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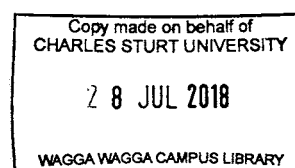
HST4016 HISTORY DISSERTATION

**REGIONAL SUPPORT FOR
RIVERINA NEW STATE MOVEMENTS
IN THE 1920s AND 1930s**

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ABBREVIATIONS

ADB	<i>Australian Dictionary of Biography</i>
CSU	Charles Sturt University
DA	<i>The Daily Advertiser</i> , Wagga Wagga
FSA	Farmers and Settlers' Association
NA	<i>Narrandera Argus</i>
NLA	National Library of Australia, Canberra
PT	<i>Pastoral Times</i> , Deniliquin
RG	<i>Riverine Grazier</i> , Hay
SMH	<i>The Sydney Morning Herald</i>

CONTENTS

Introduction	1
1. The Context of the Movements	11
2. Leaders and Followers	21
3. What they said - then and later	39
4. Ongoing discontent or separate uprisings?	48
Conclusion	56
Appendix	61
Bibliography	67

INTRODUCTION

This dissertation aims to establish a profile of the regional leadership and a number of followers of the Riverina new state movements of the 1920s and 1930s — the Riverina New State League of 1921 to approximately 1923 and the Riverina Movement of 1931 to 1935. Both were movements which drew a widespread following from towns and the surrounding areas throughout the Riverina, with support being freely quoted in the thousands at the peak of their public activity. This profile will cover a sample of supporters' occupations, backgrounds, age range, and interests, as well as the reasons for their support. It is for the most part an examination of the leadership, for these are the people to be found most in contemporary reports and archival material, to see if they fit into a pattern of employment and background as a distinctive group, and if this is likely to have provided an explanation for their support.

Each of the movements is short-lived but over a decade from 1921 to 1931 they fit into a pattern of ongoing regional agitation for a better deal for the Riverina. Pressure groups such as development leagues flourished and a number of centres set up organisations to promote the advantages of their area wider afield. This dissertation aims to show that, rather than being a series of disconnected groups, they were part of an overall pattern of ongoing discontent, with similar ideals and often, many of the same supporters as in the new state movements at either end of the period.

For the most part, the 1920s movement is given less attention in historical texts and its leading membership appears to have been concentrated more along the Murray River than the wider-ranging population of the Riverina Movement in the 1930s. The 1920s movement, known as the Riverina New State League, formally came into being early in 1921, and was based on dissatisfaction that centralisation of government was leading to a neglect of the Riverina. Special emphasis was placed on inadequate rail and transport facilities, and the geographical frustrations of being in an area so close to the Victorian border where markets and a community of interest were closer than the far distant New South Wales capital of Sydney. The movement held a series of major conventions through 1921, 1922 and 1923 and joined new staters from Northern New South Wales and Monaro in giving evidence before Judge Cohen's Royal Commission into proposals for new states in 1924 but without success. Extended local government powers were recommended by the Commission but were not taken up by the governments of the day.

The 1931 Riverina Movement was a far more high profile movement, staging a series of well-orchestrated rallies throughout the region in the early months of 1931. As with the 1920s League, the Riverina Movement supporters complained of centralisation of government and the high costs to primary producers, but added a new dimension with a strong anti-Communist stance and anger against the policies of the NSW Premier of the time, Jack Lang. The Riverina Movement did not call itself a new state movement, and after early threats of secession, leaders followed a strongly constitutional line for the abolition of State parliaments and the creation in their place of provincial councils with a high degree of local autonomy. A petition to the Federal Government was rejected, and the movement eventually joined forces with the Country Party late in 1931 to gain political strength. Leaders seldom referred to new states, but their objectives were familiar in the context of new state movements throughout New South Wales. Because of this, the Riverina agitation also led to a Royal Commission with the report released early in 1935 finding three areas, including southern NSW (Riverina), suitable as States and suggesting referenda should be held to determine the feeling of the citizens. Again nothing was ever done by governments and the enthusiasm and idealism of the early 1930s faded.

Between the two movements were a number of organisations with similar ideals, most notably the Riverina Development League, based in the Wagga district in 1928 and 1929 with a focus on development projects which would ensure the progress of the area. Some of its aims, particularly in hydro-electricity and water schemes, eventually came to fruition but a long time after the Riverina Development League had disappeared, probably absorbed into the overall aims of the Riverina Movement.

There are obvious links between the movements through the 1920s and the 1930s. Their aims correspond to a large extent, but more importantly from the point of view of this study, many men continue through with active membership of the Riverina New State League, the development leagues and the Riverina Movement. The backgrounds and interests of these people mean there is a continuity in regional support.

While the progression and objectives of new state movements have been covered at length, the historiography neglects any detailed assessment of the appeal of the movements through a study of the type of people who gave them their support. Much is written about the leaders, Earle Page in the Northern New State Movement and the Riverina Movement's Charles Hardy junior, but I would suggest that this puts these movements in the area of being a "one-man band". Obviously a lot of willing workers and enthusiastic followers were needed - men who led the groups in their areas, made

decisions, organised meetings and petitions, and continued the spread of the message through public statements. As Mandle says in his study of the leadership of the British Union of Fascists,⁽¹⁾ by extension the backgrounds and reasons for the leaders' support can indicate the more general appeal of the movement.

The historical literature generalises support for movements in New South Wales and Queensland as the elites of the grazing community and the towns of the regions. Russell Ward puts the strongest supporters of the 1930s movements in Riverina and New England as well-off graziers and businessmen, all with a belief in "the myth of superior rural virtue"⁽²⁾ and Crowley⁽³⁾ also puts the strength of secession feeling solidly with farmers and pastoralists. A similar generalisation comes from Graham⁽⁴⁾ with his assessment that as a political movement, new statism in Australia was "essentially a regional league of local elites".

In his 1950 study of the movements in general,⁽⁵⁾ Neale points out the most powerful movements grew in flourishing communities with well-established economies and a settled population, a point with which I would agree so far as my Riverina study is concerned. He makes no attempt to take this point further, merely commenting on the Riverina's "strong community of interest with Victoria" in the 1920s, and a general identification of the Farmers and Settlers Association, Graziers Association and, by extension, the Country Party, with new state movements - another feature of support which emerges strongly in my study. Neale also offers a plausible explanation for what he calls the periodicity of the movements, reflecting "sometimes the prosperity or depression in the state, or the energy and constitutional convictions of the leaders" but more often than not as a response to a regional economic or political issue. This too is evident in my examination of the reasons for support in the Riverina movements.

Loveday also tends to link new states ideals to regional identity. He says by defining an enemy and providing an ideal formula for grievances, the new state sentiments gave an identity "within which a rather heterogeneous collection of people and their interests and ideas could be moulded into one".⁽⁶⁾ Such a description of the region's people gives the lie somewhat to the general description by others of new staters as pastoralists and town elites and will be borne out in the study of what is shown as a complex and diverse group of supporters.

Within New South Wales, it is appropriate to compare the Riverina agitation with that of the strong New England movement. (The Monaro and Western Movements seem to have followed the lead of these two groups and in fact joined with them to become the United Country Movement in 1931.) Riverina and New England new staters had similar aims and ideals, similar complaints on which their agitation was based and

exchanged views and speakers. But an assessment of the support for the northern movement presents some contrasts with the study of Riverina supporters.

Commentator on the New England movement, Grant Harman,⁽⁷⁾ says this separatist movement through the 1920s lacked "widespread broad-based popular support", and was based almost entirely on the support of newspaper editors and proprietors, urban businessmen and professionals and graziers. This, he concludes, mirrored the values, attitudes and styles of the Protestant landed establishment, which he defines as the elites of the community. He takes a small step towards providing a more detailed picture of supporters with a tabulated comparison of the occupations of key activists in the Country Party and the New State movement in the Northern region at this time, but only as a footnote. In a sample of 57 new staters, Harman finds 37 per cent are graziers and farmers, 23 per cent businessmen, 33 per cent professional men, and seven per cent are newspaper proprietors. The difference between the northern agitation and that in the Riverina in the 1920s and 1930s can be seen by occupational figures in my study of 96 leaders and supporters. These show 58 per cent were graziers and farmers, including small market gardeners and orchardists, 18 per cent businessmen, 19 per cent professionals (including newspaper editors) and five per cent tradesmen.

Specific investigations of the membership of the Riverina movements of the 1920s and 1930s have been sparse and generalist. A man with connections with both the Northern and Riverina movements, Ulrich Ellis, Country Party propagandist and New State lobbyist, concentrates heavily on an assessment of the skills and failings of 1930s leader, Charles Hardy.⁽⁸⁾ Having pointed out the New England leaders like Earle Page, Colonel Bruxner, D S Drummond, F Chaffey and others were prominent or soon to be prominent in political circles while still fighting for new states, Ellis dismisses the leaders of the Riverina agitation as "political amateurs". And from the point of view of experience in practical politics, they were indeed. Those in politics at the time were far less active in the movements than people like Page and Drummond. For those who went into politics after the movements, I would suggest their election was on a wave of support based on their activities at that time rather than any obvious political talents. Studies of their support for the 1931 movement certainly bear out Ellis's assessment that they combined "a fierce crusading zeal and confusion concerning practical objectives." But one has to be wary in taking up Ellis' views wholeheartedly. He has a tendency to confuse names and dates and, although he prepared the Riverina case for submission to the Nicholas Royal Commission into new state proposals in 1934, Ellis is first and foremost an Earle Page man. His book shows there was a tension between Page and the younger sometimes belligerent Hardy.

Another whose discussions of the Riverina movements of the 1920s and 1930s should be treated with caution is Wagga historian, Keith Swan, who quotes figures, meetings, dates and speeches without footnotes to allow a reader to check details further.⁽⁹⁾ By mid-1931, says Swan, the Riverina Movement boasted "more than a thousand branches, several women's auxiliaries, about 100,000 members and the sale of thousands of badges." But with no official records of the movement readily available, it is possible these figures came from press reports of the day, an essential but not always reliable source. Swan also gives considerable emphasis to the role of Charles Hardy but refutes suggestions it was "merely a Hardy crusade". "The movement ... could not have succeeded as it did without many able men," he says. But who these men were is not spelled out. Again, Swan talks of regional identity and a belief by people that the Riverina was unique but fails to take this any further into seeing just why this identity and this faith in the special uniqueness emerged.

Another to perpetuate the theme of an elite domination of the agitations is Bill Gammage⁽¹⁰⁾ who talks of the 1920s support of "prosperous country town businessmen and large selectors" — a strange and outdated description of the rural elites in the 20th Century. It is a summary which does not take into account the diverse range of supporters, town and farm, large and small, examined in my study. Gammage also claims the Riverina Movement transferred rural political authority from the big landholders of the area to the businessmen of the larger towns. It is true Charles Hardy was a Wagga businessman who dominated the 1930s movement and many of his lieutenants were urban-based. But at the same time Gammage's statement ignores the many small centres, particularly in the western areas, where enthusiastic leadership came from the farming and grazing community. Nor is it clear what he means by "rural political authority". If he sees this as local government councils, the structure of this system at the time would suggest otherwise.

Contemporary sources of the 1930s do little to provide a clearer picture of the reasons for the appeal of the movements. In an article in 1931, John Archer Lorimer of Narrandera, a new stater of the 1920s and 1930s movements, an active member of the Riverina Development League and the Riverina's representative on the 1924 Cohen Royal Commission, stated: "The Riverina Movement is the public expression of a deep-seated dissatisfaction with the system of government in Australia, more particularly as that system affects the relations between the Commonwealth and the State."⁽¹¹⁾ He summarises the appeal of the movement as one of economic and political issues — "The majority of people of any nation do not get excited about or give much thought to, the government of their country whilst they are able to go about their own private business successfully and profitably ... When however his business is

rendered unprofitable he looks to the government or the system of government to discover the cause. ... we are to a great extent frightened of our Governments because we feel that we have not enough control over them at the ballot box." His appeal for a "return to British ideals and the welding of Australia into a genuine Nation" is indicative of the sentiments expressed by many supporters, strongly attached to their British heritage as the way to a better Australia. But Lorimer, expressing his ideas in the educated and sometimes pedantic language of his background, was not always so upstanding. Notebooks he kept while hearing evidence at the Royal Commission in 1924⁽¹²⁾ indicate an impatience with some of his fellow supporters. For example, evidence from an Albury New State League official in November 1924 drew the cutting notation from Lorimer: "No-one in Albury has ever heard of these previous attempts to get Border Railways built. The NSW Government has no luck if it doesn't do anything, the outlying parts growl and if it does do anything they don't hear about, so what the 'ell can it do to please the cows." It was not all sweetness and light among the leadership, as some historians would have us believe!

A report in the conservative *Round Table* publication in 1924⁽¹³⁾ made no attempt to analyse support other than placing members firmly on the conservative side of politics, apparently because of their rural base. "...the majority of the New Staters, being country folk, are suspicious of the Labour party which, they say, governs always with its eye on the industrial population of the capitals and neglects the country." Similarly, commentaries by leaders of the New England movement of the time do nothing to extend a detailed knowledge of the leaders or their followers.⁽¹⁴⁾

Overall, the historical literature on membership of new states movements is small, and to a large extent, simplistic in its assertion of the wealthy graziers and businessmen forming an elite of support. Aitkin follows this line but introduces the ideology of "countrymindedness" as an important factor in cementing support both for the Country Party and the various new states movements, particularly in New South Wales.⁽¹⁵⁾ He says the powerful emotional appeal of countrymindedness derived from its assertion of the value of country life, the Australian dependency on its primary producers for a high standard of living, the virtuous ennobling and co-operative aspects of rural pursuits as opposed to the competitive and parasitical elements of class-conscious city life, the country man as the distinctive Australian character, and the fact that political power was based in the cities which had no understanding of the special needs of country people. It was, says Aitkin, an ideology which provided a proud self-perception and identity among all country people, not just the farming communities, from the 1920s onwards. The central tenets of countrymindedness recur in many of the statements made by new state supporters throughout the 1920s and 1930s. Whether all were imbued with the ideology or simply used the rhetoric of

countrymindedness to promote their aims is debatable. But it undoubtedly helped to unify the supporters from rural towns and the surrounding countryside.

This idea of "country versus city" is of course a hangover from colonial times, when it was also linked to separatist movements, which have been a part of the history of the Riverina almost from the time the Port Phillip district was granted independence from New South Wales late in 1850. Frappell's *A Squatters' Plot* gives a comprehensive coverage of agitation for an independent colony of Riverina from 1856 through to 1866. He traces the movement through major meetings in Albury, Wagga and Deniliquin, based to a large extent on concerns over border customs, and land and electoral reform proposals. These reforms were opposed by the big pastoralists with some urban support,⁽¹⁶⁾ but because the grievances were centred mainly on the needs of one class, there was never the unity of purpose which I believe permeated the 1920s and 1930s movements and gave strength to their appeal.⁽¹⁷⁾ Buxton⁽¹⁸⁾ shows the change in Riverina society over a 30-year span in the latter part of the 19th Century, with the polarized community of "masters and servants" in 1861 giving way, most likely through free selection legislation, to a more diversified economic and social life in the Riverina in 1891. Such a trend was to continue through the present century.

The lack of attention to membership breakdowns of the new state movements could appear to be surprising given that the New Guard and other conservative movements such as the Who's for Australia and All for Australia Leagues in 1931 and the 1920s Sane Democracy League, evinced some attempts to find a reason for their support within the membership.⁽¹⁹⁾ As in the new state discussions, these studies have concentrated on a small section of the leadership and have shown a strong influence of prominent professional and business leaders. The strength of membership of these conservative groups has been in metropolitan areas. While the general thrust of sentiments correlates to some of the new state movements' views, their membership profile cannot be considered as especially relevant to the present study.

Similarly little comparison can be made with Neale's interpretation of the new state movement in Queensland⁽²⁰⁾ because of its concentration on the movement's colonial forerunners, which he says were complex and divisive, and ultimately destroyed by internal disharmonies and opposing ambitions. The Western Australian Secession movement of 1933⁽²¹⁾ and the Tasmanian Dominion League's secessionist threats around the time of the Riverina Movement's emergence⁽²²⁾ merely serve to show the spread of discontent nationwide at this time and give no indication of membership which could be compared with the Riverina agitation.

In short, the historical literature is sadly lacking in establishing a profile of leaders and supporters of the movements generally and in the Riverina in particular, to lead to a broader view of why the movements functioned as they did and how they came to be so effective and popular in the short term. Given the inadequate supporting evidence of primary sources such as membership rolls and formal minutes or records in the Riverina movements, the neglect is not unexpected.

This has led to a methodological approach not unlike Mandle's in his study of the leadership of Mosley's British Union of Fascists with data assembled on just over a hundred members of the leadership and classified under headings such as age, education and occupation.⁽²³⁾ In my study, I have concentrated research on the background and interests of a total of 96 leaders and supporters. Many more followers are known but information about them is so limited that their inclusion in the study would add little to its results.

The short-lived and at times controversial nature of the 1920s and 1930s movements, together with the nebulous details of actual membership, has meant that piecing together the backgrounds of supporters has become a jigsaw puzzle. Names of leaders and supporters have been culled from newspaper reports and then profiles of each built up through a variety of sources. My research has centred to a large extent around newspaper reports of the day, as well as archival material in Canberra and Wagga, and a range of Riverina local government council records and libraries. The social picture is enhanced by pastoral records to indicate the history and size of holdings, as well as several interviews with families of members of the 1931 Riverina Movement. Details on age and education, as well as other activities, have been traced mainly through obituaries, and political affiliations come from a combination of a set of Country Party membership lists (undated), general newspaper references and the biographical registers for both the NSW and Federal Governments. Formal records of the movements have not been found — one member said you paid for a badge of the Riverina Movement and automatically became a member — but a small number of personal papers have given a different perspective to previous assessments of some aspects of the leaders and supporters.

In addition, the reports of evidence of the Royal Commissions of 1925 and 1935 into new states in New South Wales provide a "double" picture — on the one hand men give evidence which differs in no way from the views they expressed during the peak of the movements, while others seem to have tempered their fire and their views of the initial rallies. Some attention has been given to the opposition raised to both movements, sometimes from the same people ten years apart. The research timetable

has not allowed for a detailed study of the opponents but it can be suggested that they too ranged from farmers to professional townsmen. Disillusionment is obvious in some of those well to the fore in the 1931 Riverina Movement as it failed to meet their expectations, in one particular case within just a few months of its launch.

The complex picture which emerges from this study of people involved in the movements of the 1920s and 1931-32 is different from that presented in the historical literature. Many were indeed prominent citizens in their communities and so have left some material to establish their backgrounds. The generalisations of wealthy pastoralists and townsmen have some validity, but can be countered by the unity found among large and small landholders and business people in the membership. Perhaps because of the similarity in backgrounds, there is a lack of pronounced barriers between towns and rural areas, large and small landholders, big and small businessmen, in attitudes and levels of support. The mix comes together against the "common enemy" of city interests.

