister [Deakin] put it. But you put me under great obligation in the reference that you made to it.<sup>75</sup>

A year later, an unforgiving Hackett was making no headway. Once more he outpoured his annoyance to James:

I looked to see you get the CMG from the Colonial Office. You will, of course, receive it before you come out. But how ridiculous they are to have formerly scattered these KCMG’s broadcast as if they were throwing them from a sack, and now making so much of the smallest honour they give to those who have worked hard and well for their country. We shall have soon a class of old KCMG’s, who will be thought nothing of, and the new, who will be rated too highly.<sup>76</sup>

James’ replies are not recorded. However, by 1907, there was evidence that Deakin (again, Prime Minister) was working behind the scenes. He supported Hackett’s cause in a letter to John Forrest: ‘[Hackett] would not discuss the matter with me and apparently would not have welcomed any interference on his behalf ... [as] he is annoyed at his continuous oversight’.<sup>77</sup> Deakin expressed his disappointment with the Colonial Office, not only for having rejected Hackett’s nomination, but also for having rebuffed several other Australians for Imperial honours. In respect to Hackett’s case, Deakin considered the snub a scandal, remarking: ‘I think their [Colonial Office]

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<sup>75</sup> Hackett to James, 22 March 1905, *ML MSS* 412, vol. 6, item no. 133.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, 9 July 1906, *ML MSS* 412, vol 7, item no. 379.

<sup>77</sup> Deakin to Forrest, 28 February 1907, *BL MN* 34, 766A, Box 4, file 1, item 377.



### 1911 Knighthood

Hackett in court dress for his investiture as a knight.  
Acknowledgment: Batty Library, Western Australia, Ref: 1912B

treatment of him [is] as much a discourtesy to you [Forrest] as to himself'.<sup>78</sup> As for the Colonial Office, Deakin thought the fact that:

[Hackett's] refusal became public is their fault and not his. He was never asked and it would be another outrage to punish his wife for their own his hideous blunder in gazetting without enquiry. They [Colonial Office] will try to humbug you and pretend the King would not agree – that is all humbug and if you only let yourself go in the right quarters you will carry the day.<sup>79</sup>

It took an exasperated Hackett until 1911 to accept a Knight Bachelor.<sup>80</sup> There were probably two reasons for his eventual capitulation. Firstly, after rejecting an award for fourteen years, he realised his life was ebbing away and so decided to accept any knighthood on offer, even if it was the lowest category. Secondly, as Deakin alluded in his letter to Forrest, Deborah Hackett would have been ecstatic with her husband's honour. It would be a further two years before Hackett was appointed a KCMG.<sup>81</sup> So finally, his perseverance was eventually rewarded. The eventual reason behind his being awarded the KCMG is one of those irrecoverable details of the past, but it was possible that after Deakin left office he continued to pressure the authorities to give his friend the higher award. However, the glory was short-lived. Hackett and his family had less than three years to relish the accolade before he died.

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<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.* Underlined in document.

<sup>80</sup> "Its an Honour". *In Australian Honours List* [on line] <[http://www.itsanhonour.gov.au/honours\\_list/searchResults.cfm](http://www.itsanhonour.gov.au/honours_list/searchResults.cfm)> Accessed 21 June 2005, 24 February 1911.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, 3 June 1913. The maximum number of KCMGs allowed in 1913 was 300 (e-mail from Central Chancery of the Orders of Knighthood, St James's Palace, London to author, 13 January 2006).

## **Conclusion**

Hackett's friendship with Leeper indicated that he was not only a shrewd businessman, but also was a generous person when the need arose. When Leeper found himself in difficulties, either financial or otherwise, Hackett was at hand to assist. His ownership of various properties confirmed his wealth. More importantly, it affirmed his social status, which would eventually lead to his acceptance into the élite of Western Australian society. His marriage to Deborah Drake Brockman completed the jigsaw, although – having been a bachelor for 57 years of his life – he had articulated strong views in defence of single people. Membership of both the Freemasons and the Weld Club also underlined his standing in society. The long-running saga involving his knighthood indicated he was not willing to accept second best and saw himself as a pillar of the community. He always aimed for the pinnacle.

There was one successful institution that Hackett aspired to establish which so far has yet to be discussed. He was the driving force behind Western Australia's first tertiary education facility - the University of Western Australia. This episode of Hackett's life will be examined in the following chapter.

## CHAPTER NINE: HACKETT'S CROWNING ACHIEVEMENT: THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

*'A University education is looked upon as the proper completion of, as the finishing touch to, the education given in the grammar schools, ...[and] until we have a University the best and most promising boys and girls in our secondary schools must be placed at a serious disadvantage'.*

– J. W. Hackett, September 1901.

### Introduction

During the 1890s Hackett had achieved most of his professional objectives in that he was both part-owner and an editor of a major newspaper. He was steadily climbing the local social ladder and, by 1898, had also masterminded the abolition of state aid to church schools. However, there was still one aspiration he had yet to accomplish, which was to establish Western Australia's first university. Alfred Deakin, when reflecting on the delegates who attended the September 1897 Federal Convention, referred to Hackett as: 'University conscious Hackett',<sup>1</sup> whilst John Kirwan would recall in his 1936 autobiography that: 'From my first acquaintance with him [Hackett] he talked and worked to establish a university'.<sup>2</sup>

The early years of the history of University of Western Australia have been extensively documented, notably by Fred Alexander in *Campus at Crawley*. Consequently, this chapter will focus on Hackett's determination to create a university in Western Australia as well as some of his ideas about what it should achieve and some of the

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<sup>1</sup> Deakin, *And Be One People*, p. 73.

<sup>2</sup> John Kirwan, *My Life's Adventure*, London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1936, p. 248. Kirwan, like Hackett, was a newspaper editor and eventually part-owned the *Western Argus* and *Kalgoorlie Miner*. He was also a parliamentary colleague of Hackett's in the Legislative Council. (*BRMPWA*, pp. 114-115.)

problems he encountered in establishing it. Various people were to assist in the formation of the university, but it was Hackett's motivation, resilience and determination that carried the project through. It will also be argued in this chapter that Hackett, commencing from his 1879 Prelector's Lecture in Melbourne, always aimed to be associated with a university that agreed with his ideology, which was to focus on practical subjects rather than those that were becoming outdated such as classical languages.

The legislative process required to establish a university commenced in 1901 with a motion moved by R. S. Hayes MLC to discuss whether a university should be established in Perth.<sup>3</sup> This was followed in 1904 when the University Endowment Bill allocated land for the purpose. However, it was a further five years before a Royal Commission was established to again debate the viability of a university in Western Australia. Under Hackett's chairmanship, it lasted for eighteen months from 11 February 1909 to 30 August 1910.<sup>4</sup> The Royal Commission gave approval to establish a university, but the practicalities created a fresh set of challenges.

One problem was that there were nine different sites to be considered for the new university, with a selection committee unable to reach a final choice. There were also foundation professorships to be filled, which included a chair in Agriculture endowed by Hackett. He was not pleased with the field of applicants and in frustration took over the task of interviewing them himself in order to have the appointment filled speedily and proficiently. The chapter concludes with the comments of a number of individuals on this aspect of Hackett's legacy to Western Australia. Each gives emphasis to his tireless advocacy and how the institution transformed the education system in Western Australia forever.

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<sup>3</sup> *WAPD*, 10 September 1901, vol. 19, p. 783.

<sup>4</sup> Alexander, *Campus at Crawley*, p. 15.

## Early considerations

One of Hackett's main beliefs throughout his life was that, irrespective of wealth or status, everyone should have an opportunity for a good education. His public aspirations for higher education can be traced back to his Prelector's Lecture delivered in 1879 at Trinity College, Melbourne, which outlined his vision for the future of universities in Australia.<sup>5</sup> The speech was given in the Old Library of the University on 2 July of that year, with the Society's Patron, the Bishop of Melbourne, in the chair. This was the first recorded public occasion when Hackett revealed his views on the future of universities; especially universities in Australia. It is significant that he chose the subject himself which reflected his own past experiences and values and indicated just how much he was to value education in the future. He recounted the history of universities since the twelfth century, they having first been established in Paris, Bologna and Salerno, and then compared the universities of England with those in Germany. The former, he stated, functioned as an examining board, while in contrast, German universities:

‘imbue[d] the undergraduate with general culture, and, secondly, to train him [sic] up for some technical avocation, aiming, as it were, at securing a general development of all the mental faculties in a specific direction’.<sup>6</sup>

Reflecting on Melbourne University, he considered that students still followed the colonial system as students ‘are compelled to adapt themselves to the pitiless Procrustes bed of the matriculation examination’.<sup>7</sup> As an alternative, he suggested that more practical subjects be offered which would cultivate ‘ideas, which students would carry

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<sup>5</sup> Hackett, *Address*.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 16.

away with them, and in which, unfortunately, this community is by no means too rich'.<sup>8</sup> This philosophy and passion for education were to stay with him for the remainder of his life.

Hackett's support for universities had evolved during and since his childhood days in Dublin. He had been influenced by his father's work as both the Registrar of the Erasmus Smith Trust and Secretary to the Incorporated Society for the Promotion of English Protestant Schools in Ireland. The Erasmus Smith Trust had provided scholarships, amongst others, to clergymen's children to study at Trinity College. Hackett, his father and two younger brothers had all been beneficiaries of the Trust and on his father's death in 1888 a memorial fund was established to promote English Protestant schools in Ireland. He sought to extend such a scheme in Western Australia, but on a much wider scale and with no reference to religious denomination.

On 3 January 1884, a correspondent to the *West Australian* felt that the colony did not have the population to sustain a university.<sup>9</sup> At the time there were slightly over 32,000 residents.<sup>10</sup> In all probability Hackett would have had to agree with the writer, who had also pointed out that in Victoria the population was over 800,000 and only 400 students were attending university.<sup>11</sup>

Nearly eleven years on, in December 1894, Hackett believed the time was right to raise the issue again. The Western Australian economy was booming. Two years earlier, Bayley and Ford had found gold at Coolgardie, whilst a year later Paddy Hannan had

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<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 18.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 19.

<sup>9</sup> WA, 3 January 1884, p. 3. H. N. P. Wollaston letter to the editor.

<sup>10</sup> Seddon and Ravine, *A City and Its Setting*, p. 277.

<sup>11</sup> WA, 3 January 1884, p. 3.



discovered more of the mineral in Kalgoorlie. In 1892, construction work had commenced on Fremantle Harbour.<sup>12</sup> In an editorial Hackett argued that:

The education of the boys and girls of the community may be regarded as an essential form of political insurance. If the electoral rulers of the future be left ill-instructed, undisciplined, and unappreciative of the true greatness and meaning of a citizen's career, those who have the power of setting those things right, and do not do so at the present day, will reap the penalty at no distant date.<sup>13</sup>

He went on to indicate the economic benefits for Western Australia: 'The investor recognises thoroughly that every school makes the payment of his interest safer, and that every new scholar means more intelligence directed to the work of production'.<sup>14</sup> However, he was the first to acknowledge that education was not the panacea for all the world's ills, conceding that: 'More knowledge does not necessarily mean more honesty, but even here most will allow that instruction properly applied should help to the end'.<sup>15</sup>

John Kirwan recalled an incident when an unidentified person remarked to Hackett that Western Australia could not afford a university. To this he retorted:

The time is coming when we cannot afford to be without a university. It is not only for the education of our young people but also for research work. There are countless problems continually arising in our back [sic] country. There are treatment troubles in connection with our ores. Insect pests, poison weeds and stock diseases can only be effectively dealt with when scientifically investigated. A university would be of

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<sup>12</sup> Chate, Graham, Oakley, *Date It!*, p. 27.

<sup>13</sup> WA, 27 December 1894, p. 4.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

inestimable service in helping the development of our natural resources.<sup>16</sup>

Hackett was keen to press on with his plan. The fight would not be as intense as his battle with the Roman Catholic Church over state aid to church schools, but it would be longer in duration.

### **Parliamentary debates, 1901-1911**

Nothing much occurred in relation to the university issue until Western Australia joined Federation. In September 1901 the Legislative Council debated a motion that a university should be established in Western Australia.<sup>17</sup> Although Hackett did not move the motion, he was the key participant in the debate, especially after he moved an amendment: 'That this House is of [the] opinion that the advisability of at once establishing a University or University Institute demands, in the best interests of the State, the immediate consideration of the Government'.<sup>18</sup> As Fred Alexander later acknowledged, his speech 'gave clear indication of the shape his thoughts were taking'.<sup>19</sup>

Much of what Hackett had to say was a repetition of his 1879 Prefector Lecture. He again stressed how important universities were for the future of education:

A University education is looked upon as the proper completion of, as the finishing touch to, the education given in the grammar schools, ... [and] until we have a University the best and most

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<sup>16</sup> John Kirwan, *My Life's Adventure*, p. 249.

<sup>17</sup> *WAPD*, 10 September 1901, vol. 19, p. 783.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 24 September 1901, vol. 19, p. 1047.

