

THE FIRST SIXTEEN MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT FOR PALMERSTON NORTH 1871-2005

by M.W. Hancock



Lectures
Presented in association with the
Manawatu Workers' Educational Association (WEA)

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PREFACE

This volume contains fifteen lectures on Palmerston North's parliamentary representatives from 1871 to 1990. Each lecture reviews the MP's work and parliamentary career taking account of the social circumstances of the time. There are some brief notes on the present Member of Parliament Steve Maharey who has been in Parliament since 1990 and who, in 2005, still holds the seat. I am too close in person and time to offer a lecture on Steve Maharey.

In 2001, jointly with the WEA (Workers' Educational Association), I published five lectures. This covered the MPs from 1890 to 1949, including an additional lecture by Mr Jim Lundy on J.A. Nash. This new publication includes those lectures from 2001. However, the lecture on the two Wilsons now appears in two separate presentations on the grandfather and the grandson and in chronological order.

In 2002, I gave two lectures on the Members of Parliament who represented the constituents of Palmerston North in the Manawatu Electorate from 1871 to 1890. They were Walter Woods Johnson and Douglas Hastings Macarthur. In 2003, the three lectures of that year concerned Blair Tennent, Philip Skoglund and William Henry Brown. In 2004, the final three lectures were presented on Joe Walding, John Lithgow and Trevor de Cleene.

Preparing this collection was a major task and took much longer than expected. I ask the readers indulgence for any shortcomings they may find. The fifteen lectures in this volume are presented as a resource base rather than as a book of essays. Inevitably, some material has been repeated where it was relevant in a different context or where issues needed to be clarified for a new audience.

I have also included a large amount of primary material in the hope that this will be useful to other researchers. The work is primarily for a person with a general interest in past political events in Palmerston North. It is hoped that the lectures have given life again to the work of the persons described. As is well understood in adult learning – the lecturer's own education and understanding is enhanced. It is so with these lectures.

An important note concerns the electoral system that has operated in the period 1871-2005. Two questions were of prime importance – who could vote and what were the boundaries of the electorates.

In 1871, there was a property requirement for an elector. In 1890, one male person – one male vote operated for the first time. Women voters gained the franchise in 1893.

From 1890 onwards, the boundaries of the Palmerston North electorate slowly contracted from a rural urban mix to an urban electorate by 1937. This process paralleled the steady rise in the number of voters on the roll. The country quota was a complicated factor, which ceased to be important from the 1940s. The introduction of MMP from 1996 enlarged the electorate again and brought in some rural voters. The issue of the boundaries of the electorate, the rise in the number of electors and the different voting system deserves scrutiny and a lecture of its own.

One final point of importance is that the material used in the lectures has been drawn from public sources available in Palmerston North. In three lectures, a small amount of material came from family. Thus, there are many other stories likely to be told about the subjects of these lectures from each family's descendants and from close friends.

Merv Hancock
December 2005

ILLUSTRATIONS

The majority of the photographs have been drawn from the Palmerston North City Library Photographic Collection.

The Manawatu Standard supplied some photographs as well.

The source of the other photographs, where possible, is indicated in the text. A number of illustrations contain text drawn from newspapers or parliamentary debates. At times we had difficulty in obtaining a clear copy, and for this we apologise.

THANKS

All the lectures have been sponsored by the WEA. My links with the WEA are very long-standing and it is particularly gratifying to me for that association to be continuing. Margaret Tate from the WEA has been of substantial assistance since the project began. Her commitment and belief in the project has involved work at every step towards publication. I am especially indebted to her.

Roni Fitzmaurice as the President of WEA has supported both the lectures and the publication. I thank John Thornley for his support as well. This publication is made on a non-profit basis.

Heather Hodgetts made a great contribution in putting the manuscript in order and with the initial formatting and typing. Denise Kenley of Ess'nDee Associates Limited, is responsible for the technical production of the book in its final form and I am very grateful for her expertise.

Local historian, Brian Mather has offered great assistance in checking and proof-reading the early versions. His meticulous work is consistent with his own high standards in historical research. Anthony Lewis, City Librarian, volunteered to prepare the index. This was a major task but it has contributed enormously to the value of the book for future researchers. His enthusiasm for studies in local history has been greatly appreciated.

Alison Hancock has been behind the scenes throughout the six years of this project and her support has been enduring and sustaining. I cannot thank her enough.

To the staff of the Palmerston North City Library, special thanks for their contribution, in response to my many persistent requests. Lesley Courtney and Barbara Olsen of the Ian Matheson City Archives have continued the great work of the late Ian Matheson, on a scale which is very good to see.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Merv Hancock was born in Palmerston North in 1926 and educated at Terrace End School and Palmerston North Boys' High School.

He is a graduate of the University of Auckland and Victoria University of Wellington.

A social worker by profession, Merv Hancock worked in Gisborne and Dunedin before returning to Palmerston North in 1960 as District Child Welfare Officer.

In 1967, Merv Hancock established a private social work practice as a Family Counsellor and Welfare Consultant.

In 1975 Merv Hancock was appointed to Massey University where he joined the Sociology Department to assist in the development of a Bachelor of Social Work degree and became the Senior Lecturer in charge of the Social Work Unit.

1983 brought a return to private practice in the city. Later that year, Merv was elected to the Palmerston North City Council and continued until completing his third term in 1992.

He has lectured before to a WEA Course in 1994 on *Palmerston North City Now* – a social analysis.

Merv Hancock has maintained a lively interest in local and national politics throughout his life.

He has held office in many national and local voluntary organisations over his lifetime.

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