The study is fairly evenly divided between supporters of the 1920s and 1930s movements with about 17 per cent of men active in both movements. However it produces a change in the focus of power bases, with the leadership of 1921-24 very strong along the Murray River between Albury and west of Deniliquin, while the 1931 Riverina Movement's best known leaders come from the eastern end of the Riverina, particularly around Wagga. It is suggested that the highest levels of leadership in each movement could account in some way for this difference. The support for and strength of other organisations between the two movements can also be said to provide some shift in the leadership emphasis. That no attempt is made to define the area known as Riverina, adds a flexibility and further diversity to its membership. The evidence presented to the two Royal Commissions in 1924 and 1934 shows a certain vagueness about the boundaries of the area.

The study shows that more than half of the leadership were farmers and graziers, with the next highest category being people strongly connected with rural pursuits, such as stock and station agents, machinery and produce merchants, and auctioneers. In the towns of the region, the leadership was drawn in the main from these people and from other businessmen and professionals. Many were in local government and often held office in other town and district organisations. They were predominantly Protestant and long-time residents of the area, a number having family and property connections well back into the 19th Century. Of those whose political affiliations are known, an overwhelming majority were members of the Country Party, which may account for the strong element of conservatism, particularly in the 1931 Riverina Movement, and for the combination of anti-Communist and anti-city attitudes.

Through these people it is possible to see the regional ideals and strengths specific to the Riverina and also within the wider historical context. To what extent did their background and interests bring conservative well-established people to become such fervent visionaries? What led respectable and respected citizens to combine occupational pragmatism with political idealism? Any answers will help to gain an understanding of why the New State ideals were such a powerful force in a widespread and diverse community throughout the 1920s and early 1930s.

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1. W F Mandle "The Leadership of the British Union of Fascists", in *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, Vol.XII, May 1966-November 1966, pp.360-369
 2. Russell Ward *A Nation for a Continent* Richmond, 1985, pp.206-7
 3. Frank Crowley, *Modern Australia in Documents* (Vol 1) Melbourne, 1973, p.492
 4. B D Graham *The Formation of the Australian Country Parties* Canberra, 1966 p.155
 5. R G Neale "New States Movements" in *The Australian Quarterly* Vol. XXII, No. 3, September 1950, pp.9-23
 6. Peter Loveday "'Anti-Political' Political Thought" in Robert Cooksey (ed) *The Great Depression in Australia* Canberra, 1970, pp.121-135
 7. Grant Harman "New State Agitation in Northern New South Wales, 1920-29" in *Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society*, Vol. 63, June 1977, pp.26-39
 8. Ulrich Ellis, *The Country Party, A Political and Social History of the Party in New South Wales* Melbourne, 1958.
 9. Keith Swan "The Middle Reaches Since 1900" in H J Frith and G Sawyer (eds.) *The Murray Waters, Man, Nature and a River System* Sydney, 1974, pp.124-139
 10. Bill Gammage, *Narrandera Shire* Narrandera, 1986.
 11. J A Lorimer, "Riverina Movement" in *The Australian Quarterly* Vol. 3, No. 10 15 June 1931 pp.58-63
 12. MS1102, Lorimer Notebooks, National Library of Australia
 13. "The New States Movement" in *The Round Table*, MemXXIV, No. 55, June 1924, pp.590-598
 14. For example, D S Drummond "The New States Movement, Its Basis and Objective" in *The Australian Quarterly* Vol. 3, No. 10, 15 June 1931, pp.46-57, and V C Thompson "New States in Australia" in *The Australian Quarterly*, Vol. 1, No.3, September 1929, pp.47-53 are more concerned with furthering the cause of their particular movement and its objectives.
 15. Don Aitkin, "'Country-mindedness' - the Spread of an Idea" in S L Goldberg and F B Smith (eds.) *Australian Cultural History* Cambridge, 1988, pp.50-57
 16. L O Frappell, *A Squatters Plot? The Beginnings of Riverina Separatism and the Pastoral Independence Movement 1856-1866*, Sydney, 1986
 17. This colonial agitation in the Riverina echoed similar movements in northern Queensland, the Clarence-Richmond petition of 1861 - itself a forerunner of the strong New England New State Movement throughout this century - and the Princeland secession movement in western Victoria and south-eastern South Australia from 1861 to 1867.
 18. G L Buxton, *The Riverina 1861-1891, An Australian Regional Study*, Melbourne, 1967
 19. For example, Phyllis Mitchell "Australian Patriots: A Study of the New Guard" in *Australian Economic History Review* Vol IX, No. 2, September 1969, pp.156-178; Keith Richmond, "Response to the Threat of Communism: The Sane Democracy League and the People's Union of New South Wales" in *Journal of Australian Studies*, No. 1, June 1977, pp.70-83; and Trevor Matthews, "The All For Australia League" in Cooksey (ed) *The Great Depression in Australia* Canberra, 1970. pp.136-147. From a historical perspective, there does not appear to be any literature on pressure groups in general during the period under review, with the available analyses focusing on particular groups.
 20. R G Neale, "The New State Movement in Queensland" in *Historical Studies*, Vol.4, No.15 November 1950, pp.198-213
 21. F R Beasley, "The Secession Movement in Western Australia" in *The Australian Quarterly* No.29, March 1936
 22. Crowley, *op.cit.* p.494
 23. Mandle *op.cit.*

1. THE CONTEXT OF THE MOVEMENTS

The Riverina New State League of 1921-23 and the 1931 Riverina Movement emerged in significant periods for Australia and its people, who found themselves no longer insulated by distance from the effects of the Great War of 1914-18 or the despair of the 1930s Depression. These events of the outside world provided a background for the dissatisfaction which propelled the movements along the lines of regional issues and strengths.

In both the movements, the city became the enemy, misgovernment held back the progress of country areas, and there was a general neglect of the rural community and its needs, said the supporters. Not only were these criticisms expressed in similar movements throughout Australia, but the sentiments have a familiar ring alongside the views expressed in the colonial era. For example, at a meeting in Deniliquin in 1858, a prominent pastoralist was quoted as saying "Here is an inland territory, purely pastoral, of larger extent than the British Isles, which the Sydney politicians have failed to legislate for - politically and socially disenfranchised."⁽¹⁾ More than 70 years later the same thoughts were being repeated. "Nowhere else are the capital cities so densely populated at the expense of the country as in Australia," said a speaker at a meeting during the Riverina Movement fervour of 1931, while another referred to Sydney as "the great octopus ... draining the lifeblood from the country."⁽²⁾

Just how much were these attitudes attributable to the times in which the discontent emerged? The 1914-18 war undoubtedly brought great change to Australia, politically and socially. The apparent innocence and confidence of society had been shattered and post-war projects to find employment for returning soldiers, in particular the soldier settlement schemes, meant rural Australia was moving even further away from the pastoral empires of the 19th Century. One writer marks 1920 as the "period of transition from the restrictions of wartime to the uncertainties of a regulated peace" and links a fear of Communism to demands for conformity among conservative groups.⁽³⁾ The Communist bogey does not seem to have been taken up by the agitators in the Riverina in the 1920s, whereas their 1931 counterparts expounded a strong anti-Communist line.

For the 1920s New Staters, regional issues, as affected by national political and economic regulations, were the basis of discontent. The rehabilitation programs for returned soldiers proved expensive and results were disappointing. Agitation for tariff protection and antagonism towards the growing government intervention in the economic life of the community was set against the not unexpected "burst of

optimism" in the immediate post-war period. But by mid 1921, there were signs of a recession, with primary producers being hit by a slump in world prices.⁽⁴⁾

Still, the Riverina New State League appears to have come into being with very little fanfare. The 1920s had brought forth progress associations in some centres throughout the region and civic-minded men like Narrandera's Robert H Hankinson (prominent in both the 1920s and 1930s New State movements) were pushing for promotions which would accentuate the country spirit.⁽⁵⁾ Along the border area, an early Riverina Development League of 1920, centred on Berrigan, was reported to be making "considerable progress", particularly in its fight for irrigation, as was its kindred body around Deniliquin, the Western Riverina Development League.⁽⁶⁾

But the concerted agitation of colonial times for annexation to Victoria or an independent colony in Riverina had remained dormant. One of the earliest indications of a re-awakening came when Emmanuel James Gorman, a large-scale grazier and prominent public figure in the Berrigan area, wrote to the Berrigan Shire Council in January 1921 raising the possibility of Riverina being formed into a new State or added to Victoria. Not surprisingly, the council gave Gorman's letter a favourable hearing; after all, he had been Berrigan Shire's first president in 1906 and served on the council for five years.⁽⁷⁾ From Gorman's approach came a "large and representative gathering" at Berrigan in March 1921, which formed a Riverina Severance League.⁽⁸⁾ The cries of the colonial era were being heard again in the Riverina.

With a conference set for Albury on 19 May 1921, a campaign to encourage support apparently involved approaches to local government bodies throughout the region. The response was mixed, at least in those council files and newspaper reports available. Windouran Shire Council, based at Deniliquin and taking in surrounding rural areas, decided against sending a delegate to the Albury conference and noted council as such should not be involved in matters of this nature,⁽⁹⁾ but the town of Deniliquin itself had two representatives.⁽¹⁰⁾

At Hay Municipal Council, the Berrigan proposal evoked considerable debate, even some name-calling. "They had a million people in Sydney against a million all over the State and they could not get anything they wanted from Sydney," Alderman Minogue was quoted as telling the council meeting — the recurrent theme of country versus city interests. When local solicitor, Edward Weston Wilkinson (who opposed new states at the 1924 Royal Commission) spoke out against council involvement, he was described by another alderman and staunch Victorian supporter as "the member for Manly".⁽¹¹⁾ The pull of nearby Victoria remained strong in the border areas.

The matter appears to have provoked only brief references in council and newspaper reports from that time on. Three years later, when giving evidence to the NSW Royal Commission into New States in 1924, proprietor and editor of the *Riverine Grazier* at Hay, John Johnston, admitted to writing only one editorial on the issue. "There has been a general desire on the part of some individual citizens — and some very good and responsible citizens — but there has been no general desire such as there was for Federation ... It has never been at fever heat," he told the Commission.⁽¹²⁾

The 1920s and 1930s agitations were a contrast in styles. The organisation of the 1920s was almost sedate compared with the Riverina Movement of 1931 and its ongoing rush of gatherings large and small avidly reported and supported by the regional press. True, conferences were held at various centres over a three-year period — Albury in May 1921 and July 1922, Narrandera in October 1921, Wagga in May 1921 and October 1923, and a failed attempt at Cootamundra in October 1922 — but in between, the movement seems to have been confined to casual talk between supporters and the occasional meeting of a branch of the League in scattered centres. It was a movement kept going at a small local level and little commented on in press reports, apart from the twice-yearly conferences in 1921 and 1922.

Changing its name at the 1921 inaugural conference, the now Riverina New State League aimed at setting up a southern state around the area between the Murray and Murrumbidgee Rivers, with some extension to areas north of the Murrumbidgee, particularly near Narrandera and Wagga. It seems to have considered flexible boundaries based on the level of support in various centres, but supporters still turned their eyes to the natural outlets for their produce in Melbourne. President, E J Gorman of Berrigan, pointed out that, being 200 miles from Melbourne and 420 miles from Sydney, they were never able to secure free access to their natural market.⁽¹³⁾

By the time delegates were preparing to gather for the second conference at Narrandera on 24 October 1921, the League was attracting plenty of support, although details of the strength of membership varied considerably. For example, a Carrathool Shire Councillor, Alexander McArthur of Gunbar, told his colleagues it was intended to form leagues in every town in the Riverina and "show the people of Sydney the discontent which existed in the Riverina."⁽¹⁴⁾ A month later, supporters were claiming nearly 200 branches in the Riverina.⁽¹⁵⁾ But the Sydney press was a little less effusive. In a report previewing the Narrandera conference, the Albury correspondent of *The Sydney Morning Herald* reported between 50 and 70 branches had been formed, with a branch "in practically every town and village between Albury and Balranald" ... and more being formed every week.⁽¹⁶⁾

The Narrandera conference took the New State League towards a more concrete form. That the Riverina League had entered the fold of new states movements in general (and indirectly the politics of the Country Party) was reinforced by the presence of Federal Country Party leader and Northern New State initiator, Dr Earle Page, Lieutenant-Colonel Bruxner, Country Party member in the NSW parliament, and Mr Victor Thompson, secretary of the Northern New State Movement.

Gorman told delegates "a fair amount of organising had been done" and branches formed but lack of funds had precluded a comprehensive canvass of all the Riverina to date. Nevertheless, there had been almost unanimous agreement for a drastic change, he said.⁽¹⁷⁾

The conference's answer to centralisation and the cost of government was decentralisation, and this, delegates believed, would come through the creation of smaller states. Resolutions were passed calling for amendments to the Federal Constitution on the formation of new States and for the Federal Government to assume all national functions, a move brought to a head by the new staters' emphasis on the importance of a better railway system to overcome breaks of gauge and differential freight costs.⁽¹⁸⁾

The All Australia conference at Albury in July 1922 was both the pinnacle and the beginning of the end for the Riverina New State League. A conference convened for Cootamundra in October 1922 was deemed a failure by the League's General Secretary, John T Tully of Narrandera, and although he describes another conference at Wagga in October 1923 as "highly successful",⁽¹⁹⁾ it was a repetition of the same issues and grievances.⁽²⁰⁾

Tully suggested the 1922 Albury conference had brought a feeling in the Riverina that "the new states question had been taken out of the hands of the local leagues."⁽²¹⁾ Late in 1924, for example, membership of the League in Narrandera was put at no more than 30 to 40.⁽²²⁾ Others indicated little progression in the movement from 1922, some putting the demise even earlier. Deniliquin Mayor, Ernest Matthews, said of his experience after attending the initial convention at Albury in May 1921: "We came back and reported, and then the New State movement died a natural death — they never even paid the expenses."⁽²³⁾ Narrandera Mayor and League member, William Harden, believed there was more individual support than League operations in 1924;⁽²⁴⁾ Deniliquin alderman, William Henry Jones, agreed enthusiasm had died down considerably after the Albury convention in 1922;⁽²⁵⁾ and the president of the Henty branch, John Joseph Jones, said regular meetings were not held — "we have meetings when there is any necessity to call a meeting."⁽²⁶⁾

As has been stated earlier, the possibility of keeping such agitation at a peak for any considerable period of time in the 1920s was remote. Reports of the time suggest the movement was making little progress towards its objectives, with the exception of some railways extensions. As life settled into a peaceful conservative pattern, the Country Party was taking its place as a force on the political scene with the accompanying hope, albeit unspoken at this stage, that it would bring with it an opportunity for the rural voice and its needs to be heard more strongly in the seats of power. No doubt the supporters of the Riverina New State League saw the Country Party's commitment to a consideration of New States, led by that most ardent of new staters, Earle Page, as an answer to their grievances.⁽²⁷⁾

The Riverina Movement of the 1930s produced some similarities in its progression. But unlike the measured beginnings of the Riverina New State League, the Riverina Movement of 1931 made an impact from the first mention of discontent, drawing huge crowds to a series of well orchestrated rallies throughout the region. Not for the Riverina Movement organisers the single convention and a stirring of enthusiasm to set up local leagues. Leaving little to chance, the organisers gained attention with rallies of a reported 10,000 at Wagga on 28 February 1931, and a further 5000 the following week at Narrandera. The widespread support from throughout the region is apparent when one considers the population of the Wagga urban area at the end of 1930 was only 8920.⁽²⁸⁾ Organisers went on the road to address meetings in towns and villages the length and breadth of the region, everywhere drawing crowds which had the press marvelling at their size.

For several months, this was a familiar pattern in the Riverina but, like the 1920s agitation, it was a level of enthusiasm which could not last. Conventions were held, petitions signed, thousands of membership badges sold, but still the governments of the day remained unmoved.

From barely a week going by in 1931 without a mention in the local press of the Riverina Movement, the enthusiasm waned to the extent where its leader, Charles Hardy junior of Wagga, was admitting in 1933 the movement had failed both to break down party politics and to end the city's domination over country areas.⁽²⁹⁾ In November of the same year there was a strong indication of declining support when the Secretary of the Riverina Division of the movement's successor, the United Country Movement, wrote to Ulrich Ellis about young Hay grazier, J Allen Gibson, commenting "I wish we had a few hundred more as enthusiastic as he is."⁽³⁰⁾ One study claims that when Hardy resigned as leader in November 1935, the Riverina

Movement was as good as dead.⁽³¹⁾ For most supporters, the movement had died long before.

The background to the 1930s agitation provides a clear picture for its initial impact. The effects of the depression in which the Riverina Movement emerged were a potent force, with devastating social effects of mass unemployment and, in the country areas, the economic turmoil of the fall in world prices for primary products, exacerbated by Australia's dependence on wool and wheat exports. Many farmers and graziers were quick to blame Federal and State Governments for their inability to deal effectively with these problems.

Allied to the social and economic ills, country people turned on the Premier of NSW, Jack Lang, as a political whipping-boy. To the politically conservative and pro-British people of country NSW, Lang's 1930 plan to repudiate on the payment of interest on overseas borrowings was anathema. His proposal became "the epicentre of a social and political earthquake" and brought to the fore a flurry of right-wing groups, anti-Lang and anti Communist.⁽³²⁾

Patriotic organisations and pressure groups of the early 1930s, described as fascist-orientated, a secret army — all were a product of the stresses of the time. When Charles Hardy and his committee launched the Riverina Movement in February 1931, it was only to be expected that it would be seen in the same light. Attempts have been made by some writers to link the Riverina Movement to any number of the 1930s reactionary movements but there is little evidence to suggest the links went much further than an occasional meeting between leaders to pledge common support and a similar anti-government wave of rhetoric. For example, late in March 1931 Hardy addressed the first convention of the All For Australia League in Sydney calling on city and country to come together for "sane and reasonable government". In reply, the League President, Alec Gibson, pledged the support of the city in obtaining justice for the country.⁽³³⁾

Against a backdrop of farmers' protests, businessmen's concerns and talk of an Australia above the intrigues of politics,⁽³⁴⁾ the instantaneous appeal of the Riverina Movement was assured. When the estimated crowd of 10,000 gathered on the banks of the Murrumbidgee River at Wagga on Saturday 28 February 1931, they heard what they had been hearing at lead-up meetings and had been reading in their local newspapers for several weeks. But, if anything, the repetition of these sentiments lifted the general public's support for action to a peak. Carefully organised by a ten-man committee of farmers, graziers, business and professional men in several weeks leading up to the rally, a series of resolutions were ready to go before the gathering.