<sup>19</sup> Alexander, *Campus at Crawley*, p. 20.

promising boys and girls in our secondary schools must be placed at a serious disadvantage.<sup>20</sup>

He also indicated that he preferred practical subjects, as taught at some German institutions. He considered such universities had adapted themselves to the 'needs of the day, and are passing us not only in dead languages, modern languages, and scientific studies, but in the practical questions of life, upon which after all, we depend for our daily bread'.<sup>21</sup> He no doubt emphasised this point in the knowledge that his audience of fellow Legislative Councillors were 'practical men'.

He was less impressed with the older British universities. For instance, he stated that students at Oxford and Cambridge Universities concentrated on 'the study of the dead languages, or the pursuit of what is called the higher mathematics ... everything else is not only of secondary importance, but in many cases of no importance whatever'.<sup>22</sup> He felt that such subjects only catered for the élite in society and considered that if a university were established on similar lines in Western Australia, 'it would fall to the ground within six months'.<sup>23</sup> He enumerated the four requirements necessary for the establishment of a university: 'a site, an endowment, teachers, and pupils'.<sup>24</sup> He acknowledged that the only weakness was the state's population of about 190,000 people, which raised doubts as to the viability of a university.<sup>25</sup> However, in a more positive mood, he stressed the imperative need for such an institution and identified his concerns if it was not established:

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<sup>20</sup> *WAPD*, 24 September 1901, vol. 19, p. 1047.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1048.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1049.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1048.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*

I am one of those who believe that if a thoroughly efficient system of education were introduced, we should have to spend less on our police, on our magistrates, and on our courts, and that the virtue and morality of the people would be raised to a degree we have never yet realised in any age in the world's history.<sup>26</sup>

Interestingly, it was a similar argument to that used by Erasmus Smith in 1669 when he set up his Trust. Smith considered that a lack of knowledge led to people being disobedient. He claimed that subsidising education would eventually solve this problem.<sup>27</sup>

In his speech, Hackett recalled the circumstances that enabled him to obtain his own university education and hoped that in future people from all walks of life could gain an education, not just a privileged few. He stressed that Western Australians, in spite of their small numbers, suffered by not having a university and claimed that such an institution would develop 'the mind at the very point of their life when it is most open to development, when it is most receptive, and at the same time most fruitful'.<sup>28</sup> His speech was an authoritative one as it was clearly an issue about which he felt passionately. The fire in Hackett's belly had returned and he was now focused on the establishment of a university that would compare well with those on the eastern seaboard.

Also in his parliamentary speech, Hackett argued that the State Treasury could afford a university.<sup>29</sup> As an example, he cited that Sydney University started with an annual

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<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1047.

<sup>27</sup> "Erasmus Smith Archive" In *The High School, Rathgar, Dublin 6*. [on line] <<http://www.highschoolublin.com/erasmus.htm>>. Accessed 18 May 2002.

<sup>28</sup> *WAPD*, 24 September 1901, vol. 19, p. 1047.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*

grant of £5,000.<sup>30</sup> In 1901, Western Australia was experiencing a continual increase in gold production, with annual revenue reaching over £7 million. It would be a further two years until production would reach its peak. Exports exceeded imports by over £2 million. The value of other minerals, such as copper, which had experienced an extraordinary increase in production value from £33,937 in 1900 to £110,769 in 1901, also indicated an upsurge.<sup>31</sup> Hackett would have been well aware of the boom in the economy and therefore extremely confident that the state could easily find the finance. However, not all members were in favour of the motion. These included Wesley Maley MLC, John Glowrey MLC and Donald McKay MLC. Each expressed the opinion that monies proposed for a university would be better spent in funding schools in country regions.<sup>32</sup> Despite the opposition, the motion was eventually passed on members' voices.<sup>33</sup> The first hurdle had been cleared and at the same time Hackett's own status was further enhanced.

The next obstacle Hackett had to overcome was the second reading of the University Endowment Bill in 1903. His speech in this debate again reflected his enthusiasm and aspirations for the university. First of all, he repeated his hope that subjects taught at the university would be of practical use in everyday life in order to 'prepare the sons and daughters of the people for battling with the conditions of existence and enable them to rise'.<sup>34</sup> He reiterated that some English universities, such as Oxford and Cambridge, taught subjects which were becoming irrelevant. These universities concentrated in the 'the graces of culture, that polish which the race received from the study of the masterpieces of literary art, or from examinations in the lunar theories, or

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<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1048.

<sup>31</sup> *Statistical Register of Western Australia for 1920-21 and Previous Years*, Part XII, pp. 6-8.

<sup>32</sup> *WAPD*, 24 September 1901, vol. 19, pp. 1050-1052.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1054.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 6 October 1903, vol. 23, p. 1392.

the differential calculus'.<sup>35</sup> He again repeated that these courses were ridiculous and useless.<sup>36</sup>

Secondly, he anticipated that the university would accept students irrespective of the affluence of their parents. He did 'not contemplate to any degree the sons of the well-to-do taking advantage of this university' and stressed it would also be 'for the poor man, the working man and the working woman'.<sup>37</sup> Although Hackett's thoughts in this instance were well-intended, it must be remembered that in 1903 children had to come from a reasonably affluent family in order to have experienced any but the most basic education.

Finally, Hackett argued that the university should have sufficient endowment in the form of land in order to develop some substantial assets as the University of Chicago had done.<sup>38</sup> The legislation was passed in 1904 with the university being given 4,146 acres [1,678 Hectares] of land.<sup>39</sup> The 33 parcels of land included not only ones in the metropolitan area such as North Fremantle and Swan, but also in country regions, such as Mount Barker, Pingelly, Wagin, Narrogin and Katanning.<sup>40</sup> In 1912 some parcels of land were exchanged for 'areas increasing the extent of the University's proposed permanent site at Crawley'.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1391.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1390.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>39</sup> Alexander, *Campus at Crawley*, p. 12.

<sup>40</sup> *Government Gazette of Western Australia*, 1 July 1904, p. 1795; 5 August 1904, p. 2049.

<sup>41</sup> Alexander, *Campus at Crawley*, p. 35. The economic benefits from the subsequent land sales were so dismal that a royal commissioner, Mr Justice Wolff was appointed in 1941-1942 to examine, amongst other issues, the land sales failure. He came to a conclusion that the administrators had squandered their opportunities. (Alexander, *Campus at Crawley*, pp. 335-336.)

In the years following the passing of the University Endowment Bill, its establishment gradually gained momentum as between 1904 and 1908, the population of Western Australia increased from 242,289 to 270,823 people.<sup>42</sup> It was time to take the next step in the process of establishing a university in the state and in 1908 Newton Moore's Liberal ministry was favourably inclined to do so. In a speech in July of that year at Bunbury the Premier spoke favourably of the proposal.<sup>43</sup> In February 1909, still under Moore's Premiership, Hackett was installed as Chairman of a Royal Commission to examine the viability of establishing a university.<sup>44</sup> In June 1909, he attended the Imperial Press Conference in London but the Commission was never far from his mind. During his travels he took the opportunity to visit a number of universities in Great Britain, Canada and the United States. While in England he was impressed with the more recently established universities, such as Manchester and Sheffield, especially as these institutions taught subjects that were of a more practical use. He studied various aspects of each university, such as their constitutions, teaching, internal organisation and financial patronage.<sup>45</sup> Generally, he must have felt that the information he gathered on his trip was most helpful.

In the federal election year of 1910, it seems that Hackett had his doubts as to Labor's views towards the university. He was unsure whether if elected, the new government would financially assist the university or divert federal funds away from it. He knew that Deakin would support the project. A week before Andrew Fisher won office for the second time for Labor on 29 April 1910,<sup>46</sup> he expressed his anxieties to Deakin:

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<sup>42</sup> Seddon and Ravine, *A City and its Setting*, p. 279.

<sup>43</sup> WA, 13 August 1908. Cited by Alexander, *Campus at Crawley*, p. 15.

<sup>44</sup> Alexander, *Campus at Crawley*, p. 15.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 26-27.

<sup>46</sup> Holliman, *Century of Australian Prime Ministers*, pp. 20-21.

[I]f Labourites press their advantage, [it] may deprive us of our University from lack of funds, which this year I have brought almost to the point of success, and it will be a severe disappointment if I am to lose it.<sup>47</sup>

There was no need for Hackett's concerns. It seems Fisher did not interfere in the proposed project as there is no documentary evidence to suggest that the Commonwealth Government provided any finance to support it. Consequently, on 2 February 1911, R. D. McKenzie MLC introduced University Bill to establish a university.<sup>48</sup>

The University Bill was significant in that during the second reading no member spoke against it. Possibly by then, most of them would have considered the establishment of a university as being inevitable. Following the introduction of the motion by Robert McKenzie MLC, Minister without portfolio, he and Hackett were the only significant speakers.<sup>49</sup> Hackett would have been delighted at the introduction of the bill, though he was not too pleased with 'the paltry sum of £13,000 a year' provided for its annual funding.<sup>50</sup> During his speech he reiterated the benefits: 'This University is intended to help people to add to their success, to increase their wages, and to make them altogether more comfortable and happier members of our social system than they may be at present'.<sup>51</sup>

Although the question of fees had not been raised at that stage, he hoped that all those students who wished to use the facilities could do so. As James Battye would recall in a radio speech in 1945, Hackett 'always kept before him the idea that such a University should be free and so afford equal opportunities to rich and poor alike, provided that

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<sup>47</sup> Hackett to Deakin, 22 April 1910, *NLA MS 1540/15/993*.

<sup>48</sup> *WAPD*, 2 February 1911, vol. 40, p. 3634.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 3634-3646.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3640. The amount was actually \$13,500. Refer Alexander, *Campus at Crawley*, pp. 61, 76.

<sup>51</sup> *WAPD*, 2 February 1911, vol. 40, p. 3642.



they proved themselves capable of benefiting from higher education.<sup>52</sup> In concluding his speech, he quoted from the Royal Commission Report, emphasising the fact that Western Australia was the last ‘self-governing country under the British Crown without its university’.<sup>53</sup>

The University Bill was finally passed on 3 February 1911.<sup>54</sup> Over fifty years later, Fred Alexander was to assert that the time between the end of the Commission and the proclamation of the Act was a period when an ‘aptness of the timing, and soundness of the pace [was] maintained, by those responsible for the series of events which culminated in the passage of the Act of 1911’<sup>55</sup> and if the university had been established in the 1890s, Western Australia with its small population would have had the greatest difficulty in supporting and developing it.<sup>56</sup> Also, according to Alexander, ‘Hackett never allowed his enthusiasm to outstrip his judgment of what was practicable’.<sup>57</sup> Not surprisingly, when the University Senate was first constituted Hackett was appointed its inaugural Chancellor.<sup>58</sup>

The issue of student fees was a controversial one. At a University Senate meeting held on 26 August 1912, the matter was referred to a meeting of the administrative and finance committees.<sup>59</sup> At the next meeting on 14 October, majority and minority reports were submitted to its members. Thomas Walker (Minister of Education) and Tom Bath

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<sup>52</sup> Battye, ‘Sir Winthrop Hackett’, *BL*, PR14514/HACKETT, item 2, p. 2.

<sup>53</sup> *WAPD*, 2 February 1911, vol. 40, p. 3644.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 3 February 1911, vol. 40. p. 3730.

<sup>55</sup> Alexander, *Campus at Crawley*, p. 32.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 32-33.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 33.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 768.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 60.

MLA then moved a motion 'that no fee shall be charged to students of the University'.<sup>60</sup> The debate was eventually adjourned until 18 November, at which time an amendment was moved that fees should be charged. Alexander asserts that several Senators were 'uncertain about the likelihood of [the] children of workers being able to take advantage of the University, fees or no fees'.<sup>61</sup> However, with the amendment being defeated, the original motion was again debated and voted upon. This resulted in a tied vote. Hackett, as President of the Senate, then placed his casting vote in favour of the proposal that students should pay no fees.<sup>62</sup> Again, he had won the day, although by a very narrow margin. This incident was yet another example of Hackett at his best, with his enthusiasm and persistence eventually winning the day.

### **Initial problems for the university**

With the passage of the legislation, Hackett had overcome another hurdle but then had to handle the daily practicalities of organising the university. As might be expected, the task was not trouble-free. In 1912, he wrote a candid letter to Alfred Deakin, in which he detailed some of the problems he was experiencing:

It is quite incredible how mean people can be, how one-sided, and how directly regardless of what is really needed over such a business ... Many of them are opposed to it. Others think a mere technical school business will be sufficient, and so on, while in the Senate I can see all round me men who hope to profit by the big salaries and emoluments promised by the University.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>63</sup> Hackett to Deakin, 30 August 1912. Cited by Alexander, *Campus at Crawley*, p. 74.

However, Hackett did temper his remarks by supporting his parliamentary colleagues who he considered were not really ‘a bad lot of fellows by any means and they are enthusiastic over the University’.<sup>64</sup> Notwithstanding his comments to Deakin, he continued to forge ahead with the task.

