

6. The oppositional parties in the Parliament, 1957–1968

Parliamentary opposition to the Nicklin government came from a host of diverse players in the decade between August 1957 and January 1968. Especially after the Labor split of 1957, opponents of the Coalition government were a dispirited and dishevelled band, most of whom appeared as individualistic dissidents. Each had their own particular fights to fight and wars to wage. Each had different enemies in sight. Labor's Jack Duggan and the QLP's Ted Walsh never spoke to each other again privately after the split, despite afterwards sitting together in the Assembly for more than a decade, and frequently interjecting against each other. Adversarialism was not only a matter of formal battlelines drawn across the Chamber. Indeed, some of the most intense acrimony was found within the oppositional groups among remaining members who survived the 1957 split.

If occasional internal conflicts simmered through the government side of politics, they at least demonstrated the capacity to remain in office while enjoying the comforts and trappings of power. The circumstance of being in government was sufficient to instil a collective solidarity between the Coalition parties, which was evident most strongly in the ministry. In contrast, the oppositional members were far more fragmented and querulous. They demonstrated little prospect of ever forming a single cohesive opposition. Indeed, after only one term in government, the Liberals were describing Labor as the weakest opposition in Queensland's political history. Only towards the mid-1960s did the Labor opposition gradually develop any coherence and commitment of purpose. By its third and fourth terms as opposition, Labor began to appear credible as an alternative government and its frontbench was gradually able to mount and sustain a concerted attack on the government. By then, however, Labor had been out of government for about 10 years and some backbench members were beginning to doubt that they would ever sit on the Treasury benches again.

After 1957, the remnants of the official ('loyalist') ALP were the largest non-government grouping in the House and remained so throughout the period, although their representation increased only marginally throughout the 1960s. Only 20 ALP members were returned in 1957. Of these, 18 were survivors of the split, with two new members entering the Parliament for the first time (Merv Thackeray, Keppel, and Jack Houston, Bulimba), both of whom defeated Labor defectors. These 20 ALP members represented about one-quarter of the Assembly (then consisting of 75 seats). In the next three state elections, the

ALP's numbers increased by only six, taking them to 26 of the 78-member Assembly until the 1969 poll. In other words, for 12 years, the ALP accounted at best for only one-third of the members of the Assembly.

Because all but one member of the previous Gair ministry had defected to the Queensland Labor Party (QLP), the ALP rump possessed little ministerial or senior parliamentary experience. Its main rivals on the non-government benches, the QLP, consisted initially of 11 members with considerable parliamentary experience, but within two elections they had declined to a single member. The party's leader, Les Diplock (Aubigny), who was personally popular in the Condamine, was the sole survivor of the QLP at the 1963 elections. The QLP members were mainly Catholic, anti-communist zealots with working-class origins and sympathies. The third but more disparate grouping consisted of various independents who managed to hold on to their seats usually because of strong personal and local support. The independents as a group in the Parliament rarely acted as a block but in numerical strength were better represented in the mid-1960s than at any time since. Some of these independents had broken away from the traditional parties (often over preselection or policy disputes) and not all were ideological opponents to the conservative Nicklin government; indeed, independents frequently voted with the government and some, such as Jim Houghton (Redcliffe), had initially entered the Parliament unaligned but soon felt it necessary to join one of the Coalition parties for protection. Arthur Coburn (Burdekin) probably best typified the truly independent member, even though he had conservative leanings.

The composition of the non-government benches from 1957 to the early months of 1969 is shown in Table 6.1. The ALP constituted the official opposition in the House and provided the Leader of the Opposition.

Table 6.1 The size and composition of the non-government members in the Parliament, August 1957 – August 1969

Seats held by:	1957	1960	1963	1966	1969
Australian Labor Party	20	25	26	26	31
Queensland Labor Party	11	4	1	1	1
Independents	2	3	5	4	1
Country–Liberal government	42	46	46	46	45
Total number of seats in the Legislative Assembly	75	78	78	78	78

Duggan's leadership of the opposition in the Parliament, 1958–66

The ALP lost its experienced but short-term parliamentary leader, Jack Duggan, in the rout of the August 1957 state election. Duggan had been a longstanding member of the Legislative Assembly, representing the regional seat of Toowoomba since 1935, but lost it to the Liberals' J. R. Anderson in 1957. He had served as Minister for Transport from 1947 to 1957 under the Hanlon and Gair governments and as Deputy Premier from 1952 to 1957. He had led the 'loyalist' ALP into the 1957 election, serving a little more than three months as party leader. As the most senior ALP leader to remain loyal in the split, Duggan had justified his acceptance of the directions of the ALP's Queensland Central Executive (QCE) to support three weeks' annual leave through a statement that was later apocryphally reduced to: 'I am not too proud to accept direction—right or wrong, wise or unwise.'¹ This statement made Duggan seem prepared to serve as the puppet of the trade union-dominated ALP executive. The quote became infamous and in later years was frequently rehashed by political opponents to discredit Duggan personally (see the QLP's *The Standard*, 1 May 1963).

The surviving ALP Caucus sorely missed Duggan's absence and the party eagerly awaited his return via a by-election. In his place, Les Wood (North Toowoomba) was elected as Opposition Leader by the Labor Caucus when the Parliament returned.² Meanwhile, shortly after the general election in October 1957, Duggan contested a by-election in the far western seat of Gregory—up to that point, a traditional Labor seat once held by a former Labor Speaker, George Pollock, who shot himself in his rooms in Parliament House in 1939. Gregory became vacant after the death of George Devries, a former Minister for Education and then Mines in the Gair Labor government and a QLP defector in the 1957 split. Devries had been a cabinet colleague of Duggan's, holding the positions of Secretary of the Department of Public Instruction—known by its staff as the 'Impartment of Public Destruction'—from 1950 to 1956 and Secretary for Mines, 1956–57. With the AWU unpopular in the region over the shearing strike of 1955–56, however, and the QLP running a candidate against him and splitting the Labor vote, Duggan lost in Gregory to the Country Party's Wallace Rae (who was later to become a Minister for Local Government and then Lands in the Bjelke-Petersen Coalition government, before being posted to London as Queensland's Agent-General). This was Duggan's second defeat in 1957 and Labor never again won Gregory.

¹ Jack Duggan in fact said: 'whether you like it or not, whether it is wise or unwise, the course to take is to endorse the official Labor decision' (see *Courier-Mail*, 29 April 1957).

² Les Wood announced his nine-man frontbench on 27 August 1957. It included: Deputy Leader, Eric Lloyd; Secretary, Jim Donald; Whip, Cecil Jesson; as well as Jim Clark, John Dufficy, Fred Graham, Pat Hanlon and John Mann, all without portfolios.

In the Parliament, the Labor Opposition suffered a further blow when its new leader, Les Wood, died suddenly on 29 March 1958. He had been in the Assembly since 1946 but served only six months as parliamentary leader. Wood was not known to have been suffering ill health. As an interim measure, the parliamentary party elected its party secretary, Jim Donald (Bremer), as leader, knowing that Wood's death would mean another by-election was now required (leaving Wood's deputy, Eric Lloyd [Kedron] as the deputy leader). Donald served as Opposition Leader for only four months, from 14 April to 17 August 1958, but led the opposition in the House for only three days, as the Assembly did not sit after 17 April. Donald informed the House on 15 April of his own elevation, along with Horace Davies (Maryborough) as secretary, while Cecil 'Nugget' Jesson (Hinchinbrook) remained party whip. At the same time, Wood's seat was declared vacant (*QPD* 1958:vol. 220, p. 2140). Although there had been some speculation that Duggan might quit politics after his second straight defeat, he contested the North Toowoomba by-election (his home town) in May 1958; it is somewhat paradoxical that Duggan returned to the Assembly through a by-election caused by the unexpected death of his successor. On this occasion, however, the former Labor Deputy Premier won comfortably with 63 per cent of the primary vote, well ahead of his Liberal and QLP challengers.

On resuming his parliamentary career, Duggan regained the party leadership and was acknowledged as the Opposition Leader when the next session of the Parliament began on 19 August 1958. In Duggan's maiden speech as Opposition Leader, Jim Donald received fulsome praise because he had made a 'very great sacrifice' and 'voluntarily relinquished the office' of party leader to return to the position of party secretary (*QPD* 1958:vol. 221, p. 19). The fact that the Labor Party stood by Duggan, kept preselecting him for seats and held the position of leader open for him indicates the respect and high standing he enjoyed in the parliamentary party and the wider ALP machine. It also indicates that there was no other obvious contender in the Parliament at the time. Duggan had the opposition leadership to himself and remained in the position without challenge until he personally felt obliged to resign the leadership in October 1966 over serious tax irregularities (see below). He retired from the Legislative Assembly in May 1969 after serving 33 years in the Parliament (interrupted only by a 10-month absence around the change of government).

In the late 1950s and early 1960s, there was no formal shadow ministry with a frontbench scrutinising the respective ministerial portfolios. The parliamentary Labor Party, with about one-third of the Assembly seats (between 20 and 26 to select from between August 1957 and August 1969), retained largely a five-member 'parliamentary executive', designating the leadership group and allowing certain essential functions to be allocated. When Duggan resumed his position as Opposition Leader in August 1958, Eric Lloyd (Kedron) continued

as his deputy in the parliamentary party—a position he would hold until June 1965 when he was challenged and beaten by Jack Houston (Bulimba). John Dufficy (Warrego) was elected as the parliamentary Caucus's representative on the ALP's QCE and Jim Donald (Bremer and then Ipswich East, and the former interim parliamentary leader) was reappointed secretary. The final member of the Caucus executive was Cecil 'Nugget' Jesson (Hinchinbrook), who was reappointed as party whip (a position he had held since 1950). Besides the five-member parliamentary executive, the other members of the frontbench with no designated functions were John Mann (Brisbane), who had served as Labor's last Speaker (1950–57), Jim Clark, Fred Graham and Pat Hanlon. After the 1960 election, this same group (except Jesson) was again reappointed; Jesson was defeated in the 1960 election after he chose to contest the seat of Albert rather than remain in Hinchinbrook. The new whip was Horace Davies (Maryborough), who had earlier served as interim secretary when Donald had briefly led the party. Beyond this executive group, the other members of the opposition Caucus had equal standing and no designated responsibilities, although in the House some were more vociferous and argumentative on particular topics than others.

