

***SO HARD THE CONQUERING***

***A LIFE OF IRENE LONGMAN***

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## **ABSTRACT.**

This biography of Irene Longman is the story of a remarkable woman. A woman of integrity, intelligence, courage and compassion. It is also the story about the period in which she lived and how her life was inevitably interwoven with the lives of others and with the social structure and culture of the times. What made Irene Longman unique was that she became the first woman to sit in the Queensland Parliament.

Irene Longman was elected to the Queensland Parliament in 1929, defeating the sitting Labor member in Bulimba. She was nominated by the Queensland Women's Electoral League and endorsed by the Country Progressive National Party, but held the seat for only one term as Labor swept back into power in 1932. Longman's career in the Moore government coincided with a brief interruption of continuous Labor rule in Queensland (1915-1957). No other woman was elected to State Parliament in Queensland until after Irene Longman's death in 1964 at the age of 87.

Though her parliamentary career was short, Irene Longman was active in public life for over thirty years. This thesis brings to light her early childhood in Tasmania, her education and development while living in Sydney and will describe her career and the associational networks which shaped her political ideas. In 1904 at Toowoomba, Irene married Heber Longman and they made Queensland their permanent home. Although this study investigates a particular historical period in Australia, a wider account of Queensland life is incorporated to give a political context to Irene Longman's experiences in the decades after Federation.

Irene Longman was involved in a wide range of social issues including town planning and the preservation of flora and fauna. But her professional and voluntary work was principally in the field of the welfare of women and children. Therefore, this thesis is not only a historical study but it also examines other discourses related to Irene Longman's experience and interest, such as feminism and women's reproductive function. I consider how the strength of maternal citizenship influences the way women lived their lives and understood their positions in the world.

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I am grateful to the helpful librarians and staff of Griffith University at Nathan and Logan Campuses, and particularly for the assistance of Joanne Anthony at the John Oxley Memorial Library. My thanks to Colleen Andrews of the Lyceum Club; and to Tim Moroney at Parliament House and Richie Woolley in Tasmania. Both helped in reading selective chapters and their comments and suggestions were appreciated.

Special thanks go to the volunteers who work diligently to preserve and maintain artefacts of women's history through the Women's Historical Association. Having spent many months at Bowen Hills reading Irene Longman's Scrapbook, I would like to thank these women for the friendly welcome they always gave me and to record that lunch on the verandah at 'Miegunyah' was always a very special occasion that I will long remember.

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## **ABBREVIATIONS**

ALP	Australian Labor Party
CPNP	Country Progressive National Party
NCW	National Council of Women
PARAQ	Playground and Recreation Association of Queensland
QBBC	Queensland Bush Book Club
QPD	Queensland Parliamentary Debates
QWEL	Queensland Women's Electoral League
QWHA	Queensland Women's Historical Association
WCTU	Women's Christian Temperance Union

This work has not previously been submitted for a degree or diploma in any university. To the best of my knowledge and belief the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the thesis itself.

.....

**The life so short, the craft so long to learn;  
The assay so sharp, so hard the conquering  
The dreadful joy.**

**Chaucer  
“Parliament of Fowles”**

## *Bulimba Electorate.*

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*Queensland Needs Women  
in Parliament.*

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*Irene Longman*

*Endorsed by the Country-National Party and  
the Queensland Women's Electoral League.*



## **Introduction**

If Irene Longman<sup>1</sup> (1877-1963) is remembered today, it is because she became the first woman to enter the Queensland Parliament as a representative for the Country Progressive National Party. Despite her electoral success in 1929, this exceptional woman has gained little public recognition for her role as a Parliamentarian. Up to the present time there has been little mention of women politicians in general texts on Queensland history. The story of Dame Annabelle Rankin, the first Queensland woman to be elected to the Senate in 1947 has been written by Waverley Brown (1981), and Pam Young's biography of Emma Miller (1991) 'the grand old Labor Woman of Queensland', has traced the history of the female suffrage movement in Queensland. However, women directly involved in the Queensland Parliamentary process appear to have been forgotten. This lack of general historical work on Queensland's political women was brought to my attention in 1984, when I first read of Irene Longman in Ross Fitzgerald's *A History of Queensland: From 1915 to the early 1980s*.