According to one of the organisers, "this vast crowd was supporting the speakers almost with one voice, the few dissentients contented themselves with mutterings that were only heard by those close to them, and when the motion was put, it was carried with the greatest enthusiasm."⁽³⁵⁾

The resolutions put to the meeting which drew "loud acclaim, the raising of nearly 10,000 hands and the waving of hats, following by ringing cheers and the loud tooting of scores of motor horns", were:

- To call on both State and Commonwealth Governments to immediately effect drastic reductions in the cost of Government, to relieve industry, both primary and secondary, from statutory burdens, to give immediate financial relief to primary producers, to prepare proposals to enable future interest charges to be reduced, and so lower the costs of production.
- That, in the event of such Governments refusing to recognise or failing to give effect to such resolutions by March 31, 1931, immediate steps be taken to hold a referendum on the question of the right of the Riverina to determine its own affairs and control its own destiny as a free people under the British Crown, if necessary by secession, with its consequent diversion of taxation from existing Governments.

It was left to the organising committee to conduct any referendum or other matters which might be needed to put the will of the meeting into effect.⁽³⁶⁾

On 3 March, letters containing these resolutions were sent to Prime Minister, J H Scullin, and NSW Premier, J T Lang. The Riverina Movement was formally under way. In the weeks that followed it gained momentum as first these resolutions were recorded at Narrandera and the subsequent amended plan on provincial councils drew support in many Riverina centres. At Narrandera on 7 March, 5000 people packed into a local park to record their protest "against the attitudes of the State and Federal Governments in their treatment of the country districts ... There were few present who were not fully convinced that it was time something was done to bring about a better state of affairs."⁽³⁷⁾ On 25 March, Deniliquin held "the largest and most enthusiastic open-air meeting ever";⁽³⁸⁾ a few days later, about 1200 people of the Hay district added their voices to the demand for sane government and to protest against repudiation.⁽³⁹⁾ In smaller villages the message was being repeated, with local voices joining those of the organising committee in a rush of anti-city feeling. Jack Lang may have been the chief protagonist on whom to vent these feelings, but the views were broadened to bring to the fore all the dissatisfactions with governments in general, party politics and the lot of the rural people under city rule.

Throughout the month of March 1931 the movement was buoyed by the ultimatum of possible secession if the government did not act by 31 March. Stirred by Hardy's words to "Go to your homes and put a ring round that date on your Almanac, for it is the day on which we are going to act",⁽⁴⁰⁾ membership was growing daily, although no records were kept and this can be based only on newspaper reports. But behind the scenes, some of the leaders were feeling uncomfortable. They had set their ultimatum but had little idea of how they were going to carry out their threat when the time came.⁽⁴¹⁾

In a letter to Hankinson of Narrandera dated 12 March, Hardy outlined his change of heart to a scheme to "consummate the nationhood of Australia by giving the present Federal Government increased powers with the consequent abolition of State Governments and the creation of provinces ... who will be free to develop their own resources." But he was anxious to avoid discussion of the constitutional methods at the convention saying "every bush lawyer would endeavour to show what a fine knowledge he has of constitutional law."⁽⁴²⁾

Two days later, he put this proposal to the first convention of delegates, gaining overwhelming support. The change was not without confusion, and Hardy was forced to issue a statement denying the resolution for provincial councils with wide local powers under one Australian parliament was, in fact, a policy of unification. "Our policy is that each Province will possess a constitution which cannot be altered except by the will of the Province. In other words, we require self-determination in our own affairs."⁽⁴³⁾

The change in direction was not universally popular. John Graham commented on Hardy's new line of thought that "very soon I was to have many of my fond hopes dashed to the ground as must have been the case with thousands of others." And later Hardy's move to elect a new committee instead of retaining the group which had worked with him from the beginning, led Graham to say "This action with his change of policy and selling the big ideas began to shake my confidence in him."⁽⁴⁴⁾

He may not have been alone. While the press continued its almost daily coverage of the Riverina Movement — *The Daily Advertiser* for example carried columns of detail on every meeting of delegates — the movement had indeed changed direction. In August, the Riverina Movement joined with the New England, Western and Monaro-South Coast movements as the United Country Movement to press for reforms and to establish a political base. Shortly afterwards, agreement was reached to merge with the Country Party, and the Riverina Movement had taken the final step away from its anti-political stance. While its leadership, and probably a majority of its membership, was

on the conservative side of politics and a number were actually members of the Country Party, the merger alienated some support.⁽⁴⁵⁾

In October, Prime Minister Scullin rejected the Riverina Movement's petition for new provincial units with power over their own local affairs. Its momentum brought to an abrupt end, the Riverina Movement, now known as the United Country Movement, contented itself with meetings of branches in Riverina centres and an annual conference to reaffirm its aims of self government.

Like the 1920s New State League, the Riverina Movement peaked early and faded slowly. Its days of strongest support were obviously in the first six months of 1931 and there was undoubtedly a genuine enthusiasm for the cause. With Lang out of office in May 1932, one of the obvious government targets disappeared and the general improvement in the economy dissipated some of the rural areas' concerns.

In the short-term both movements, in 1921-24 and 1931-35, initially focused attention on the rural communities' link with overseas markets for strong economic conditions, and may well have led to improvements in railways and other communications. The fact that Royal Commissions were held to inquire into proposals for new states in NSW, with reports released in 1925 and 1935, brought a legal and constitutional perspective to the claims of Riverina and other areas throughout the State. That the failure of successive governments to act on either of the Commissions' recommendations brought so little comment from New Staters or other supporters indicates these may well have been rural revolts attuned to the conditions of the time. What the movements did achieve was to lay to rest the divisions of colonial society and bring together farmers and graziers, businessmen, professionals and tradesmen in a common cause and a united recognition of their region's potential.

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1. John E P Bushby, *Saltbush Country, History of the Deniliquin District* Deniliquin, 1980 p.227
 2. *The Daily Advertiser*, Wagga 2/3/31
 3. Richmond "Response to the Threat of Communism" pp 70-71.
 4. Gordon Greenwood, *Australia, A Social and Political History*. Sydney, 1955 pp.287-295
 5. Gammage *op.cit.* p.219
 6. Back to Berrigan official souvenir program, September 1949, pp.6-7
 7. Berrigan Shire Council records 17/1/21
 8. *Pastoral Times*, Deniliquin, 26/3/21
 9. Windouran Shire Council minutes 15/4/21
 10. PT 21/5/21
 11. *Riverine Grazier*, Hay 15/4/21
 12. 1925 Royal Commission Evidence, Vol.4, pp.2328-2331 NLA
 13. MS1006 Ulrich Ellis papers, Riverina New State League conference report, NLA
 14. RG 16/9/21
 15. Ibid 18/10/21
 16. *The Sydney Morning Herald* 25/10/21
 17. *Narrandera Argus* 28/10/21
 18. SMH 26/10/21

19. 1925 Royal Commission Evidence, Vol 3, p.1785
20. MS1006, Ellis papers, *The Riverina State* December 1923. NLA
21. 1925 Commission Evidence, Vol 3, p.1785
22. Ibid p.1795
23. 1925 Royal Commission Evidence, Vol. 4, p.2281
24. 1925 Royal Commission Evidence Vol 3, p.1852
25. 1925 Royal Commission Evidence, Vol 4. p.2289
26. 1925 Royal Commission Evidence, Vol 3, p.1975
27. Page had given his support and his presence to the Riverina League from its inception. As leader of the Country Party, he attended the inaugural conference and delivered a public lecture on new states in Albury during the evening. (DA 20/5/21) He was again a speaker at the League's conference in Narrandera later in 1921.
28. *Official Year Book of the Commonwealth of Australia*, No. 24, 1931, p.659
29. MS1006, Ellis Papers, W A Beveridge "The Riverina Movement and Charles Hardy", BA Thesis, Sydney University 1954, p.48, NLA
30. MS1006, Ellis papers NLA
31. MS1006, Beveridge Thesis p.48 NLA
32. Bede Nairn, *The Big Fella*, Melbourne, 1986, pp.224-5
33. SMH 30/3/31
34. For example, the United Australia Association, formed at Lockhart late in 1930, foreshadowed some of the objectives of the Riverina Movement and sponsored several protest meetings.
35. John Graham notes, 1931 undated, p.12. The typed notes were written, he said, to 'give a complete history of the inner workings of the Riverina Movement since its inception', and he may have intended to publish them in booklet form but never did.
36. DA 2/3/31
37. NA 10/3/31
38. PT 27/3/31
39. RG 31/3/31
40. Graham notes p.13
41. MS1006, Ellis papers NLA. Ellis suggests Hardy had doubts within a couple of days of the Wagga rally and says he voiced his uncertainty to Earle Page during a late night meeting on 2 March.
42. MS3775 Hardy Letters NLA
43. DA 16/3/31
44. Graham Notes pp.17-19
45. There is some evidence of this in contemporary reports and in evidence given to the Royal Commission of 1935. This will be discussed in more detail in the following chapter.

2. LEADERS AND FOLLOWERS

The supporters of the 1920s Riverina New State League and the Riverina Movement of 1931 did not split into 'class' divisions. Nevertheless, a study of 96 supporters of the two movements does produce a distinctive pattern in areas such as occupation, political affiliation, public involvement, religion and long ties to the Riverina.

As stated earlier, for the most part, the study covers the leaders of the movements with their backgrounds and views taken as the basis of a wider indication of the membership and the movements' general appeal. The leaders are at both the group level in the various centres and at the top of the structure. Generally, the materials on the backgrounds and interests of the 1930s supporters are in greater detail than for those in the 1920s movement.

In compiling a list of supporters it has been necessary to rely heavily on the newspaper reports of the time. For example, reports of the 1920s conferences invariably included a list of delegates and officials, with reports of the early rallies in the 1931 Riverina Movement including a long catalogue of the names of those whom one could assume were the better known faces in the crowd, as well as organisers and speakers. In its multi-column coverage of the riverbank rally at Wagga on 28 February 1931, *The Daily Advertiser* listed the names of more than 100 people seen "in the vicinity" of the official platform.⁽¹⁾ Many of this number went on to lead the movement in their own towns and areas. Others gave support of a more tacit nature, and a very small number of this latter section of early supporters have been included in the study, both because of their standing in the community and the subsequent ease of tracing details of their background. For example, the well-known and respected farmer, Anthony Brunskill, has been included on the basis of his involvement at an early February meeting when he seconded a motion to call a rally to consider refusing to pay taxation. As a contemporary noted, this "carried some weight because one would expect him to be one of the last men to talk direct action."⁽²⁾

The criteria for inclusion in the study therefore have been fluid. Although the names of many more supporters were known, it was decided the study should include only those about whom at least two factors could be incorporated (for example, occupation, length of residency, other activities) and-or an assessment of attitudes to the movements could be found either through reported speeches or evidence at one or other of the Royal Commissions.

Such a basis has been necessary because no formal membership records appear to have been retained for the two movements. It would seem that attending meetings and, in the case of the Riverina Movement, buying a badge, was enough to be counted as a member. The Riverina New State League branches in the early 1920s may have had some slightly more formal structure — a number of witnesses at the Royal Commission in 1924 were able to quote numbers in their particular branch — but records have not been found. In the 1931 Riverina Movement, any lists of members were seldom referred to and estimates of support were apparently gauged by subscriptions. But details of these were not published because "someone may be made to feel that because he or she cannot afford to give a big sum his or her tiny but gracious gift would fade into insignificance against that of the more fortunate Riverina subscriber."⁽³⁾

To what extent the small donations of a few shillings helped keep the movement financial is a debatable point. With the costs associated with travelling throughout the Riverina and even farther afield in New South Wales for some, many of the leaders may have been paying their own way. As well, the lack of publicity given to contributions by "the more fortunate" subscribers raises the possibility that financial support — and by extension general support — may not have been as extensive as organisers hoped for in the Riverina Movement. In the case of the 1920s Riverina New State League, the organisational level appears to have been smaller, and delegates were meeting their own expenses "in a noble cause ... to enlighten the people".⁽⁴⁾

From April 1931 the Riverina Movement's badge was being sold, often in drives by women's auxiliaries and usually priced at two shillings. Sometimes membership was a combination — for example a Berrigan man said "to become a member I purchased the badge and paid five shillings."⁽⁵⁾ Not all could afford to buy a badge during the drives, said one report, but these people still said they were "fully in sympathy with the movement."⁽⁶⁾ No doubt there were many people who felt this way. They counted themselves as supporters but made little contribution, not always because of financial hardship. It is possible that many of the estimated 30,000 who signed the petition to the Federal Government in 1931,⁽⁷⁾ saw themselves as supporters without making any other commitment to the cause.

The study covers only men in the two movements - not an unusual situation in the 1920s and 1930s. The women's role seems to have been to work in auxiliaries, to sell badges and generally engender support. In 1931, it is known that many of them were wives or relatives of men in leadership positions, and the same was probably the case in the 1920s. In my study, most of the men held some official standing in the 1920s

and 1930s movements, varying from group leader, organiser, delegate to conventions to executive of the movement as a whole. Others spoke at or attended meetings merely as a supporter, and a number gave evidence of their support to the Royal Commissions.

Of the 96, the dominant occupation is as a farmer or grazier with 54 men in this category. A further six listed farming and grazing interests as well as their day-to-day occupation, while one was a market gardener and another a fruitgrower, although this particular orchardist also listed himself as a producers' co-operative manager. The combination of town business and rural properties was not uncommon among the supporters. The next highest category was eleven men closely connected with rural pursuits such as stock and station agents, machinery and produce merchants, land agents and auctioneers. A further six were businessmen, with the professions represented by five solicitors, four journalists, two engineers, two doctors, a clergyman, accountant and schoolteacher. Two were shire clerks and five listed trades as their occupation.

Given the area of the Riverina and its emphasis as a centre of primary production, it is not surprising to find 67 per cent of the sample were allied to rural occupations. The stock and station agents, auctioneers and other agents were town-based but would have maintained close contact with the farmers and graziers. As well, they are likely to have travelled widely through the region and built up a network of clients and contacts, plus a working knowledge of life on the land in the 1920s and 1930s.

What becomes evident in a closer look at the farming community supporters is the lack of divisions between the large and well-established graziers with their huge properties and the smaller farmers making a living from wheat growing with some sheep. Closer settlement had seen a breaking up of the huge pastoral empires of the late 19th Century but the big estates covering thousands of acres still held sway in the Deniliquin district and further west.

Family connections from several generations of settlement in this area strengthened the standing of new staters such as John Hunter Patterson III, owner of more than 41,000 acres at Hartwood Station at Conargo, and a man well aware of "a sense of social position and paternalism". As the only son of a wealthy established pastoralist (his family had been in the Riverina since 1862), "he was fully conscious of the responsibilities to the community which his position conferred on him and gave unstintingly of his time in order to fulfil these obligations."⁽⁸⁾

Hunter Patterson presents the ambivalent face of new state support. His pastoral interests were concentrated in the Riverina and he was a member of Conargo Shire

Council from 1914 to 1948, as well as being involved in graziers' organisations. But like other pastoralists of the time, his interests still gravitated towards the city. He had city business interests, a house in Toorak in Melbourne, held membership of the Australian Club in Melbourne and was also a member of the Victorian and Moonee Valley Racing Clubs.⁽⁹⁾

His support of the new state movements both in the 1920s and 1930s was carefully enunciated and tinged with an element of self-interest. He gave evidence to the Royal Commission in 1924, favouring a new state "to get better treatment from the government", but when he was asked his position if a new state led to increased taxation, he responded he would then oppose it.⁽¹⁰⁾ When the rallies of 1931 began, Hunter Patterson was there again, chairing a meeting at Jerilderie in February, but expressing strong opposition to the proposals to go before the Wagga meeting on definite action and the refusal to pay taxes. Describing them as unconstitutional, he refused to have his name or that of the Graziers Association of Southern Riverina, which he represented, associated with the resolutions.⁽¹¹⁾ By the time Hunter Patterson addressed the Deniliquin rally in March, the line of attack had changed to constitutional reforms to gain provincial councils. Did Patterson's opposition have any bearing on Hardy's change of heart to provincial councils? There is no evidence to suggest this, but Hardy may have heard of Patterson's criticisms and would undoubtedly have appreciated his standing in Riverina society. As a leading figure, his support would be seen as a big boost for the movement. Therefore, Hardy would have been pleased when Patterson gave his support to the Riverina Movement at the Deniliquin rally, describing the position of the primary producer as desperate, mainly because of "incompetent politicians devoid of courage to face the facts."⁽¹²⁾ He was also listed as a delegate to the mid-March convention of the Riverina Movement and maintained a level of support through the early months.

There were certainly some big names and big holdings among supporters — Hunter Patterson and the Officers of Deniliquin, another old established family with secession support spanning the 1920s and 1930s movements, the Gibsons of Hay, Fred Grabau of Balranald running 17,000 sheep in the western districts, the vast tract of Roger Sheaffe on Kilperra Station at Booligal with nearly 19,000 sheep and 780 cattle. In the eastern areas were the Ross dynasty and its extensive holdings around Holbrook, the respected Brunskill properties around Wagga, George Paterson Wilson from the 12,000-plus acreage of Big Springs, east of Wagga, and J O Cox of Mangoplah Station which had been in his family since the 1840s.⁽¹³⁾

But for all the property and power of these men were a comparable number of ordinary farmers, working a small acreage, growing wheat and other crops to survive (a

number apparently tried tobacco during this period) and counting their sheep in the hundreds rather than the thousands of the big graziers. For example, a member of the original committee in the 1931 Riverina Movement, W J Vincent, farmed at The Rock on 1560 acres, 420 acres of which was described as agricultural land on which he could have grown crops.⁽¹⁴⁾ Another convention delegate from The Rock, W J McGrath, had a property listed as less than 600 acres.⁽¹⁵⁾ Member of the organising committee and speaker at several 1931 rallies, W H Simpson of Gregadoo, ran merino sheep on a property of less than 2000 acres and supplemented his income by growing hay and tobacco, cropping little wheat at that time, probably because of the depressed prices. He was a strong supporter of the Country Party, and a staunch worker for the Farmers and Settlers Association, seeing it as the organisation best able to help "the ordinary battling farmer, the cocky."⁽¹⁶⁾ 1931 convention delegate, Colin Lord, farmed 1400 acres and ran 300 sheep near Junee.⁽¹⁷⁾ He came from a family which had been among the first to take up farming in the Junee district and was active in local government and Junee civic organisations⁽¹⁸⁾ — in other words, a typical public figure found in the survey but by no means a large landholder. Similarly, Ganmain farmer and later Wagga alderman, D R Hamblin, an early Riverina Movement supporter, was prominent in affairs in both towns. His property at Ganmain was less than 1000 acres in 1931.⁽¹⁹⁾

From the 1920s movement, Wagga market gardener, Albert Hartland, was a delegate to the executive of the Riverina New State League and could certainly not be seen in the same class as the big western pastoralists. Nevertheless, his views on the costs of sending a truckload of cauliflowers to Sydney⁽²⁰⁾ were given as much credence and value as his fellow supporters' complaints on freight costs for their wheat and sheep. Similarly, both movements drew support from orchardists on small blocks, many of them soldier settlers in the Griffith and Leeton areas. The size of these blocks was certainly not substantial. The first farms in the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area in 1912 ranged from just two acres up to 50 acres, and when the soldier settlement schemes began in 1916, horticultural blocks were from 12 acres up to 35 acres, while 'large area' farms in non-irrigable areas were up to 200 acres. Even amendments to raise the size of large area farms to 640 acres did little to stem the flow of complaints on the inadequate size of the horticultural farms.⁽²¹⁾

One point to be remembered is that size of acreage was often dependent on its location and its usage. For example, the dry western districts needed vast areas of land to run sheep while substantially smaller river frontages and properties in the cooler and more fertile eastern area were profitable.⁽²²⁾ William M Hammond, a prominent figure in the Riverina Movement as a member of the original committee and speaker at several rallies, was regarded at the time as a pastoralist of some note. But 1931 records show

he held just 2685 acres at Harefield and ran 1200 sheep,⁽²³⁾ small beside the western figures but evidence that the size of a holding may not necessarily have been an indication of the property owner's wealth.