The search for a permanent site for the university buildings was a prolonged affair. From the nine sites originally proposed, the Commission eventually found only three of them suitable for a permanent site – the new building housing the Western Australian Parliament, Government House and land near Subiaco Railway Station.<sup>65</sup>

Controversially, Hackett considered that of the three locations being proposed, the Western Australian Parliament site would be the most appropriate.<sup>66</sup> However, this site was considered too small, while Government House, although convenient for students, was thought to be impracticable. The Commission did not provide any final recommendation, although it favoured the Subiaco site as being ‘easily accessible by rail and tram to students from Perth to Fremantle and from suburbs lying in between’.<sup>67</sup>

In 1911 a seven-man committee, including Hackett, was established to select a suitable location and again, he was at the centre of the discussion. Of the three sites being considered, the Government House proposition was replaced by vacant land at Crawley.<sup>68</sup> He was clear in his views, advising his colleagues that ‘five things [were] to be considered in selecting a permanent site: healthfulness, sufficient land area, accessibility, position and appearance and “character, contour and material”’.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>65</sup> Alexander, *Campus at Crawley*, p. 32.

<sup>66</sup> WAPD, 2 February 1911, vol. 40, p. 3644.

<sup>67</sup> Alexander, *Campus at Crawley*, p. 32.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 62-63.

<sup>69</sup> Premier’s Department. File 77/1912. Cited by Alexander, *Campus at Crawley*, p. 63.

The Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, M. F. Troy MLA, voted with Hackett for the Parliament House site, while the other five members voted for different locations.<sup>70</sup>

To Hackett's disappointment, the committee could not arrive at a final decision.

From May 1912 to 1916 the university rented offices in Cathedral Avenue, Perth, from the Church of England.<sup>71</sup> No doubt Hackett's position in the Church, including his Chancellorship of the Perth diocese, assisted the university in obtaining these buildings. Then, after several failed attempts to obtain other sites, including the Observatory near Parliament House and the city-centre, a site in Irwin Street was eventually obtained. Lectures commenced in the Irwin Street buildings (known by the students as 'Tin Pot Alley') in March 1913 and continued there until they were transferred to the new Crawley site in 1930.<sup>72</sup>

In January 1914 a permanent site was still being debated. In frustration, Hackett once again turned to the *West Australian* to write an editorial about his displeasure at proceedings. He especially mentioned the indecision of the committee and advised his readers that the question of the location for the university had:

been a veritable apple of discord from the day the University was constituted. It occasioned a cleavage in the [University] Senate; it drove Senate and Convocation into what looked like becoming hopeless irreconcilable camps; the governing authority of the University espoused one site, and the teaching staff another; the two Houses of Parliament were at odds over the matter; and the community generally was more or less set by the ears.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> Alexander, *Campus at Crawley*, p. 63.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 62.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 62-63.

<sup>73</sup> WA, 26 January 1914, p. 6.

Hackett then turned his anger towards the university Senate: 'For the Senate to have turned such an offer down [the Crawley site] would indeed have been to look a gift horse in the mouth and to have inflicted a serious material loss on the University'.<sup>74</sup>

The question of a site was a prolonged affair. This was one matter that Hackett would not live to see through to its conclusion, as it was not resolved until 1922 - six years after his death.<sup>75</sup>

Hackett was determined to obtain the finest lecturers for the university, especially for the first Chair of Agriculture, which he had previously announced he would personally endow.<sup>76</sup> He was therefore determined that a responsible person would be appointed to the position.<sup>77</sup> He was initially dissatisfied with the candidates and so, to the embarrassment of some of his fellow senators, he used his position of Chancellor of the University to carry out additional interviews of prospective candidates himself. As a result, John Waugh Paterson was selected and held the position until his retirement in 1934, with his tenure producing enduring benefits for the state.<sup>78</sup>

On Paterson's death in 1958, a former State Director of Agriculture, George Sutton, wrote: 'Looking back over the years, I am satisfied that no better appointment could have been made'.<sup>79</sup> Sutton also praised Hackett's foresight in creating such a position. He stressed that he had 'realised the great importance which science could and would

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<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>75</sup> Alexander, *Campus at Crawley*, pp. 104-106.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 30. The Royal Commission recommended initially five chairs.

<sup>77</sup> Hackett's bequest provided £18,000 to the Chair of Agriculture. The interest from the investment was to be paid towards the position. J. W. Hackett's will, *SROWA*, consignment no. 3436, item 1917/393, clause 17.

<sup>78</sup> Alexander, *Campus at Crawley*, p. 56 and p. 774.

<sup>79</sup> *The Countryman*, 19 June 1958, p. 28. George Sutton was the Director of the Department of Agriculture from 1921 to 1937.

play in supplementing the hard work of the pioneers'.<sup>80</sup> Sutton also acknowledged that Hackett had been working against the prevailing mood as 'the majority of these pioneers did not share this view. Their outlook was entirely practical with rather a contemptuous opinion of the scientist and his work'.<sup>81</sup> Paterson's selection would eventually reverse such retrograde beliefs.

Hackett's ideas for the university did not always go as planned. In 1912 he was bitterly disappointed when philanthropist and former Etonian, Cecil Oliverson, donated money for the construction of a chapel at Guildford Grammar School. He had expected that this a donation should have gone to a similar project at the fledgling University of Western Australia.<sup>82</sup> In a congratulatory letter to Guildford's headmaster Reverend Percy Henn, his envy came to the fore:

I wish to Goodness [sic] it was in Perth instead of at Guildford where the attendance will consist almost solely of the boarders – always a doubtful quantity – though this ought to help to swell them. Another objection I am afraid is that it is on the edge of one of our most dusty roads and one which will become more dusty as the land is cut up for building.<sup>83</sup>

This is an excellent example of how Hackett reacted when on rare occasions he did not obtain what he sought. It was not therefore surprising that in his will the two largest beneficiaries were the University of Western Australia and the Church of England. He intended to make certain that his two favoured institutions were not going to be bereft

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<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>82</sup> Boyce 'The First Archbishop', p. 84.

<sup>83</sup> Hackett to Henn, 26 June 1912, *Guildford Grammar School*, Henn papers, Acc. 194/1990-2. Deborah Hackett (née Drake-Brockman) was one of the few girls to be educated at Guildford Grammar School (*ADB*, vol. 9, pp. 149-150). In 1912, Hackett would have been aware of that fact.

of funds again. His bequest also specified that a chapel should be constructed in the university grounds.<sup>84</sup> In all probability this was because he aspired to have a chapel similar to, or better than the one at Guildford Grammar School.

Being the meticulous person he was, Hackett left nothing to chance. Within months of the commencement of World War One he ‘announced that he desired to offer two prizes – one of 100 guineas and a second of 25 guineas – for the best suggestions or plan for laying out the Crawley site for University purposes’.<sup>85</sup> On a personal level he had continued with business as usual, ignoring the hostilities in Europe. As O. K. Battye recalled years later, Hackett was one of those optimists ‘who believed that if war came the Germans could be “beaten by Christmas”, a view widely held among the conservative Allied authorities’.<sup>86</sup> This was another occasion when he would be proved wrong. Although he was not to live to see his plans for the university implemented, he had set in motion a strategy for the construction of the Hackett Memorial Buildings within its campus. No doubt he would have been proud of the award-winning designs.

## Legacy

When the university accepted its initial 184 students in 1913, Hackett was nearing the end of his life.<sup>87</sup> The establishment of the university would be his last major achievement. By dint of sheer enthusiasm he had finally provided his adopted homeland with a tertiary education institution. On 29 July 1914, the University

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<sup>84</sup> J. W. Hackett’s will, *SROWA*, consignment no. 3436, item 1916/478, clause 32. Ironically, Percy Henn was appointed in 1931 the first Warden of St George’s College Chapel. (Alexander, *Campus at Crawley*, pp. 515-517, p. 634.)

<sup>85</sup> University of Western Australia, Senate Minutes, 16 November 1914. Cited in Ferguson, *Crawley Campus*, p. 8.

<sup>86</sup> Battye, ‘The West Australian’, BL, MN 1719, Acc 5192A/30, Chapter 11, p. 4.

<sup>87</sup> Alexander, *Campus at Crawley*, p. 794.

awarded him an honorary degree of Doctor of Laws, although he was overseas and unable to accept it personally.<sup>88</sup> This acknowledgement, together with his appointments as both the inaugural Chancellor of the University and President of the Guild of Undergraduates, would undoubtedly have placed a satisfied smile on his face.<sup>89</sup>

Hackett's legacy would be acknowledged for decades to come. At the opening of the Hackett Memorial Buildings on 13 April 1932, James Battye remarked:

All who love Western Australia subscribe to his [Hackett's] faith in its future. Many hundreds of students have benefited by the fact that his educational dreams have been transformed into living entities. By this wonderful forethought in providing endowments for necessitous students, those numbers will increase year by year until down through the ages there will arise in Western Australia a cloud of witnesses to call his name Blessed.<sup>90</sup>

Thirty years later, a prominent Western Australian educational historian, David Mossenson, reminisced: 'Using the word education in its wider sense I believe it would be correct to say that Hackett was certainly among the few leading personalities, perhaps the outstanding one, in fashioning Western Australian education'.<sup>91</sup>

The former Primate of Australia, Archbishop Peter Carnley remarked in 2000: 'One suspects he [Hackett] knew the result of this commission of enquiry without having to hear the evidence'.<sup>92</sup> Carnley was correct. At the commencement of the Royal

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<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 90. Hackett's widow, Deborah (1932) and his son (1963) were also awarded the same honorary degree. (UWA Guide – Holders of honorary degrees. [on line] <[http://uwaguide.publishing.uwa.edu.au/latest/honorary\\_degrees](http://uwaguide.publishing.uwa.edu.au/latest/honorary_degrees)> Accessed 24 June 2006).

<sup>89</sup> Alexander, *Campus at Crawley*, pp. 453, 768. Hackett was only 'titular president' of the Guild of Undergraduates.

<sup>90</sup> *WM*, 21 April 1932, p. 4.

<sup>91</sup> D. Mossenson to F. Alexander, 27 May 1962. Cited in Alexander, *Campus at Crawley*, p. 17.

<sup>92</sup> "Law and Religion: An Address". In *Anglican Church of Australia* [on line] <[http://www.anglican.org.au/pctalks/speeches/law\\_and\\_religion.htm](http://www.anglican.org.au/pctalks/speeches/law_and_religion.htm)> Accessed 11 October 2002.



Commission in 1909, Hackett was a successful businessman and community leader and by then he had sufficient self-belief to be confident that whatever he endeavoured to achieve would be successful. Consequently, by the start of the Royal Commission he was confident enough that the time had arrived for the final push towards the university's establishment.

James Battye was to criticise one aspect of Hackett's bequest to the University. In a radio broadcast in 1945, he claimed that no monies were allocated for an increase in staff in relation to teaching and administration. Being a free university and therefore having no income derived from fees, the state government was obliged to make up the shortfall.<sup>93</sup> Battye's disapproval of this section of the bequest was particularly harsh for when Hackett's bequest was finally announced in 1926 it provided £425,000 towards the fledgling university.<sup>94</sup> Consumer Price Index figures indicate that at 2006 values, the University of Western Australia benefited by an amount equivalent to \$32,946,479.<sup>95</sup> Hackett had realised the University was experiencing difficulties in financing the construction of its buildings, and this was his response to alleviate such an urgent problem. In respect to Battye's criticism, Hackett could not of course have been expected to anticipate every future circumstance.

Hackett was not seeking everlasting glory for himself, nor was his wish to establish the first university in Western Australia a call from God. His underlying belief in establishing a non-fee paying university was that future generations of students should be able to experience similar opportunities to those he himself had enjoyed back in Ireland. Together with his previous achievements, including the establishment of a

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<sup>93</sup> Battye, 'Sir Winthrop Hackett', *BL*, PR14514/HACKETT, item 2, p. 5.

<sup>94</sup> Supreme Court Order no. 20 of 1926, *UWA OG 721*; Alexander, *Campus at Crawley*, p. 118.

<sup>95</sup> Author's telephone conversation, 25 January 2007, with Lee Taylor, Australian Bureau of Statistics, Canberra, ACT.

public library and zoo, the university was his ultimate achievement and one that he considered was essential for the state's future development.

As previously noted, the two major beneficiaries of Hackett's bequest were the University of Western Australia and the Church of England in Western Australia. However, before these two institutions could actually benefit from his generosity, Hackett's successor as editor and owner at the *West Australian*, Alfred Langer, needed to increase its circulation so that the newspaper could be sold at an acceptable price. This section of the legacy will be discussed in greater detail in the following chapter, which examines the nature of Hackett's final gift to Western Australia.

## CHAPTER TEN: THE HACKETT BEQUEST

*'His [Hackett's] idea was that there should be for every child in Western Australia a free education passage from kindergarten to University. He saw that idea in actual operation and when his time came to leave the world, he left it with a deep sense that he had done something to show his love and appreciation of the people among whom he had worked'.*

- J. S. Battye, October 1945.

### Introduction

Death came quickly to Hackett, although he had suffered from Parkinson's disease.<sup>1</sup> On Friday, 18 February 1916 he kept to his usual practice by going into his office to work. The following day he seems to have collapsed at home and was pronounced dead by doctors Saw and Merryweather.<sup>2</sup> This chapter examines his will and his legacy to Western Australia.