Fitzgerald's history of 'progress' emphasises political and economic development. Women politicians are only briefly mentioned. Irene Longman receives two lines, while Rosemary Kyburz (1974 Liberal) features briefly in two instances. Vicki Kippin (1974 National Party) and Vi Jordan (1966 Labor) do not get a mention at all. While Jordan, Kyburz and Kippin are recognised as politicians, very few people including myself remember Irene Longman. This raises two questions. Firstly, why have Irene Longman's achievements received such little attention considering that she was the first and only woman to sit in the Queensland

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<sup>1</sup> Irene Longman was christened Irene Maud Bayley. The correct spelling of her name in family records is difficult to establish. Among the family birth Certificates there is evidence that her name was spelt either Irenie or Irenic. She spelt her name Irene, but was always called Irenie.

Parliament in the first one hundred years from its inauguration in 1860? Secondly, after a gap of thirty-four years when Jordan entered the House in 1966 and Kippin and Kyburz followed in 1974, a distinct problem seems to be that not only is Longman forgotten, but also the contribution of all these pioneering women has yet to be assessed. Additionally, in the published history of *Labor in Queensland* (Fitzgerald and Thornton:1989) Vi Jordan remains an invisible figure in ALP politics as well as parliamentary history.

Long before Irene Longman's success in 1929, Queensland women were active participants in political life but mainly worked within women's organizations. In the ensuing years, women were elected to local Councils, and aligned themselves with political parties. But women who took up the challenge to enter the Queensland Parliament did so with little success. No other woman was elected to state parliament in Queensland until after Irene Longman's death in 1964 at the age of 87. Labor's Vi Jordan was elected in 1966. This was a lasting disappointment to Longman who was anxious to see more women enter formal politics. Why did women not represent women in Parliament?

This Irene Longman continued to ask, as do contemporary feminists who still puzzle today over the long delay in Australian women being elected to political office, particularly as 'Australian women were the first in the world to be granted both the right to vote and to stand for the national parliament' (Sainsbury 2001:63)<sup>2</sup>. Irene Longman was not the first woman to enter a State Parliament, being preceded by Edith Cowan (WA), May Holman (WA) and Millicent Preston Stanley (NSW). It was 1943 before Enid Lyons became the first woman to enter Federal politics (Sawer & Simms 1993:75-6).

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<sup>2</sup> See Appendix 1. for a list of women who stood for election to Queensland Parliament between 1923-1966

During the first generation of women representatives, four of the nine first women to enter state politics were political widows or daughters. As Sawyer & Simms point out, this development was termed the 'male equivalence' and indicates that the presence of women is justified by their standing in for their fathers or husbands. The other five representatives were all closely aligned to women's organizations. This included Irene Longman, who not only had the support of women's organizations, but also had the advantage of coming from a political family. Her brother Percy had been MLA for Pittsworth (Qld) and at the time of Irene's election, brother James Bayley was MHR for Oxley (Sawyer & Simms 1993:75-76).

As Sainsbury points out, the political awakening of women and the mobilisation of women during the suffrage campaign was 'not only crucial to women winning the vote' (Sainsbury 2001: 66), but it also unified women into non-party feminist organizations. Likewise in the 1920s and 30s, Irene Longman and other women activists became the vanguard of women's rights, demanding social and economic change and the right to self-determination. This mobilisation of women into non-party organizations coincided with social legislation adopted during the first decade of the twentieth century, which had laid the foundations of the Australian welfare state. Women were now speaking of birth control and the injustices faced by women, including the question of sexual and economic power. They were demanding the same respect and dignity for sexual autonomy, independence and freedom as that experienced by men. Women were claiming the opportunity to be in control of their lives and to construct spheres of autonomy for themselves. These early feminists were challenging the traditional orthodoxy of the time that a woman's place was 'in the home'.

Since the 1970s, feminist scholars have undertaken the project of restoring women's experience to the historical record. In the absence of formal documentation of women's lives, they have taken to interpreting women's lived experience and have offered rich insights into the way that women's voices inform scholarly research. Irene Longman's papers have not survived. My biographical account of her private life and public career has read between the lines of a range of published records and family memories.