Nor were the men of the towns all professional elites and big businessmen. Those like Hardy, Lusher, Windeyer in Deniliquin, and Hankinson in Narrandera, were offset by tradesmen such as William Harden, a painter and member of the Narrandera Municipal Council, in the 1920s movement, coachbuilder, W A Beissel in Hay, the first native-born mayor of the town, or schoolteacher, Vernon Goodin, president of the Wagga branch of the New State League in 1923-24. Goodin provides a break in the pattern of supporters, having only lived in the area for a short time, becoming a Labor member of parliament shortly after the end of the League, and, while others were members of farmers' organisations and show societies, Goodin's interests lay in the more esoteric area of genealogy.⁽²⁴⁾

Like Harman's enthusiastic press support for the northern new state agitation,⁽²⁵⁾ newspapers large and small were right behind the Riverina movements. But most of the active supporters from the press were a far cry from Harman's press barons like Sommerlad and Victor Thompson in New England. The "little men" of the Riverina press had loud voices in their own communities. *Narrandera Argus* editor, Edward J Lapthorne, a 1921 convention delegate, put a case to the 1925 Royal Commission for provinces to replace State Governments, claiming "the majority of the members of our present State Parliament know as little about the Riverina as they do about Timbuctoo and care as little".⁽²⁶⁾ Editor of the *Mirrool Irrigator*, William E Gosper, was an organiser in the 1920s movement. In the Riverina Movement of 1931, journalist on the *Coolamon-Ganmain Farmers Review*, Mark Kingdon, played a role in the Coolamon group and told his readers the agitation was "a people's movement" with all classes welcomed at gatherings.⁽²⁷⁾ Originally from England, Kingdon was a stalwart of farmers' causes and in fact was the only non-farmer member of the United Farmers and Woolgrowers Association for his service to this organisation's predecessors, including the Farmers and Settlers' Association.⁽²⁸⁾ For 37 years, he happily ran the small weekly newspaper, respected by all members of the community and contributing to many facets of Coolamon's life.

There was a complexity and diversity in the various supporters' way of life, but a unity of purpose. If there was a common factor which bound the leaders and followers of the movements together, it was the length of time they had lived in the Riverina. At least 60 of the 96 in the study had lived in the area for at least 20 years, with half from families dating back well into the 19th Century. Interest in new statism may have been passed down through the family in some cases. For instance, William Hammond's

father, a well-known Junee squatter, T W Hammond, was a member of the Wagga Wagga Auxiliary Separation Committee which was formed from a meeting of 200 men in the city on 28 February 1861, exactly 70 years before William Hammond was addressing Wagga's riverbank rally.⁽²⁹⁾

These long established ties were not confined to the farmers and graziers, although a great number came from families which had taken up land in the Riverina in the latter half of the 1800s. Many had come to the Riverina from Victoria, both urban and rural supporters, and their "roots" in the southern state influenced their leanings in the 1920s movement particularly. The men of the towns also showed long periods of residency with businessmen, agents and tradesmen spending much of their life in the Riverina. Among the professional men, at least two of the solicitors, two doctors and accountant, J A Lorimer of Narrandera, had counted the Riverina as home for more than 20 years. Such a tie to the Riverina could not be loosened when it came to fighting for its development and helps explain the strong regional orientation of the movements.

In a number of cases, these men of the towns had links to the rural areas. The 1931 organising secretary, John Graham, took up land with his brother in the Deniliquin area about 1910, crossing the border from Echuca. Graham moved to Wagga in the mid-1920s but retained an interest in the Deniliquin property, which is still in the family today.⁽³⁰⁾ Another member of the original Riverina Movement committee, Dr Edwin Tyrie, came to the area about 1910 and practised medicine at The Rock. After serving as a medical officer in World War One, he married into the Davidson family of Bullenbong Station (a 19th Century pioneer family) and took up grazing on a portion of the station.⁽³¹⁾

But not all of the leaders could claim such long residency. Wagga 1930s leader, Fenn Lusher, arrived in the town in just 1926, but within two years had been elected to the Municipal Council and was active in a number of local organisations. General Secretary of the Riverina New State League, John Tully, arrived in Narrandera about 1921 to take up a position as Yanko Shire Clerk and immediately became embroiled in the local agitation, as did 1920s organiser, newspaper editor, W E Gosper, who arrived about the same time.

Although the two movements turned their attention to a national focus, it was evident that they saw the strengths of their region as a vital part of the future of Australia. They were moved to anger by the feeling that the cities, that is, the governments located in and dominated by city interests, did not appreciate the importance of the country areas. The background of regional supporters is such that these men would have played

leading roles in the development of the Riverina over many years, taking pride in its economic contribution and its political stability.

This long attachment to the Riverina was accompanied by pride in the citizens' British heritage. Speakers often referred to the ties of the Mother Country, criticised those who would break with British traditions and support (for example, Lang was depicted as anti-British over his repudiation proposals), and the Riverina Movement was proclaimed as "pointing the way to a return to British ideals ..." ⁽³²⁾ The pull of the British Empire was strong in this period.

The ages of the group place the leadership strongly with those of middle age. Of 15 whose ages were known in 1921, seven were aged 44 to 56, five were less than 40 and three over 60. Remembering that a number of these men continued their support through to the 1930s movement, it is fair to say that most of these came from the youngest of the 1921 groupings. For 1931, the ages of 49 men were tabulated to show almost half of them - 23 - in the 40 to 50 years age group. A total of 14 were aged 50 to 60, nine were under 40, and again three were over 60.

But while most were middle-aged men, their leader was among the younger brigade. Charles Hardy junior was just 33 when he took command of the rural protests to launch the Riverina Movement. His organisational skills, his personality and his public speaking drew the group of older men around him, a fact noted by his organising secretary, John Graham, who later remarked "I was astounded that they should be so completely dominated by a man so young." ⁽³³⁾

The middle age of many of the leaders could have given an air of confidence to followers — they could have felt it was unlikely men in their 40s and 50s would take drastic action without serious consideration and without strong convictions on the need for change. Another influential factor in attracting supporters behind these leaders was their strong public involvement. Of the 96 men, 36 are known to have been involved in local government either at the time or in the years leading up to the movements. As well, more are known to have gone into local government in the years after the movements. Without detailed records, the figure of involvement at the time may be even higher. One of the problems faced in the study has been a lack of time to examine more than a cross-section of regional council records. A number are available in archival material and some councils were visited. But many more sets of minutes and records are still held by the councils themselves, scattered across hundreds of kilometres. With Wagga as the site of much of the 1931 activity, one would have hoped to elicit evidence of support from contemporary minutes of the Wagga Municipal Council but many of this council's earlier records were apparently destroyed

by fire many years ago. However, in evidence to the Nicholas Royal Commission in 1934, Town Clerk, Robert Emblen, replied when asked about council's attitude to the Riverina Movement: "There did not appear to be any great interest in the matter so far as the aldermen were concerned."⁽³⁴⁾ Well, perhaps not in the council chambers! For the most part, the region's municipal and shire councils refrained from a direct involvement in either movement, but their individual members were not so reticent.

In 1921, several western district councils had agreed to send delegates to the inaugural meeting of the Riverina New State League but records show little continuing interest. In fact while the New State League supporters (many of them councillors) were making speeches on the need for government help with railways and freight charges to cut primary producers' costs, Jerilderie Shire Council (just a short distance from the Berrigan heart of the New State League) was throwing its support behind the Million Farms Campaign to encourage new settlers.⁽³⁵⁾ The story was much the same in 1931. Councils were more concerned with the localised issues of unemployment in their area, upgrading roads and trying to keep rates to a reasonable level for their financially-embattled ratepayers. Correspondence from the Riverina Movement invariably met a standard response of being left up to individual councillors to give their support or otherwise.

While the councils remained circumspect, the local government representatives were getting wholeheartedly behind the movements of 1921 and 1931. In 1931 in particular, mayors and shire presidents in several towns agreed to chair public meetings and many aldermen held office in the various groups and branches. In Wagga, for example, alderman of the Municipal Council and mayor from 1923 to 1925, Daniel T Byrnes, was a member of the 1921 New State League executive. Ten years later, Deputy Mayor of Wagga, E Fenn Lusher, was playing a leading part in the Riverina Movement, chairing the February riverbank rally and acknowledged as Hardy's chief lieutenant.

As leaders in the community, the move to a prominent role in the separatist organisations was a natural step for these men, and for many followers may have put an imprimatur of authoritative approval on the aims and proposals of the agitation. The autonomy offered by local government, however limited, was prized by country people as another extension of regional identity. Provincial councils could be seen as a wider form of local government and would therefore attract similar groups of people.

The regional issues also may have prompted many of the leaders to become office holders or members of other organisations. Most notable were the rural lobby groups such as the Farmers and Settlers Association, the Graziers Association, Wheatgrowers

Union, but many also took part in development leagues, show societies and chambers of commerce, all designed to promote the progress of the region. Business and social organisations, sporting bodies and a smattering of Masonic Lodge membership were among the interests of the leadership in a pattern of solid public-spirited respectability.

In the area of religion, Protestantism was dominant. Of 52 whose religion is known, only two were Roman Catholics. Among the remainder, Presbyterians made up 24, Church of England 15, Methodists 10 and one other Protestant denomination. In a number of cases, the men were noted as staunch supporters of their church, often holding lay positions and on occasions donating to church buildings. It is difficult to draw any definite conclusions from these figures, other than to suggest it may fit in the conservative nature of country society generally at the time. However, taking Wagga as an example, the small number of Catholics could be seen as unusual. Wagga historian, Keith Swan, points to a strong Roman Catholic element in the city in 1921 — 32.7 per cent of the population compared to the national average of 25 per cent at the time. His figures show Church of England as the main religion in Wagga, with Presbyterians and Methodists making up just over 17 per cent of the population in 1921, as against 65 per cent of the known religion in my study over the 1921 to 1931 period.⁽³⁶⁾ Perhaps the old ascetic Protestant work ethic found an outlet in new statism.

The education of the leaders and followers is not readily available and a small sample of only 21 gives no clear picture. Of this number, eleven attended private schools and ten public schools, although some attended both. For example, Charles Hardy went to a public school in Wagga High and then attended Geelong Grammar. Most of these private schools were in Sydney or Melbourne and, in the main, were attended by the sons of wealthy graziers, particularly from the western parts of the Riverina. Of those going on to tertiary education, seven are known to have attended university. Sydney University is noted on three occasions, with two of these the sons of large western landholders and, coincidentally, both studied engineering before returning to the property. Because of the lack of information on education, it is not possible to draw conclusions on this influence other than to say the balance between public and private education could suggest a continuance of the egalitarianism of the movements.

War service in the sample is also restricted to just 22 examples. But it does seem to provide a stark contrast to the more radical New Guard, where leadership was for the most part in the hands of men who had been senior officers during World War One. This point has been noted in numerous studies of the New Guard, with its appeal linked to carrying on the traditions of Australia's military forces of World War One and its leaders exercising their former officer skills in command and organisation.⁽³⁷⁾

The New State League and the Riverina Movement give little indication of following this pattern. The 1920s League organised itself in a way which resembles the farmers' organisations with which many of its members would have been most familiar. Supporters in Riverina centres set up local branches and encouraged membership, meetings were held when it was deemed necessary, and branch delegates got together twice a year. In the case of the Riverina Movement, the structure was more complex and has been likened by some historians to a military-type structure.⁽³⁸⁾ The Riverina Movement structure, publicly announced late in March 1931, comprised an overriding executive council known as the Riverina Province Council with committees at Wagga and Narrandera, plus 13 groups centred on towns throughout the Riverina, each with an executive of six and a group leader. Smaller towns were encouraged to form sub-groups within the 13 designated groups.⁽³⁹⁾ The hierarchical structure of leadership working down to general membership can, one supposes, be placed in the context of a military structure of ranks, but the system could just as easily be likened to a corporate business. Hardy had visited the USA in 1924 studying aspects of the timber industry and industrial relations⁽⁴⁰⁾ and probably took in details of corporation management structures as well.

The leaders of the Riverina organisations were certainly not the New Guard's ex-officers turned movement commanders. A total of 22 men are known to have war service, with six officers (two each with the ranks of major, captain and lieutenant), a medical officer, two sergeants, two corporals and four privates. The ranks of seven of the number are unknown. The majority served in the Army, with Deniliquin secretary, William Salter, an ex-naval man. The military service of 1921 leader E J Gorman is not known, but as he would have been 47 years old at the outbreak of war in 1914, he is unlikely to have undertaken active service. Charles Hardy saw overseas service with the AIF before being gassed in March 1918 and was a lance corporal when discharged.⁽⁴¹⁾ His organising secretary at the start of the movement, John Graham, served as a private in the Middle East and France and was certainly not career-oriented towards the Army.⁽⁴²⁾

For the majority of the ex-military personnel in the movements, this may well have been the case as they seldom gave much indication of their new state support being motivated by any rallying cry from the past. Occasionally, an ex-soldier would be quoted as telling an audience they should carry on the spirit of the war years, and reference to the lack of military service among some members of the governments in the 1930s was sure to bring applause from an audience. For example, at a meeting in Hay, an ex-soldier and prominent grazier responded to an interjector by asking "Did Theodore (member of the Scullin government) put his fat carcass where it could be hit

with a bullet?"⁽⁴³⁾ Comments such as these were for the most part rhetoric of the moment and, when put in the context of the fervour of the secessionist rallies, show just how little influence the experience of war service made on the movements.

It is a different story with political affiliations. The politics of 47 men through the movements show an overwhelming conservatism with 40 members of the Country Party and four Nationalist or UAP supporters. The three Labor Party members formed a lonely outpost in such a grouping. Such a conservative dominance, particularly of the Country Party, is not unexpected with the strong rural orientation of the movements and the anti-city and anti-Communist sentiments expressed. The anger against NSW Premier Lang in 1931 was possibly as much on party lines as outrage at his repudiation policies.

Despite the movements' claims of being non-political, and in 1931 anti-political, there is a distinctive political undercurrent between 1921 and 1932. During this time, five supporters were in politics on the conservative side, four as Country Party members and one Nationalist. Their involvement ranged from a show of support at meetings and the occasional speech to, in the case of the Federal Member for Riverina, W W Killen, assisting in the presentation of the Riverina's case to the Cohen Royal Commission of 1924.

Far from being anti-political, it can be suggested the Riverina Movement in particular provided a stepping-stone to a political career for a number of leaders. In the NSW elections after the dismissal of Lang in 1932, four Riverina Movement leaders were elected as Country Party MLAs — Robert Hankinson of Narrandera to the seat of Murrumbidgee, Joseph A Lawson of Deniliquin in Murray, William F M Ross of Harden in Cootamundra, and George A L Wilson of Lake Cowal, by then leader of the Western new state movement, in the seat of Dubbo. A fifth leader, Alexander Mair, became the United Australia Party member for Albury. In addition, Wilson Moses of Griffith became a Country Party MLC, alongside non-supporter and UAP member, E E Collins of Wagga.⁽⁴⁴⁾ For the Movement's leaders, their public profile and enunciation of populist views no doubt attracted considerable support at the ballot box.

The most spectacular rise to political prominence was, of course, Charles Hardy who gained nomination to the Senate late in 1931. Hardy had made much of his anti-political sentiments and a colleague believes his non-party attitude at the start of the Riverina Movement was "perfectly sincere".⁽⁴⁵⁾ Hardy himself responded to a suggestion of politics in the Movement by claiming "the Riverina Movement is far too big to be used as a political stepping-stone; it is infinitely bigger than I am."⁽⁴⁶⁾ He may well have believed this at the time but it did not take him long to change his mind

and accept the very convenient stepping-stone. Events in the latter part of 1931 (the merger with the Country Party and Hardy's nomination to the Senate) suggest Hardy may not have been as politically naive as some had assumed. Even if these eventualities were unplanned when he launched the movement, the progression to the United Country Movement to Country Party to a political career followed an almost inevitable pattern. Others associated with the movement were to take the same view later. The son of a member of the original committee remembered his father speaking cynically of the movement many years after its demise and dismissing it as "a mechanism, a political tool used by Charles Hardy."⁽⁴⁷⁾

But at the Royal Commission of 1934, supporters were at pains to distance the Riverina Movement from its political partner. Various witnesses claimed membership included a number who were not members of the Country Party, with one saying members of the Movement were "of every political shade of thought". The movement, he said, had linked with the Country Party because of the party's policy favouring subdivision — "We were behind the plank and not the Party."⁽⁴⁸⁾

Politics aside, the scope of the loosely-defined Riverina does bring some contrasts in leadership in various centres. In the smaller areas west of Deniliquin and Hay, the leaders were most often farmers and graziers, not unusual given the concentration on grazing in this part of the Riverina, while in the eastern section, particularly around the major centres of Wagga, Albury and Narrandera, it was the men of the towns who dominated the leadership. This would tend to discount Gammage's claims of a transfer of rural political authority from landholders to businessmen.⁽⁴⁹⁾ In the case of the new states movements of the 1920s and 1930s, there tends to be a balance between rural and urban leadership, explained to a large extent by geographical and land use factors. But if Gammage is referring to local government authorities, he has overlooked that in this period the two sections of the region were served by their own councils — municipal councils for the towns and shire councils for the rural areas. It is only since the rash of government-induced amalgamations in the late 1970s-early 1980s that councils of many of the towns and surrounding rural areas have been joined to serve the wider area.