As Opposition Leader, Duggan was an accomplished performer, gaining respect as a hard-working and feisty parliamentarian. He was something of a self-styled orator and an accomplished, forceful debater. He was rarely intimidated or lost for words and, according to observers of the day, was a 'polished' debater with a 'resonant voice, good enunciation and a vocabulary that reflects wide reading'. Duggan was also, however, a 'fast speaker' who was inclined to race through speeches at a rate of knots, often averaging '200 words a minute'—a feature considered to reduce the effectiveness of his delivery (Lack 1962:623–4). Sitting opposite him, Bjelke-Petersen (1990:64) said of Duggan: 'you could wind him up and off he would go, hammer and tongs, never seeming to draw breath.' Duggan's main speeches in the Address-in-Reply debates were generally compelling, powerful tirades, demonstrating a raw political astuteness and taking the fight up to the government whenever possible. Yet, such speeches were also littered with examples of purple prose and were often not the most eloquent or well-crafted presentations. In content, as distinct from polemic, they were usually a mixture of the substantial and the trivial; Duggan was wont to think on his feet, making points in debate as they occurred to him and meandering through lists of criticisms. When read today as a historical record of the debates, Duggan's speeches display a cobbled-together quality.

He was similarly not one to stand on ceremony, show due deference to the government or observe the niceties of protocol. A favourite tactic was to dismiss out of hand or ridicule the speeches of his opponents, implying they were worthless and vapid. In particular, he would criticise Nicklin's speeches as prone to exaggeration, evasive and specious. Other formal pronouncements

from the government were equally fair game. The Governor's opening speech to the Parliament was a favourite target of complaint; but in castigating each speech, Duggan sometimes overdid the hyperbole and lessened the impact he sought. For instance, in 1958, Duggan described the Governor's speech as the 'most anaemic speech it has been my misfortune either to listen to or read' (*QPD* 1958:vol. 221, p. 20). Indeed, he must have been taken with this line, because it was used once more in 1962 when he dismissed that year's opening speech as yet again 'one of the most anaemic documents it has been our misfortune to listen to' (*QPD* 1962:vol. 233, p. 74). On other occasions, he tried variations on the same theme, complaining one year when the Governor seemed to have trouble with his voice that

the memory of those in the Chamber will be very greatly taxed indeed to remember a period in the history of the Queensland Parliament when a Governor's Opening Speech contained so much written about so little. Yesterday was a classic example of time being taken up by His Excellency the Governor in reciting a lot of trivial matters in the House. On Monday evening many of us had the pleasure of being the guests of the Governor at the pre-sessional dinner he customarily extends each year to members of the Cabinet and other leading officials of the House. On that occasion he appeared to me to be in good health and had complete command of his voice. But we were all upset yesterday to see the obvious distress under which His Excellency was labouring in reading that very meagre document. I have no doubt that he would have had an opportunity on Monday of perusing the document, which perhaps explains his discomforture [sic] yesterday and obvious disinclination to recite these trivial matters with his customary enthusiasm. (*QPD* 1961:vol. 230, p. 32)

Another example of Duggan's preferred style when launching parliamentary attacks can be gained from his response to the Electoral Districts Bill 1958, a piece of legislation about which he was certainly not uninterested. He opened with his typical bluster and tortuous expression:

Rarely have I listened to such a number of pious, political platitudes as I have heard this evening, nor have I ever heard, on the introduction of an important piece of legislation, the political audacity and humbug that characterised the introduction of this measure. It reeks with hypocrisy because the intentions of the government are well known... The Premier is trying to hoodwink hon. members and the outside public into believing that he is perfectly innocent as to the intentions of the Government regarding the proposed boundaries, when he knows

only too well that Government members have been discussing amongst themselves in detail the boundaries in their areas. (*QPD* 1958:vol. 222, p. 1619)

His general debating tactics were refreshingly simple and direct. He felt strongly that it was his responsibility as parliamentary leader to take the lead in the opposition's attack on virtually every bill and significant political matter coming before the Parliament. This gave him an enormous workload when the Parliament was sitting—and one to which he could not always do justice. It also meant that Duggan was generally the only visible member of the opposition in political debates or in media coverage going back out to the electorate. He gave the impression, perhaps unintentionally, of running a one-man band and was criticised for not delegating responsibilities to his frontbench. Generally, he would attempt to focus on the politics behind issues and wear down his opponent with dogged determination. He liked to provoke the Premier or a particular minister, or stir the government as a whole, with taunts and allegations. Exhaustion was a frequent tactic employed by the Opposition Leader, but its real effect was diminished by the government's self-restraint and unwillingness to react. Ministers were well aware of Duggan's war-of-attrition tactics and usually responded by not responding—something that, over the years, often proved very effective. They simply chose to hear opposition spokespeople out until they had nothing further to say or their time had expired. The Industry Minister, Alan Munro, once described the government's counter-tactics as being particularly 'generous in our attitude in that we listen patiently' (*QPD* 1964:vol. 237, p. 2356). The Premier, in particular, rarely rose to Duggan's bait or provocations. Having himself acquired a certain shrewdness after being in opposition for more than 25 years—16 of them as leader—Nicklin would quietly hear Duggan out however long it took, often with a wry smile on his face. Time was on the Premier's side, and moreover, in a unicameral parliament there was not much else the opposition could do besides fulminate.

Nevertheless, throughout the 1960s, the Labor opposition shared many of the values and policy orientations of the Coalition government (see below for policy similarities). Duggan and many ALP members were avid supporters of the system of constitutional government headed by the Queen of Great Britain. Indeed, in one of his earliest speeches in opposition, Duggan was glowing in appreciation of the new Queen. In his customary Opposition Leader's reply to the opening speech, he ventured:

On my own behalf and on behalf of those who are with me on this side of the House let me say that we join as sincerely, as quickly and as generously as hon. members on the government side in expressing and re-affirming our unswerving loyalty to Her Majesty the Queen. We are indeed fortunate that we live in a country with a monarchial [sic] system

of government presided over by such a gracious person as Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth...we are indeed fortunate to have the protection of a system of government that is invulnerable to corruption, a system which ensures the protection of the liberty of all people of goodwill and a system which protects the occupant of that high office from threat of assassination or removal. (*QPD* 1958:vol. 221, p. 19)

In many ways, therefore, the opposition conducted itself in a courteous and respectful manner. If not necessarily successful in politics, they nevertheless tried to be honourable in the Parliament. This was true under Les Wood's and Jim Donald's short terms of leadership as well as throughout the eight years under Duggan's leadership. In those days, too, there was also a degree of friendship and amicability shown across the Chamber and a certain amount of mutual respect especially for those considered worthy adversaries. A sense of this amicability is perhaps best illustrated by the close friendship between the successive Transport Ministers, Labor's Jack Duggan and the Liberals' Gordon Chalk. Both men lived in close proximity in the Toowoomba region and shared the ministerial car when returning home after sitting days. When Duggan was Transport Minister under Gair, he regularly gave Chalk—then a young opposition backbencher—a lift home. Chalk returned the gesture during the 1960s when he became Transport Minister and then Treasurer. Many former members who served during this period subsequently commented that the House was a much 'more friendlier place' in those days, and many considered such qualities to have long since disappeared to the detriment of the Parliament.

Scarred by electoral contests in the early 1960s

Elections are great levellers. They provide oppositions with the opportunity to shine and perhaps redress the balance somewhat after a period out of government. Elections present all sorts of new possibilities to political parties: an opposition might hope for a turnover of members allowing new blood to enter the Parliament; they might be able to win additional seats and strengthen the opposition's numbers in the Parliament; or best of all, the chance nature of any election offers the prospect of delivering a majority to an opposition enabling them to form government. If governments tend to lose office after a time, oppositions have only to look better at the right time. Few of these opportunities or possibilities, however, were realised throughout the 1960s by the Labor opposition in Queensland. Labor appeared more battle-scarred and dispirited by the experience of contesting elections. Indeed, after reversing the fortunes of the QLP by 1960, it became extremely difficult for the ALP as a

whole to make further electoral headway. Some opposition members regarded elections with increasing unease, especially if they were in danger of losing their seats through lack of performance or political vicissitudes. Labor backbenchers were always susceptible to defeat by either one of the Coalition parties, and perhaps even the QLP in the early years (although it never really captured a Labor seat), and sometimes to others in their own party through preselection contests. Concerned about their seats and pensions, many Labor members found it was more secure to opt for safety in opposition.

The first election faced by the Labor opposition in 1960 was a dour struggle between four seemingly well-matched parties. The election could be seen as a ‘four-cornered’ contest fought on the basis of a winner-take-all, first-past-the-post voting system. Indeed, Hughes (1969:16) described the 1966 election as the first to involve real ‘four-cornered’ contests in that both conservative parties contested some seats together with both Labor Parties; but even so, relatively few seats in fact attracted all four parties at any election in the 1960s. On the government side, the Country Party was determined to remain numerically superior to the Liberals, while among the opposition, the ALP and QLP were locked in mutual combat to capture and monopolise the non-government vote. It was a bitter fight for the right to exclusive representation of the working-class constituency. In the campaign, the QLP concentrated on attacking the ALP as if it were in government or likely to become so, while the ALP, in contrast, positioned itself as the main opposition and attacked the Coalition government over its mixed record and broken promises. Both Labor Parties, however, were critical of the government’s market-oriented policy of removing postwar price controls. This had seemingly contributed to rapid increases in prices and rents. Both also complained about the impact of harsh economic conditions on the lives of the low paid, with the QLP—mindful of the Catholic proportion of its constituency—stressing more the impact on large families. Such lines of attack against the government were, however, blunted by the propensity of the contending Labor Parties to attack each other in public.