His will, followed by three codicils, covered twenty-two pages.<sup>3</sup> As the will could not initially be fulfilled with the resources then available, it was rewritten after his death and was replaced by a twenty-five page document.<sup>4</sup> It was then the task of Alfred Langler, the estate's executor, to sell the newspaper holdings, primarily consisting of the *West Australian* and *Western Mail*, for what he considered to be a realistic price. Hackett's will was not executed until 1926 when his newspapers were finally sold.

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<sup>1</sup> Nairn, *et al.*, eds., *ADB*, vol. 9, pp. 150-153.

<sup>2</sup> C.L., 'A Great Triumvirate: Lord Forrest, Sir J.W. Hackett and Archbishop Riley (8)'; Royal Western Australian Historical Society, John Forrest cutting file no. 1/1847/3 (*Sunday Times* article, n.d.).

<sup>3</sup> J. W. Hackett's will, *SROWA*, consignment no. 3436, item 1916/478.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, item 1917/393.

Excepting Langler, nobody would have predicted that the Hackett estate would eventually realise a staggering £625,000.<sup>5</sup>

In this chapter it will be suggested that Hackett's will reflected his attempts to continue his philosophy after his death. It also details the provisions he made for his widow, four daughters and his son, leaving them adequate monies to continue living comfortably. Significantly, however, the largest bequest was made to the University of Western Australia. Throughout his life he had worked for a university for Western Australia and it was possible that he knew of the bequest of Cecil Rhodes, who had died in 1902, to Oxford University, and consequently attempted to replicate part of it by modifying his own will to suit Western Australian circumstances. After the university was established Hackett found himself with two major problems. The first was that the university would struggle to attract sufficient students and that this problem was out of his control. The state's population in 1914 was 323,971 and during the war years it decreased by just over 10,000.<sup>6</sup> This was scarcely enough to sustain a university. In 1884, it had been brought to his attention that Victoria had a 'population of over eight hundred thousand and [its university had only] an attendance of students of four hundred'.<sup>7</sup>

The second problem for the university, which Hackett had repeatedly referred to over the years, was that it required an endowment.<sup>8</sup> It is not known how much money was available from his initial will, which was revealed in 1916. However it was insufficient to cover all of his bequests. It was left to Alfred Langler to make certain that the university would have ample funds to construct buildings. As will be explained

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<sup>5</sup> *ABD*, vol. 9, pp. 667-668. At 2006 Consumer Price Index figures, the estate is equivalent to over \$48 million. (Author's telephone conversation, 25 January 2007, with Lee Taylor, Australian Bureau of Statistics, Canberra, ACT)

<sup>6</sup> Seddon and Ravine, *A City and its Setting*, p. 279.

<sup>7</sup> *WA*, 3 January 1884, p. 3.

<sup>8</sup> *WAPD*, 24 September 1901, vol. 19, p. 1048; *WAPD*, 6 October 1903, vol. 23, p. 1390; *WAPD*, 11 December 1913, vol. 48, p. 3663.

shortly, the amount of money that eventually became available probably surpassed even Hackett's wildest dreams.

Considering the amount that Hackett bequeathed to the university on his death, it is interesting to note his opinions when the 1895 Probate Duties Bill was debated. He was in favour of the legislation, which imposed a tax on property that exceeded £1,500 in value. He felt the amount levied on inherited estates to be 'one of the most legitimate, and one of the most justifiable forms' and considered that 'under this Bill it falls upon the dead, and consequently upon those who are better able to pay it'.<sup>9</sup> Was this a prophecy? Yet to achieve his own wealth, he disingenuously added: 'To me to possess £1,500 seems like a dream, and if I die worth that sum I do not say that my widow will be satisfied, but I myself shall be perfectly content'.<sup>10</sup> However, it must be remembered that in 1897 he built himself a three storey, twenty-five room home at the corner of St Georges Terrace and Milligan Street, which the Perth City Rate books showed as having a capital value of £2,500.<sup>11</sup> When the outcome of his will was announced, it was revealed that Hackett was extremely benevolent to various institutions, but yet not too indulgent towards his family.

### **The will**

As with everything else he attempted in life, Hackett was also thorough in the preparation of his will. Clearly, he was determined to leave an enduring legacy to Western Australia. He initially completed his will on 16 December 1913 but, as a

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<sup>9</sup> *WAPD*, 28 August 1895, vol. 8, p. 726.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> *Battye Library*, RN 558, 'Hackett Home'; *SROWA*, City of Perth Consignment no. 3460, Rate Book of the Perth Municipality, West Ward, 1897, p. 171.

perfectionist, he was to make three further amendments before his death – the final one being made on 8 May 1915.<sup>12</sup>

Although the financial aspects of Hackett's will are the ones best remembered today, there are other clauses that demonstrated his astuteness, such as clause 27. Although this section was never enacted, it directed in sequential order who would be guardian of his children if Deborah were to die before the children became of age. His sister, Annie Pakenham-Walsh, was first in line, followed by his other sisters, Sara and Alice.<sup>13</sup> Interestingly, his sisters were still residents in Ireland.

Hackett immediately provided £20,000 each to his widow and four daughters for investment. His son, John Winthrop, received £10,000 also for investment, whilst Deborah also received £1,000 'for her immediate wants and necessities' and together with the five children would receive an annual income from the invested amounts. The reason why his son was provided with less is not known; however the best explanation may be that his father had thought his son would be able to earn his living, while the daughters would not. In respect of Deborah's inheritance, Hackett noted that it should cease if she married again (which she did in April 1918 to Frank Beaumont Moulden<sup>14</sup>) and the residue would be returned to the estate.<sup>15</sup> As Claire Tomalin explains in her biography of author Thomas Hardy, such a caveat was not unusual at the time: 'in rich men's wills and [was] supposed to deter fortune hunters who prey on widows, halved her annuity should she marry again'.<sup>16</sup> However, in Deborah's case, the clause was

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<sup>12</sup> J. W. Hackett's will. *SROWA*, consignment no. 3436, item 1916/478, pp. 14, 18, 21, 22.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, clause 27.

<sup>14</sup> *ADB.*, vol. 9, pp. 149-150.

<sup>15</sup> J. W. Hackett's will. *SROWA*, consignment no. 3436, item 1916/478, clause 7e.

<sup>16</sup> Claire Tomalin, *Thomas Hardy: The Time-Torn Man*, London, England: Viking, 2006, p. 376.

more stringent, for she was totally disinherited in the event of her re-marriage.

What Hackett's daughters thought of their father's bequest is not recorded. However, in an interview some years later with the English *Sunday Times*, Hackett's son commented on his own legacy:

[M]y father left us all enough to go to schools and universities and to have a little pocket money, but most – and the newspaper would be worth four or five million pounds today – went to the university and church in Western Australia. I was so grateful. I was a freebooter. I could do what I liked.<sup>17</sup>

Considering that the younger John Winthrop Hackett made a successful military career in the British Army, there is no doubt his father would have been proud of his achievements.

Hackett did not forget his loyal *West Australian* employees. Amongst those who benefited were Alfred Langler, Alfred Carson, Muriel Chase and Charles Frost. Chase was a journalist who wrote under the names 'Aunt Mary' and 'Adrienne', while Frost was the Fremantle Branch Manager for the *West Australian*.<sup>18</sup>

Hackett's legacy to the Church of England was the second largest monetary bequest, totalling £138,285.<sup>19</sup> In an attempt to alleviate the loss of clergymen by the Anglican Church, clause 15 provided monies to clergymen of the Diocese of Perth who had served the church outside the metropolitan area for at least five years. His will stipulated that the legacy was 'not given necessarily for clergy who are poor', but to those in the service 'to look forward to an augmented income after fitting service

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<sup>17</sup> Ronayne, *First Fleet to Federation*, p. 198.

<sup>18</sup> J. W. Hackett's will. *SROWA*, consignment no. 3436, item 1916/478, clause 32; *BDWA*, vol 1, p. 515; *BDWA*, vol 5, p. 310.

<sup>19</sup> *Church of England in Australia*, Diocese of Perth: Year Book, 1928, p. 182.

performed' in the church.<sup>20</sup> He was thus rewarding clergymen who he considered had been loyal to the church. Having been closely involved in the Anglican Church since his arrival in Western Australia, he knew of the problems in retaining conscientious clergymen. This approach was his attempt to help retain clergymen in the church.

Hackett never forgot his Irish roots. In May 1914, he sent a £100 cheque to his alma mater, Trinity College Dublin, 'for the furtherance of the study of classical archaeology'.<sup>21</sup> Then, in his will he provided the College with money to 'establish a prize for applied [sic] Science'.<sup>22</sup> In January 1926 the College received £2,883. In October of that year, the university decided to award an annual prize of £100:

to a moderator of the first class who has specially distinguished himself at the moderatorship exams in experimental science, or natural science (A B or C), or engineering science, and who proposes to take up a course of research or special study.<sup>23</sup>

The award is still presented today.<sup>24</sup>

Another Irish beneficiary of his will was St James' Church, Crinken, his childhood church, where his father and brother Thomas had been long-standing vicars.<sup>25</sup> The Church received £500 to augment the wages of future incumbents.<sup>26</sup> When in 1990, the

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<sup>20</sup> J. W. Hackett's will. *SROWA*, consignment no. 3436, item 1916/478, clause 15.

<sup>21</sup> E-mail to author from TCD College Archives, 9 June 2005. The money was used to purchase archaeological slides.

<sup>22</sup> J. W. Hackett's will. *SROWA*, Consignment no. 3436, item 1917/393, clause 18.

<sup>23</sup> E-mail to author from TCD College Archives, 9 June 2005. The information appeared in the TCD Board Minutes, 30 January 1926, 9 October 1926.

<sup>24</sup> TCD, College Calendar 2005-06, part 1, p. S 57.

<sup>25</sup> Hackett's father and brother between them held the vicarage position from 1840 to 1903.

<sup>26</sup> J. W. Hackett's will. *SROWA*, Consignment no. 3436, item 1917/393, clause 16.



Church published its history it acknowledged the considerable contribution made by the Hackett family.<sup>27</sup>

### **Legacy to the University of Western Australia**

The most significant part Hackett's will was Clause 25, in conjunction with clause 12. Clause 25 read in part: 'I Empower my Trustees to postpone the sale calling in and conversion of all or any part of my real and personal estate for as long as my Trustees shall think fit ...'.<sup>28</sup> At the same time, Clause 12 stipulated that legacies were not to be paid to the beneficiaries '[u]ntil such time as the conversion of my real and personal estate shall be sufficient'.<sup>29</sup> This was a very prudent move by Hackett. His will was first revealed in 1916, but could not be finalised, as the existing assets could not at that time cover his bequests.<sup>30</sup> It took Langler until 1926 before he felt satisfied that he could safely sell the newspapers and all of Hackett's properties at what he considered to be a reasonable price. The newspaper company was sold to Melbourne businessmen W. S. Robinson and W. L. Baillieu for around £625,000.<sup>31</sup> The revenues from Hackett's properties are not known but as a result of a Supreme Court order dated 22 December 1926, the University of Western Australia received £425,000.<sup>32</sup>

The other major beneficiary of Hackett's will was the Anglican Church which received £138,285.<sup>33</sup> The remaining proceeds of the will were then distributed as per its

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<sup>27</sup> -, *St James' Church*, pp. 18-20.

<sup>28</sup> J. W. Hackett's will. *SROWA*, consignment no. 3436, item 1916/478, clause 25.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, clause 12.

<sup>30</sup> Nairn, *et al.*, eds., *ADB*, vol. 9, pp. 667-668.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>32</sup> Supreme Court Order no. 20 of 1926, *UWA OG 721*; Alexander, *Campus at Crawley*, p. 118.

<sup>33</sup> *Church of England in Australia, Diocese of Perth: Year Book*, 1928, p. 182.

requirements: to his immediate family; his family in Ireland and to institutions which included the Children's Hospital, Perth; Home of Peace, Subiaco and the Perth Zoo.<sup>34</sup> Langler had certainly worked hard over a ten-year period to increase the capital value of Hackett's newspaper interests as in September 1917 the newspaper had been valued at only £93,230.<sup>35</sup>

The public announcement of Hackett's bequest to the University of Western Australia was made at the annual university graduation ceremony held at the Government House ballroom on 7 May 1926 in the presence of the Governor, Sir William Campion. The Chancellor, Dr Athelstan Saw, told his audience that as well as £37,500 already promised from the Hackett will, the university also expected to receive a portion of the proceeds from the sale of his estate, which included the *West Australian* and *Western Mail* newspapers.<sup>36</sup> He considered the value of the bequest when realised would constitute 'one of the most munificent bequests that has ever been made to an Australian University [sic]'.<sup>37</sup> After acclamation from the audience Dr Saw stated that he hoped the bequest would be an 'incentive to the [State] Government to push on with the buildings at Crawley'.<sup>38</sup> He was not to be disappointed at the eventual legacy. As mentioned previously, later in the year the university went to the Supreme Court of Western Australia to confirm its financial inheritance.

In 1912, Hackett had been extremely disappointed when the University of Western Australia had missed out on a donation from former Etonian and philanthropist, Cecil

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<sup>34</sup> J. W. Hackett's will. *SROWA*, consignment no. 3436, item 1917/373, various clauses.