Considerations of community standing may have entered into the choice of leaders in some areas during the 1920s and 1930s movements. To what extent leaders were appointed by a central executive (perhaps on the basis of their local profile) or elected by the general membership is not clear. Albury doctor, Robert Robertson, told the Royal Commission in 1934 he had become involved with an Albury branch of the Riverina Movement "then it was announced I was group leader for this section" but he knew of no definite representative meeting which had made the appointment.⁽⁵⁰⁾ Other

prominent community leaders may well have found themselves in a similarly unexpected position.

The two movements show some change in the main focus of attention and support. The 1920s movement's strength was along the Victoria border areas, with Deniliquin, Finley, Berrigan and similar districts leading the way. This can be explained partly by the still strong pull of Victorian loyalties, and the power base of the League's president, E J Gorman, firmly in this locality. The eastern dominance in the 1930s Riverina Movement is as much attributable to the drive and leadership of Charles Hardy in Wagga as to anything else. Among the large landholders, and even some smaller ones, Melbourne was still a social and business focus, but an overriding regional identity had gained importance to provide the necessary unity of purpose.

Overall, the study of 96 men to the fore in the movements of the 1920s and 1930s shows a pattern of well-established, public-spirited men, Protestant, middle aged and politically conservative. I would suggest the basis of the leadership is in the middle strata of Riverina society of the time, with these people reasonably secure financially, even well-to-do, many of them farmers and graziers and businessmen already well established before the onset of economic depression. It is difficult to portray the group as the so-called elites of rural society usually described in the historical literature. A commanding figure such as the pastoralist, Hunter Patterson, with his vast tracts of land and high social standing, is rare in the sample, and his involvement is not as extensive as might have been expected if the movements were controlled, as has been suggested in New England for example, by the economically and socially powerful figures of the community. For the most part, the Riverina leaders were not the biggest landholders or the wealthiest businessmen, but a diverse public-minded group brought together by similar aspirations. Testimonials from local newspapers and discussions with families place an emphasis on the practical aspects of the leaders' natures. And, while they may have been visionary in some concepts, they were not given to chasing unattainable dreams, say these reports, presenting a contrast with the idealism they showed through the 1920s and 1930s movements.

The leaders, Gorman of Berrigan and Hardy of Wagga, were indeed substantial public figures in the Riverina, but it must be stressed that neither was a "one-man band". Their styles and personalities were very different, but their ideals were similar, as were those of their colleagues. Gorman, a long-time resident of Berrigan, has been described as "almost a visionary in his endeavours to better the community."⁽⁵¹⁾ The son of a farmer, he was born at Wallan, near Melbourne, and came to the Berrigan area first as a stock and station agent before buying a 30,000 acres property in the district. Such a property certainly put him in the large landholder category. An active

advocate of Federation, he presided at the 1893 conference in Corowa which is generally acknowledged as having set Australia on the path to Federation.⁽⁵²⁾ Thirty years later, reviewing the course of the Riverina New State League, he wrote "Although I have never regretted the small part I took to bring about Federation I have often felt that as far as Riverina is concerned the results were disappointing."⁽⁵³⁾

Gorman dabbled in politics in 1904 when he is reported to have stood against Richard T Ball for the seat of Corowa, on the issue of irrigation. No indication is given of his political affiliations. Gorman lost the election by 800 votes but continued his quest for irrigation for the areas around Berrigan.⁽⁵⁴⁾ Two years later he became the first president of the newly formed Berrigan Shire Council and served in this position until 1910, when he retired from the council.⁽⁵⁵⁾

The Riverina new state movement of 1921 was born in Berrigan with E J Gorman a persuasive, respected and dedicated midwife. Reports of his speeches at conventions in 1921 and 1922 show an approach along constitutional lines to overcome centralisation of government with its concomitant neglect of country areas. As the movement waned, less was heard of Gorman and by the time the Royal Commission into new state proposals began hearing evidence in 1924, he had retired to the Sydney seaside suburb of Manly. When he gave evidence to the Commission in Sydney early in 1925, he still retained the title of president of the Riverina New State League, but spoke mainly in the past where indeed the force of the League now lay.⁽⁵⁶⁾ Aged 54 when the League began in 1921, E J Gorman personified the long-established public spirited man, enthusiastically motivated to right the wrongs governments were forcing on his fellow citizens in Riverina.

Charles Hardy junior was a much more colourful and high profile leader. The third generation of a long-established family running a successful timber and building business in the Wagga district, he took an active interest in regional matters from an early age. In 1924 he gave evidence to the Royal Commission on New States and although he spoke only on his business and its associations with both Sydney and Melbourne,⁽⁵⁷⁾ it may have engendered an interest in the aims and ideals of the separatists. He threw himself enthusiastically into the activities of the Riverina Development League of 1928-29 and was president of the Wagga branch of the Employers Federation in 1929.⁽⁵⁸⁾ Many of the contacts in these and other organisations with which he was involved, became the mainstay of Hardy's early organising committees of the Riverina Movement in 1931.

Aged just 33 at the time, he was generally acknowledged as a striking orator and hard-working organiser. On 7 February 1931, Hardy made an immediate impression when

he spoke at a meeting of the Producers Advisory Council in Wagga. A contemporary's description of the impact of his speech is important to show how Hardy took the lead over young and old, graziers and urban people, in some of the most amazing rallies the Riverina has seen:

"The last speaker had spoken and the chairman was about to close the meeting when a young man rose near the front and without taking the platform faced the meeting. Let us look at this young man because there is something about him that strikes you at once. About five feet eleven high with light brown hair closely cropped, blue eyes, expressionless as a rule, and as hard as flint. He speaks fluently and quickly, using an occasional Americanism ... but there is a magnetism about him that one only finds among natural leaders. The moment he commenced speaking, everyone was galvanised. He pointed out the futility of sending resolutions to a Government such as we had, what did we think they would do with them? 'That,' he said, as he ripped a sheet of paper from end to end. 'You must put some punch into it,' he went on, 'we are not going to take this lying down. The whole of the Riverina should assemble at a given point and refuse to produce, or pay taxation until we get relief.' At this the meeting went wild with enthusiasm. He spoke on for a short time, and the meeting closed, but everyone talked more of the young man's few words than of everything that the others had said, and there at that meeting the Riverina Movement was born, because that young man was Chas. Hardy, Jun."⁽⁵⁹⁾

In the coming months, the writer was to become disillusioned with Hardy's methods and changes in aims, but his ability to move a crowd with his speeches could not be faulted. Despite their differences, Earle Page had respect for the young Hardy predicting a bright political future for him⁽⁶⁰⁾ and new state organiser and lobbyist, Ulrich Ellis described him as "a superlative asset" with "the bearing and apparent qualities of a great leader" but said the Riverina Movement was doomed to failure because Hardy lacked political experience.⁽⁶¹⁾ On the other side of the political fence, Jack Lang wrote many years later that Hardy "was promising what his audiences most wanted, without having the slightest clue as to how he was going to redeem his promises."⁽⁶²⁾ There is much of the demagogue in Hardy.

In the union of the new state movements of the New England, Western, Monaro and Riverina areas in August 1931, Hardy took control and was chairman of the new United Country Movement, again over older and more experienced campaigners. In December 1931 he was elected as a United Country Party Senator where he served until June 1938, the final three years as his party's leader in the Senate. The move into politics seemed to temper his rhetoric and his evidence to the Royal Commission in April 1934 takes on statesmanlike qualities of speech,⁽⁶³⁾ unheard in his rousing cries for reform in the heady early days of the Riverina Movement.

Gorman and Hardy, naturally enough, have attracted the most attention. But the study of regional support goes some way to remedying the previous neglect of the many

more men who took the ideals and aims of new states — or at best constitutional reform for wider local powers — to thousands of Riverina people. The press saw the organisers of the early meetings in 1931 as "prominent citizens who are known by their works."⁽⁶⁴⁾ The men summed themselves up in a similar way. One of their number said they were from all walks of life and "as sound a body of men as could be got together in any district in the State",⁽⁶⁵⁾ and another leader wrote 20 years on "I tell you those were hectic days and the spirit of our people was aroused. I often regret that these relaxed for all over the proposed area of the New State some wonderful public-spirited men were right behind the movement."⁽⁶⁶⁾ The next step is to see what led these conservative and diverse men along such a path.

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1. DA 2/3/31
 2. Graham notes, p.7
 3. DA 27/3/31
 4. Valentine Wooding, Albury delegate, Letter to the Editor, *Narrandera Argus*, 9/5/22
 5. Leonard Abbott, 1935 Nicholas Royal Commission Evidence, Vol. 6, p.1775 NLA
 6. DA 17/4/31
 7. Edwin Fenn Lusher, 1935 Royal Commission Evidence p.1675
 8. J O Randell, *The Pastoral Pattersons*, Melbourne, 1977 p.218
 9. *Australian Dictionary of Biography* p.166
 10. Evidence 1925 Royal Commission Vol 4, pp.2306-08
 11. DA 23/2/31
 12. PT 27/3/31
 13. Details of property and stock holdings from the Australian Pastoral Directory 1933 and Wagga Rural Lands Protection Board - formerly the Pastures Protection Board - Rate Books of 1931.
 14. Wagga Rural Lands Board Rate Books 1931
 15. Ibid
 16. Interview with his son, Bill Simpson, 27/5/92
 17. Wagga Rural Lands Board Rate Books 1931
 18. DA 7/10/39
 19. Wagga Rural Lands Board Rate Books 1931
 20. 1925 Royal Commission Evidence, p.1806
 21. B M Kelly *From Wilderness to Eden, A History of the City of Griffith, its region and its people*. Griffith, 1988. pp 63, 120, 127, 132
 22. Humula grazier, Bob Osborne, in an interview on 28/9/92, noted that a relative of his had run a 100,000 acres property west of Deniliquin in the 1930s with a stocking rate of one sheep to four acres. At the same time, 20,000 acres was a big property around the Wagga district, he said.
 23. Wagga Rural Lands Board Rate Books 1931
 24. Heather Radi, Peter Spearritt and Elizabeth Hinton, *Biographical Register of the NSW Parliament 1901-1970*, Canberra, 1979
 25. Harman op.cit., p.29
 26. 1925 Royal Commission Evidence, Vol. 3 p.1899
 27. *Coolamon-Ganmain Farmers Review* 18/2/31
 28. DA 18/5/72
 29. Frappell op.cit. p.61
 30. Interview with John Graham's daughter, June Dunn 16/5/92
 31. DA 22/9/70
 32. Lorimer, "Riverina Movement" in *The Australian Quarterly* 1931, p.63
 33. Graham Notes p.17
 34. 1935 Royal Commission Evidence, Vol 6 p.1617
 35. Jerilderie Shire Council minutes 13/9/21
 36. Keith Swan *A History of Wagga Wagga*. Wagga, 1970. p.168
 37. Phyllis Mitchell "Australian Patriots: A Study of the New Guard" pp.163-64

38. Andrew Moore, *The Secret Army and the Premier*, Sydney, 1989 p.104 quotes a reference by Charles Hardy in July 1931 to a 'silent division' to uphold law and order, but suggests it may have been grandstanding on Hardy's part.
39. DA 27/3/31
40. ADB p.194
41. Ibid p 194
42. Interview with June Dunn, 16/5/92
43. RG 31/3/31
44. Radi, Spearritt and Hinton, *op.cit.* 1979, and Joan Rydon, *A Biographical Register of the Commonwealth Parliament 1901-1972*, Canberra, 1975
45. MS1006, Ulrich Ellis to Henry Mayer, Sydney University, 23/20/54
46. PT 24/3/31
47. Interview with Bill Simpson, 27/5/92
48. J A Lorimer, 1935 Royal Commission Evidence, Vol. 6, p.1335
49. Gammage, *op.cit.* p.221
50. 1935 Royal Commission Evidence, Vol. 6, p.1724
51. Ian Fuzzard, *Berrigan Today and Yesterday* 1965 p.29
52. *Pastoral Review* . 16 September 1929, p.847
53. MS 1006, Ellis papers *The Riverina State* December 1923 NLA
54. Fuzzard *op.cit.* p.29
55. Berrigan Shire Council records
56. 1925 Royal Commission evidence, Vol 4, P.2707
57. 1925 Royal Commission Evidence Vol. 3 p.1818
58. RW97, CSU Regional Archives, Kyeamba Shire Council records
59. Graham Notes pp.4-5
60. MS1006, Ellis papers, NLA
61. Ellis, *The Country Party in NSW* p.141
62. "Politics from the Inside", *Truth*, 27/10/57 p.42
63. 1935 Royal Commission Vol 1, pp.2040-2047
64. DA 27/3/31
65. Graham Notes, p.6
66. MS1006, Ellis papers, R H Hankinson to U Ellis 17/10/51, NLA

3. WHAT THEY SAID — THEN AND LATER

An examination of the speeches, statements and, in just a few cases, the memories of those new staters who made themselves heard through the 1920s and 1930s, produces a succession of similar themes, repeated over and over again. In both movements there is an overpowering anti-city feeling and criticism of the failure of governments to meet the special needs of the country people, shared by speakers from the towns and on the land, large and small. Pastoralists' concerns over land and electoral reforms dominated the agitation in the 1850s and 1860s with town people trying to join them in a united front. But the divisions between colonial urban dwellers and the squatters were too wide to be overcome. Such divisions had dissipated by the 1920s with a realisation of mutual dependency. "Why should the storekeepers wish to injure the farmers, whose interests are identical?" asked Narrandera storekeepers in early 1931. "... if the storekeepers injured the farmers they would injure customers who had business associations with them for years."⁽¹⁾

The 20th Century movements flourished on the basis of unity and a strong regional orientation. With so many of the leaders — and by extension supporters — being born and bred in the Riverina or having lived there for many years, there was an element of pride in THEIR home among others of similar background and attachment. In addition, the breaking up of huge 19th Century holdings through the Free Selection Acts and closer settlement meant small farmers and big graziers were working side by side to maintain the Riverina's wealth and eminence as a rich primary producing district. The social effects of World War One had touched most people regardless of class or wealth, and improvements in communications, both in travel and technological advances, helped to break down much of the isolation of earlier years over the far-ranging miles of the area known as the Riverina. Together, these factors meant the "call to arms" elicited by new statism was going to touch people across the spectrum of society.

The Riverina New State League of 1921 saw many producers still looking towards Victoria as a natural market, venting the frustrations of their geographical position so close to the border on the failings of Federation and of their city masters in faraway Sydney. "Grey headed men on the other side of the mountains have never seen these parts," complained one, while a Mulwala farmer and grazier described the border area of New South Wales as being "in no man's land."⁽²⁾ The locality of the Riverina League's heartland of support along the Murray River was voiced in a motion to the first conference of the League in May 1921. This called on severance from NSW for

the future progress and development of Riverina "owing to disabilities caused chiefly by the geographical position."⁽³⁾ This was a long-standing problem as Joseph A Lawson, farmer, Producers' Co-op Manager, active in both movements, and later a Country Party member of the NSW parliament, told the Royal Commission in 1924: "We are well in touch with Melbourne matters and out of touch with Sydney matters, and it appears that during the last 40 or 50 years we have been the victims of State jealousy".⁽⁴⁾

Expectations of results were high when the League held its second conference at Narrandera in October 1921. Mayor, Alderman Robert H Hankinson (again a leader in the later 1931 Riverina Movement) predicted the New State League would become a national force, and stressed national undertakings grew from small beginnings and were often accomplished in the face of opposition.⁽⁵⁾

President, Emmanuel Gorman, took a constitutional line in his address, telling delegates the New State idea meant the modification of Federal and State constitutions to meet present needs. "After 20 years it cannot be said that the present system has not had a fair trial ... Our system is too expensive and now we are burdened with a huge war debt it is obvious that something must be done to bring about cheaper government. ... In order to bring about reform, drastic changes are necessary in the constitution and no amount of patchwork is any good."⁽⁶⁾

Throughout the active life of the League, Gorman maintained his criticism of the centralisation of government and the harm it was doing to the Riverina. In July 1922, he told the All Australia New States Movement convention that steps to counteract centralisation and give the country a chance were "a double necessity".⁽⁷⁾ Giving evidence to the Royal Commission on New States, he repeated: "New South Wales is too large to be effectively managed by one government. I believed that Riverina had not got fair treatment in the past, particularly western Riverina, and I felt that it could be more economically and better handled if we had a State of our own."⁽⁸⁾

While Gorman was painting the big picture of new statism, supporters were expressing concerns over specific issues, in particular the railway connections and freight costs.⁽⁹⁾ The absence of railways compared to those available on the Victorian side of the Murray River was seen as a distinct disadvantage for primary producers and others. This led to complaints on high freight costs. Berrigan farmer and grazier, Edmond O'Dwyer, one of the initiators with Gorman of the 1920s movement, told the Commission he had given up growing wheat "because I was tired of paying heavy freight and long cartage to the railway." Sheep and wool crossed the border to go to Melbourne because freight to Sydney "eats up all the profit on sheep".⁽¹⁰⁾

Another grazier from Oaklands said travelling stock on the road, particularly in hot weather, led to a loss of condition and consequently a loss at the market.⁽¹¹⁾ For a Deniliquin solicitor a new state could mean better communications in the south-western parts of the Riverina. If the government showed more interest in this area, then the need for a new state would cease, he said.⁽¹²⁾ In the northern part of the Riverina, the concentration was on using local knowledge and resources for progress, with improvements in roads high on the agenda.⁽¹³⁾

Overall, the views of the 1920s New Staters were very much regionally-based on railways, roads, water and various services which would benefit the people of the area. The mood was one of letting the people who knew the needs and conditions best decide their own priorities, based on local knowledge. "We feel we could manage our own affairs and legislate for ourselves much better than people at a distance can do",⁽¹⁴⁾ was the theme which inspired the people of the Riverina to support moves for a new state in the 1920s.

Such a theme was again prominent in the 1931 Riverina Movement as the anti-city antagonism heightened. The effects of the Depression in rural Australia hit both towns and farms, but as well, now there was a new foe to unite them — the NSW Premier, Jack Lang, and, by association, the Communists whom new staters deemed to be running the State. This added a new dimension to the agitation, and from the somewhat polite protestations of the 1920s, the speakers in 1931 often adopted a 'no holds barred' approach in their public statements. "Sane and reasonable government" was the oft-repeated cry in the months of 1931, intermingled with stirring denunciations of the acts of Lang, the growing domination (as they believed) of Sovietism and-or Communism, and the city growing at the expense of the country.