The ALP’s 1960 campaign began by accusing the Nicklin government of breaking specific promises—among them Duggan listed the government’s failure to introduce a bill of rights (promised in 1957), to maintain full employment, to proceed with the new state(s) movement in northern Queensland, to establish an independent public service commission headed by three commissioners, to establish a police appeals board and a teaching commission, failing to restructure the Lands Department and not maximising funding opportunities for roads. Labor also criticised price and rent increases, government-controlled union ballots and higher levels of unemployment (which they claimed to be three times higher than when the ALP was last in office, jumping from 4343 a month in 1956 to 15 400 in 1960). Labor pamphlets claimed that the weekly shopping bill

had risen by 18 per cent and that the government had not delivered on health and housing policies. And yet, in attacking the government, the ALP was not averse to stooping to occasional parochialism; they criticised the government for allowing property speculation on the Queensland coast by outsiders and especially 'Asian millionaires and financial interests in Hong Kong, Sydney and Melbourne' (*Courier-Mail*, 5 May 1960). Labor's own policy commitments in 1960 offered to expand education, increase the school leaving age first to fifteen and then to sixteen years, extend state housing relief and reintroduce the rental rebate system, legislate for three weeks' annual leave and establish a state savings bank and legal aid bureau (*Courier-Mail*, 5 May 1960).

In the campaign, Duggan also tried to focus attention on sensitive issues that divided the Coalition. He attacked the Country Party for not introducing preferential voting (something from which the ALP felt it could benefit once it was challenged by the QLP), suggesting that the senior Coalition partners were looking after their own electoral interests at the expense of the Liberals. Local-branch Country Party members remained anxious to exploit the first-past-the-post system because they believed that it was more to their advantage than to the Liberals. With two contending Labor Parties and the Liberals a lesser force than the Country Party, the last calculated that simple majority voting was most likely to bolster their parliamentary representation. Duggan claimed that despite the platforms of both Coalition parties advocating the reintroduction of preferential voting, the Premier had not done so for reasons of short-term expediency. In Duggan's electoral speech on 4 May 1960, he told his audience that the Premier had admitted in a television interview 'that preferential voting was not restored because the Country Party Conference at Bundaberg directed the government not to introduce it' (*Courier-Mail*, 5 May 1960). Such criticism from Duggan explicitly made the point that both the Premier and the Coalition government would accede to extra-parliamentary pressure when it suited them—a criticism more frequently made of the ALP parliamentarians and the union movement.

Yet, in state politics when parties are out of office, mounting election campaigns can often be an expensive exercise, especially when little financial support is forthcoming from business or other sources of funding. In 1960, the ALP had a bank balance of reportedly about £8000 at the start of the campaign, but the costs of television campaigning alone were estimated to have been about £15 000–20 000 (*Sunday Mail*, 28 February 1960). Not surprisingly, Labor was interested in whatever free publicity it could get from the press, but with the labour movement divided, such coverage was often not favourable. Labor was also noticeably more restrained in advertising than the Coalition parties.

In contrast, the QLP directed its zealotry against Labor, and throughout much of the campaign the QLP's leader, Vince Gair, was negative and vitriolic.

The party could not afford a big-spending campaign, but made up for this by attracting attention in other ways, including disrupting meetings and occasionally engaging in rowdy street brawls. The QLP's platform in 1960 was an assortment of commitments reflecting the issues in which the new party was most interested. The QLP declared itself in favour of independently controlled ballots in unions, a reimposition of price controls, increased recreation leave for workers (an ironic gesture given this was one of the main issues behind the Labor split) and an allowance for dependant marriage partners. They sought to attract younger voters with a 'marriage loans' policy (offering cheap loans of up to £500 towards the purchase of a house), increased funding for non-government (that is, Catholic) schools and an industrial education bursary scheme. Gair also offered to establish a 'rural and savings bank' and provide aid to small farmers but stopped short of providing details.

So, the real fight in the 1960 election was between the rival Labor Parties over who could claim the mantle of leadership of the non-conservative side of politics and of the labour movement. Among the rival candidates, it was a battle over who would emerge as the natural party of opposition. The ALP was intent on breaking the parliamentary power of the QLP and exposing its organisational weaknesses. The ALP also had to concentrate on defeating other splinter bodies or maverick individuals (such as the North Queensland Labor Party, the NQLP). For the QLP, the 1960 election was a test of survival and a chance to develop an alternative approach to capture the working-class vote. The political dogfight took place in the public arena and the mutual animosity was manifest. As Duggan presented the ALP's policy speech to an audience of 1600 in Brisbane on 4 May, fights broke out, punches were thrown and rowdy interjections from QLP supporters punctuated his address. Duggan described QLP attacks as improper tactics designed to promote the party's propaganda, which should be treated with 'contempt' (*Courier-Mail*, 5 May 1960). He also accused the QLP of receiving funds and support from the Liberal Party (to assist them to split the Labor vote)—a claim that was immediately denied by the other parties. Yet, he offered during the campaign to 'extend the hand of friendship to every QLP man who, realising he had genuinely made a mistake during the split, sought readmission to the ALP' (*Courier-Mail*, 7 May 1960).

Vince Gair, however, as a former premier, was not to be brushed aside so easily. He boasted the QLP would remain a 'virile, fighting, positive political force' (*Courier-Mail*, 10 May 1960). The QLP's election material suggested it alone could govern the state for prosperity 'in the interests of all sections of the community—free from dictation'—an undisguised criticism of the ALP and its left-wing union connections (*QLP Election Pamphlet*, Ashgrove, 1960). They made inflammatory claims that Queensland was confronted by two deadly sins: 'becoming squeezed by monopoly capitalism on one hand, and Marxist-

inspired socialism on the other' (*Courier-Mail*, 10 May 1960). To an audience of 1700 in Brisbane, Gair argued that the 'communist-influenced' ALP constituted the principal threat to Queensland rather than the 'inexperienced, inept and amateur' Nicklin government. With his party sharing the name 'Labor' and a similar heritage, the former Labor Premier was anxious to distinguish his new party from any previous affiliations, declaring that the QLP 'positively rejects the full-scale socialism which was foisted on the ALP by the Communists and Fabian fellow-travellers' (*Courier-Mail*, 10 May 1960). Gair continued to paint the ALP as his bitterest enemy because he still felt the 'minority' ALP parliamentarians had betrayed him by crossing the floor to vote with the Country Party and Liberals to bring down his Labor government. The enmity and hyperbole remained unsurpassed, as Gair ventured that 'the Communist Party has so riddled the ALP that, riven by internal discords, sabotaged from within, an object of tragic contempt in the community, it is a prostrate giant, through whose gaunt and fleshless body the Red-ants roam at will' (*Courier-Mail*, 10 May 1960).

Notwithstanding the metaphorical prose of its leader, the QLP was finding it difficult to capture public sentiment, and even by the early 1960s was becoming a declining influence in Queensland politics. It never again showed any serious prospect of becoming a parliamentary force in its own right either as the largest opposition party or more realistically by being able to hold the balance of power between the major parties. Yet the main political significance of the QLP (and later as the DLP, the Democratic Labor Party) was not to be measured in terms of its own success, but by the damage it caused to the ALP's electoral prospects. From the vantage point of the Parliament, the QLP managed to return only 11 former Labor members to the Assembly in 1957, who for a short time added colour and passion if not substance to the quality of parliamentary debates.

The state election of 1963 was the second faced by the ALP in opposition. Before the election the government had again changed the electoral system, reverting back to a preferential voting system, which initially the ALP thought would be of advantage to itself (but the Country Party had agreed to this only after Gair had promised to give QLP preferences to the Coalition parties). This time, the campaign saw the ALP itself become an election issue, principally over accusations of demonstrating communist sympathies. Leading up to the 1963 election, the parliamentary Labor Party was continually hounded by criticisms of its dependence on left-wing unions and for its close relations with 'fellow travellers' (these criticisms were made principally by the Liberal Party and QLP and to a lesser extent by the Country Party). The QLP's newspaper, *The Standard*, attempted to draw comparisons between the ALP's policies and those of the Communist Party, listing 'parallel policies' of the parties on its front page (for example, recognition of communist China, withdrawal of troops

from Malaya, abolition of penal clauses in the *Arbitration Act* and opposition to the Catholic industrial groups in the unions). Stating that these policies were designed to bring ‘this country under the heel of international Communism’, the paper advocated that the ‘ALP under its present leadership must be smashed and broken for the security of Australia’ (*The Standard*, 1 May 1963).

The ALP became increasingly sensitive to this type of criticism and continually objected to the communist tag, but most of its attempts to bury this issue were defensive or apologetic—and some could have helped to kick the issue along. In a well-reported speech, Duggan, as Opposition Leader, explicitly stated that ‘communists were an embarrassment and a nuisance’ to the ALP (*Courier-Mail*, 10 May 1963). He told the audience in Charters Towers in May 1963 that Labor did not want the help or support of communists in its battle for respectability.

The Coalition government was also quick to exploit any other divisions within the opposition leadership on matters of policy. Such divisions kept the ALP in the spotlight and helped undermine any claim to be a viable alternative government. For example, before the 1963 state election, Frank Nicklin tried to make political capital out of ‘disagreements’ between the leader, Jack Duggan, and his deputy leader, Eric Lloyd. Nicklin claimed that the disagreement occurred over the government’s reduction of probate and succession duties. The Premier told electors that Lloyd had supported the government’s initiative against the formal and forceful opposition to the tax relief expressed by Duggan (*Courier-Mail*, 17 May 1963). Press reports had also carried stories that some senior Labor members (even among the ‘parliamentary executive’) had been ‘carpeted’ (that is, disciplined) for making individual statements ‘off the party line’, not displaying unity or failing to demonstrate loyal support to Duggan (*Truth*, 4 November 1962). Eric Lloyd and John Mann among the executive were rumoured to have faced such disciplinary action.