Writing as a feminist historian, I aim to bring a different approach to a history that has denied Longman any significant interpretation of her social and political experience. My intention is one of recovery. I aim to draw Irene Longman out of obscurity, repair the historical record and provide an opportunity for readers and writers to identify with some of the circumstances women faced in political life. On her entry to formal political life, one columnist wrote 'that the rare paradox which distinguished Irene was that she was a woman politician and a feminist' (*Brisbane Courier*, 12 May, 1930). On the other hand, the *Daily Mail's* report, headlined 'not a Feminist' stated:

Another of Mrs Longman's paradoxes is her vital platform manner, and her remarkable charm in her home. To meet her in her drawing room one would never associate the quite slender woman with a turbulent political meeting, yet she handled a meeting at a storm centre in her electorate with the ease of a seasoned campaigner.

These reports identify an ambivalence, which the feminist biographer must tease out. How is the dichotomy of gender operating in this construction of 'woman' and 'politician' as contradictory identities? Is it impossible for these reporters to talk about women in public life without the connotation of feminism, yet is it also a connotation to be denied? These questions continue to be relevant today, as there are greater numbers of women as political representatives now.

While the term 'feminist' has been widely used in Australia since the 1900s, it has been used in differing ways and its meaning has often been fiercely contested, and even rejected by some writers. As Barbara Caine points out, 'feminism...has been characterised by a series of new starts as each generation redefines its key projects, sometimes in opposition to the definition of earlier generations' (Caine and Pringle 1995:x). Theoretical issues with which I have had difficulty in preparing this research centred on two areas. One refers to debates about whether feminist agendas represent 'women's interests' adequately, and the other is that feminism has had various orientations to diverse social and political movements in different historical periods and places. Yet these movements can supply an interesting avenue of inquiry. By examining women's mobilisation, their identities and strategies it may help to understand the historical process of women's incorporation into political life and their agency in this process.

Within a Queensland context, women were conspicuously absent from the House of Parliament until 1929, yet this did not mean that women were politically inactive. Although Parliament and party politics were not their primary political arena, women's pressure groups and organizations were prolific, with a great variety of women's groups working long and hard for political representation. Incorporation into public life was available to enfranchised women in Queensland in the early decades of the twentieth century. White women, having secured the right to vote in federal elections, had to wait until 1905 to vote in state elections and until 1920 to vote in local government elections. They became eligible to stand for election in the state Parliament in 1915. Within the period covered by this study, the nature of Queensland politics changed significantly. Prior to 1915, political parties were mainly factional political groups that formed and reformed, but by 1915 the

Labor Party and the Trade Union movement had consolidated and become well organized and dominated Queensland politics. Longman's career in the Moore conservative government coincided with a brief interruption of continuous Labor rule in Queensland between 1915 to 1957.

Any study that investigates a particular historical period, must also account for geographical space as part of the shaping of the experiences of women. Gail Reekie reminds writers that the continuing debate about Queensland's difference (whether real or imagined) and its effect on women's experience, has not attended to political contexts and rarely appears in any wider account of Queensland life (Reekie 1994:1). The claim that a strong masculine ethos and paternal and autocratic Queensland governments affected women's experience (Ross and Duffield 1994:197) must be taken into account.

Longman was fifty-two years of age when she entered parliament yet little has been recorded of her previous half century of life. Though her political career was short, Irene Longman was active in public life over many decades and many of the questions that beset her are still relevant today. Irene Longman's extensive work with early childhood learning and her wide range of interests in science, history, philosophy and literature which she shared with her husband, were all important facets of her life's political education. Her interest in the welfare of women and children was a continuing feature of her life's work, dedicated to social reform and education. In this dissertation I will describe her career and the associational networks in which it emerged. One particular interest is to explore her formation as a citizen through these networks, and in particular to show how her interests and public comportment were shaped by a wide study of political ideas and social policy.

To recreate my subject's economic, intellectual and social environment, any historical account must restore Irene Longman's familiar background, which began with her early childhood in Tasmania, her education in Sydney, and her independence and career as a teacher. Married to Heber Longman at Toowoomba in 1904, Irene became closely involved in both her husband's journalistic and scientific projects. Newly emerging technologies, scientific knowledge and an interest in literature made it possible for her to join in early twentieth century debates on marriage reform, sex education and eugenics. Irene Longman, along with other women who shared her interests, sought to advance political literacy among women. She performed the intellectual work of reading and evaluating texts, writings, papers and reviews of leading women thinkers (Allen 1994:94), and presented lectures and papers on their contributions towards the emancipation of women. Her political and voluntary work within women's organizations culminated in her being elected to Parliament.