Thundered the solicitor, Fenn Lusher, at the riverbank rally in Wagga: "Sydney and the other cities were like huge cankers on the body politic of Australia feeding upon the country and growing more bloated every year." It was time to stop the growth of Sydney at the expense of the country, he said, for it was "the stumbling block to Riverina's progress".⁽¹⁵⁾ A couple of weeks later he was asking the people of Tocumwal "are you prepared to bow down to the sewer rats of Sydney ..."⁽¹⁶⁾

Speakers at rallies large and small condemned the common enemy of city domination in similar terms. Deniliquin's Ernest Matthews described country people as "bowing their knee to the people in the city";⁽¹⁷⁾ 'simple rural people' wanted to rid themselves of the contamination of city industrialists, said Narrandera's Hankinson;⁽¹⁸⁾ what hope did they have from a government controlled by "the Communists of the city"? asked J A Lawson.⁽¹⁹⁾ To the Riverina Movement followers, the State Government was the

city; it was Lang and his dire policies of repudiation and industrial relations; it was Communists breaking down the threads of a British heritage and society which country people valued.

The primary producer was at the centre of the protests. Bowed under excessive costs, high tariffs and low prices for their produce, their suffering was aligned to the high cost of government, high taxation and bad industrial legislation. Lang was hurting them and the Federal Government was inept, they cried. The primary producer paid Australia's way in the world, one of the original organisers, Ernest Hamblin of Ganmain, told the riverbank rally.⁽²⁰⁾ It was just what the crowd there and others throughout the Riverina wanted to hear. For while the farmers suffered, so did the businesses of the town.

Party politics had failed to help the country people, said many. Charles Hardy kept repeating his view that party politics should be set aside because politicians put personal ambitions before legislation to the detriment of the country. "He wanted party feeling to be sunk to discuss a state of national emergency and a definite declaration of war on the crowd of industrial 'reds' at the head of affairs, and a stupid political system which had brought them to the position they were in today."⁽²¹⁾ Despite the innate conservatism of the populace, supporters were ready to grasp at such an ideal of a non-political movement saving the country from its politicians.

When reality forced the movement to align itself with a political party, it lost one of its key attractions for a number of followers. Even as discussions were taking place in Sydney on a merger of the United Country Movement and the Country Party, Deniliquin group secretary and himself a Country Party follower, W J Salter, was warning it would be fatal for the movement to ally itself to a political party. In a letter to the editor in *The Daily Advertiser*, he said the Riverina Movement had been held together because there had been no suggestion of forming another party machine, but if such a step were taken "I am sure in this district it would mean the end of the movement."⁽²²⁾ (Any reaction in Deniliquin to the merger has not been located.) Albury group leader in 1931, Dr R A Robertson, told the Royal Commission in 1934 he and "a lot of our local people" had not favoured the Riverina Movement joining with the Country Party. He had withdrawn from the Riverina Movement immediately following this decision.⁽²³⁾ Many years later, a Berrigan supporter blamed the failure of the Riverina Movement on its becoming political,⁽²⁴⁾ as did Ulrich Ellis. Writing in general terms, he said the various separatist movements "lost much of their force" when they became political rather than reformist.⁽²⁵⁾

But it was not unexpected that the movement would merge into the Country Party with so many followers among its leadership. Nevertheless this did not automatically mean they were skilled or even very knowledgeable in the ways of politics. Members of a political party many of the supporters may have been, but the description by some critics of them as political amateurs is apt. There was a certain naivety in their beliefs that if they made enough noise, political leaders would listen and their threats to refuse to pay taxation would bring an immediate response from the city governments.⁽²⁶⁾

The movements started with a rush and, particularly in 1931, the leaders may have been overwhelmed by the instantaneous and enthusiastic response. The evidence certainly suggests there was an element of wondering what to do next in the early days of the 1931 movement. But even when a constitutional approach became the cornerstone of activities, the leadership left gaps. At the Royal Commission hearings in 1934, no witnesses from the Riverina could give definitive answers on costs. The stock answer was this should be "left to the experts" or that they needed to know where the boundaries of the state were set before working out costs.

Nor were the boundaries a matter of total agreement. They were scarcely mentioned at the time of either movement, with passing references to the area between the Murray and Murrumbidgee Rivers. The western boundary strayed as far as support in those areas, it would seem; the Murrumbidgee River was easily crossed to take in areas as far north as Grenfell; and the eastern section in 1931 had leaders from Yass and Goulburn. This eastern boundary was so flexible that witnesses at the 1934 Royal Commission talked of the need to incorporate Monaro. Some even suggested going right through to the South Coast, although there were concerns expressed that an influx of manufacturing industries would bring an accompanying change of political support, far removed from the prevailing conservatism of the country.

Such a move also changed the regional identity and consciousness on which the movements were built. In the 1920s, members talked openly of new states; in 1931 such a description was avoided. The talk of secession, printed in the headlines of most of the regional press, and suggested in the original resolutions of the Wagga and Narrandera rallies, lasted just two weeks for Hardy and company. When the course was changed to one of constitutional reform and the aim of provincial councils, the mood of the Riverina Movement also changed. Many of the crowds at the initial rallies had cheered at the idea of action at last. Instead they continued to hear what was wrong with the country and what was needed to right these wrongs, now couched in constitutional terms. "I believe in more action and less talk," said one leader.⁽²⁷⁾

Although badges were sold and crowds still gathered, the support had become muted as action was discouraged and leaders hastened to distance themselves from any mention of new states or secession. Constitutional reform leading to self-determination for country people was the phrase used regularly after the fervour of the first few weeks. As early as mid-March 1931, Hardy was telling his followers the Movement "wanted to put a stop to all idea of secession. It was not the time for new States, but for the simplification of government. Their scheme was to throw off the yoke of party politics and city domination."⁽²⁸⁾

The message of new statism was the same but the words were new. The altered course did not please everyone. According to Ulrich Ellis, Hardy "was apt to pander to popular ideas which were then fed-up with all politicians and all States ... (he) would have done better if he had preached at the beginning the New State philosophy instead of trying to be on all sides."⁽²⁹⁾ Writing in 1931, John Graham opposed New States because the name State in NSW had become obnoxious, but felt there was no difference between a state and a province.⁽³⁰⁾ He was in favour of action and believed in 1931 "the spirit of the people was sidetracked" by talk of the long process of constitutional reform. Unless definite moves were made "the whole movement will fall to pieces, and at no distant date," he forecast.⁽³¹⁾ In the conclusion to his notes, he claimed people had come together at the first rally to act and this had been what commended the Riverina Movement to so many.⁽³²⁾

By the time evidence was given to the Royal Commission in 1934, the suggestion of "self-determination" had disappeared and many witnesses referred to "subdivision". But talk of a new state slipped in from time to time, even from Hardy, then a senator and speaking in a much more statesmanlike manner than the demagogue who had galvanised huge crowds through 1931. In 1934 he believed the three reasons for the rural protest had been the fall in price levels and their effect on primary producers; a protest against the proposed repudiation on loans by Mr Lang; and a third issue, "which was hardly concrete in the minds of the people", the lack of government attention to the Riverina. Hardy maintained State action was not contemplated, with the whole policy on Federal constitutional lines.⁽³³⁾ Amazingly, Fenn Lusher admitted to the Commission that the suggestion of provincial councils had been "a matter of expediency." "If we talked new states the movement would have been dead. ... When we suggested an intermediate course, provincial council, divesting ourselves of some of the sovereign rights and passing them to the Federal authorities, retaining domestic powers, they accepted that."⁽³⁴⁾

Hardy, Lusher and Graham appear to be the only original members of the organising committee to give evidence to the Commission. But Graham was noted only as a stock and station agent with no mention of his early involvement in the Riverina Movement, unlike most other witnesses. He gave evidence on marketing aspects of a new state, particularly in relation to boundaries which might take in the Monaro area. The only question which could be said to relate to the Movement asked if he had "any bad grievances against the government." Commissioner Nicholas told Graham he did not need to answer the question, but Graham simply replied "It would depend upon what Government is in power."⁽³⁵⁾ Graham's notes of 1931 could have signified a split from the executive of the movement, and organisers of the Riverina case in 1934 may have been cautious about his giving evidence. Whether he left the movement completely or slipped into a minor role is not known. He was not listed as a delegate to the United Country Movement's Riverina Division conference in 1932, but in November 1935 he was reported to have taken up an executive position in the Riverina division of the United Country Party in the reshuffle caused by the resignation of Senator Hardy as leader.⁽³⁶⁾

The strong support for the 1920s and 1930s movements appears to have been offset by opponents of the aims, albeit on a much smaller scale. For the most part, they made their voice heard by occasional letters to newspapers and in evidence at the two Royal Commissions. As with the supporters of the movements, the opposition does not appear to have come from any particular section of the community. Royal Commission evidence and contemporary press reports indicate that many of the opponents were businessmen or professional people in the towns, alongside farmers or people in pursuits which would have brought them into close contact with members of the rural community. Like the supporters, these men had lived in the Riverina for many years and were well established in the community. A number were involved in local government, community organisations and groups to promote development in their area. Detailed research has not been carried out to build up a profile of the opponents as extensive as that of the supporters, but indications are that supporters and opponents were remarkably similar in background and interests.

Hay solicitor, Edward Wilkinson (he who had been derided as 'the member for Manly' at a Municipal Council meeting) spoke against new states in the 1924 Commission. He said it was unreasonable to allow certain people to say 'This is my State and that is somebody else's State over there.' The development of country areas would come from the extension of the powers of local government, he said.⁽³⁷⁾ A Cootamundra agent described a new state as "absolutely unnecessary", warning of increased expenditure;⁽³⁸⁾ and a retired farmer and grazier, Laurence Cox of Wagga,

felt so strongly against new states that he told the Commission "if I thought there was any chance of the State division taking place, I would be inclined to dispose of whatever little property I possess, and retire to Sydney or Melbourne in order to avoid the heavy taxation that I think will be fastened on the outer States."⁽³⁹⁾

Nor did the Sydney press think much of the suggestion of new states. In July 1922, the *Sydney Mail* doomed to failure the suggestion that a section of people could say 'This bit of territory belongs to us and we are going to detach it.', and cited high taxes and less wealth for the "poor lands" left if the productive and wealthy portions in the north and the south voted themselves out of NSW.⁽⁴⁰⁾ Criticism was not confined to the city press. The 'Peter Snodgrass' articles which were syndicated through the rural press for many years (written by grazier and later conservative politician Hugh Robertson) were less than complimentary on the provincial form of government planned by the Riverina Movement.⁽⁴¹⁾

The initial meetings of the 1931 Riverina Movement raised some opposition from the Wagga branch of the Australian Labor Party which planned its own public protest meeting against the riverbank rally. However, the plan was thwarted by Wagga Municipal Council refusing permission for the planned meeting in a Wagga street. The meeting was deferred indefinitely and little more was heard from the Labor Party on the issue.⁽⁴²⁾ With a number of the aldermen involved in the early organisation of the Riverina Movement - for example Lusher, F S Middlemiss, D R Hamblin - the council's reaction was not unexpected. But it does appear to be at odds with Town Clerk Emblen's claim to the Royal Commission in 1934 of a lack of interest by the council in the Movement.

Former Albury supporter, Dr R A Robertson, told the Royal Commission in 1934 that he believed "a big bulk of opinion" in the Albury district was apathetic towards the formation of new states. He himself was not satisfied the proposed Riverina state was in the best interests of NSW.⁽⁴³⁾ A Berrigan solicitor summed up the opposition to the new state proposal when he told the Commission "I think financially it is bad, I think it is idealist and not likely ever to eventuate."⁽⁴⁴⁾ His words were prophetically accurate.

1. NA 30/1/31
2. MS1102 Quoted in J A Lorimer Notebooks, Royal Commission 1924-25, NLA
3. PT 21/5/21
4. 1925 Royal Commission evidence Vol. 4, p.2314
5. NA 28/10/21
6. DA 26/10/21
7. MS1006, Ellis papers, Official Report of proceedings of All Australia New States Conference NLA
8. 1925 Royal Commission Evidence, Vol.4 p.2707

9. The lack of formal records as well as small coverage of the New State League in the press at the time and its concentration on Gorman's speeches with little mention of other views, means that a study of the more widespread reasons for support has been forced to be made almost exclusively on the basis of evidence given in 1924-25 to the Cohen Royal Commission. However, members maintain their support for a new state and-or decentralisation through more autonomy for local people in the management of their own affairs. The same source has provided most of the evidence of opposition to a new state in the Riverina.
10. 1925 Commission Evidence, Vol. 4, p.2220
11. Olave Olsen, 1925 Royal Commission Evidence, Vol. 4, p.2253
12. Joseph A Nathan, 1925 Royal Commission Evidence, Vol. 4, p.2292
13. George A L Wilson, Lake Cowal, West Wyalong, 1925 Royal Commission Evidence, Vol. 4, pp.2413-14
14. William Pyle of Berrigan, 1925 Royal Commission Evidence, Vol. 4, p.2243
15. DA 2/3/31
16. PT 13/3/31
17. *Koondrook and Barham Bridge* 25/4/31
18. *Coolamon-Ganmain Farmers Review* 13/3/31
19. RG 31/3/31
20. DA 2/3/31
21. PT 27/3/31
22. DA 13/8/31
23. 1935 Royal Commission Evidence. Vol.6, p.1725
24. MS1006, Ellis papers. L C Abbott quoted in *Berrigan Advocate* 8/11/50, NLA
25. Ulrich Ellis, *A History of the Australian Country Party* Melbourne, 1963, p.258
26. In 1921, E D O'Dwyer suggested "a little direct action" with Riverina people withholding half their income tax (PT 26/3/21) and the original resolutions to the first rallies in 1931 called for a diversion of taxation if governments did not take steps to hold a referendum on self-government for the Riverina.
27. Graham Notes p.23
28. DA 16/3/31
29. MS1006, Letter to Henry Mayer, Sydney University 23/10/54, NLA
30. Graham Notes, p 29
31. Ibid, p.1
32. Ibid, pp.37-38
33. 1935 Royal Commission Evidence, Vol. 1, pp.2040-2042
34. 1935 Royal Commission Evidence, Vol. 6, p.1691
35. 1935 Royal Commission Evidence, Vol. 6, pp.1630-39
36. DA 9/11/35
37. 1925 Royal Commission Evidence, Vol. 4, p.2335
38. S H Dickson 1925 Royal Commission evidence , Vol. 4, p.2407
39. 1925 Royal Commission Evidence Vol. 3, p.1810
40. Quoted in Crowley, *op.cit.*, p.42
41. According to Andrew Moore "The Myth and Reality of Country Life" Australian Historical Association Conference, 22-24 August 1987, in a critique of countrymindedness in rural politics, the Snodgrass articles were indicative of an anti-intellectual derision of the Movement's aims.
42. DA 12/3/31
43. 1935 Royal Commission Evidence, Vol. 6, pp.1725-1729
44. Harold Whitty 1935 Royal Commission Evidence, Vol. 6, p.1737

4. ONGOING DISCONTENT OR SEPARATE UPRISINGS?

There are obvious links between the movements of the 1920s and 1930s in the Riverina. As has been shown earlier, both drew much of their support from the rural strengths with farmers and graziers forming the highest percentage, local government service a feature of their background and their connection to the district well established.

A number of supporters continued from the 1921-24 movement through to again throw their weight behind the Riverina Movement. This, of course, is not surprising for it can be seen that the regional aims correspond to some extent. Both sought local autonomy and, after initial threats of secession, settled into a pattern of urging constitutional reforms to bring about the opportunities of self-government.

The general tone of the complaints also overlap. Leaders and followers in both decades complained of centralism and asked how could people in the city understand the problems of the country. The city versus country theme was never far from the surface in either movement with the result that the substance is the same within a different style. But both retained the distinctive regional focus which distinguished them from similar separatist agitation of the same era in Australia.

The reports of evidence of the Royal Commissions provide the best indication of attitudes to whether discontent simmered throughout the period between 1921 and 1934. It is also interesting to note the views expressed by supporters ten years apart. For example, in 1924, Berrigan farmer and grazier, William Pyle, based his evidence to the Royal Commission on the geographical distance from the government in Sydney, and repeated the theory that practical men "who knew what they were talking about" should govern close to the people they represented.⁽¹⁾ Ten years later his evidence revolved around the practicalities of stock and wheat transport. Asked about Riverina being attached to Victoria (one of the suggestions in the early days of the 1921 New State League), Pyle said such a move would only make NSW slightly smaller and Victoria much larger. "We considered it was dead against the principle that we were fighting for."⁽²⁾ Wagga alderman, E E Collins, preferred extended powers of councils as an option and claimed very little interest had been taken in the 1920s New State League.⁽³⁾ At the later Royal Commission he opposed the 1930s new state movement and favoured a continuation of the work of the Riverina Development League, with which he was involved.⁽⁴⁾

Long-time advocate of the formation of New States, J A Lorimer of Narrandera, provided quite a contrast in roles at the two Royal Commissions. He had been Riverina's representative on the 1925 Commission, and travelled throughout the State in 1924 taking evidence. Notebooks he kept at the time provide a summary of the views given by people from all walks of life, and occasionally give a glimpse of Lorimer's thoughts on the case being presented with acerbic comments on the quality of some evidence. "What does a builder know about livestock transport, why not ask a grazier," he wrote during evidence at Albury, and a grazier's evidence at Deniliquin is seen as "generally adverse, nothing to say".⁽⁵⁾

When called to give evidence at the Nicholas Commission in 1934, it was no surprise to see Lorimer questioned on his previous role and forced to justify the adverse findings of the earlier Commission, to which he contributed. He held to the validity of the 1925 Commission's finding on a lack of practicability and desirability for New States, claiming these in no ways clashed with his outline of the suitability of Riverina to now sustain self-government. "We found on the evidence on that occasion and the evidence in certain cases was not by any means well prepared."⁽⁶⁾ The 1930s' case could not be accused of a lack of preparation. Ulrich Ellis was employed as director of evidence to the Nicholas Royal Commission and laboured long and hard to get witnesses together, organise evidence and prepare and present the general case of Riverina in 160 typed foolscap pages.⁽⁷⁾

A feeling that the earlier movement may have let itself down in some way in its case before the 1925 Commission could have caused some 1930s supporters to distance themselves from the 1920s movement. Hardy, then a Senator, flatly rejected any connection between the New State League and the Riverina Movement,⁽⁸⁾ as did other supporters. Fenn Lusher said the only connection was "a certain overlapping in personnel",⁽⁹⁾ a point also raised by Berrigan leader Stewart Creed. But while Creed believed the organisation was dead after the findings of the 1925 Commission, "I would not say the feeling was dead, by any means, it was dormant." For Creed, the two movements were associated "in feeling only".⁽¹⁰⁾ Lorimer seemed to agree, putting the 1924-5 Commission as a goal at the time and with people then waiting for something to happen. Like others, he dismissed the chance of keeping such movements "at fever heat all the time, but there they are, they are very much alive only dormant."⁽¹¹⁾

So from the point of view of some followers of the 1931 Riverina Movement, there WAS an extension of the aims and ideals generated by the 1920s agitation, albeit a somewhat vague and untapped "feeling" through the intervening years. Commissioner

H S Nicholas had few doubts about the links between the two. In his report in 1935, he referred to the 1925 report of Judge Cohen's Commission bringing activity to an end, "partly because of a fear that the machinery of government in NSW would reproduce the 'trappings' of NSW, and partly because in a period of prosperity no change was thought essential." Commissioner Nicholas saw the place of the 1920s League taken by the Riverina Development League in the late 1920s.⁽¹²⁾ The disputed question is did the Riverina Movement supplant the Development League?