Labor was confident of winning government at the 1963 election. ALP sources told the press that it would not only gain the 14 seats necessary to form government in its own right but win 18 seats. Press reports tended to support Labor’s confidence. As mentioned in Chapter 4, the *Truth* and the *Courier-Mail* reported in early 1962 that Labor was well placed to win the next election. The *Courier-Mail* was definitively claiming that the Nicklin–Morris government could not win a third term (*Courier-Mail*, 11 March 1962). Labor pushed the issues of restoring full employment and improving industrial conditions for workers. The party was committed to introducing three weeks’ annual leave—the issue that had been the catalyst for the 1957 split. Other workplace benefits promised included long-service leave, equal pay for women and reforms to the apprenticeship system. Labor stressed its support for education and more teachers and schools and better levels of equipment. Consumer price increases were a volatile issue and Labor undertook to reintroduce price controls for

subsistence items and provide low-interest housing loans. The ALP supported full citizenship for Aboriginal people and presented an extensive set of rural policies to challenge the Country Party in its heartland. Labor was committed to rural subsidies through a rural finance board and various assistance schemes for specific primary industries (such as dairy, tobacco and wheat). In policy terms, Labor began to look like a professional party again and a viable alternative government.

Yet, the ALP gained only one additional seat in 1963, taking its total to 26 in the 78-seat Assembly. Labor's Edwin (Eddie) Wallis-Smith defeated the Country Party's Tom Gilmore in the northern seat of Tablelands by 3281 votes (or 51.5 per cent) to 2761 votes (or 43.3 per cent), with the QLP gaining only 116 votes (or 1.8 per cent) and an independent securing 204 votes (or 3.2 per cent). Tablelands was a traditional Labor seat, which had been taken by the Country Party in 1957 largely due to the split. The result was a major disappointment to the ALP, especially to the senior members of Caucus. Nevertheless, despite the loss, the poor result did not produce demands for Duggan's resignation or cause the party to search for a new leader. Rather Duggan's leadership was unquestioned and his position at the head of the opposition even more secure.

The big loser in the 1963 election was the QLP, which was reduced to only one representative. The deputy leader, Les Diplock (Aubigny), held his seat comfortably, winning 52.4 per cent of the primary vote. The party's leader before the election, Paul Hilton (Carnarvon), lost narrowly to the Country Party's H. A. McKechnie, who gained 3157 votes (or 36.3 per cent) to Hilton's 3073 votes (or 35.4 per cent), with the ALP's candidate, D. Gow, receiving 2449 votes (or 28.2 per cent). Two ex-QLP members, Bert Adair (Cook) and Ted Walsh (Bundaberg), retained their seats as independents, but all the other QLP candidates were defeated. A total of 61 QLP candidates had contested the election for only one seat secured.

When the Parliament resumed after the 1963 election, Pat Hanlon (ALP, Barooona), son of the former Labor Premier Ned Hanlon, used the Address-in-Reply debate to reject accusations that communist sympathisers dominated the Labor Party. In particular, he objected to one of the Liberal Party's campaign advertisements run in the *Courier-Mail* (on 24 May), before the June 1963 election. The advertisement played on the fears of voters by depicting Parliament House under the shadow of a hammer and sickle should Labor win government. Hanlon, who was widely regarded as a moderate within the ALP, told the Speaker:

I assure you, Mr Speaker, that I do not find amusing a photograph of this parliamentary building with the hammer-and-sickle insignia imposed on it. I say to you directly...as Speaker of the House, to indicate... whether you regard the dignity of the Parliament as grossly attacked

and the Parliament itself held in contempt, which I say it is, by the use, or misuse, of such a photograph of Parliament House in this way. (*QPD* 1963:vol. 235, p. 267)

The Speaker, David Nicholson (CP, Murrumba), replied in a formal ‘Speaker’s Statement’ to the House. He claimed that there was little he could do because he was not in fact the Speaker at the time the advertisement appeared, as the House was dissolved. Nicholson went on to say that the only remedy he could see available to Hanlon was to go to the courts in a civil action. Not surprisingly, the opposition was not impressed with this reasoning. While the Opposition Leader, Jack Duggan, said he accepted the ruling, he added that Labor saw ‘far-reaching implications’ in Nicholson’s statement. He implied that the Speaker had allowed the House to be brought into disrepute without now being prepared to take action. He warned that the opposition would have to ‘examine and deal with’ these implications later in accordance with the *Standing Orders*. The two principal concerns of the opposition were that the Speaker apparently had no authority between parliaments and that once a particular parliament was dissolved the House could be used in a blatantly political manner or anyone could say anything about the Parliament without fear of reprimand (*QPD* 1963:vol. 235, pp. 336–7).

Controversies besetting the opposition in 1964–65

Two major issues confronted the opposition in the mid-1960s. First, the Labor opposition was placed in a difficult position when Jack Egerton, President of the Trades and Labour Council (TLC), made serious allegations concerning members of the government. The ALP resisted the opportunity to embarrass the government in the parliamentary controversy that unfolded over an independent’s motion to summon Egerton to the bar of the House to explain his allegations. Second, the 1965 Mount Isa Mine dispute and the continuing problems of the *Arbitration Act* eventually provided a shot in the arm for the dispirited opposition despite its initial reluctance to take up the issue.

The motion to summon Egerton took place on 20 November 1964. The independent from Bundaberg, Ted Walsh, moved the motion and was supported by Tom Aikens. The motion, which tended to be regarded initially by both sides as a case of mischief making, referred to allegations made by Egerton in his presidential address to the TLC on 16 October 1964. Walsh intended his motion to list 12 matters of concern (‘recitals’) and compel Egerton to attend the House and provide evidence under privilege to support his allegations. The motion proposed that ‘John Alfred Roy Egerton be ordered to attend before this House

at a time and day to be named by Mr Speaker but not being later than twenty-eight days from the date hereof, to be here examined as to what he shall know concerning the aforesaid matters' (*QPD* 1964:vol. 239, p. 1711).

Walsh based his motion entirely on a report of the speech carried in the *Courier-Mail* (17 October 1964) in which it was revealed that Egerton had accused some ministers and other government members of being corrupt and of receiving payments outside and beyond their entitlements. The *Courier-Mail* reported that Egerton said: 'I believe that a thorough inquiry into the affairs of some Cabinet Ministers and government members would disclose such graft and corruption that the government would be forced out of office.' Ministers held shares in oil companies and overseas transport companies and Egerton claimed there was reason to believe 'some of these shares were not properly acquired'. He added: 'some of the trips of members overseas [were also] financed by overseas business interests...and a prominent public servant [had] informed [Egerton] that a certain Minister has received very expensive presents from Japanese interests...a car has been numbered among these.'

In seconding the motion, Aikens launched into a rambling speech that combined attacks on Egerton with many rumours and allegations about members of the government. He particularly singled out Gordon Chalk (Transport Minister), whom he described as 'tactless' for buying a Japanese car in Sydney instead of Queensland shortly after he had returned from a visit to Japan (*QPD* 1964:vol. 239, p. 1717). Aikens did not accuse Chalk of corruption but said Egerton should be given the opportunity to substantiate his claims. Chalk in his own defence interjected that he had purchased the car in Queensland and only took delivery of it in New South Wales. The Speaker continually had to call Aikens to order for drifting off the topic and introducing irrelevant observations about government ministers, who according to Aikens could potentially 'become corrupt' in time (*QPD* 1964:vol. 239, p. 1718).

Nicklin responded to the motion and defended the reputations of his ministers. He stated that he could have used parliamentary tactics to avoid the debate on summoning Egerton and simply allowed the motion to remain on the business paper until the House rose (thus terminating the matter). To clear the air, however, Nicklin was prepared to have the motion debated because 'the impression might have been conveyed that the government was "covering up" in this matter' (*QPD* 1964:vol. 239, p. 1720). Nevertheless, he went on to use his interpretation of parliamentary procedure to reject the motion, saying that 'before a witness can be summoned to the Bar of the House, the House must have resolved on some subject of inquiry in which the person called would be a witness'. Nicklin reminded the House that no motion to inquire into the charges made by Egerton had been passed by the House, so no witness could be called. Using sophistry, Nicklin argued: 'a resolution has not been passed

moving that the House should inquire into the charges made by Egerton. If such resolution had been passed it would be in order then to move that Mr Egerton be summoned as a witness. This action has not been taken' (*QPD* 1964:vol. 239, p. 1721). Nicklin deliberately allowed debate on the motion to summons Egerton, but then stopped it on procedural grounds. He told the House:

In looking at the notice of motion before the House, I think you will agree, Mr Speaker, that this motion was not framed by the hon. member for Bundaberg. It was framed by somebody with legal training. Apparently the framer of the motion must have been aware of...[accepted parliamentary procedure] because in the motion an attempt has been made to overcome the defect mentioned by setting out some 12 recitals and then providing that the proposed witness shall be ordered to attend before the House, at a time specified, to be examined as to what he shall know concerning the recitals. This, however, does not overcome the objection previously mentioned because the House has not previously resolved to examine the matter set out in the recitals. (*QPD* 1964:vol. 239, p. 1721)

Nicklin then questioned the motives of Walsh ('a shrewd political campaigner') in moving the motion. According to the Premier, Walsh had a large axe to grind and was not sincere:

He is not so much concerned with the honour and integrity of Ministers of the Crown, which he claims have been assailed, as he is with putting the Government in an embarrassing position and at the same time endeavouring to discredit Mr Egerton, who is one of the leaders of the Australian Labor Party...I suggest, Mr Speaker, that we have before us today a classic example of political hypocrisy. (*QPD* 1964:vol. 239, p. 1722)

The Opposition Leader, Jack Duggan, began an attack on Walsh and Aikens—remembering back to when the movers of the motion had 'an exchange of fisticuffs of some intensity outside this Chamber'. He accused Aikens of making an 'exaggerated and vicious attack on people who cannot defend themselves here', meaning principally Egerton. Duggan also tried to refute allegations Aikens had made that the union leader was on the take from employers to preserve industrial peace. The Opposition Leader was also, however, not impressed with the attack on Chalk, who was a personal friend and someone from the neighbouring electorate with whom he often shared transport when returning home from Brisbane. Duggan then expressed the opposition's belief that

this government has scrupulously observed the ethical standards required of its Ministers in regard to taking appropriate action to divorce themselves from private operations outside that might be advantaged in some way because they were members of the Ministry...I say without any equivocation that, to the best of my knowledge and from my experience, the Premier has the reputation of being an honourable man, an honest man, and a man of undoubted political integrity. I know that he would take action—if he would not, I should reluctantly be compelled to take back what I have already said about the matter—if some specific information or evidence was supplied to him of a breach of the standards that he has laid down as those that he expects his Ministers to accept. On the evidence that is available to the Opposition in this matter, I do not think that I have any occasion to question in any way the Premier's statement that he is not culpable in this regard. (*QPD* 1964:vol. 239, p. 1727)