Irene Longman left no journal or collection of papers so her political ideas remain fragmented in the public record. Only her parliamentary speeches, newspaper reports and a few public speeches and scraps of notes remain. I have supplemented the paucity of these sources with interviews with surviving family members, in particular, with her niece Betty Bayley. I have also drawn on a wide array of historical, biographical and literary texts to recreate the context of public debate which so energised Irene Longman. I try to circumvent the conventional biographical framework by departing from a chronological account, to take a thematic approach to Irene Longman's private life and public career.

This dissertation is organized into three parts... First is an account of her political life which includes a broad outline of her two political campaigns. These campaigns highlight issues relating to the selection and support of women candidates. This account also explores the constraints of parliamentary politics and how Longman negotiated her political role in relation to the expectations and assumptions placed on her as a woman. Part two deals with the more shadowy and less known aspects of private life. It includes her colonial childhood, her education and intellectual development and finally marriage. Part Three describes her activities in public life and the way her political aspirations were shaped by her association with women's organizations.

In the context of continuing issues about women in politics and government, my research addresses further questions: how Irene Longman negotiated gender relations, how her self identity and individuality was constructed and how she positioned herself in relation to political theory and practice. On the whole this is a sympathetic reading. By combining analytical insights with the story of her intellectual, political and feminist development, I endeavour to revalue and celebrate Irene Longman's experiences and to uncover her triumphs as well as her disappointments. Important to this thesis is to question why and how Irene Longman's life took the shape it did. In this way it may be possible to reveal the way Longman reaffirmed, contested or left intact particular forms of power within a Queensland context.

The appearance of femininity in the political arena, as Carole Pateman and others have noted, disturbs that domain's conventional, contractual character and threatens perceived sexual roles. The assumption that the state was 'only the larger home' in which there was a natural division of functions' (Sawer & Simms (1993:77) prescribed a complementary role



for women, and made them less threatening (or powerful) in the political arena. Longman, married but childless, was frequently described as giving ‘the motherly side of the question’ (Williams 1973:14). She argued strenuously that women, whether married or unmarried had the same right to work as men. Even further, she argued that wives who stayed at home should be paid by the state and that motherhood should be recognised as a profession. I intend to show how Longman’s advocacy for women’s economic status introduced the feminine in a revolutionary way.

This study will show how Irene Longman’s characterisation of women emphasises reason, freedom and independence. She recasts motherhood as an economic and political status, rather than a biological fact and differentiates it from notions of virtue associated with ‘separate sphere’ ideology. She does not privilege difference but rather seeks women’s incorporation into politics as equals, and the incorporation of values of justice and equality into private life (Fallon & Ferres 2002: 5). Irene Longman’s political philosophy combines theories of liberalism and feminism with eugenic and pre-Freudian physiological thought. It is by understanding how she interweaves strands of these theoretical positions with each other and how she appropriates each for political rhetoric that we can account for her political commitments, and understand the contradictions and tensions which are central to the paradox presented by the ‘woman politician’ in the decades after Federation.

## **Restoring Women to History**

In one of her last letters to the press, published in the *New Age* (March 31, 1960, p.6), Irene Longman recounted a 'dream' in which Emmeline Pankhurst appeared before her, asking 'Why...is it that so few Australian women feel it their duty to take part in Government? They have a reputation for success in literature, in music, in business, in humanitarian and such-like societies and yet pass by the very means by which these ends could be more readily obtained'. Longman regretted the fact that others had not replicated her own achievement. My interest in this question has directed my research into women in Queensland politics. This biography of Irene Longman is intended to restore her career to a history of women in politics and to Queensland political history.

Irene Longman captured my imagination. Telling her story, and seeking out reasons why her 'dream' had not been fulfilled has been a fascinating preoccupation. Hopefully this project will contribute to the now growing literature on women in politics. In attempting to reveal Irene Longman's contribution to public life as a teacher, a wife and a politician, I confronted a problem of sources. Irene Longman left no autobiographical writing and her archival papers were destroyed. Fortunately, a scrap book containing press cuttings and a few other items of interest have been preserved and held at the Queensland's Women's Historical Society.