The Riverina Development League was one of a number of organisations with similar ideals which sprang up while new statism was dormant. In towns large and small, organisations were formed to promote their districts.⁽¹³⁾ In May 1928, what was described as "the great All-Riverina Conference" was called to discuss the development of Riverina, increasing both primary productivity and secondary industries, and "to set the wheels of progress so revolving as to ensure the evolution of this exploitation to the fullest extent."⁽¹⁴⁾ The League's proposals concentrated on regional development through hydro-electric and irrigation schemes, but now and again there was a portent of the views to be raised less than three years later.

Unlike the spectacle of the masses which marked the start of the Riverina Movement, the local press gave a poetically pastoral beginning to the Riverina Development League with a group of men meeting "beneath a spreading gum tree in a paddock along the Gundagai road", to talk of productivity, population and the potential of Riverina as a province.⁽¹⁵⁾ At the head of the new League was Wagga alderman and seven-times Mayor at that stage, Edward Easter Collins, with Narrandera's Robert Hankinson and John Lorimer, and West Wyalong's George A L Wilson to the fore among quite a few other familiar names from the Riverina Movement. The organisation of the conference was in the hands of none other than Charles Hardy junior!⁽¹⁶⁾

It didn't take long for the old familiar theme of city versus country to emerge. Opening the first conference in Wagga on 2 May 1928, Collins referred to "the sharp differences" between conditions, advantages and opportunities for country people and "those who have the privilege of living within the zone of centralised government." Collins praised the virtues of country life (another example of countrymindedness) and said conditions were much improved in recent years, but farmers should still demand "services which are calculated to place them on a more equal footing with the people of the cities and the huge towns of the interior." Once again, progress was to be achieved through co-operation between the towns and the farms, said Collins. This was taken up by the press which praised the representative character of the conference, with farmers, graziers and townsmen side by side.⁽¹⁷⁾ The ghost of the 1921 Riverina New State League and the embryo of the Riverina Movement were comfortably ensconced

in the Riverina Development League. The same was probably true of others such as the Western Riverina Development League around Deniliquin and Balranald, where its president, Fred Grabau junior, was to combine this role and a position on the executive of the Riverina Movement in the 1930s.

The conference did not concentrate on rhetoric. Development of the Riverina was its aim and that is what the delegates discussed at length and in some technical depth on issues such as exploiting the Tumut River for hydro-electric schemes. But control of electricity by a State-wide commission was opposed as infringing on local government's rights in selling electricity, and also marking an extension of centralised control from Sydney. This motion was put by Hardy who gave a glimpse of his future speeches when he condemned centralisation, saying "Riverina should be kept for Riverina men."⁽¹⁸⁾

In the following twelve months, the executive kept faith with its aims to ensure the progress of the Riverina. On the eve of the second conference, Collins could report on a number of projects successfully taken up, including a new bridge over the Murrumbidgee River between Narrandera and Wagga, surveys and investigations for the supply of water to a number of district towns, and a deputation to the State Government for the extension of electricity to all rural areas. To be taken further were matters of water conservation, closer settlement and, a 'voice from the past' (and the future) in urging "a greater measure of Local Government to enable people resident in the district to control the development of their district."⁽¹⁹⁾

Once again, the conference concentrated its energies on regional needs and how to procure increased development. Delegates left, said a report, "with the general feeling that there was another year of high achievement ahead."⁽²⁰⁾ Such high hopes appear not to have been fulfilled. Within months, the effects of the Great Depression were to be felt, the scourge of the conservative country populace, Jack Lang, would come to power in New South Wales, and conditions would change to such an extent that development came closer and closer to meaning survival. Charles Hardy and others of the Development League would go on to preach the message of self-government, with E E Collins clinging to his League and standing aloof from new statism.

Some antagonism between Collins and Hardy was apparent in evidence given to the Royal Commission in 1934. Unlike many mayors and shire presidents in Riverina centres, Collins did not preside at any Wagga meetings: "I did not believe in the proposals that they intended to bring forward ... I told them I could not fall in with their ideas and I did not take much further part." Collins' opposition to the subdivision of NSW was based on the achievements of the Riverina Development League. He

admitted he had favoured a new state of Riverina "years ago" but the advent of the Development League had brought "such wonderful development that we have forgotten all about new States." Larger local government powers, as proposed under a new bill, had muted the cry for new states, according to Collins, and "the Government spent millions of money in Riverina since May 1928. They have been very good." He told the Commission many members of the Development League had also had an interest in the New State movement but the matter had hardly been mentioned at gatherings of the League. On several occasions, he denied his League had been superseded by the Riverina Movement.⁽²¹⁾

On the basis of evidence to the Commission, Collins and Hardy disagreed on this point, although Hardy admitted the Riverina Development League had been concerned with domestic development and had nothing to do with subdivision. Collins saw the League as an ongoing movement with much still to be achieved. But Hardy claimed it was no longer strong with the last meeting of which he was aware drawing only six members.⁽²²⁾ Both claimed credit for getting the League started.

The 'debate' between Hardy and Collins over the Riverina Development League has the hallmarks of internal personal rivalry. In the early organisation of the League, Hardy had worked tirelessly and effectively towards the conferences. He obviously honed his skills as a public speaker in these settings and put forward views which were to be repeated in his Riverina Movement promotional tours a few years later. For his part, Collins, in his sixties and priding himself on his knowledge of and attachment to the Riverina, may have felt he was being overshadowed by the younger man in his perceived role as a leader and stalwart of the Riverina. When he died in 1936, a local press obituary commented that "he was a man of very strong views but won many admirers for his straightforwardness and persistence."⁽²³⁾ In the context of the Riverina Movement, much the same could be said for the more flamboyant Hardy.

One can also not overlook the play of politics in the situation. Collins was involved with the Nationalist Party from its inception and from 1932 until his death in April 1936, he served as a United Australia Party member of the Legislative Council in NSW.⁽²⁴⁾ Hardy had started his Riverina Movement on strong anti-political lines before realising the need for a political party's strengths to continue the right and was a Country Party Senator from 1932. Both were on the conservative side of politics, of course, but rivalry may have continued, spurred on by the internal regional politics motivating the two movements.

Between the Development League's peak of 1928-29 and the Riverina Movement of 1931 sits the short-lived but influential United Australia Association. Started by a

group of young Lockhart men in November 1930, it aimed to encourage young men to take a greater interest in politics. Aligning itself to no political party, nevertheless the group favoured amalgamating the conservative side of politics through the Country Party and Nationalists for a stronger voice in decision-making. Honorary organiser, Dudley Shuter, a 31-year-old farmer from Lockhart, foreshadowed the anti-political stance of the Riverina Movement when he told more than 150 people at the first meeting that the organisation's slogan should be "Australia before party".⁽²⁵⁾

Its objectives overall sound much the same as those of the Riverina Movement. The United Australia Association proclaimed loyalty and sentiment to Australia and co-operation "between people of moderate political ideas." A 1930 pamphlet said it would "foster and cultivate a spirit of patriotism in Australia as an integral part of the British Empire".⁽²⁶⁾

Heading the new Association was Wagga solicitor, Edwin Fenn Lusher, later to be a leading figure in the Riverina Movement, as indeed were many of those on the Association's committee. In the weeks leading up to the launch of the Riverina Movement, a number of protest meetings in the Riverina were held under the auspices of the United Australia Association. The lack of mention of its existence after the Riverina Movement took off leads to the conclusion that its aims and its membership were subsumed into the larger movement.

The United Australia Association can be seen as part of the upsurge of people demanding change, and, as the immediate predecessor of the Riverina Movement, it fits into the continuum of regional agitation in the Riverina from 1921 through to 1934. The Riverina New State League of the early years of the 1920s took up the cause of the colonial movements and added new dimensions - a unity of purpose and altered aims related to the changed society and times. Enthusiasm was high in the first twelve months or so and sporadic through to the release of the Royal Commission's report in 1925. If indeed, as many have said, the feeling of a need for a better deal for country areas, particularly Riverina, was always there under the surface, it played no small part in paving the way for the enthusiasm of the Riverina Movement in 1931. In between, new states may not have been on the agenda for groups like the Riverina Development League, but their urging of development with accompanying cries of neglect of the country areas, certainly kept the pot boiling.

I would contend that the ongoing discontent through the 1920s and 1930s is linked not only by the background and interests of the various groups' supporters and their objectives, but by a sense of "countrymindedness" which Aitkin sees as an ideology embodying the values of country life. While he says its beliefs and basic philosophy

were Physiocratic, populist and decentralist, they were certainly not implausible. The legendary picture of the Australian countryman emerged from seven elements defined by Aitkin as: • Australia's dependence on its primary producers for its high standard of living, adding to the country's wealth; • City and Country should support policies to improve the position of primary industries; • Rural pursuits are "virtuous, ennobling and co-operative"; • City life is competitive, nasty and parasitical; • The national character emerges from the struggles and productive efforts of country people, while those of the city are indistinguishable all over the world; • People should be encouraged to settle in the country, not the city; and • Power is in the city and country people need a separate political party to "articulate the true voice of the nation".

Aitkin puts the influence of the concept of countrymindedness between 1925 and 1970 and suggests it may have been brought into vogue by Country Party and New State leaders of the New England area in the late 1920s to early 1930s - a time of intense 'anti-political' political activity in country areas.⁽²⁷⁾ The idea is readily identifiable with the Country Party, but can also reinforce regional pride and a sense of special identity.

Such a philosophy was a strong force in new state movements, not only in the Riverina. Time and again, speakers in the 1920s and 1930s movements in the Riverina stressed the inability of the city-based governments to respond to the needs of country people or to appreciate the values of primary production — points which have already been raised in the preceding section. Country people had special qualities — one supporter went so far as to say "people on the land are healthier and more robust as a rule than the city people"⁽²⁸⁾ and a number of leaders saw the country and its products as the basis of Australia.⁽²⁹⁾ For many of these men, it was a genuinely-held belief, although they did not categorise it or indeed recognise it as an ideology. It was simply how they felt about the country areas in which they lived. For others, caught up in the surge of the movements, the rhetoric of countrymindedness may have been a useful tool in maintaining the wave of enthusiasm.

Even if no real commitment was made to it as an ideology, countrymindedness was important for the leaders and supporters of the 1920s and 1930s movements. Its claims about the centrality of primary producers in the Australian economy and the superiority of country life over that of the cities were widely believed and provided a focus as a base on which to strengthen even more the inherent unity these diverse groups of people shared in their agitation for the right of Riverina people to determine their own future.

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1. 1925 Royal Commission Evidence, Vol. 4, p.2243
 2. 1935 Royal Commission Evidence, Vol. 6, p.1781
 3. 1925 Royal Commission Evidence, Vol. 3, pp.1827-30

4. 1935 Royal Commission Evidence, Vol.1 pp.1836-38
5. MS1102 Lorimer Notebooks, 1924-25, NLA
6. 1935 Royal Commission Evidence, Vol.6, pp.1329-1344
7. MS1006 Ellis letter to Hardy 29/1/34. NLA
8. 1935 Royal Commission Evidence, Vol. 1., p.2040
9. 1935 Royal Commission Evidence Vol. 6, p.1676
10. 1935 Royal Commission Evidence Vol. 6, pp.1741-45
11. 1935 Royal Commission Evidence Vol. 6, p.1334
12. RW153, CSU Regional Archives, J A Gibson papers *New States Commission Report* pp.40-41
13. For example, in 1925, a group calling itself the Greater Wagga League distributed widely a journal advertising the advantages of the district and met to discuss issues affecting progress. The participants included some names familiar in the 1920s and 1930s new state movements.
14. DA 1/5/28
15. DA 2/5/28
16. DA 2/5/28
17. DA 3/5/28
18. DA 3/5/28
19. DA 1/5/29
20. DA 2/5/29
21. 1935 Royal Commission Evidence, Vol. 1 pp.1836-1837
22. 1935 Royal Commission Evidence, Vol. 1, p.2045
23. DA 8/4/36
24. Rydon *op.cit.* p.55
25. DA 17/11/30
26. MS1006 Ellis papers, NLA
27. Aitkin "Countrymindedness - the spread of an Idea", 1988
28. Daniel Herlihy of Tumut, 1925 Royal Commission Evidence, Vol. 4, p.2396
29. Interview with June Dunn 16/5/92

CONCLUSION

The foregoing study of the leaders and supporters of the Riverina new state movements of the 1920s and 1930s has revealed a diversity of personnel brought together by a general unity of purpose to have a greater say in the running of their own affairs. This unity perpetuates the consciousness of regional strengths and identity to support the claims of the Riverina for self-government.

At the same time there is a flexibility in the aims. The Riverina New State League of 1921 actually began its 'life' as the Riverina Severance League, with supporters initially looking eagerly towards Victoria as the cure for their ills. By being added to Victoria, claimed the men along the Murray River, the rural people and even those businesses in the towns linked to rural pursuits, would have greater access to their 'natural' markets in Melbourne and, by extension, better railways links and consequently lower freight charges.

While many of the supporters had strong ties to the southern State, joining Victoria did not find widespread favour and the focus of the agitation quickly became a new state for the Riverina in an area generally bounded by the Murray and Murrumbidgee Rivers. The change was an exercise in pragmatism - if new statism was to achieve recognition, the area must move further afield than the districts stretched along the Murray River. It needed to take in towns such as Wagga and Narrandera, with the forceful voices of people such as Hankinson and Lorimer. Wagga may have been something of a disappointment. There was a swell of support in the town, but reports of the day suggest Wagga played a more peripheral role in the early 1920s than in the 1931 Riverina Movement. The dominance of leadership in the southern and far western sections gives the 1920s movement a distinctive Victorian-oriented flavour.

In a similar way, the strength of the leadership in 1931 was concentrated in the east of the Riverina, due in no small part to the energetic Charles Hardy. In much of the historical literature, Hardy and the Riverina Movement are one and the same thing. Closer examination of the people involved in the movement shows this as a convenient generalisation. It is true Hardy's personality and speeches wielded a powerful influence in such an assessment, but he gathered around him many willing followers to put into play his complex organisation. These supporters were more wide-ranging than the select few at the upper levels of society in the rural and town areas who are usually portrayed by the historical literature.

The diversity of supporters in itself leads to one of the major problems in the Riverina Movement — its sudden change from action with the threat of secession if demands were not met by a due date, to constitutional processes. People of the Riverina had gathered in their thousands primed for action and the drawn-out processes and talk of the following months dissipated that initial surge of enthusiasm. Despite the attempts of leaders to play down the secessionist threat, the movement does fit neatly into the pattern and protests of new statism. The constitutional reform suggested by the Riverina Movement's executive to abolish State governments and set up provincial councils in their place merely added a touch of legality and, in the minds of the leaders, a responsible reaction to overwhelming problems in country area.

This is an example of how both the 1920s and 1930s movements show an elasticity of aims. They start by making demands for action from the hated city-based governments and decrying the centralisation of political power in terms which touch the nerve of latent countrymindedness among supporters throughout the region. But as the fire of the first gatherings dies down, the movements are left with their discontent smouldering and the prospect of a long slow road to constitutional reform. In such a situation, it is to be expected the movements would lose active support and this was indeed the case with both movements.

This does not mean the movements were in any way "a flash in the pan". They arose as a product of their times and never really disappeared from the regional agenda. The 1920s New State League was a natural successor to the colonial agitation for annexation to Victoria or an independent colony of Riverina. But it was far more successful in bringing together supporters from the diverse range of backgrounds and interests against the common enemy of the city.

The development leagues and similar groups which flourished through the 1920s were symptomatic of another form of the discontent. A new state did not come into their discussions; they concerned themselves with the practicalities of projects which would bring progress to the Riverina. The combination of the effects of the depression and the perceived treacherous policies of NSW Premier Lang, changed the focus to an anti-political basis for the Riverina Movement. No longer would begging deputations to politicians in the cities suffice. It was time for the people of the Riverina to have a powerful voice in their own affairs. In a nutshell, self-government was the answer to their problems.

Put this way, the Riverina New State League of 1921-24 and the 1931 Riverina Movement should not be viewed in isolation. They are the start of and the closing point, for the time being, of ongoing discontent for a better deal for the Riverina. By

concentrating on the high profile Riverina Movement, the historical literature has neglected the agitation of the 1920s and has distorted the undercurrent of continuity in the rural revolts of the period.

Discontent cannot be measured by the number of regional meetings or the existence or otherwise of active branches of new state organisations. From 1921 onwards, it was embodied in a sense of frustration at the inability of Riverina people to see their region grow and develop without the interference brought about by the lack of attention and centralisation of both population and power in the big metropolitan areas. During the period between the movements, thoughts of new states were dormant, but for many supporters the feelings of dissatisfaction with their lot were ever present. As a grazier told the 1934 Royal Commission, the movements of the 1920s and 1930s were associated in a feeling which had not died — the feeling that giving Riverina people control of their own affairs would help cure their ills.⁽¹⁾

The continuity of agitation is also borne out in the regional profile of the supporters. Membership overlaps in a number of cases - for example, Hankinson, Lorimer and Mancey of Narrandera, Ernest Matthews, Lawson and Windeyer in Deniliquin, George A L Wilson of West Wyalong, J T Close of Finley, J J Jones of Henty, Tuck in Tocumwal, Frederick Grabau in Balranald. Most of these men played a prominent role in both movements, whilst many others worked for a new state for the Riverina in the early 1920s and again in the 1930s. In between the activity of the movements, a number were involved in development and progress organisations to improve their areas, the Riverina and, in their eyes, by extension Australia as a whole.

The regional press obviously played an important role in the ongoing nature of the agitation, with its involvement stimulating support and action well beyond the normally-expected bounds of reporting the news. At the time, local newspapers proliferated in towns right across the Riverina. Concerned very much with the welfare of the communities in which they operated, the journalists kept up a steady stream of news and views on the issues, invariably giving extensive coverage to meetings of the development groups and, of course, the new state movements. Their line was overwhelmingly supportive, their editorials exhorting the strongest possible support. For example, *The Daily Advertiser* told its readers the Riverina Movement had led to "this definite and defiant throwing down of the gauntlet to Government" and proclaimed "Let 'Riverina Roused' be the rallying cry till 'Riverina Released' resounds o'er the countryside."⁽²⁾ In towns large and small throughout the Riverina, the message of the local press was the same through the 1920s and early 1930s.