After making his speech, Duggan led all members of the ALP out of the Chamber. The walkout was in protest over the attacks on Egerton, over the intent of the motion and in order to avoid being 'pawns in a political chess game'. Duggan explained:

The Government has the numbers to do what it likes. It has a substantial majority in the House, including all the parties, to solve this problem to its own satisfaction. We will allow you to conduct this argument amongst yourselves—in peace if you like, in rancour if you like, and with recrimination if you like. But we in the Australian Labor Party do not intend to take part in it, and I now propose to leave the House with my colleagues. [Whereupon all members of the Australian Labor Party present withdrew from the Chamber]. (*QPD* 1964:vol. 239, pp. 1728–9)

Aikens chided them with running to Egerton's bidding, crying, 'Why don't you put your tails between your legs?' He then sought and received permission from the Speaker to occupy the Leader of the Opposition's seat 'seeing that they ran away'. He continued to interject when the next member (Alan Munro, Minister for Industrial Development) rose to speak, only to be told by the Speaker: 'The hon. member may be permitted to sit where he likes, but he cannot interject from any seat other than his own' (*QPD* 1964:vol. 239, p. 1729). Finally, Chalk rose to make some personal clarifications about what had been said or implied by other speakers. He also launched a personal attack on Jack Egerton, claiming he had made 'dirty, damnable insinuations' (*QPD* 1964:vol. 239, p. 1734), which had hurt him personally.

After five hours of 'debate', Walsh summed up. There had been no amendments moved, so the original motion was put and defeated under *Standing Order 148*,

which states that '[w]hen, on a Division taking place, fewer than five members appear on one side, the Speaker shall forthwith declare the resolution of the House'. With the opposition boycotting the vote and the government opposing the motion, Walsh secured fewer than five members to support his motion. The House resolved 'in the negative' and then adjourned.

The Mount Isa dispute was principally an extra-parliamentary industrial issue that simmered for months in the state's north-west and the arbitration courts. The Parliament itself was not much involved in the evolution of the dispute, except for the fact that the government's arbitral legislation was at issue between the company, Mount Isa Mines, and the Australian Workers' Union (AWU). At first, the opposition was not particularly incensed or active over the issue until the mine was reopened and police were sent in to prevent picketing (and some have ventured that they did not really understand the implications of the act). Then, Duggan announced, after a special ALP executive meeting, that as Opposition Leader, he would move a motion of no confidence in the government on the next sitting day because of its 'ineptitude in handling the Mount Isa dispute and industrial conditions generally, and over certain aspects of police administration'. The opposition's action was seen as somewhat belated; one of the main protagonists in the dispute later commented 'at last' when referring to Duggan's no-confidence move (Mackie with Vassilieff 1989:189). This was only the second time since 1957 that the opposition had resorted to the tactic of moving no confidence in the government. The fact that the opposition also added allegations of police corruption to the no-confidence motion indicated perhaps that they were either less sure of their credibility in attacking the government over strike breaking or simply preferred a multi-pronged attack on the government.

When the second session of the Parliament resumed on Tuesday 4 March 1965, the opposition managed to move a want-of-confidence motion immediately after question time. Duggan moved:

That the government does not possess the confidence of this House, for the following reasons, namely:—(1) The economy of Queensland and Australia is being adversely affected by the prolonged industrial dispute at Mount Isa; (2) Great hardship and financial suffering has been, and is being, experienced by a great number of people... (3) A major contributing factor to the foregoing has been the tragic and inept handling of the problem by the Government and its continuing lack of interest and effective action in bringing the dispute to a satisfactory conclusion; (4) Failure of the Government to convene Parliament earlier than March 2, 1965; (5) The provocative nature and circumstances under which the emergency Orders of Council were issued, thereby aggravating and prolonging the dispute; (6) Its failure to acknowledge that the

basic provocation of the dispute was the sections of the 1961 *Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act* which deprived the employees of Mount Isa Mines and other industries of access to the Industrial Commission on the question of increased bonus payments, and its failure to indicate at any stage of the dispute its intention to amend the Act to allow the Commission to arbitrate on the bonus question. (*QPD* 1965:vol. 240, pp. 2309–10)

Duggan added for good measure a seventh reason largely unrelated to the other six: allegations of police corruption and cover-up and internal transfers of police relating to ‘sectarian’ internecine feuds. He moved simply:

(7) The public disquiet and concern by members of the Queensland Police Force regarding certain administrative decisions which—(a) have resulted in widespread discontent within the Force; (b) has caused grave doubts by the general public as to whether the Force is being permitted to operate at its optimum efficiency. (*QPD* 1965:vol. 240, pp. 2309–10)

The no-confidence motion ran for 14 hours, with the House rising at 3.50 am on the Wednesday (recording more than 107 pages of *Hansard*). One ALP member, Merv Thackeray (Rockhampton North), was ordered out of the Chamber for disorderly behaviour and constantly interjecting (under *Standing Order 123A* of the Legislative Assembly). Labor nominated its better performers to argue its case, with Duggan, followed by his deputy, Eric Lloyd, then Alex Inch (Burke), John Mann (Brisbane), Jack Houston (Bulimba), John Dufficy (Warrego) and Percy Tucker (Townsville North). The Premier responded for the government, followed by the Treasurer, Tom Hiley, then Bill Knox (Lib., Nundah), John Herbert (Lib., Sherwood), Gordon Chalk (Lib., Lockyer), Bill Ewan (CP, Roma) and finally Ray Smith (Lib., Windsor). Four ministers spoke against Duggan’s motion and in defence of the government’s record. Only two Country Party members spoke in the defence, while five Liberal members were represented—indicating perhaps their greater articulateness in off-the-cuff speeches. Interestingly, the fourth speaker in support of the no-confidence motion was independent Tom Aikens (Townsville South), who spoke with passion against the government but did not wait around for the vote after midnight. The last speaker (also in favour of the motion) was Ted Walsh (Ind., Bundaberg).

It was, however, hard for Labor to score much political advantage from the Mount Isa dispute or the other industrial issues—especially given that they had responded to industrial disruption in a similar way to the Nicklin government when the ALP was last in government. Moreover, the AWU in Brisbane was locked in a battle against the local AWU branch in Mount Isa for control over the strike. Shortly before 3.50 am, the Premier moved that his amendment expressing ‘full confidence’ in the government be put and this was carried (after

a voided vote) by 38 to 22 votes. This then became the motion and was also carried by 38 to 22 votes (18 members were not in the Chamber, although four were paired for approved absences). The marathon no-confidence motion was defeated on party lines although none of the independents or the QLP leader, Les Diplock, took part in the final vote.

The election of 1966

By 1966, Labor in opposition was not a happy bunch. Factional rivalries and personalities occasionally flared among parliamentary Caucus and there was always the danger of extra-parliamentary influence generating public controversies. Duggan had warned the party in February 1966 that they were too preoccupied with internal party troubles (*AJPH* 1966:vol. 12, no. 3 [December], p. 443). Two union groups, the right-wing AWU and left-leaning TLC unions, were vying for dominance in the wider party and in the parliamentary Caucus. Labor parliamentarians would at times feel constrained to abide by the ALP's Queensland Central Executive (QCE), and episodically some took the serious step of challenging QCE decisions in the Parliament, in the media or their local electorate.

For example, in the lead-up to the May 1966 state election, one sitting Labor member, Bill Baxter (an MLA since 1953 representing Norman and then Hawthorne, and a factional member of the ALP right and a previous deputy opposition whip), was dis-endorsed by the full QCE (by a vote of 51 to seven, or in some reports 52 to eight). He was ostensibly dis-endorsed on a series of assembled charges (including punching a fellow party member, being rude to a woman travelling in his car and being involved in an 'incident' with a female parliamentary staff member outside Parliament House, which Baxter admitted had occurred but was not serious enough to warrant a reprimand from the Speaker). Baxter was also rumoured to be having an affair with a Labor alderman in Brisbane. How serious these incidents were considered at the time is open to question, but certainly these were hardly 'crimes' of which Baxter alone was guilty, and there were many others in the party who were known to favour physical resolutions to disputes rather than the power of reason, and he was more than likely not alone in any alleged infidelity. Baxter claimed in his defence that he was taking medicinal drugs and had no recollection of the events. Other evidence pointed to an intense factional brawl over Baxter's seat since his original seat of Norman was merged with part of Bulimba in the 1959 redistribution (*Truth*, 1 May 1966). After he was deposed, Baxter attacked the 'steamroller tactics' of the party machine, claiming he was 'unpopular with left-wing officials of the Trades Hall' and that the TLC wanted only parliamentarians 'who would do their bidding "right or wrong, wise or unwise"' (this was a

pointed reference to the inopportune statement Duggan had made in defence of the party executive's direction on three weeks' annual leave in 1957) (see *Sunday Mail*, 1 May 1966).

After his dis-endorsement in 1966, the former Labor member became a renegade. In the lead-up to the election, Baxter became even more belligerent, asserting 'I did not rat on the Labor Party. They ratted on me!' (*Truth*, 1 May 1966). Thinking he could capitalise on his local standing as a sitting member, Baxter was determined not to go easily and stood against the newly endorsed Labor candidate for Hawthorne (T. Burton) in the 1966 elections. He ran a negative campaign but was personally unsuccessful and in fact came third behind the Liberal (Bill Kaus, who would in 1983 swap to the Nationals) and the official Labor candidate. He did, however, ensure that Labor lost the seat. Dumping Baxter meant that Labor forfeited the seat. Later, when the Parliament resumed and Bill Kaus was giving his maiden speech, Labor members taunted him with interjections suggesting that he should thank the ALP's central executive for securing him his seat. John Mann (Brisbane) told Kaus he should donate '10 percent of your salary to the QCE for getting you here' (*Courier-Mail*, 5 August 1966).