This scrapbook was collated by Irene Longman's husband Heber and suggests that while Irene Longman did not actively preserve a record, her husband left a trace to ensure that she not be forgotten. Possibly Heber Longman's dream was that one day this would be a useful artefact for a future biographer. What I found intriguing was that the final pages of the Scrapbook contained several articles and a memorial speech commemorating Heber's life achievements as well. Irene who survived her husband by

another ten years may have added these items. Was this inclusion symbolic of the final chapter of a life story, or just the beginning of another?

### **Women in Politics**

In a revised edition of *A Woman's Place, Women and Politics in Australia*, Marion Sawer and Marion Simms claim that although largely overlooked, there has been a 'growing body of work analysing the nature of women's political participation' (Sawer & Simms 1993:xi). This poses a range of questions about women's political practice. Although women in Australia achieved the franchise relatively early, they were slow to make their entry into the Houses of Parliament. Sawer and Simms identify some very significant reasons for this delay and their work has been helpful in understanding why Irene Longman's 'dream' was unfulfilled. Sawer and Simms point out that most women candidates stood for minor parties or as independents with little chance of success. It was a common practice for political parties to nominate women for unwinnable seats. Political parties did not see women who were mainly occupied in the home as ably qualified for a political career. Nor did women have great trust in the male dominated party system or their pre-selection process. Those who did gain nomination through women's organizations and were endorsed by political parties 'had to be careful not to threaten established family roles' (Sawer and Simms 1993:106). This poor record of success did not encourage other women to contest seats where they had little chance of winning.

Virginia Sapiro has pointed out that when women have developed political careers they are usually referred to as women politician, even though they did not see themselves as totally representative of simply a woman's point of view. This, she argues, forces women to make choices. First, they can either accept the feminine norm or second, they

can act according to prevailing political customs and be seen as the male equivalent (Sapiro 1983:3). Sapiro contends that 'the view that full citizenship concerns itself with issues that go beyond immediate personal concerns also conflicts with the traditional images of woman' (Sapiro 1983:87). The notion that feminine women 'should be sweet, attractive, submissive, understanding, dependent and defenceless' (Lake 1999:221) was not the image that Irene Longman displayed. She was certainly not submissive or defenceless. She was described as charming with a vital platform manner and the ease of a seasoned campaigner (*The Daily Mail*, May 13, 1929, p.11).

Marion Simms argues that negative labelling of women as being 'unsuited to politics' glosses over the differences that exist between women. The traditional idea that politics was men's business, while women's work was to build networks within the community, in effect separated women into undifferentiated groups and marginalised their political participation. Yet it was women's participation within the community that presented avenues for women's expanding solidarity and representation. Political action groups as well as literary and cultural groups enabled women to develop ideologies and philosophies which provided a source of political influence for them (Sawer and Simms 1993:254). This political influence can be uncovered by tracing the careers of professional women like Irene Longman, and contributes to the understanding of the methods of incorporation of gender difference and citizen participation into democratic life (Fallon & Ferres 2002:1). In an effort to redefine the limits of citizenship and to enlarge universalism, Longman focused on work in cultural institutions. She was a regular speaker at the Lyceum Club formed in 1919 for women interested in the advancement of literature, journalism, science, art and music. Irene Longman was also a foundation member of the Queensland Bush Book Club and involved in the

Playground Movement's program, which included the establishment of children's libraries.

One concern in writing this thesis was how to embrace the personal 'woman' who lay submerged beneath the public and political individual self. How to recover and interpret her experiences when confronted with few sources about her personal life. The larger question is how do I distinguish between her private life and her public life? Sources are more readily available about her public life as her political speeches are recorded in Hansard and records of other public activities are there to be found, either in accounts held by women's associations or in newspapers.

The recovery and interpretation of women's lives has been an important project for contemporary feminist scholars. They have written about women both as individuals and as a social group, and at national and international levels. Feminist historians who have written accounts of women in public life include Carolyn Steedman (*Childhood, Culture and Class in Britain: Margaret McMillan 1860-1931*, 1990), Barbara Caine (*Victorian Feminists*: 1992), Alison MacKinnon (*Love and Freedom*: 1997) and Marilyn Lake (*Getting Equal* 1999). Caine has written about British women, and MacKinnon has explored the public careers of Australian women. Marilyn Lake examines the history of the Australian feminist movement. On the other hand, Steedman writes an historical account of the life of British born Margaret McMillan, her work in early childhood education, and her political prominence in the Independent Labour Party. Another useful text that focuses on women in politics has been written by political scientists Marian Sawer and Marian Simms (*A Woman's Place: Women and Politics in Australia*, 1993). As a result of the work of these historians and political scientists my interest in women's experiences and their feminist perspectives has become more

focused on the terms of women's inclusion in the public domain. With new approaches to the question of feminism there has been a significant change in the way feminism is understood, and in the way women's participation in public life can be analysed.