Helping the spread of agitation via the press in the period was an improvement from colonial times in communications throughout the area. Organisers spent time on the telephone drumming up support and followers took to the roads in their cars to swell the crowds at rallies, many travelling hundreds of miles to show their support. Hardy even flew to a number of centres around New South Wales to spread his message of self-government.

The study of the leadership is drawn for the most part from the public face of each movement. The leaders were a diverse group, encompassing several graziers with vast landholdings, many less substantial landholders and small crop farmers, men of the towns in business, the professions and trades. Most had lived in the Riverina for many years, perpetuating a strong regional identity and pride. They were involved in a range of public organisations and local government to bring a public-spirited authority to the movements. Their politics were conservative, most leaning towards the Country Party, but their political outlook at the time was, at best, naive. This aspect led to some uncertainty in how to achieve their aims and, as has been pointed out earlier, a loss of confidence and perhaps even support among some of the membership. The idealism of apolitical agitation succeeding by itself throughout the period eventually foundered on the realisation that a united political voice held more power than their individual efforts, no matter how enthusiastic and well-supported they were.

Accepting that the leadership of the movements reflected the general membership, it can be said that support came not from radicals but from conservative well-established people. The appeal of the agitation probably lay in its populist sentiments at times of economic and social stress, giving Riverina people a chance to proclaim their identity. The strength of the movements' support and also that of the organisations in the intervening period lay in the combination of a strong following by the farming community with the recognition by people of the towns of the inextricable economic and social ties binding them together. The society of the Riverina in the 1920s and 1930s had moved away from the power of the big pastoralists (though their support would still have been eagerly courted) to range across the spectrum of backgrounds, occupations and interests in town and district over a variety of organisations.

A broader sample of membership (not possible in the time available for this study) would, I believe, substantiate further the diversity of the people involved in the ongoing agitation while at the same time reinforcing the unity of purpose. The big and the small, the wealthy and the struggling, got behind the calls for self-government. It was, for them, a case of country values against city domination — a feeling which may never really fade away.

New statism as such disappeared in the 1930s but its sentiments have lingered on. The agitation continued strongly in New England, reaching a peak with a referendum for a northern new state in 1967, with a 30,000 majority in the area defeating the move.⁽³⁾ The Country Party maintained its support for new states with party conference resolutions through the 1950s and 1960s calling for consideration of the matter, including several from the Jerilderie and Deniliquin branches.⁽⁴⁾ In the Riverina, the New State movement made a brief reappearance in 1964 with a public meeting in Wagga to again launch the fight for self-government. A 1930s supporter, Leonard Abbott of Berrigan, had coordinated the revival for several years prior to 1964, and soon the cry of city-based government was heard again as one delegate told the convention "We have eight representatives in the State Parliament outvoted by 57 who would rather have an Opera House and a Cahill Highway than a University in Riverina."⁽⁵⁾ The reasons for this revival, and its apparent lack of success in gaining the momentum of the 1920s and 1930s, could be the subject of further study, with particular reference to the wider context of the political and economic situation of the time. If the earlier movements arose from within the tensions of the post-War period and the Great Depression, what was the catalyst for similar sentiments in the Riverina in the 1960s?

Today, the cry is for regional development, pushed along by local government representatives and others not unlike the diverse group of earlier new staters. Proponents stress life in the country is cleaner, quieter, easier than in the city, and continued urbanisation and centralisation can only lead to future problems.⁽⁶⁾ Could it be those 'feelings' of the 1920s and 1930s leaders still lurk just beneath the surface of the Riverina of the 1990s?

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1. Stewart Creed, 1935 Royal Commission Evidence, Vol. 6, p.1745
 2. DA 2/3/31
 3. MS1006 Ellis papers, NLA
 4. Ibid
 5. RW14, CSU Regional Archives, Report of Wagga Convention for Riverina New State Movement, March 1, 1964.
 6. News Release, NSW Country Mayors Association, 20/10/92

APPENDIX

	Involvement	Occupation	Time in area	Age 1921 1931	Education	Religion	War Service	Local Government on the land (supervisor)	Politics	Other Organisations
Leonard C. MIBOTI	Supporter 1931	Solicitor, Berrigan	2 years (Lagmannia)							
Arthur C. ANTON	Original Committee Delegate 1931	Farmer, Boree Creek	From 1900 (Victoria)	60		Methodist			Country Party	Graziers Association
Richard L. BAIT	Delegate 1920s	Frontfounder/Politician	20-30 years	64	Eastern Creek Public School	Baptist			Liberal, UAP, From 1932 Country Party	ESA, Protestant Federation
William A. BEISSEI	1920s support	Coachbuilder, Hay	Native of Hay	31				Hay Municipal Council		
DEBI YIII	1931 support	Farmer & grazier Thornton, Denifiquin								
Anthony BRUNSKILL	Early meetings	Farmer/breeder Forest Hill	From 1879	72		Methodist				Sheepbreeders Assn, Lands Advisory Council, Pastoral Advisory Committee
Thomas H. BRUNSKILL	1931 meetings	Grazier, Borambola	All life	44		Methodist		Wagga Municipal Council	Country Party	Business/Social
Daniel T. BYRNES	1921 Executive	Land agent Wagga	Brought up on the land				Gunner	Wagga Municipal Council, Mayor 1923-25	Labor Party	Rifle Club, Repatriation Committee, Greater Wagga League, RSL, Land Board
John C. CHANTER	1931 support	Farmer, Lake Cargelligo	Family in area from 1890s	50	Moama Public	C of E	Major	Lachlan Shire 1928-45	Labor Party	Wheatgrowers Union, Show Society, Freemason
Arthur L. CHRISTIAN	Group leader Yass Riv. Movement leader from 1935	Grazier, Yass	From 1920				Major			
Norman Charles CLATTERTON	1931 support	Property manager/ Grazier, Kywong	From 1899 (Victoria)	56						Graziers Assn, Melbourne Australian Clubs, Racing/golf
John Thomas CLOSI	1920s support 1931 delegate	Coachbuilder/farmer Finley	From 1893	51 61		Presbyterian				Finley Show Society Berrigan Irrigation group
John Oliver COX	Mangoplah group leader 1931	Farmer & grazier Mangoplah Station	Family on station from 1840s	46		Roman Catholic	Yes (rank unknown)			Murrumbidgee Turf Club/sport
Stewart S. CREED	President Berrigan 1931 Executive Riv. UCM	Farmer & grazier Berrigan	All his life		Sydney		Yes (rank unknown)		Country Party	Town & district groups
Michael O. CURTIS	Coolamon group leader 1931	Stock & station agent/ farmer, Coolamon	30 years	52		Roman Catholic				Many town groups
John David DAVIES	1920s support	Farmer & grazier Tocumwal	From 1904					Berrigan Shire 1911-14, 1917-20, 1925-31		Graziers Assn
William B. DAVIS	Riv Movement Executive 1930s 1935 Royal Commission Evidence	Stock & station agent Wagga	30 years in area							

[illegible]

	Involvement	Occupation	Time in area	Age 1921 1931	Education	Religion	War Service	Local Government (at the time or previously)	Politics	Other Organisations
John E DOWLING	1920s support	Grazier, Balranald	40 years				Yes (rank unknown)	Wakool Shire, Mayor of Balranald		
William Clyde FIFE	1931 support	Grain & produce merchant, Wagga	From 1919	33					Country Party (1930s); Liberal Party 1946 on	Chamber of Commerce; Show Society; Masonic Lodge
Arthur C FITZNEAD	1920 support 1925 Royal Commission Evidence	Shire Engineer, Deniliquin						Deniliquin Municipal Council		
John Allen GIBSON	Hay leader, UCM Executive 1930s	Grazier, Hay	Family property	27	Public primary; Hay High; Sydney Uni.	Presbyterian		Hay Shire Council	Country Party	NSW Graziers Assn; Land Board; Lodge
Vernon W E GOODIN	Delegate 1920s; President Wagga New State League; 1925 Evidence.	Schoolteacher, Wagga	1920s	29	Albion Public; Sydney Boys High; Sydney Uni				Labor Party	Genealogical Society
Emmanuel James GORMAN	Founder/president Riverina New State League 1921-23	Farmer & grazier, Berrigan	From late 1800s (Victoria)	54				Berrigan Shire Council 1906-1910. First Shire Pres.		Corowa Federation Convention; Irrigation & water groups
William E GOSPER	Organiser 1920s	Newspaper editor, Mirrool	1920				Yes (rank unknown)			FSA; RSL
Frederick W GRABAU	Executive 1921; Delegate 1931	Farmer & grazier Balranald	From 1893					Wakool Shire Council	Country Party	Western Riverina Development League; PP Board; Progress Assn.
John GRAHAM	First secretary/Hon. organiser 1931	Stock & station agent Wagga	Deniliquin 1910; Wagga 1926 (Victoria)	46	Echuca State	Presbyterian	Private		Country Party	RSL, Legacy; Murrumbidgee Turf Club; Riverine Club
George Albert GRAY	1920s Executive 1925 Evidence	Journalist, Albury								
Daniel R HAMBLIN	Early 1931 meetings	Farmer, Ganmain & Wagga (ret)	(Victoria)	56		Methodist		Wagga Municipal Council 1925-31	Country Party	Ganmain and Wagga Show Societies
Ernest M HAMBLIN	First 1931 committee; Ganmain group leader	Farmer & grazier, Ganmain	From 1905 (Victoria)	48		Methodist			Country Party	Riverina Development League; FSA; Wool Board
William M HAMMOND	First 1931 Committee Speaker at rallies	Farmer & grazier, Harefield	Pioneering pastoral family	57		C of E			Country Party	Graziers Assn.; Chamber of Commerce; Show Society; Australia Day Fund
Robert H HANKINSON	1920s support; First 1931 committee	Merchant/ricegrower Narrandera	From 1898 (Victoria)	44 54	Edenhope State (Vic)	Presbyterian		Narrandera Council through 1920s to 1950s	Country Party	Riverina Development League; Rice Marketing Board; Storekeepers Storekeepers Assn; town groups

	Involvement	Occupation	Time in area	Age		Education	Religion	War Service	Local Government (at the time or previously)	Politics	Other Organisations
				1921	1931						
William HARDEN	1920s support; 1925 Royal Commission	Painter, Narrandera							Narrandera Council 1920-31		
Charles HARDY inr.	Founder/leader Riverina Movement 1930s	Timber & building firm Wagga	Family from 1861		33	Wagga High; Geelong Grammar	C of E	Lance corporal		Country Party	Riverina Development League; Employers Federation; RSL MUIOOF Lodge
Albert W HARTLAND	1920s delegate; 1925 Evidence	Market gardener, Wagga	From 1890s (England)		60		C of E				
Walter H HIGGINS	Speaker at rallies; UCM executive; 1935 Evidence	Manager, Hardys Mill, Tumbarumba	Father born Hay		38	South Wagga & Gurwood Street Public Schools	C of E	Captain	Defeated Council elections 1921	Country Party	Sport - cricket/golf; RSL; Greater Wagga League
Robert J HOPWOOD	1931 delegate	Farmer, Boree Creek			49		Presbyterian				
George HOWATSON	Hay meetings 1931	Grazier, Booligal	Family property		53	Geelong College Sydney Uni.	Presbyterian	Captain			United Australia Assn; Western Lessees Assn; public and church groups
John E JELBART	Vice-pres New State League 1920s; 1931 delegate	Farmer & grazier, Jindera	From 1910 (Victoria)						Hume Shire Council; Exec. Shires Assn of NSW	Country Party	FSA; Graziers Assn.
Arthur G JENNINGS	Coolamon group member 1931	Farmer & grazier, Coolamon	All life		46		C of E				Sporting groups
John Joseph JONES	President Henty League 1920s; 1931 delegate	Farmer, Henty	Most of his life	49	59					Country Party	
William KEENAN	1920s executive; 1931 delegate	Farmer & grazier Corowa									
Frederick KEMBER	Ganmain group member, delegate 1931	Farmer, Ganmain			47		C of E			Country Party	
Thomas E KENDALL	1931 group leader	Grazier, Holbrook	Family property		49		C of E		Holbrook Shire Council	Country Party	Wheat Board; Sporting groups
Ebenezer T KENDELL	1931 support	Farmer, Lockhart	From 1927 (Victoria)		45			Driver		Country Party	FSA; Woolgrowers Federation; RSL; Show Society; Hospital Board
W W KILLEN	1921 Vice-president; 1930s support	Farmer/politician Barellan		61	71		Presbyterian			Country Party	FSA; Graziers Assn.
Matthew KILPATRICK	1930s support	Farmer/politician Wagga	In Riverina from 1890		56					Country Party	FSA; Land Board
Mark L KINGDON	Coolamon group member 1931	Journalist, Coolamon	From 1919		40		Presbyterian	Private		Country Party	Scouts; UFWA; town groups
Edward T LAPTHORNE	1920s delegate; 1925 Evidence	Newspaper editor Narrandera	Hillston & Narrandera from early 1900s.								
Joseph A LAWSON	1920s support; 1931 Deniliquin group leader	Farmer/ co-operative manager, Deniliquin	Most of life (Victoria)	28	38	Local Deniliquin schools	Presbyterian		Deniliquin Municipal Council	Country Party	FSA; Wheatgrowers Assn.; Hospital Board; PP Board

[illegible]

	Involvement	Occupation	Time in area	Age		Education	Religion	War Service	Local Government (at the time or previously)	Politics	Other Organisations
				1921	1931						
Wilson H MOSES	1925 Evidence; 1931 delegate; UCM executive	Fruit farmer/manager producer co-operative, Griffith	From 1926		50		Presbyterian			Country Party	
William M MOURITZ	1920s delegate; 1925 Commission	Farmer, Wagga	From 1890s				Presbyterian			Country Party	FSA; PP Board
Joseph A NATHAN	1920s delegate; 1925 Evidence;	Solicitor, Deniliquin	24 years								
Edmond D O'DWYER	1920s Executive; 1925 Evidence	Grazier, Berrigan	From 1877								Development League; Irrigation groups
Ernest OFFICER	1920s support; 1925 Evidence	Grazier, Deniliquin	From 19th Century						Windouran Shire Council		
Robert OFFICER	1931 delegate & speaker	Grazier, Hillston	Pastoral family					Yes (rank unknown)		Country Party	Primary producer groups
Olave J OLSEN	1920s Executive	Farmer & grazier Oaklands	All his life						Urana Shire Council	Country Party	
David C PAGAN	Hay UCM executive	Shire Engineer, Hay									
Francis Thomas PARRAMORE	1931 group leader and delegate	Farmer, Tarcutta			59		Presbyterian				
Francis PATEY	1920s executive, 1925	Farmer & grazier, Oaklands	42 years						Urana Shire Council		
John Hunter PATTERSON III	1925 Evidence; 1931 executive; speaker at at rallies	Pastoralist, Conargo	Family since 1862		49	Camberwell Grammar	Presbyterian		Conargo Shire Council 1914-48		Graziers Assn.; Meat Board; Australia Club; Racing
George H PEREIRA	Grenfell group leader; UCM executive	Farmer & grazier Grenfell	40 years						Wedden Shire Council; president	Country Party	
Joseph PIKE	1920s support; 1925 Evidence	Clergyman, Wagga	From 1914		56		C of E				War Service Committee; Recruiting Committee; Patriotic Fund
William PYLE	1920s executive; 1931 speaker at rallies	Farmer & grazier, Berrigan	From 1879				Presbyterian		Berrigan Shire Council		Irrigation groups
Robert Affleck ROBERTSON	Albury group leader; 1931 delegate	Doctor, Albury	22 years			University				United Aust Party	
Albert A ROGERS	1931 support	Stock & station agent, Albury								Country Party	Hospital Board
John ROSS	1931 delegate	Grazier, Holbrook	Pioneer pastoral family		40	Coerwill Academy Lithgow	Presbyterian		Holbrook Shire Council 1928-69	Nationalist 1927-30 Independent 1930	FSA; Cllr Albury Grammar, PLC Goulburn, Scots College
William F M ROSS	1931 group leader	Farmer & grazier, Harden			43	Scots College, Sydney	Presbyterian	Lieutenant		Country Party	FSA; Graziers Assn.; Show Society; Polo

	Involvement	Occupation	Time in area	Age		Education	Religion	War Service	Local Government (at the time or previously)	Politics	Other Organisations
				1921	1931						
William J SALTER	Deniliquin group secretary; 1931 delegate	Windouran Shire Clerk Deniliquin	From 1926		51		Methodist	Navy (rank unknown)		Country Party	Library and Hospital Boards; RSL; town groups
William R SCILLEY	1931 support	Farmer & grazier, Corobimilla	15 years						Yanko Shire Council		PP Board; Show Society
Roger Hale SHEAFFE	1931 speaker; UCM group executive	Grazier, Booligal							Waragery Shire Council	Country Party	PP Board
Dudley SHUTTER	Organiser United Australia Assn; 1931 rallies	Farmer & grazier, Lockhart			31	Melbourne & Sydney Grammar					United Aust. Assn.
William H SIMPSON	First 1931 Committee; speaker at rallies; 1931 delegate	Farmer, Gregadoo	From Victoria		47		Presbyterian			Country Party	FSA; Show Society; Masonic Lodge
Frederick W TIFTYENS	1920s support; 1925 Evidence	Solicitor, Albury									
Henry W TUCK	1925 Evidence; 1931 delegate; district UCM	Stock & station agent/ grazier, Tocumwal	From 1908 (Victoria)								Ratepayers group; Development League; Progress Assn.; Export Lambs Assn.
John T TULLY	1920s League Secretary	Shire Clerk, Yanko (Narrandera)	3 years								FSA;
Edwin TYRIE	First 1931 Committee	Doctor/grazier, The Rock	From 1910		47	University	Presbyterian	Medical Officer			United Aust. Assn; Golf Club; Riverine Club
Wilfrid J VINCENT	First 1931 Committee	Farmer, The Rock	From 1913 (Victoria)		49		Methodist			Country Party	FSA
George A L WILSON	1920s delegate; 1930s speaker, executive; later Western Movement leader	Grazier, Wyalong		26	36	Scotch College, Melbourne	Presbyterian	Corporal	Bland Shire Council 1920-30 Exec Shires Association	Country Party	Riverina Development League
George Paterson WILSON	First 1931 committee	Grazier, Wagga	Family from 1865		59	Alma Road Grammar, St Kilda	Presbyterian			Country Party	Graziers Assn.; Show Society; Racing Clubs; Riverine & Australian Clubs
Archibald Hubert WINDEYER	1925 Evidence; 1931 rallies	Solicitor, Deniliquin	From about 1900	47	57	Admitted to bar, Melbourne			Deniliquin Municipal Council 1909-27; 1928-33		Hospital Board; sporting groups

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Mr Bob Osborne, Humula grazier. At Wagga 28 September 1992.

Mr Bill Simpson, son of W H Simpson, original committee member of Riverina Movement. At Wagga 27 May 1992.

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