<sup>35</sup> Nairn, *et al.*, eds., *ADB*, vol. 9, pp. 667-668.

<sup>36</sup> *WA*, 8 May 1926, p. 13. £37,500 was six-eighths of £50,000. The remainder, £12,500 was left to the Anglican Church. The £37,500 would be part of the £425,000 which was later that year awarded by a Supreme Court order to the university.

<sup>37</sup> *WA*, 8 May 1926, p. 13.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*

Oliverson, who had donated money for the construction of a chapel at Guildford Grammar School. As argued in the previous chapter, he was jealous at losing out and determined that one day he would rectify the situation. This was eventually done in Clause 32 of his will, which allocated monies, not only to the University of Western Australia, but also to the Diocese of Perth Trustees for the erection of a chapel for the university.<sup>39</sup> The chapel was eventually constructed in the grounds of St George's College, one of the residential colleges for university students and was situated:

[h]igh up in its northern isolation [of the College] it dominated the quadrangle and the double-cloistered storeys below, which surrounded the quadrangle on three sides. The style of the chapel was early English. Once again effective use was made of polished jarrah for the panelling and seating which was in the traditional monastic style.<sup>40</sup>

The College took its initial intake of students in April 1931.<sup>41</sup> Undoubtedly, had Hackett been alive he would have been delighted at the result, especially with the College and chapel complementing each other architecturally. As Alexander commented in his history of the university, if it had not been for Hackett's generous bequest, the construction of St George's College and its chapel would no doubt have been considerably delayed'.<sup>42</sup>

Hackett's bequest also included a scholarship for students who wished to extend their education.<sup>43</sup> It was called the 'Hackett Studentship' and amongst students who have benefited from this legacy were notable historians, Geoffrey Bolton (1954) and Tom

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<sup>39</sup> J. W. Hackett's will. *SROWA*, Consignment no. 3436, item 1917/393, clause 32.

<sup>40</sup> Alexander, *Campus at Crawley*, p.634.

<sup>41</sup> Ferguson, *Crawley Campus*, p. 56.

<sup>42</sup> Alexander, *Campus at Crawley*, p. 512.

<sup>43</sup> J. W. Hackett's will. *SROWA*, Consignment no. 3436, item 1917/393, clause 32.

Stannage (1967). Another notable recipient was Allan Fels (1965), who served as Chairman of the Trade Practices Commission (1991-1995) and Chairman of the Prices Surveillance Authority (1989-1992).<sup>44</sup> As Stannage would say some four decades later: ‘I have always been grateful for my Hackett Overseas Studentship’ which assisted him in gaining his doctorate at Cambridge University.<sup>45</sup> No doubt other recipients held similar views.

With the assistance of Alfred Langler, Hackett had achieved his major ambition of placing the University of Western Australia on a firm footing. The will had accomplished four of his objectives in respect to the university. Firstly, it had provided the fledgling institution with the finance to construct buildings at the Crawley site. Secondly, in 1931 he posthumously obtained his chapel within the university grounds. Thirdly, the introduction of the annual Hackett Studentships enabled a small number of students to benefit from postgraduate studies overseas. Finally, as a combination of all of the above achievements, his name would be cemented in the annals of Western Australian history.

### **Cecil Rhodes’ will**

It is interesting to compare Hackett’s will with that of Cecil Rhodes who had died some fourteen years earlier in March 1902<sup>46</sup> and had left amongst his legacies a bequest to Oxford University. The similarities between the two documents raise the question of whether Hackett attempted to use Rhodes’ will as a model for his own. An example of

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<sup>44</sup> “Hackett students”. In *Official Publications: University of Western Australia Guide* [on line] <[http://uwaguide.publishing.uwa.edu.au/latest/hackett\\_students#1940](http://uwaguide.publishing.uwa.edu.au/latest/hackett_students#1940)> Accessed 22 November 2005; “Allan Fels”. In *Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia* [on line] <[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Allan\\_Fels](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Allan_Fels)> Accessed 10 December 2005. A complete list of Hackett’s Studentships recipients appears in Appendix 3.

<sup>45</sup> E-mail from Professor Tom Stannage to author, 16 December 2005.

<sup>46</sup> J.G. McDonald, *Rhodes: A Life*, London: Chatto & Windus, 1941, pp. 1, 363-366.

the similarities between them is found in their philosophy on tertiary education. Rhodes ‘saw far into the future’ and was certain ‘that his desires would duly materialise’.<sup>47</sup> McDonald’s biography of Rhodes stressed that his ‘intense unselfishness is shown by every clause of his will’.<sup>48</sup> Hackett’s will was also meticulous in its detail.

Amongst his legacy, Rhodes left £100,000 to Oriel College, Oxford, instructing that part of the monies be spent on new campus buildings.<sup>49</sup> The key part of his will is the clause providing ‘for the education of young colonists and young Americans at Oxford’.<sup>50</sup> Like Hackett he considered that students would benefit from gaining ‘breadth of their views and for their instruction in life and manners for instilling into their minds the advantage to their colonies’.<sup>51</sup> McDonald asserted that Rhodes expected those students gaining scholarships to eventually grasp ‘something of the wideness and the scope for enterprise afforded by the new’ and believed that these students would eventually be the pioneers ‘of an ever-extending progress throughout the world’.<sup>52</sup> When reporting Rhodes’ death in a *West Australian* editorial, Hackett highlighted that when Rhodes was considering various proposals, particularly in connection to the British Empire, Rhodes was usually ‘persistently followed and never once departed from or despaired of’.<sup>53</sup>

Hackett’s life demonstrated similar traits, especially when it came to the abolition of state aid to church schools and in his quest to establish a university. He would have

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<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 374.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 375.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 377.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 378.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 379-380.

<sup>53</sup> *WA*, 28 March 1902, p. 4.

known about Rhodes' will but given the lack of surviving diaries or correspondence to explain his thinking, it is unclear exactly what was in his thoughts while drafting his own. Nevertheless, similarities in the two wills do exist. At least one person thought so, as in April 1932 at the opening ceremony of Winthrop Hall on the university campus Charles Latham, the acting Western Australia Premier, referred to him as the 'Cecil Rhodes of Western Australia'.<sup>54</sup>

## **Funeral**

Hackett's funeral was held on Monday, 21 February 1916. The *West Australian* reported that it was a 'hot, suffocating' day with the temperature reaching 85°F (29.4°C).<sup>55</sup> However, the stifling conditions did not stop public interest in the occasion, and the 'Cathedral knell had the city at a standstill'.<sup>56</sup> For two days flags on public buildings, including the Town Hall flew at half-mast. Sir John Forrest, who had been in Albany at the time of his friend's death, rushed back to Perth to attend his funeral. Others who attended included the Governor, Sir Harry Barron, state parliamentarians and senior committee members from the Diocese of Perth.<sup>57</sup> The sombre funeral procession moved from Hackett's residence at 248 St Georges Tce to St George's Cathedral. Archbishop Riley spoke to the congregation about Western Australia's great loss, and also of his own personal bereavement. The Archbishop, who had known the deceased for twenty-one years, said that from the first day the two men had met, Hackett had 'been my friend and fellow helper in all kinds of work'.<sup>58</sup> He also

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<sup>54</sup> *WM*, 21 April 1932, p. 5.

<sup>55</sup> *WA*, 22 February 1916, p. 4; E-mail to author from the National Meteorological Library, Melbourne, 13 April 2006.

<sup>56</sup> *WA*, 22 February 1916, p. 4.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*

acknowledged that he had ‘obtained a clearer insight into the motives of Sir Winthrop Hackett’s actions than those who were outside the immediate circle of his friends.’<sup>59</sup> Riley then outlined what he considered to be the four characteristics that made Hackett so successful – ‘he loved work, he loved to lead and therefore liked to be in office and he had a large vision’.<sup>60</sup> He then spoke of his Irish upbringing which had provided him with ‘such [an] imagination as has made Irishmen some of our best generals’.<sup>61</sup> To prove his point he spoke of his numerous achievements in Western Australia since his arrival in 1882.

To conclude his speech, the Archbishop spoke of Hackett leading by example: ‘[B]y sheer hard work and determination [he] rose from being a stranger in the land to one of its leading citizens – [to] be an inspiration to the youth our country for many a long year’.<sup>62</sup> Charles Riley’s comments on Hackett were genuine, as other than his widow and children no other person in Western Australia would have been closer to him than the Archbishop. Before Hackett’s marriage, the Archbishop and Alexander Leeper would have been Hackett’s closest confidants. It has been suggested throughout this thesis that the subject’s ambition in his adopted homeland was to be accepted and recognised, and to ultimately achieve status in Western Australian society. Riley acknowledged that he had accomplished all three.

The names of those who attended the church service, the burial service and those who had sent in their written condolences filled two columns of the *West Australian*.<sup>63</sup> Many of the people who were on the route of the funeral cortège or attended the church service would not have known him personally, but most onlookers would have visited

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<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*

at least one of the facilities principally initiated by Hackett, such as the Art Gallery, Museum, Library or Zoo, and many also would have been the readers of the *West Australian*. Members of the public were there to pay their final respects to a person who had unquestionably made his mark on Western Australian society.

### **Tributes**

Hackett's death led to numerous tributes indicating the esteem in which he was held in the community. This was in marked contrast to his lifetime, when public accolades had been a rarity. One exception was in August 1913 when the Western Australian Governor, Sir Harry Barron, opened the new Hackett Hall extensions of the Public Library and acknowledged Hackett's determination to improve public facilities.<sup>64</sup>

On the Monday following Hackett's death, the editorial column of the *West Australian* led the accolades. An unidentified writer (probably Alfred Langler) wrote of some of Hackett's attributes such as bringing to the 'editorial chair an uncommon intellectual equipment, a keen and subtle intellect, a remarkably broad and richly stored mind, an exceptional knowledge of men, and that rarest of political faculties, vision'.<sup>65</sup> The writer also stressed that he 'was not content to spend only his physical and mental energies for the advancement of the institutions with which he was officially associated. He supported them also and generously from his private purse'.<sup>66</sup> As a mark of respect to its late editor and owner, the newspaper's offices were closed later that day between 1pm and 5pm whilst the funeral took place.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>64</sup> WA, 19 August 1913, p. 7.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 21 February 1916, p. 6.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*



When Parliament reconvened for the first time after Hackett's death in July 1916, the Colonial Secretary, John Drew MLC, delivered the valedictory speech. Drew thought that his legacy was his 'powerful pen'. His 'influential newspaper' had 'largely assisted in moulding the destinies of Western Australia' and, 'his adopted country had the benefit of his trained intellect and of his clear and far-seeing judgement'.<sup>68</sup> However, in Drew's opinion there was one achievement that stood above the rest – the establishment of University of Western Australia:

It is doubtful whether we should have now such an institution in our midst but for the able, forceful, and tireless advocacy of Sir Winthrop Hackett. In all the other important undertakings which won his support, as in this, Sir Winthrop Hackett was directed by only one thought – the good of the country which he had made his adopted home.<sup>69</sup>

It should be noted that the above remarks were made ten years before the full extent of Hackett's financial legacy to the university was revealed. Drew's praise and recognition of Hackett is all the more significant because he was Catholic. In all likelihood, because of Hackett's long service to the church, most of his contemporaries would have guessed that he would be generous to the Church of England.

Condolences and tributes to Hackett also flowed in from various organisations. For instance, C. B. Cox, Chairman of the Western Australian Turf Club, said that his death deprived the state 'of the services of a philanthropic and loyal citizen, a courteous gentleman, and an accomplished scholar'.<sup>70</sup> The Acclimatisation Committee acknowledged their late President's service to Western Australia, and especially to the zoo's development. They felt that

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<sup>68</sup> *WAPD*, 20 July 1916, vol. 53, p. 9.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>70</sup> *WA*, 26 February 1916, p. 6.

no greater or more pleasing monument could be raised to his memory than the beautiful gardens which he did so much to bring into existence, and the care and supervision of which formed one of the leading interests of his life.<sup>71</sup>

Karrakatta Cemetery Board was another institution to recognise Hackett's contribution. Lionel T. Boas, the Cemetery's secretary, wrote of his eighteen years of service as Board Chairman, which had endeared him to fellow Trustees. Boas recognised his 'keen and wise council [sic]' and his drive to 'make the cemetery a credit to the State'.<sup>72</sup> A year after his death, Karrakatta Cemetery organised a monument to its former long-standing Chairman. They allocated £805 for the project; for they wanted 'the workmanship and material used would be of the finest quality'.<sup>73</sup> As Liveris remarks, in wartime this contribution was indeed a generous one.<sup>74</sup>

In a radio broadcast in October 1945 reflecting on Hackett's life, James Battye reflected that at the time of his death his good friend had succeeded in what he had set out to achieve:

His [Hackett's] idea was that there should be for every child in Western Australia a free education passage from kindergarten to University. He saw that idea in actual operation and when his time came to leave the world, he left it with a deep sense that he had done something to show his love and appreciation of the people among whom he had worked.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.* Hackett was a member of the Board Trustees for nineteen years (1897-1916), however was only Chairman of Trustees for sixteen years -1900-1916. (Liveris, *Memories Eternal*, p. 277.)