In her recent history of Australian feminism, Marilyn Lake points out that it is misleading to assume that once Australian women had the vote, they failed politically because they largely failed to win election to Parliament. She contests this point of view and argues that post suffrage feminists were very active and took their citizenship seriously. Understanding this activism requires a redefinition of the political arena in which women participated. This arena was not congruent with 'parliament' or 'party politics' (Lake 1997:229). Instead, women mobilised independently of political parties, thus achieving a distinctive political program of their own in order to achieve real reform. Lake offers two suggestions that may explain why post suffrage women and their achievements have been omitted from political history. One, the current preoccupation with party politics and two, 'that earlier generations of feminists worked for reform in frameworks now thought unprogressive' (Lake 1999:12). What was important for Irene Longman was the new relationship to ideas and theories of development and growth of the human spirit, which allowed her to enter debates relating to evolution and eugenics. As Kay Ferres points out, contemporary feminists may not accept these new ideas and theories of the evolutionary human spirit, but they did provide early feminists with the means of expressing a greater understanding of their identity and their place in the world (Ferres 1994:43-44).

Barbara Caine points out that there has been an ongoing tension within feminism around competing claims of equal rights between men and women, and the recognition of sexual difference. The meaning and definition of feminism has often been fiercely

contested, and even rejected by some writers (Caine 1992:x). While the term feminism has been widely used in Australia since the 1900s, it has been used in differing ways. It 'has been characterised by a series of new starts as each generation redefines its key projects, sometimes in opposition to the definition of earlier generations' (Cain and Pringle 1995:x). By today's standards earlier generations of feminists could be considered unprogressive, but Caine argues they worked in the only framework that was possible for them to use, namely the dominant ideology of domesticity and virtue which was one of the formative influences of early feminism. What is less recognised, argues Caine, was that the concern about the situation and status of women themselves rendered the 'woman question' problematical. While for some, liberalism offered feminism a language to demand equality and freedom, it did not satisfactorily address feminist concerns about sexual oppression or women's representation in the political world. Faced with the inadequacy of liberal democratic theory, early feminists spoke about sexual difference and women's distinctive qualities as a way of expressing their basic concerns about women's rights.

Women sought to articulate an idea of female citizenship, which took into account the sexual difference between men and women and the need for women's interests as gendered subjects to be represented in the public world.

Caine 1992:41

Historical research has now revealed the expanding public role of the nineteenth century women's movement and its connection with the fictional and journalistic creation of a 'new woman', and the revolutionary changes to political campaigning this early women's movement helped to shape (Caine 1992:41-43).

The increasing demand for a wider-ranging citizenship brought women together in both political and non-political organizations. Her association with women's organizations shaped Irene Longman's political aspirations. She was a member of the Queensland

Women's Electoral League, which fought for equal representation on selection committees for non-Labor parliamentary candidates. Longman was also a member of the non-political National Council of Women and its many affiliated organizations, which lobbied around specific women's issues, including equal pay and divorce reform (Sawer and Simms 1993:105,234). The question I had to ask is was Irene Longman a feminist? While I respect the freedom of feminist thought, one problem for me has been the impossibility of producing a single identity of Irene Longman that would fit a proscriptive feminist category. I am unable to name her as a liberal, socialist or radical feminist. Longman's goal for free and equal citizenship at first glance suggests she could be liberal in her thinking, but she had many radical ideas particularly about the institution of marriage and she frequently used socialist ideas as political rhetoric for the introduction of social change.