The ALP was still the subject of attack in the 1966 campaign. The buoyant economy tended to divert attention to issues of political stability and credibility. Internal divisions within the ALP and the labour movement were damaging to the opposition. The ALP's stance on industrial issues during the mid-1960s became a constant source of criticism. Les Diplock, the sole QLP member in the House and a constant critic of Labor, suggested in the 1966 campaign that Labor 'was tied to a deliberate program of political sabotage' (*Courier-Mail*, 12 May 1966). He accused Labor of adopting a double-faced approach to industrial unrest. Referring to the bitter 1964 Mount Isa strike, Diplock said, 'during the strike the ALP characteristically showed its two faces. The frightened right-wing adopted an attitude of silence while the more outspoken left-wing openly collaborated with the Communist element, which took control of the dispute four months after it began' (*Courier-Mail*, 12 May 1966).

The 1966 state election was the fourth lost by the ALP in succession. There were few bright spots for Labor in the outcome. The number of seats Labor held in the Assembly remained the same (at 26 in the 78-seat Chamber). With only two seats changing hands, Labor lost one Brisbane seat (Hawthorne) to the Liberals (Bill Kaus) and, with its candidate Peter Wood, captured a Liberal seat (Toowoomba East). Labor's campaign had been lacklustre and there was not much cause for celebration among the opposition.

Two other features, however, remain of particular importance with the 1966 election. Violet Jordan was elected to the Queensland Parliament for the seat of

Ipswich West, becoming Labor's first female parliamentary member (McCulloch 1994). Jordan was only the second woman ever elected to the Parliament (the first being Irene Longman, 1929–32, representing the Country Progressive National Party). To reach the Parliament, Jordan had to endure a tough ALP preselection process and plebiscite vote, but was elected comfortably at the general election. She found the Parliament an inhospitable place and recalled that when she first arrived there were no toilets for women members in the building. She was a conscientious member but not an outstanding performer in debates. She once mooted in August 1966 that she would introduce a private member's bill to provide for equal pay for women and to remove the discrimination against women in the public service, but nothing came of it. She was unkindly referred to as the 'biggest flop ever to be elected to this Chamber' by Tom Aikens—a comment that might say more about Aikens than about Jordan (*QPD* 1968:vol. 249, p. 430). She held the seat for three terms until she was defeated at the 1974 election. When she attempted to recontest her former seat in 1977, she was beaten in the preselection battle by her campaign manager, David Underwood, who won Ipswich West and held it for 12 years. The second item of interest was the enfranchisement of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders for the 1966 poll. Amendments to the *Electoral Act* allowed for the voluntary registration of Indigenous adults, but once registered, voting was compulsory (as it was for non-Indigenous electors). The nominal Minister for Native Affairs, Jack Pizzey, had announced the changes in March 1965 as part of a series of measures for Indigenous peoples.

Leadership issues became more pressing with the poor showing of the opposition in the 1966 election. Just before the election, Bill Baxter had accused the party of complacency in opposition and claimed that the party leader, Jack Duggan, 'does not know the meaning of mateship and under his leadership the party is degenerating' (*Sunday Mail*, 1 May 1966). Interestingly, after the election, the main target of attack was not Duggan, but his deputy, Eric Lloyd. Lloyd had fallen foul of the extra-parliamentary wing of the party in Trades Hall because of his stance on industrial issues. The parliamentary Caucus also perceived that the relationship between Duggan and Lloyd had gradually broken down and they were not working as well together in a way that would benefit the party. A view developed in Caucus after the election that either Duggan or Lloyd had to go; and given that no-one was prepared to run against Duggan, who was still regarded as the party's best parliamentary performer, Lloyd was the most expendable.

With Duggan's support, Jack Houston (Bulimba) challenged and defeated Lloyd by a vote of 15–10 (in a Caucus of 26). The contest over the deputy leadership was partly a factional struggle, with Lloyd representing the right-wing of the party (mainly with AWU links) and Houston enjoying the support of the

leftish TLC unions. Another leadership aspirant, Pat Hanlon, refused to contest the deputy's position, as he was reluctant to stand against Lloyd. Once Lloyd was defeated, Hanlon stood against Houston for the position of parliamentary delegate to the QCE and the vote was tied 13 all. Many commentators of the day considered the TLC had 'deposed the parliamentary deputy' to put in its own candidate (see, for example, *AJPH* 1966:vol. 12, no. 3 [December], p. 446). The contest was also about positioning within the Caucus and who could be considered a likely successor to Duggan when his leadership finally came to an end. Houston had emerged as a capable and tough parliamentary performer and seemed a better prospect to lift the parliamentary party's stakes in the future. He also had the support of the dominant TLC faction.

The spectacular fall of Jack Duggan in October 1966

Jack Duggan was certainly an effective, hard-working opposition spokesman and party leader. The fact that he lost three elections in a row did not appear to diminish his standing with his colleagues. Indeed, they regarded him as a natural leader who was capable of debating issues with the government. For a long time, however, Duggan was also regarded as the party's only leader, and he did little to dispel this view so never cultivated a successor. He was also not good at delegating or devolving responsibilities to his colleagues. Some former members who served under Duggan remembered his tendency to pick their brains about legislation and use the material when beginning debates. One member, Jack Melloy, recalled how Duggan would occasionally be unprepared on a particular bill and would call members who were listed to speak in the debate up to his room before the Parliament resumed to ask them what was wrong with the legislation. The member, having undertaken some preparation and research, would present an assessment of the measure, then Duggan would go down to the Chamber and, initiating the opposition's case against the legislation, would deliver the assessment as if it were his own—often leaving the providers of the material floundering with nothing to say when their time came to speak. Melloy added that he soon woke up to this practice and thereafter refused to divulge the details of his own preparations to Duggan—sometimes deflecting Duggan's requests by claiming that the legislation under consideration was 'just administrative'. Duggan's methods ensured that the main focus of attention was on the leader without allowing others to gain much recognition. Consequently, when Duggan suddenly resigned from the leadership in October 1966, he left a big gap.

To the surprise of the Parliament and most of Queensland, Jack Duggan announced his resignation from the leadership in the House on the morning of 11 October—just as Labor was about to reply to the state budget. In a personal statement to the House, Duggan admitted to a ‘taxation difficulty of some magnitude’ and gave this as the reason for his resignation. His statement was unexpected by both the Coalition and his own party (most of whom, including Jack Houston, his deputy, had been told less than one hour before the Parliament met) and was described by commentators as ‘sensational’, a ‘bombshell’ and a ‘shock’ to all parties in the Parliament. Duggan explained that he had operated an investment fund between 1955 and 1962 and now had been retrospectively classified as a ‘trader’ rather than an investor by the Taxation Department over his share dealings. He admitted ‘responsibility and blame for not revealing my full share transactions’ (*QPD* 1966:vol. 243, p. 797). As a consequence, he had become a tax defaulter and had understated his income by \$66 342. He owed about \$47 000 in back and additional taxes. Duggan made the announcement because he knew he was about to be publicly named by the Tax Commissioner for tax breaches (he was subsequently named in the House of Representatives on 12 October).

On hearing Duggan’s personal statement, the Treasurer and Acting Premier, Gordon Chalk, immediately rose to his feet and, acknowledging he had known Duggan as a friend for 20 years, said ‘whatever might be the outcome of the problems that confront him, from my personal point of view the hand of friendship and the hand of assistance will still be extended to him’. He hoped further that the former leader would ‘be able to clear all his responsibilities and that he and his [wife and family] will have happiness, peace and contentment in this world’ (*QPD* 1966:vol. 243, pp. 801–2). Chalk’s remarks were a genuine expression of compassion from across the Chamber. One unforeseen consequence of Duggan’s resignation was, however, that Jack Houston had to speak against the budget for about an hour with next to no notice or preparation; as one former member said, ‘there was a good deal of sympathy for “being stuck with it”’ (Hewitt, Personal communication).

With Duggan’s resignation, there was no automatic successor. He had been Deputy Premier under Gair for five years (1952–57) and Opposition Leader for eight years. In June 1966, only four months before Duggan’s departure, Lloyd had been dumped from the deputy’s position and was now an embittered man on the backbench. His successor, Houston, had only just settled into the deputy’s job and was still an unknown quantity. Widely seen as the TLC’s candidate, Houston had to contend with the perception that he was promoted to ensure Trades Hall kept control of the parliamentary wing of the ALP. Other possible contenders were mentioned at this time, including: Pat Hanlon (Baroona), Percy Tucker (Townsville North) and Doug Sherrington (Salisbury), but these were

long shots in 1966. So, when Duggan announced his intention to resign, he was pressured by his colleagues to remain—indeed the Caucus pleaded with him to reconsider. Either because no successor was apparent or out of recognition of his abilities, the party wanted him to remain as leader and passed a motion of confidence virtually unanimously urging him to resume the leadership. The motion was virtually unanimous because although the vote was 25–nil in favour, Lloyd, angered at Duggan's previous lack of support for the deputy's job, had stormed out of the meeting rather than support the confidence motion. Lloyd left his proxy vote with John Dufficy, who maintained the unanimity by voting in support of the motion. Duggan, however, declined to reconsider and retired to the backbench before bowing out of State Parliament at the 1969 election. He had served 33 and one-half years in the Parliament; at that time, he had been in the Parliament for more than half his lifetime.

Jack Houston's opposition team: 1966 and beyond

Two candidates stood for leadership of the opposition in 1966: Jack Houston and Pat Hanlon. The ensuing jockeying for support among the 26-member Caucus became a test of strength between rival factions: the Trades Hall union group represented by Houston and the AWU group backing Hanlon. The factional clash over the leadership reinforced the perception that Labor remained divided and fractious in opposition.