<sup>73</sup> Karrakatta Cemetery Board, 20<sup>th</sup> Annual Report, 1 July 1917. Cited by Liveris, *Memories Eternal*, pp. 81-82.

<sup>74</sup> Liveris, *Memories Eternal*, pp. 81-82.

<sup>75</sup> Battye, 'Sir Winthrop Hackett', pp. 5-6.

## Recognition

Since Hackett's death there have been a number of places named after him, including suburbs, a housing sub-division, roads and rooms in various university buildings. In Western Australia one suburb is named Winthrop, while in the Australian Capital Territory [ACT] there is a suburb called Hackett. Winthrop was named by the City of Melville in March 1978 as previously the land was part of the Applecross Pine Plantation, which was then owned and being developed by the University of Western Australia. The Council considered it appropriate that the suburb should be named after the university's largest benefactor. The majority of the streets in the suburb are named after administrators and lecturers who were associated with the university.<sup>76</sup>

The suburb of Hackett was gazetted in the ACT on 7 April 1960. Most of the streets in the suburb are named after scientists<sup>77</sup> and both suburbs have roads named after Hackett.<sup>78</sup> In the 1950s, a Hackett housing sub-division appeared in the district of the City of Nedlands, the area consisting of around 240 lots of land. Once again, the streets were named after academics who had served the University of Western Australia. Examples were Shann Street (Professor E. O. G. Shann) and Underwood Avenue (Professor Eric Underwood).<sup>79</sup>

The road between the university campus and the Swan River was also named after Hackett. In 1914 when he wrote in an editorial: 'The Government on its part, also undertakes to make a road round the [University] property', he probably did not realise

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<sup>76</sup> "History of Suburb Names". In *Department of Land Information*. [[http://www.dli.wa.gov.au/corporate.nsf/web/History\\_of\\_suburb\\_names\\_W-Z](http://www.dli.wa.gov.au/corporate.nsf/web/History_of_suburb_names_W-Z)] Accessed 1 April 2006; E-mail from the Department of Land Information, Western Australia to author, 3 April 2006.

<sup>77</sup> "Themes Search –Suburb Results". In *ACT Planning and Land Authority*. [on line] <http://203.15.126.40/cgi-bin/search.pl> > Accessed 1 April 2006.

<sup>78</sup> Hackett Place and Hackett Pass in Hackett and Winthrop respectively.

<sup>79</sup> A. E. Williams, *Nedlands: From Campsite to City*, Nedlands: City of Nedlands, 1984, p. 159.



### Time Capsule

A photograph of Hackett in a bottle which was placed in a time capsule under the foundations of the Winthrop Hall in the late 1920s  
Acknowledgment: University of Western Australia, Ref: 1940P

that part of the road would eventually be named after him – Hackett Drive.<sup>80</sup> In addition, the major road from the city to the university’s main entrance on Mounts Bay Rd is named Winthrop Avenue.<sup>81</sup> It was no surprise that several buildings in the university grounds were named after Hackett. When making provision for funds to the fledgling university in his will, he stipulated that ‘I desire to have my name associated with it’.<sup>82</sup> As a result the Hackett Memorial Buildings were constructed. Hackett Hall was constructed as an administration building and was in use by 1930, whilst Winthrop

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<sup>80</sup> WA, 26 January 1914, p. 6.

<sup>81</sup> Fax from the Department of Land Administration (now known as The Department of Land Information, Western Australia), 31 January 2002. The department cannot provide a definite year when these roads were named.

Hall opened on 15 April 1932 in the presence of Hackett's daughter, Patricia.<sup>83</sup> In the same year these buildings were 'awarded the prestigious Royal Institute of British Architects triennial Bronze Medal for excellence in design'.<sup>84</sup>

Amongst the variety of committee positions Hackett occupied was his tenure as Chairman of the Caves Board from 1905 to 1910.<sup>85</sup> Decades later a newspaper columnist remarked that it had been Hackett who persuaded the Rason and Moore State Governments to open up and develop caves throughout Western Australia.<sup>86</sup> Once again, his customary determination and persistence had prevailed. In his Chairman's report of 1906, he predicted such facilities would one day be used as health resorts. He aspired to have the local caves as popular as the Jenolan Caves in New South Wales<sup>87</sup> and considered it was the government's duty 'to open up places such as Yanchep for "the pleasure and recreation of its people", and to promote Western Australia'.<sup>88</sup> Shortly after his wedding in August 1905, Hackett took his young bride, Deborah, to explore caves in the Witchcliffe region, in the south-west of the state. The trip culminated in one cave being named after her – Bride Cave.<sup>89</sup>

Hackett's name also appears in some unexpected places around Western Australia. In Kings Park a pathway built in 1898 was named 'Hackett's Path', zigzagging from

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<sup>82</sup> Hackett's will. *SROWA*, consignment no. 3436, item 1917/373, clause no. 32.

<sup>83</sup> Ferguson, *Crawley Campus*, p. 33.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>85</sup> Bryce Moore, 'Tourists, Scientists and Wilderness Enthusiasts: Early Conservationists of the South West' in B. K. de Garis, ed., *Portraits of the South West: Aborigines, Women and the Environment*, Nedlands: UWA Press, 1993, p. 117-118. The Caves Board was abolished in 1910 and its responsibilities were transferred in 1914 into the Licence and Liquor Board. (Western Australian Speleological Group [on line] <<http://www.wasg.iinet.net.au/sw.html>> Accessed 22 April 2005)

<sup>86</sup> *South Western Times*, 22 August 1957, p. 15.

<sup>87</sup> WA V & P, 1906, vol. 2, paper no. 19. President's Report to the Annual Meeting of the Caves Board.

<sup>88</sup> Linley Chandler, 'The Development of Yanchep Park as a Tourist Destination 1901-1941', *Early Days*, 200, vol. 11, no. p. 681.

<sup>89</sup> E-mail from Department of Land Information, Western Australia to author, 22 June 2005.



Wallaby - *Petrogale lateralis hacketti*  
Named in January 1905 after Winthrop Hackett  
A Black-flanked Rock Wallaby  
Located on Mondrain Island, south of Esperance, Western Australia.  
Acknowledgment: Perth Zoo.



Wombat - *Phaseolomys hacketti*  
Skull of a wombat  
Named in 1910 after John Winthrop Hackett  
Located at Mammoth Cave, Augusta, Western Australia.  
The wombat became extinct around 30,000 years ago.  
Acknowledgment: J. Long/The Western Australian Museum, Perth.

Fraser Avenue down to Mounts Bay Road.<sup>90</sup> Hackett's also had an involvement with and passion for Perth Zoo, which resulted in two animals being named after him. In January 1905, the zoo received several animals including a wallaby from Mondrain Island, south of Esperance. The wallaby was named 'Petrogale lateralis hacketti'.<sup>91</sup> Five years later, in 1910, an extinct wombat was also named after Hackett - 'Phaseolomys hacketti'. The wombat's lower jaw and partial skeleton were retrieved from Mammoth Cave, near Augusta. It has been estimated that the wombat probably existed around 30,000 years ago.<sup>92</sup> It can only be speculated as to how Hackett reacted to these two accolades, but no doubt he was delighted. It was a further indication that his name would live on after him.

Two buildings in Perth had rooms named after Hackett. The Public Library building in James Street had additions completed in 1913 with State Governor, Sir Harry Barron opening the Hackett Hall extensions on 18 August 1913.<sup>93</sup> During his speech, the Governor praised Hackett, who at the time was President of the Trustees of the Public Library and Museum and Art Gallery of Western Australia.<sup>94</sup> The Governor told his audience that the humblest citizen: 'believed if they gave Sir Winthrop Hackett his way, they would have palaces adorning the City of Perth at every corner: he would be "A Veritable Augustus" transforming a city of clay and brick into one of marble'.<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> E-mail from Botanic Gardens & Parks Authority to author, 19 March 2003. The pathway has been closed for public use since 2002 due to serious ground subsidence around the pathway. (advised by phone in 2002 by a staff member of the Park.)

<sup>91</sup> -, 'Dr Hackett's Wallaby', *West Australian Newspapers Limited Quarterly Bulletin*, February 1966, vol. 5, no. 1, p. 10.

<sup>92</sup> Notes on the *Phaseolomys hacketti* supplied by Dr John Long from the Western Australian Museum by e-mail to the author, 10 January 2003.

<sup>93</sup> WA, 19 August 1913, p. 7.

<sup>94</sup> Hackett was Chairman/President of this board from 1903 to his death in 1916. (Stannage, *The People of Perth*, p. 320; Annual Reports of the *Public Library of Western Australia* [1896-1910] and *Public Library and Museum and Art Gallery of Western Australia* [1911-16]).

<sup>95</sup> WA., 19 August 1913, p. 7.

Although the Governor was stretching the truth, it was possible that most local citizens thought likewise.



Interior of Hackett Hall, Public Library, James St, Perth  
c.1913. Currently part of Western Australian Museum, Perth.  
Acknowledgment: Battye Library, Western Australia, Ref: 21360P

People had begun to acknowledge Hackett's many achievements. The Freemasons also recognised their late member, who had been their Grand Master from 1901 to 1904. Their new imposing headquarters constructed in 1967 in Terrace Road had two meeting rooms. One was the Hackett Suite and the other was the Riley Suite. Both rooms were used as meeting rooms in the Lodge.<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>96</sup> Telephone conversation, 4 April 2006, between the author with Reg Doran, Freemasons Grand Lodge. The building was demolished in 2002.



## **Conclusion**

This chapter has demonstrated that even in death, Hackett continued to achieve what he had persistently strove for while he was alive. During his lifetime he continually attempted to improve his status and with his death people began to openly acknowledge his contribution to Western Australia. He had been at the helm of the state's major newspaper for over thirty years and had been pivotal in the establishment of the library, museum, art gallery and zoo. He had also, as a committee member, been instrumental in the development of King's Park, Karrakatta Cemetery and caves throughout the state. His crowning achievement was the establishment of the University of Western Australia. When his endowment was announced in 1926, it only confirmed his lifetime commitment to tertiary education and the Anglican Church. The various places that were named after him following his death only cemented his name into the history of Western Australia.

## CONCLUSION

*The 'Cecil Rhodes of Western Australia'.*

- Acting Western Australian Premier, Charles Latham, April 1932.

An editorial tribute in the *West Australian* two days after Hackett's death, probably written by his successor Alfred Langler, noted: 'When in later years Sir Winthrop Hackett's work is seen in truer perspective the many-sidedness of the man will surely attract the historian of Western Australia'.<sup>1</sup> This has taken longer than Langler estimated, largely because Hackett's personal papers were destroyed and historians have to date considered the task too difficult to complete. Fortunately, there remains a plethora of information about the man's life due to his involvement in public affairs and this is the material that has informed this writer and provided a basis for this thesis.

This study of John Winthrop Hackett has attempted to show that throughout his life he was determined in whatever he set out to achieve. He was a man with a mission who intended not only to be a successful businessman, but also to provide cultural facilities and a tertiary education institution for Western Australia. He was not easily defeated and was continually motivated to increase his power base, through his roles as parliamentarian and part-owner and editor of the *West Australian*.

Hackett's early life in Ireland, as part of a devout Anglican family, left an indelible mark on him throughout his adult life. In 1875, at the age of twenty-seven, seeing little future prospects if he remained in Ireland, particularly with the prominent Roman Catholic population agitating for independence, he set sail on the *Hampshire* for Australia in the hope of improving his fortunes.

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<sup>1</sup> WA, 21 February 1916, p. 6.

When he arrived in Australia in 1875 he seemed to distance himself from Irish domestic politics. It was as if he wanted to remove himself from his past. However, that did not stop him commenting when significant events occurred in Ireland. For instance, when in October 1891, Charles Stuart Parnell, an ardent supporter of Irish Home Rule, suddenly died, Hackett informed his readers that Parnell's career had 'been one of the most remarkable of the latter years of the nineteenth century' and '[t]hrough his authority [in] the House of Commons ... [h]e has really effected a greater revolution than the reformers of 1832'.<sup>2</sup>

Hackett's hostility towards Irish Home Rule was illustrated when former British Prime Minister, William Gladstone died on 19 May 1898. In an editorial on the following day, he described him as 'possibly the greatest English man of the century, and one of the greatest of all time'.<sup>3</sup> However, he was less benevolent in respect to Gladstone's handling of the Home Rule legislation referring to it as the 'crowning blunder of his political career'.<sup>4</sup> He took a cynical view of Gladstone's support for Home Rule as he was of the opinion that the then prime Minister (who was generally considered to be statesmanlike when dealing with the issue) was supporting the legislation merely in order to ensure his party retained a majority in the House of Commons.

This disdain for Irish domestic politics can be put down to several causes. Probably the major cause was the political turbulence during the period when Hackett lived in Ireland and which caused him to leave that part of his life behind. He was also opposed to Home Rule. As Patrick O'Farrell argues, for many Irish-Australians 'Irish nationalism in Australia was never simply an expression of loyalty to Ireland: it was

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<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 9 October 1891, p. 4.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 20 May 1898, p. 4.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

always also a part of the processes of settlement ... a way of defining who and where Irish-Australians were'.<sup>5</sup>

When Hackett decided to settle permanently in Western Australia in 1882, and following his disappointing experience of running a sheep station in the Gascoyne region, he became very busy and realised that life in Perth satisfied his requirements. Subsequently, there was no reason to look back on his youth. Besides the newspaper business and a multitude of institutions to which he gave his support, there was his twenty-five years service as a parliamentarian. Then, late in life he married. If his business, parliamentary duties, and community commitments did not fill his time, his new wife and subsequent five children almost certainly succeeded.