In her innovative work on the first generation of Australian professional women, Alison MacKinnon states that it had long been the dream of women that they would one day reach a Utopia where equality and freedom of choice, which seemed to be the province of men, would also belong to women. Inheritors of the legacies of early activists, these women had achieved the right to higher education and economic independence, yet the journey had not been easy (MacKinnon 1997:2). MacKinnon's account of the reshaping of women shows that a reassessment of relations between the sexes is an inevitable and critical dimension to the project of restoring women to history (MacKinnon 1997:2-3). MacKinnon's reassessment of her women illustrates how educated women, identifying with Mary Wollstonecraft's model of the rational and intellectual woman, desired to enter the public sphere, 'to engage in critical discourse... and to bring that understanding to the social world' (MacKinnon 1997: 134). MacKinnon points out that this access to critical discourse allowed women to question and challenge perceived



knowledges and was a precondition for full citizenship which had long been denied to women (MacKinnon 1997:134-5).

It was through this discourse of understanding and her political position that Irene Longman was able to challenge the notion of separate spheres of action and a complimentary role for women. In the parliament she assured members ‘that the desire to enter into the political responsibilities arises rather from a sense of duty than from that spirit of sex antagonism ...[and that] the co-operation of men and women in public work is the keynote of our modern life’ (QPD, vol.153, 21/8/29, pp.10-12). Irene Longman suggests that with co-operation, men and women could be accepted as equal citizens. She is speaking of a new sexual identity where women were equal partners with men. Irene Longman’s understanding of equal rights for men and women incorporates reason, freedom and independence.

Historians discussed so far in this chapter have called different feminist theories and categories into question. They have acknowledged the tension within feminism, particularly the preoccupation with compelling claims for equal rights between men and women, and the recognition of sexual difference. There are also new debates about difference, not only between men and women, but also between and within the subjective identity of ‘woman’. Postmodern theorists no longer speak of ‘the unitary self’ or ‘self identity’ but instead use the term ‘decentered self’ (Lambert 1995:305). Considering that earlier feminists worked in frameworks which could be thought outdated, and that some theories would no longer be acceptable to contemporary feminists, these historians have agreed that early women activists and feminists did provide a means of expressing a greater understanding of the problems women experienced as each new generation redefined its key projects.

Political scientists Sawyer and Simms on the other hand strongly defend the usefulness of theories now claimed to be unfashionable. Sawyer and Simms claim that categorising women into liberal, socialist and radical feminism is still valid in debates today, particularly as the 'sameness' perspective is comparable to liberal feminism. The problem they claim is that to ignore the debates of the 1970s tends to obscure the knowledge 'of the nature of women's activism in Australia before the advent of the second wave of feminism' (Sawyer and Simms 1993:250-252). Sawyer and Simms point out that the publication of Carol Pateman's *The Sexual Contract* renewed the debate about women's oppression and that debates about liberal feminism have not yet been concluded. Pateman's arguments are still being used to analyse the depth of sexism still remaining within Western liberal democracies (Sawyer and Simms 1993:250-252).

Post structuralists question why anyone would continue to use labels such as liberals, socialists and radicals as these distinctions are inadequate in current debates within feminism (Allen 1990:34). As an alternative, feminists have turned away from seeing women, as a sex, suffering exploitation and discrimination in order to balance victim/discrimination with discussions of agency and resistance. Feminists working from a post-structuralist perspective, no longer accept the concepts of patriarchy and capitalism as fixed universal structures. Instead, they concentrate on instances of gender domination and its interrelationship with class, ethnicity, sexuality, politics and culture, all analysed in the context of their historical development (Pringle and Watson 1992:64-65). Post structuralists argue that patriarchy implies a model of power and domination that is constructed diffusely, rather than in binary opposition. They maintain women's oppression is sustained by a whole construction of sexual identity

and desire, not necessarily by the literal overpowering of one interest group, women, by another, men (Phillips 1992:10-28).

Rethinking the problem of patriarchy has presented some conceptual difficulties for me, particularly writing in the present time a life story of a woman whose public life spanned the early decades of the twentieth century. The problem is that Irene Longman operated within a political culture where women's 'absence and obscurity was organized by a wide variety of political thought, and by various theories of femininity' (Steedman 1990:249). Steedman contends that the dependency on old assumptions of a patriarchal society and the struggles for the unitary 'self' formed in conflict, once universalised, are no longer adequate in the portrayal of women's lives (Steedman 1990:249). Steedman agrees that while traditional theories such as liberal, radical and socialist feminism allowed women to be politically active across a wide arena, there was a need to provide an historical background that would add significance to women's sphere of action (Steedman 1999:249). What is needed then, is the presentation of the life and career of subjects 'in ways that account for particular cultural and historical formations of subjectivity' (Ferres 1994:iii).