Houston was a Scottish-born electrical fitter who had been a trade schoolteacher for 15 years before entering the Parliament in 1957. Pat Hanlon was the son of the former Labor Premier Ned Hanlon and had entered the Parliament in 1956, winning the seat of Ithaca in a by-election. In a closely fought ballot, Houston, then aged forty-seven, defeated his younger and perhaps better-known opponent by 14 votes to 12, and assumed leadership of the opposition. Even though the margin on the day was close, Houston thereafter comfortably retained the leadership and remained Opposition Leader from October 1966 until July 1974. His deputy elected at the same meeting was Percy Tucker, also a left-wing (TLC) member of Caucus, who defeated Col Bennett by 16 votes to 10 on the eighth ballot.

At the time Houston won the leadership he was regarded as something of an enigma, especially outside the confines of the Labor Caucus. When he had toppled Lloyd for the deputy's position, he had been euphemistically described in the media as someone yet to make his mark. One report (*Truth*, 19 June 1966) asked 'who is this Mr Jack Houston', and went on to say:

Jack Houston, a well-built 46 years old one-time electrical fitter, has been in Parliament since 1957. Yet there can be very little in his scrap book to show for all those years. You have to scratch your head hard to remember when he last made a headline. But from now on we have the feeling that Jack Houston's scrap book is going to take on a new look.

On winning the leadership, Houston rapidly broadened his expertise across a range of policy areas and attempted to develop a collective expertise within the Caucus. In particular, he was concerned to see greater specialisation among the leading members of Caucus so that they were able to develop expertise in relation to specific portfolios. From 1966 on, Houston distinguished himself from his predecessor by establishing an informal arrangement of nominating 'shadow spokespeople' from among the elected executive of the parliamentary party. Houston's initial nine-man shadow team consisted of

- Opposition Leader: Jack Houston
- Deputy Opposition Leader and Treasury Spokesman: Percy Tucker
- Secretary and Spokesman for Conservation: Doug Sherrington
- Parliamentary Whip: Horace Davies
- Spokesman for Treasury: Pat Hanlon
- Spokesman for Works and Housing: Fred Newton
- Spokesman for Health: Jack Melloy
- Spokesman for Lands and Local Government: Eugene (Hughie) O'Donnell
- Spokesman for Labour and Tourism: Fred Bromley

In practice, each Labor spokesperson had between one and two ministries to 'look after' and on which to lead debate from the opposition side. Others also took the lead in speaking on particular matters—such as Col Bennett on police and legal issues. Four years later, this shadow arrangement was formalised into a declared 'shadow ministry' (passed at the ALP executive meeting on 14 October 1970), when the shadow ministry was extended to 14 members. The ALP's parliamentary executive had consisted of nine when Houston took over, but was increased by one in September 1969, before a further four were added in 1970. It must, however, be appreciated that initially these titles and responsibilities were recognised only within Labor's own ranks and in the media. The government, and especially the subsequent Premier, Bjelke-Petersen, did not recognise these positions and balked at the title of 'shadow minister' as a non sequitur.

Labor's first formal 'shadow ministry' of 1970 thus consisted of 14 members of Caucus

- Opposition Leader: Jack Houston
- Deputy Opposition Leader and Treasury Spokesman: Percy Tucker

- Secretary and Spokesman for Conservation: Doug Sherrington
- Whip and Spokesman for Education and Cultural Affairs: Horace Davies
- Spokesman for Treasury: Pat Hanlon
- Spokesman for Works, Housing and Police: Fred Newton
- Spokesman for Health: Jack Melloy
- Spokesman for Primary Industries: Edwin Wallis-Smith
- Spokesman for Lands: Eugene (Hughie) O'Donnell
- Spokesman for Labour and Tourism: Fred Bromley
- Spokesman for Justice: Colin Bennett
- Spokesman for Mines and Main Roads: Martin Hanson
- Spokesman for Transport: Ray Jones
- Spokesman for Local Government and Electricity: Harold Dean

The effectiveness of the opposition in the Parliament

If the parliamentary opposition was not particularly effective during its first decade out of government, it simultaneously laboured under some very significant handicaps for much of the time. Some of these handicaps were of its own making and some were imposed on it by the strictures of parliamentary politics. With the official opposition consisting of the ALP as the largest single non-government party, it was handicapped by its relatively small numbers. Labor was never able to command more than one-third of the members in the House. They were not particularly overwhelmed with talent or effective parliamentary debaters. And, indeed, some of the members who had survived from the days when Labor was in government were used to ministers and their advisers taking the lead and were unprepared to put in the hard work of opposition. The QLP, NQLP and a few maverick independents sitting on the crossbenches were often more noticeable and noisy—and prepared to take the fight up to the government.

The non-government sides of the Chamber were also characterised by acrimony. Rather than focusing on a common enemy and operating as an effective team, the non-government members were disorganised and undisciplined. They were 'led' by outspoken individuals (sometimes former ministers), who often carried enormous historical baggage with them into the political debates. Each tended to operate on the floor of the House as a 'one-man band' with their own predilections. Many parliamentary debates were 'three-cornered dogfights' in which self-proclaimed 'real' opponents to the government would begin to attack the Coalition, then turn to attack with much greater ferocity colleagues sitting

alongside them—ostensibly part of the oppositional forces. The more vocal and active among the parliamentary opposition and the independents resembled a potpourri of individual talents, which were more often directed against fellow travellers than against the performance of the government.

From the outset of the Nicklin period, the performance of the Labor opposition became the subject of some comment. Political opponents, especially the Liberal Party, were dismissive of the opposition from the start, accusing Labor of not adjusting well to the rigours of political life out of government. Other criticisms, however, came from non-partisan sources from the very beginning. For instance, a stinging editorial in the *Sunday Truth* newspaper (4 June 1961) declared: ‘Labor wake up!’ The newspaper pointed out that over recent months the government had faced a ‘series of body blows to its prestige’ and criticism from ‘former friends and supporters’:

But where was Parliamentary Labor? Was it pitching in to make the most capital out of the government’s ineptitude and embarrassment? Was it backing up the protests of country people seriously hurt by Mr Chalk’s Transport Act? Was it attacking Cabinet’s decision to allow the Westbrook secret inquiry—the first secret inquiry of this kind Queensland has known. And on hospitals—Queensland’s cherished free hospitals. Did Parliamentary Labor organise a public outcry to see the free hospitals Labor itself created were properly maintained in the public interest... The answer to each question is No...No...No! Parliament is in recess. So apparently is the Opposition—with its Leader, Mr Duggan, overseas without published reason. In Queensland’s name what has happened to Labor? The last weeks have seen Labor’s biggest chance in four years to take the government on and win back the public’s imagination. But it DID nothing, SAID next to nothing. The views of the people of this state who disagreed with government policy got no support from the Opposition. The role of Opposition was complacently handed over to the Press. (*Sunday Truth*, 4 June 1961)

In policy terms, there was not much to separate the opposition from the Coalition government. A change of emphasis rather than substantial differences was often the only real basis of distinction. Policy controversies were mostly over the speed, timing or effectiveness of particular measures. The opposition, for instance, was regularly critical of the government’s regulations applying to road transport and its lack of transport planning. From the early 1960s, the ALP supported an integrated transport policy and advocated the establishment of a transport advisory committee to assist in gaining greater funds from the Commonwealth regarding road planning and development. Eventually such a committee was established, but both sides shared the main policy objectives of protecting rail while developing road transport.

Labor was also continually critical of the level of unemployment and held the government accountable for the apparent slowness by which the figures were being reduced. Yet, the government was pursuing types of state development at breakneck speed and generally received the ALP's endorsement for stimulating economic growth. Even though the ALP was criticised for being too closely associated with or influenced by those with communist sympathies, Labor broadly agreed on the importance of state development, on the need for sustainable employment, increased migration and on the expansion of services in education and health care. Thus, both sides supported free public hospitals, the expansion of schools throughout the state and the need for a reliable public service to administer government policies.

Some philosophical differences were maintained between the two major camps. Labor was oriented more positively towards the public sector and opposed in principle the privatisation of public sector commercial assets. The opposition, for example, criticised the Coalition government for selling the Collinsville State Coal Mine, stating in the Parliament that 'they are a private-enterprise Government, disposing of very valuable public property at bargain rates' (*QPD* 1961:vol. 230, p. 441). Labor was also not as predisposed towards the concerns of the bush or as receptive to the self-interested pleas of the rural sector and mining industry. Labor was continually critical of the Country Party's record on releasing crown land to freehold or pastoral leases, which it felt 'sold out' state interests or provided government legitimacy to land grabbing.

The opposition and the effectiveness of parliamentary scrutiny

To work effectively, the Parliament requires an effective opposition and adequate means to hold the government accountable. Being somewhat dispirited and fractious throughout the 1960s, the opposition rarely placed the government under close scrutiny. In its attacks on the government, it was typically more likely to be interested in personal misdemeanours, ministerial problems, issues of probity and inter-party conflicts. It was less interested in legislation unless interests close to its immediate support base were directly affected.

Slowly, the difficulties of scrutinising the government began to become apparent. After taking Labor to its second electoral defeat, Duggan recognised that the ALP would have to 'work hard to justify the confidence the Queensland electorate had placed in them' as the largest non-government party (*Courier-Mail*, 10 June 1960). Duggan was anxious that the party begin to take seriously the job of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition and scrutinise the performance of the government. At the start of Nicklin's second term, he struck a new note,

warning the government that they would now ‘have to stand entirely on their own legs’ and be less able to blame the legacy of previous Labor governments (*QPD* 1960:vol. 227, pp. 100–1). While the message was heard, it was, however, slow to sink in among ALP members. Some Labor members worked hard, but many did not. The opposition in the 1960s was generally noted for its tenacity and belligerence rather than for its skills or techniques in constructively scrutinising government performance. The opposition became known for displaying a dogged determination in pursuing selective political subjects (usually ones close to its heart and support base), while maintaining silence on other topics.