Initially, Hackett did not find life in Melbourne to his liking and after six years as a lecturer at Trinity College, Melbourne (for much of the time receiving free board in lieu of salary), in 1882 he moved to Western Australia. He initially leased a sheep station in the Gascoyne region but when that venture failed because of drought conditions, his ambitions drew him back to Perth where Charles Harper, the owner of the *West Australian* newspaper offered him an equal partnership. In 1887 he was also appointed its editor and from this point his fortunes rose meteorically, with the result that his status grew as he was gradually accepted and recognised in society.

Foremost amongst all Hackett's non-professional activities was his long-term association as a lay-member of the Anglican Church hierarchy. For over thirty years he served on nineteen diocesan committees. The period in question was not only characterised by his campaign to abolish state aid to religious schools, but was also marked by his acrimonious relationship with Frederick Goldsmith. The differences

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<sup>5</sup> Patrick O'Farrell, *The Irish in Australia*, Revised edition, Sydney: New South Wales University Press, 1993, p. 197.

between the two men arose essentially from their varying interpretations of the teachings of the Church of England. Hackett was an Evangelical whilst Goldsmith was a strict Tractarian. It has been argued that Hackett's resilient personality came to the fore in this matter and it seems he did not allow the issue to effect his daily life. To counteract this turbulent relationship, he enjoyed an extremely good friendship with Archbishop Riley. Once again, his involvement in church affairs only enhanced his standing in the local community.

Then there was Hackett's 25-year parliamentary career. He had entered the Legislative Council in 1890 and was not aligned to any political faction and saw himself as someone who wanted to retain his independence in order to express himself freely. Acutely aware of the colony's financial bonanza, he was determined that the colony should develop its economic infrastructure, including the Perth-Coolgardie pipeline, railways and port facilities. He took a strong interest in social reforms favouring women's franchise and fighting for the rights of patients who were institutionalised in asylums. In addition he was passionate about environmental issues such as industrial pollution and tree-felling and was concerned for Australia's environment.

Throughout the 1890s Hackett was a Western Australian delegate at the National Australasian Conventions, which resulted in Federation. Although he rarely spoke at these meetings, he nevertheless continually lobbied through his newspaper editorials and private correspondence with such figures as Alfred Deakin to obtain the best possible entry conditions for the colony and only finally accepted what was being offered when he and Premier John Forrest realised that the other colonies were ready to create a federation without Western Australia.

Soon after his arrival in Western Australia, Hackett realised that the Anglican Church was in a state of inertia. One reason was that the Catholic Church, as a result of Bishop

Matthew Gibney's efforts, was taking full advantage of state aid that was available to denominational schools, while the Anglican Church was not. It has been argued that Hackett as a prominent lay-member in the Anglican Church orchestrated the struggle to abolish state aid, with the Church only playing a minor role in this acrimonious affair. Through his perseverance, he achieved his objective of removing state aid to denominational schools in 1895. His ruthless determination further enhanced his status, especially as the majority of the population of Western Australia were Protestants.

Hackett wanted to have his own way on most issues. He did not hesitate when a matter arose about which he felt passionately. He campaigned relentlessly through the columns of the *West Australian* until the necessary action was implemented. His vigorous and successful campaign to abolish state aid to church schools was a notable achievement, except in the eyes of the members of the Catholic Church. He also exercised his persuasive powers in the selection of a new site for Parliament House. In 1897, he advocated a site in Harvest Terrace, but was supported only by George Leake MLA. It was not until March 1900 that the two men convinced their colleagues to follow their lead. The House's presence in Harvest Terrace today is testament to Hackett's perseverance. Rarely did he fail to achieve his aims, one exception being when he and John Forrest campaigned unsuccessfully for Fremantle's new harbour to be located at Owen Anchorage. This was a minor set-back however. Hackett's motivation and determination ensured that most of his aspirations were eventually achieved.

Hackett's decision not to marry until late in life was probably deliberate and influenced by his prior ambition to become a successful businessman. He admitted to Walter

James in 1905: 'The place is so dull, and life so monotonous that I absolutely must have a new experience'.<sup>6</sup> That was to be his marriage to eighteen-year-old Deborah Drake-Brockman. Although Deborah is not dealt with in this thesis, it would be remiss not to make some mention of her. After her husband's death in 1916 she became a fund-raiser for the war effort and was awarded *La Medaille de la Reconnaissance Française* by the French government. In the year of her husband's death she published a popular household guide, with all monies raised being donated to charities.<sup>7</sup> On 10 April 1918, despite her automatic disinheritance under the terms of Hackett's will, Deborah married Frank Beaumont Moulden, who from 1920 to 1922 was Lord Mayor of Adelaide. It was while she lived in South Australia that Deborah Moulden realised the importance of the mineral tantalite, but she had difficulty convincing governments of its usefulness. Eventually, during the Second World War tantalite was used to develop radar.<sup>8</sup> A 1965 obituary in the *New York Times* described her as 'one of Australia's wealthiest women' and 'Australia's Tantalite Queen'.<sup>9</sup>

Hackett's children were high achievers, including a son who rose to the rank of General in the British Army.<sup>10</sup> If Winthrop Hackett had survived to see his children into adulthood, he would certainly have been proud of them, especially with four of them completing tertiary education.<sup>11</sup> His only disappointment may have been that –

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<sup>6</sup> Hackett to James, 15 July 1905, *ML*, MSS 412, vol 6, Item Nos. 421.

<sup>7</sup> *ADB*, vol 9, pp. 149-150.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> *New York Times*, 18 April 1965, p. 81. Deborah was also the first passenger in 1934 to fly from Australia to Britain.

<sup>10</sup> Fullick, *Shan Hackett*, p. 173.

<sup>11</sup> Verna studied medicine at Westminster Hospital (Fullick, *Shan Hackett*, p. 16); Patricia attended universities in Adelaide and London (John Ritchie (ed), *ADB*, 15 vols., Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1996, vol. 14, p. 349); Joanna attended Grenoble University in France; Shan attended New College, Oxford (Fullick, *Shan Hackett*, p. 16).



### Winthrop Hackett's children

Hackett's children, c.1917

From left to right: Deborah Winthrop, John Winthrop, Joanna, Patricia and Verna.

Acknowledgment: Trinity College, Melbourne.

because of Deborah's departure from the state soon after her husband's death - none of them were educated at the University of Western Australia.

With reference to Hackett's aspirations to establish a university in Western Australia, he realised that knowledge was a precious but vital commodity. His approach to education was well ahead of his contemporaries, his aim being to provide young people with an adequate and free tertiary education, as long as the courses were grounded in practicalities. This was his crowning achievement and his main enduring memorial amongst a multitude of accomplishments. His philosophy of education can be traced back to his university days in Ireland, where had he not been the son of a clergyman, he would not have been able to obtain a scholarship to Trinity College Dublin through the Erasmus Smith Trust. Yet, Hackett himself had no desire to be a clergyman. In the



years after his death, the success of the university has been confirmed by the thousands of Western Australians who have been fortunate enough to have enjoyed a free tertiary education. Today, he would find abhorrent the transformation of Australian universities into businesses selling degrees.

Hackett was determined that his achievements would not only be acknowledged by his contemporaries, but also remembered by posterity. He managed to ensure that this would be the case with his bequest to the University of Western Australia. Critics might suggest that Alfred Langler's efforts as the executor of his estate were responsible for increasing the popularity of the newspaper and therefore its capital value, which he did in a spectacular manner. It might therefore be argued that Langler should have received some of the accolades for the University's eventual windfall. Although there is no disputing Langler's efforts, it was Hackett who provided the framework for the distribution of proceeds from his assets. His bequest would leave an indelible mark on tertiary education in Western Australia. The University of Western Australia was the state's first university, and its only one for 62 years.

One puzzling aspect of Hackett's will is that when he bequeathed monies for the construction of university buildings, he stipulated they should be named after him.<sup>12</sup> Being a devout and committed Anglican it was probable that he would have known the Bible in some detail. The book of Matthew reads: 'Hence when you go making gifts of mercy, do not blow a trumpet ahead of you ... that your gifts of mercy may be in secret; then your Father who is looking on in secret will repay you'.<sup>13</sup> No doubt he was explicit in his will because he was determined to leave a legacy that future generations would know about. He probably thought his actions in this case as only a minor

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<sup>12</sup> J. W. Hackett's will. *SROWA*, Consignment no. 3436, item 1917/393, clause 32.

<sup>13</sup> *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures*, New York: Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Revised ed., 1984, Mathew, Chapter 6: 2-4.

indiscretion, therefore viewing his legacy of more importance than an adherence to the scriptures.

What motivated Hackett? Throughout his time in Western Australia, he nursed a passionate desire to be recognised and accepted by the Establishment in his adopted home. In order to achieve this he worked tirelessly, constantly striving to improve his standing socially, politically and as a businessman. He undertook every task and determined to fulfil it in the most efficient manner possible. In 1897, 19 years before Hackett's death, Kimberly wrote that 'in public, in private, or in the editorial chair of the *West Australian*, Mr Hackett has laboured constantly for his adopted country'.<sup>14</sup>

By the time of his death, Hackett had certainly extended his long list of achievements, the ultimate one being the driving force for the establishment of the University of Western Australia. In 1936 John Kirwan, a former editor of the *Kalgoorlie Miner*, remarked in his book *My Life's Adventure* that 'Western Australia has had no one whose zeal was keener in public service'.<sup>15</sup> It is as though Kirwan belatedly acknowledged Hackett's achievements after the announcement of the latter's will in 1926. Hackett was a strong ally of John Forrest and Kirwan was known as 'a harsh critic of the Forrest ministry, contending that it discriminated against the goldfields population' in various ways.<sup>16</sup>

Although Hackett was a successful businessman, there were sections of the community who had reason to dislike him. The reason being was that he always aimed to be central to any projects he was involved in. He used several means to influence the people, including the columns of the *West Australian*. Some people who probably found his

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<sup>14</sup> Kimberly, *History of West Australia*, pp. 21-23.

<sup>15</sup> Kirwan, *My Life's Adventure*, p. 251.

<sup>16</sup> *ADB*, vol. 9, pp. 614-616.

behaviour objectionable included divorced women; two leading clergymen; Chief Justice Onslow; Charles Harper's family; and possibly his own wife. Hackett did not want divorce to be made easier but considered that the proposed legislation in the 1899 Divorce Bill would result in divorce occurring 'on any ground whatever',<sup>17</sup> and would only weaken the matrimonial knot. Nevertheless, he admitted that the then current legislation, which had been introduced in 1863 was outdated. Despite his misgivings however, he only argued successfully for two minor amendments to the legislation, in respect to insanity and to desertion, which highlighted his conservative social values. He did not push for further amendments, as he believed that any incoming Federal government was likely to centralise the laws.

There were at least three persons who crossed swords with Hackett and none of them fared well. They were Matthew Gibney, John Gribble and Chief Justice Alexander Onslow. The three received the full force of Hackett's anger. Gibney was head of the Catholic Church in Western Australia from 1886 to 1910, and like his fellow co-religionists had no reason to like Hackett, especially after his successful campaign to abolish state aid to church schools in the 1890s. Gibney attempted to uphold the values of his Church through the columns of *The W.A. Record* but was overwhelmed by the deluge of editorials in the daily *West Australian* denouncing state aid to church schools.

John B. Gribble also fell foul of Hackett's pen and tongue. He spoke out against the conditions under which Aboriginal pastoral workers' in the Gascoyne region were forced to work. After publishing his account in *Dark Deeds in a Sunny Land* in 1886 he was called 'a lying canting humbug'<sup>18</sup> by Hackett in the columns of the *West Australian*, and unsuccessfully sued the newspaper. Gribble was left penniless by his

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<sup>17</sup> WAPD, 13 September 1899, vol. 14, p. 1248.

<sup>18</sup> WA, 24 August 1886, p. 3.

actions and soon after clandestinely left the colony, without paying court costs. During the case Hackett defended his fellow pastoralists in the Gascoyne, denying any maltreatment of the local Aboriginals. However, his brief ownership of the 'Wooramel Station' in 1882 he must have known that the indigenous workforce was being treated rather as convict ticket-of-leave labour had been.

Chief Justice Sir Alexander Onslow was another person who clashed with Hackett. This resulted in 1888 Hackett and his partner, Charles Harper, petitioning the Western Australian Parliament accusing Onslow of bias in his judgements. As previously noted, the case was a prolonged affair with no effective outcome. While the final decision was being debated, Onslow left the colony for England and only returned in 1891 after responsible government had been introduced in the colony. This ensured that the remainder of his stay in Western Australia was uneventful. These three cases demonstrate the influence and power Hackett held in Western Australia. Three factors - his part-ownership and editorship of the *West Australian*, his parliamentary role, and his well-connected friends - rendered him capable, if necessary, of effecting a person's downfall, notwithstanding that person's standing in society.

The Harper family would have viewed Hackett as a shrewd, unscrupulous businessman. After Charles Harper's death in 1912, they were extremely angry at Hackett's initial offer to his three children for the shares they held in West Australian Newspapers Co Ltd. For an eighteen-month period from 1912 to 1914, two of Harper's sons, Charles Walter and Gresley Tatlock, challenged Hackett's offer in the Supreme Court. Finally, the dispute went to arbitration, which process finally settled on a payout of £80,000.<sup>19</sup> This saga was to leave future generations of the Harper family feeling very bitter towards Hackett, especially after the newspaper was sold for £625,000 in 1926.

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<sup>19</sup> Harper family papers, BL MN 94, Acc 1973A/10.

Hackett even attempted to control his wife Deborah's life after his death. It seems that he did not wish her to re-marry, as one clause in his will stipulated that her inheritance would cease if she did so.<sup>20</sup> He probably considered this a sufficient deterrent. However, Deborah was courageous enough to do so not once, but twice, and it was noted at the time of her death in 1965 that she was a very wealthy woman despite losing any further inheritance from the sale of Hackett's newspapers. Was her third marriage an attempt by Deborah to take her revenge on Hackett, for Basil Buller Murphy was a Roman Catholic and the couple were married in St Patrick's Cathedral, Melbourne?<sup>21</sup> This thesis has more than hinted at the animosity Hackett held towards the Roman Catholic Church.

Hackett's legacy continues. In a public speech given seventy-two years after Hackett's death, his son, General Sir John Winthrop Hackett, speaking in February 1988, at the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations for the University of Western Australia, observed that his father saw very clearly that the prime necessity in this young and growing community was to help its members, as he put it, to win their daily bread. Later prosperity would permit what was being planted at that time to flower in other ways.<sup>22</sup>

As a newspaper proprietor, politician and philanthropist, Hackett is without peer in Western Australian history. Subsequent generations have received the benefit of his commitment to the ideas he advocated throughout his public life. Given the significance of his initiation of and generous support for Western Australia's fledging university, and his backing for other cultural institutions, it was no surprise when he

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<sup>20</sup> J. W. Hackett's will. *SROWA*, consignment no. 3436, item 1916/478, clause 7e.

<sup>21</sup> *ABD*, vol. 9, pp. 149-150.

<sup>22</sup> Hackett, 'Inauguration Ceremony', pp. 3-4.

was referred to later as the 'Cecil Rhodes of Western Australia',<sup>23</sup> as well as in his own lifetime as, a 'Veritable Augustus'.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> *WM*, 21 April 1932, p. 5.

<sup>24</sup> *WA*, 19 August 1913, p. 7.

## **APPENDIX**

### **1. Positions held within the Diocese of Perth**

Diocesan Trustee	1898-1901
Acting Diocesan Registrar	1901
Diocesan Registrar	1902-1916
Diocesan Council	1886-1898
Panel of Triers	1889-1916
Auditors of Diocesan Accounts	1886-1888
Trustees of Clergy Widows and Orphans' Fund	1890-1895
Diocesan Board of Education	1892-1903
Chairman of Committees	1897-1898
Inter-Diocesan Committee	1905
Provisional Council	1906-1913
Presentation Board	1907
Chancellor of the Diocese of Perth	1907-1916
Canon (Lay)	1906
Government Legislation	1908-1911
Padbury Memorial Committee	1908-1911
Member of the Provincial Synod	1912-1916
Social Question Committee	1912
Clergy Memorial (later known as the Australian Clergy Provident Fund)	1912
General Synod Representative	1914-1916

Source: *Church of England in Australia, Diocese of Perth: Synod Minutes 1885-1894 and Year Books 1895-1917.*

## **2. Other Committee positions**

The Caves Board (President)	1905-1910
Karrakatta Cemetery Board	
Trustee	1897-1899
Chairman	1900-1916
Kings Park Board (Committee Member)	1895-1916
Library Board	
Board Member	1889-1902
Chairman of the Board	1903-1910
President of the Trustees	1911-1916
Perth Zoo (President)	1896-1916
South Perth Lawn Tennis Club (President)	1898-1914

Information obtained from various Government minute books; Leonie Liveris, *Memories Eternal*; and Lindsay Richardson et al., 'The History of the South Perth Lawn Tennis Club'.



### **3. Hackett Studentship holders from the University of Western Australia.**

#### **Years**

#### **1927**

H. W. Bailey  
T. C. Dunne  
J. I. Hamilton

#### **1928**

E. C. Andrews  
J. E. I. Cairns  
G. C. Dowson  
A. King  
A. A. Orton  
V. A. Summers  
A. T. Williamson

#### **1929**

W. G. I. Hayman  
A. G. Nicholls  
L. A. Owen  
F. J. Schonell  
E. J. Underwood  
G. I. Wade

#### **1930**

D. M. Barclay  
M. Harris  
A. Mcl. Trounce  
E. M. Watson

#### **1931**

S. E. Coalstad  
H. C. Coombs  
R. W. Fletcher  
M. H. Grubb  
D. C. Swan  
D. Taylor

#### **1932**

No Awards

#### **1933**

G. Boume  
D. Carroll  
L. W. Samuel  
H. R. Trenaman  
T. G. Wilsmore

#### **1934**

L. B. Harrop  
H. D. Poole  
J. H. Riches  
D. Spargo  
R. F. Williams

#### **1935**

C. W. Allen  
G. Clarke  
R. G. Crossley  
C. R. Kent  
J. L. Lobstein  
K. R. Norris  
K. L. Prendergast  
T. H. Roberts  
M. E. Solomon

#### **1936**

R. J. Allen  
F. Gamblen  
I. M. Gawler  
R. T. Prider  
L. C. Snook

#### **1937**

P. W. E. Curtin  
C. E. Fleming  
B. Gravenall  
C. C. Thiel

#### **1938**

N. Burbidge  
F. L. Jones  
N. O'Connor  
I. G. Sharp  
L. E. Taylor

#### **1939**

M. B. Benn  
A. L. Blakers  
W. P. Rodgers  
F. S. Shaw  
D. K. Wheeler

#### **1940**

F. O. Grogan  
P. Pentony  
R. C. Rossiter  
M. E. Smith

#### **1941**

I. V. P. Bennett  
W. F. Cole <sup>1</sup>  
S. R. Davis <sup>1</sup>  
L. F. E. Goldie  
R. W. Pickering

#### **1942**

F. T. P. Burt  
W. S. Fairbridge  
G. J. Snowball

#### **1943**

D. F. Sanders

#### **1944/1945**

No Awards

#### **1946**

E. M. Bedwell  
W. F. Cole  
S. R. Davis  
R. Traill-Nash  
I. Ward

#### **1947**

F. A. Blakey  
A. R. H. Cote  
D. H. Curnow  
J. P. E. Human  
J. T. Jefferies  
T. J. Robinson  
D. C. Thomson  
J. S. G. Wilson

#### **1948**

A. C. Cook  
J. A. Kent  
J. R. H. McWhae

#### **1949**

M. W. Kerr  
J. D. Lawson  
R. Strahan

**1950**

A. S. Holmes  
P. R. Jefferies  
J. F. Loneragan  
A. B. Weston

**1951**

I. Bennett  
P. J. H. Dunlop  
P. E. Parsons  
W. A. P. Phillips  
M. Newton

**1952**

N. E. Hardwick  
J. C. Watkins  
R. Pelham Thorman

**1953**

J. Graham  
W. L. Kennedy  
B. Ketterer  
E. G. McRae  
W. E. G. Salter

**1954**

G. C. Bolton  
B. R. Hammond  
K. M. Lalor  
V. W. Masten  
D. W. Watts

**1955**

A. de Jasay  
L. H. Little  
J. E. McGechie

**1956**

J. G. Kovesi  
B. F. Stone  
R. Yensen

**1957**

C. Hart  
A. K. Lee  
R. G. Mauldon  
G. W. Taylor

**1958**

J. K. Baron-Hay  
M. J. LITTLEJOHN  
B. W. Ninham  
A. J. Parker  
J. A. L. Watson

**1959**

J. Cohen  
M. E. Dwyer  
J. J. Meddemmen  
D. C. Shaw

**1960**

H. M. Imlach  
H. C. Robinson  
H. E. Purdie

**1961**

C. D. Clark-Walker  
D. V. Hawks  
H. L. Simmons

**1962**

C. M. Mayrhofer  
J. J. Monaghan  
K. C. Freeman

**1963**

P. J. Jennings  
I. Raiter  
R. D. Bensky

**1964**

M. A. Sanders  
E. Rudeberg

**1965**

D. J. Elias  
A. H. M. Fels  
R. I. V. Hodge  
C. J. Kuiper

**1966**

J. A. Bradshaw  
R. P. Byron  
W. J. L. Dunstone  
J. B. Maund  
S. M. Walker

**1967**

G. L. Luke  
S. N. Langford  
C. T. Stannage  
M. A. Leader

**1968**

L. Brennan  
D. M. Gews  
A. P. Miller  
A. T. Tansley

**1969**

J. A. Hillman  
R. G. A. R. MacLagan  
Chong Pin Ong

**1970**

M. E. Hillman  
P. C. Jennings  
G. Keady  
B. R. Nelson  
F. S. Pitman  
A. M. Vicziany  
S. P. Walton

**1971**

V. J. Bevan  
A. Rutherford  
R. D. Pierce  
M. M. Campbell

**1972**

R. J. Austin  
C. W. Gillam  
R. S. Hill  
C. C. Ryan

**1973**

R. J. Austin  
S. A. Kendell  
S. M. Kobutniczky  
C. A. Low  
B. P. Lucas  
M. D. Morris

**1974**

C. M. Adam  
R. J. Francis  
D. K. Jackson  
W. S. Martin  
G. W. Riley

**1975**

P. I. Grave  
P. E. J. Nulsen  
B. F. Stoffell  
J. L. Wardrop  
J. Whitehead

**1976**

D. C. Burr  
K. A. Forsyth  
J. Negroponte  
L. M. Wheeler

**1977**

S. J. Ashford  
P. G. Creighton  
M. A. E. Forrest

**1978**

J. M. Kaldor  
P. N. Payne  
C. R. Phipps

**1979**

R. Durack  
G. A. Lawrence  
I. N. McArthur  
I. C. Massey  
N. L. A. Misso

**1980**

G. J. Bancroft  
A. N. Bint  
J. A. Davidson  
Kin-Wah Mak  
K. E. Varvell

**1981**

C. Coroneos  
M. J. Scott

**1982**

K. A. Lewis

**1983**

M. R. Segal  
A. R. Walter  
D. E. Watt

**1984**

W. J. Boudville  
E. Silver

**1985**

M. J. Campbell  
J. G. Eades  
D. J. Everard  
L. J. Moses

**1986**

M. B. Barnaba  
C. M. Kovesi  
D. J. Paterson  
B. J. Rosser

**1987**

D. G. Clarke  
R. G. Sloan  
P. T. Fan

**1988**

C. Hassell  
A. Gherghetta  
D. Jayatilaka  
G. I. Watson

**1989**

S. Guenzl  
J. J. Killerby

**1990**

P. S. Grassia  
N. J. Levi  
N. J. Mullany

**1991**

J. M. Bailey  
T. H. Boykett  
T. D. Colmer  
D. J. Wetherall  
J. Whale  
S. J. Willis

**1992**

K. Y. Chung  
C. J. Kepert  
A. M. Lee

**1993**

E. J. Collins  
R. M. Davies  
A. V. Dharmapata  
R. J. Pensalfini

**1994**

N. J. Edwards  
L. V. Busch  
R. A. Newman

**1995**

D. M. Broun  
H. A. Ingram  
J. C. Sharman  
J. A. Thomson  
V. W. Wittorff

**1996**

K. L. Evans  
C. A. Keenan  
G. Matassa  
D. C. Solomon

**1997**

J. R. Paget  
E. R. Roberts  
M. West

**1998**

A. Venkatesh  
M. R. Guidici  
T. A. Semeniuk

**1999**

T. L. Griffiths  
L. H. Katnejais  
J. H. Rosman

**2000**

J. B. Fitzgerald  
C. Stace  
C. Taylor

**2001**

R. K. D'Mello  
S. A. McCarthy  
M. A. Neilan  
C. J. Porter  
K. A. Stubbs

**2002**

K. Guelfi  
F. Michel  
K. R. Radalj

**2003**

S. R. Martin-Iverson  
E. M. Stoddart  
M. T. K. Soh

**2004**

G. S. Cresp  
R. D. Muhandiramge  
T. Popiel  
K. E. Riley  
J. Gould  
S. J. Fox

**2005**

L. A. Dunlop  
E. D. Goddard-Borger  
K. L. Livesey

**2006**

R. M. Della-Bosca  
B. M. Farrant  
K. J. Hartlieb  
J. C. McCabe-Dansted  
M. F. Van Zuilen

<sup>1</sup> Also received award in 1946.

Source: "Hackett students". In *Official Publications: University of Western Australia Guide*  
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