Few in the opposition were greatly interested in undertaking research into issues underlying proposed legislation or related policy areas. Many Labor members entered the Parliament from a trades background and tended to approach topics from a practical perspective. Their lifelong experiences and limited formal educational backgrounds did not necessarily predispose them towards an appreciation of the value of research. Others were not prepared for the solitary slog of opposition. Even among the leadership, the importance of thorough preparation was not always evident. Some leaders were reputedly infrequent visitors to the Parliamentary Library—and given the absence of personal staff in those days this illustrates much about their personal styles. Members of the opposition in the 1960s have lamented the fact that virtually no research was ever undertaken—because of a lack of resources and time and because members did not undertake it themselves. Shortly before he died, Harold Dean (Sandgate, 1960–74) reflected: ‘in those days many members simply got to their feet and spoke off the top of their heads—it was often all rubbish.’ Either by circumstance or style, the opposition tended to be reactive and focused on short-term horizons.

It should also be appreciated, however, that the opposition was not afforded much opportunity to exercise scrutiny. Its effectiveness was severely limited (as it had been when the non-Labor parties were in opposition) by the orders, proceedings and conventions of the Parliament. The opposition was not granted adequate means or resources sufficient to hold the government accountable. The government, with its command of the numbers, was in a position to amend these arrangements and generally was reluctant even to consider changes to improve scrutiny. The older Country Party members, and especially Joh Bjelke-Petersen, had a ‘get even’ mentality, insisting that ‘they gave us nothing when we were in opposition’ (Hewitt, Personal communication; see also Bjelke-Petersen 1990:48). For instance, the Standing Orders Committee, although formally established with senior members in each parliament, did not in fact meet to review or revise the *Standing Orders* throughout the period 1962–82. Hence, to be fair, the opposition’s performance was hampered by the limitations of parliament

and the government's control of business. There were few opportunities to 'put the government on the spot' and even question time was heavily policed (see below). The government was also able to explain its intentions or behaviour through ministerial statements to which the opposition had no right of reply.

Moreover, the Parliament did not meet all that often and, when it did, large parts of the day-to-day business were ritualistic and formalised. In the 1960s and early 1970s, the Parliament was usually not recalled early in the year in which an election was due. Thus, the last session would rise before Christmas (either in November or December, subject to government business) and would not resume before the election (conventionally held between March and June). In a worst-case scenario, the Parliament might not have sat for some six to eight months depending on how soon after the election the opening took place. Hughes (1980:122) has described this convention as a 'politically convenient practice' used by the government to avoid 'calling parliament together for some months before polling day, and thus preventing the opposition making use of parliamentary business to embarrass the government'.

Question time

The capacity to ask the government searching questions on the floor of parliament is a cherished tradition of most Westminster-derived parliaments. In Queensland, all questions had to be 'with notice', meaning that the opposition (and any government backbenchers) had to inform the Speaker some time beforehand, usually within 24 hours, of the nature of the question they intended to ask. This severely limited the interrogative possibilities of question time and the chances of pushing the government on its previous answers. Questions could be ruled out by the Speaker, so could not be asked. If members strayed from their intended question, they could be considered to be asking a question without notice (and so procedurally ruled invalid). Ministers could also select not to answer particular questions directly but take them 'on notice', enabling them to come back to the Parliament at a later date with a considered answer (and one probably prepared by officials in the minister's department). Most importantly, the opposition often charged that the government knew what questions they were going to ask so tended to be better prepared.

The opposition occasionally criticised this restriction on its capacity to question the ministry. There were calls from time to time for the Parliament to allow open questions without notice, but the government was unmoved by its representations. For example, Jack Houston ended the first Address-in-Reply debate under the Bjelke-Petersen government with a passionate plea for improved accountability:

[M]ay I also say that it is about time the Standing Orders Committee met and brought in a system of questions without notice so that, when answers are given to questions, we get a ministerial opinion and not that of a public servant. The present system of having only questions on notice leads to arrogance, laziness, and finally incompetence, which is certainly not in the best interests of this State. (*QPD* 1968:vol. 249, p. 54)

The ALP would be 13 years in opposition before they were permitted to ask questions without notice, and then only rarely were they entirely without notice, as they had to show them to the Speaker. The Bjelke-Petersen government finally allowed questions without notice in August 1970.

Parliamentary privilege and allegations of police politicisation

Under parliamentary privilege, members could raise serious allegations about other public officials or the conduct of public administration, which, if made outside the House, could constitute defamation and attract civil action. For an opposition, this was a potentially powerful device, which could implicate the government or particular ministers. The intention of the opposition was generally to make some specific allegations often with a hint of other perhaps more sinister revelations to come and see how the government responded. If they accepted the allegations then the opposition had landed a political punch; but if they denied such claims, they could find themselves in more trouble as an issue unfolded—provided there was some substance behind the allegations. The record of the Parliament in this period shows that while some members used this privilege sparingly, many were carefree about smearing opponents, parties, public officials or groups to whom they took a certain dislike. The targets ranged far and wide. Government members often focused on communist infiltration of the ALP or unions; non-government members targeted ‘corrupt’ business links to the Coalition; sometimes ‘freethinkers at the university’ were attacked. At other times, members simply sounded off against all manner of things.

Others, however, were more careful about using such privilege and endeavoured to provide substance to allegations they made. Some allegations have remained no more than allegations or suspicions and subsequent history has failed to confirm them one way or another. Other cases have clearly been sustained by later evidence, even if at the time those making the fuss were unable to make much political headway in a unicameral system. For instance, Colin Bennett, in instigating the National Hotel inquiry, was treated with outright hostility from the government side, yet his allegations against the police were later proved to

have substance and became significant in light of subsequent inquiries. True, this was an era that demanded respect for authority and the police were the public face of legal authority. The government's determination not to take the opposition seriously was, however, extreme.

So, persistent allegations ran through the 1960s claiming that police misconduct was rife and that they protected themselves by political partisanship. Non-government members made many allegations that senior police—all the way up to the Commissioner, Frank Bischof—were actively campaigning for the government and against the opposition. In 1963, Colin Bennett ventured:

I should say that the last thing a Commissioner of Police should do is participate actively in politics. Much to our amazement, we in the Australian Labor Party was [sic] inundated with complaints from places in the coastal area of Queensland, and in North Queensland, about the Commissioner's barnstorming campaign in support of the Country–Liberal Government prior to the last election. In addition to Inspector Osborn in the northern area, he had Inspector Bauer of the CI [Criminal Investigation] Branch working in close collaboration with him to secure the re-election to office of the present Government, and that is why the Government is not prepared to enforce certain regulations and rules as they apply to the top administration of the Police Force. The Commissioner has the Government by the throat simply because they were prepared to contribute campaign funds, to organise further donations and contributions to the Country Party and Liberal Party's campaign funds, and were prepared to canvass for them during the election. (*QPD* 1963:vol. 236, p. 1062)

According to Bennett, Commissioner Bischof was 'meddling in politics and endeavouring to keep the present Government in office because he knows that under its regime he can do as he pleases' (*QPD* 1963:vol. 236, p. 1063). Opposition Leader Duggan, however, told the Parliament that he had personally telephoned the Commissioner with such allegations and the Commissioner had denied them. In this case, the opposition's tactics seemed poorly conceived and uncoordinated. Strangely, despite the significance of the claims, the opposition did not follow up Bennett's allegations in the next question time. It was some time before senior members of the government such as Tom Hiley would concede that senior police were, indeed, corrupt (even though Hiley recalled that the Premier, Alex Dewar and himself privately confronted Bischof with allegations of his corruption, most likely in 1967; see Stevenson 2003:301).

Independents such as Tom Aikens also rarely missed a chance to stir regarding police and judiciary issues, although some of his allegations went from the serious to the ridiculous. Aikens generally attempted to be humorous but often

there was a hint of bitter sarcasm in his questions. For instance, in 1961, he asked the Premier why a large contingent of police was undertaking a five-day course in creative thinking (*QPD* 1961:vol. 230, p. 141), implying such activities were oxymoronic.

Conclusion

The first decade in opposition gave the Labor Party a more sober appreciation of the importance of the Parliament. They were also acutely conscious of the limitations of oppositions in a single-chamber, adversarial parliament. After enjoying decades in government with rarely a thought given to the effectiveness of the Parliament, Labor was now subordinate within the institution and on the receiving end of the government's tactics. They suffered their opposition status and became jaundiced about parliamentary democracy.

'Ted' Baldwin (ALP, Logan) expressed Labor's ambivalence to the functioning of parliamentary democracy in his maiden speech in September 1969. Responding to the Governor's opening address, in which the Administrator had 'paid tribute to the institution of Parliament when he had described it as the bulwark of democracy', Baldwin continued:

I believe devoutly that this must be so. I shall strive during my term of office to help it to be so...I shall fight to defend this institution and to extend its influence as the chief instrument of democracy. But Parliament is not a bulwark of democracy simply because we say it is. It is the people of the State who decide ultimately what the role of Parliament will be...I will say at the outset that the last few months as a campaigning candidate, then as a member, have left me disappointed and disillusioned, if not depressed, about some aspects of the parliamentary system. (*QPD* 1969:vol. 251, pp. 321–4)

After criticising the condition of Parliament House as an inadequate building whose 'shortcomings as an instrument of operation for democracy become obvious', Baldwin went on to claim that

electors are not convinced that they are getting value for their 95 cents per head of population for parliamentary service—the third-cheapest in the Commonwealth. And who can blame them when the very composition and limitations of this Assembly force members—back-benchers—to act as 'fix-it' men, glorified but over-paid ombudsmen, public relations men, and clerks...A Parliament, to be ideally democratic, should have at least all major lateral sections of industry—primary, secondary, tertiary and services—represented, as well as all sections of society—owners,

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professional, technological, technical, primary producing, semi-skilled and labouring classes represented in the House...it has been said scores of times to me that the task of legislating runs the risk of falling into the hands of public servants, persons who are not answerable to the people of this State...the primary *raison d'être* of a member is as a legislator, and so I say it is clear to me that our Parliament will become less of a bulwark of democracy as its members are forced to become more and more 'fix-it' men, and as public servants become more and more the legislators. (*QPD* 1969:vol. 251, pp. 321–4)