I found that post structuralist theory was helpful in understanding Irene Longman's analysis of patriarchy and sex antagonism, as it informs the multiple positions she takes up and the meanings she applies. Longman believed 'sex antagonism [was] a natural outcome of ages of suppression and which bore a large part in the struggle for the emancipation of women' (QPD, vol. 153,21/8/29 pp.10-12). Successful in having policewomen appointed in Queensland on the premise that women should take care of women because they shared a distinctive understanding of their own sex, Longman was disappointed when these policewomen did not receive equal recognition or pay. Here

Longman emphasises the natural rights of the individual to justice and equality, while at the same time she calls for state intervention for the protection of women. To understand this tension, Longman explains that her hope for the future was that with a spirit of co-operation, and the removal of barriers of sex, institutional reform could lay the foundation for a new citizenship and a new type of state.

Another problem with this research was Longman's contradictory outlook regarding political economy. There is some tension between Longman's theory of the state and the rights and obligations of citizenship. She was forthright in her laissez-faire approach to economic policies, claiming that the only way to restore social justice and political freedom was to abolish state enterprises. This, Longman claimed, could only be done through private enterprise and the non-interference of the state in the free working of the economy (QPD vol.153, 21.8.29, pp.10-12). Longman's work over a long period with women and children in Crèche and Mothercraft Associations, Kindergartens and Playgrounds made her cognisant of the need for state intervention to protect the welfare of women and children. Marilyn Lake points out that political history has given little recognition to women's maternalistic approach to a welfare state, as it was usually represented as a masculine project. The difference being that to create a just and equitable state for women, women activists expected the state to protect women from the exploitation of men (Lake 1999:56). This approach to a maternalistic welfare state was made by many women activists who 'sought to combine a liberal emphasis on the sanctity of the individual with a recognition of human interdependence, and a call for collective provision and state regulation' (Lake 1999:55).

## **Problems for the Biographer**

The exceptional biography of Margaret MacMillan, written by Carolyn Steedman as an historical project 'illuminate[s] ideas, ideologies, class and gender relations and the social practices of a particular period of British history' (Steedman 1990:244). In the history that Steedman writes, she identifies in Margaret McMillan's biography of her sister Rachael, an excellent text for the telling of Margaret's own story. According to Steedman, MacMillan had constructed a life story to explain and give origin, purpose and meaning to politics. This, she claims, allows some conclusions to be drawn about 'historical developments and changes that [the subject] was agent and actor within' (Steedman 1990:245-9). Steedman cleverly uses Margaret McMillan's biography of her sister as a primary source of information. Steedman's biographical method has been important to my project, as there are many similarities between MacMillan and Irene Longman. I faced a similar problem as Steedman, with no sources about the interior persona, shaped by relationships to important others, beginning with the family. With a lack of important sources for my own writing, I recognised that Irene Longman's scrapbook could become a valuable literary source of evidence.

Both postmodern and cultural theories are useful and help to provide the biographer of a political woman with new techniques of life narration, as well as being a historical narrative. Biography as a literary text can share the discursive methodology of both narrative history and some of the novel's innovative strategies to incorporate elements of drama, tragedy, romance and bildung into a life story (Nissen 1997::333). However, critics query whether a unified voice claiming to tell the truth about a life, and a 'chronological presentation of events and other narrative devices simply provide readers with the illusion of totality and closure?' (Lambert 1995:305).

Steedman contends 'that the historical evidence, whatever form it takes, is in some kind of conflict with the written life story' (Steedman 1990:244). This conflict centres on the

impermanence of history and 'the closure and completeness of plot and character that are wanted from biography' (Steedman 1990:246). Steedman explains that in narrative terms the writing of biography and history is a useful way of overcoming some of the problems in the telling and interpreting of women's lives.

Like history writing which does reach conclusions and attain ends, it actually moves forward implying that things are not over and the story can never be complete for some further information may come to hand that may change the interpretation already given. (Steedman 1990: 246). Steedman readily admits there are problems when one writes about another's life in the past, using biography as a narrative form.

The current constraints, the restrictions that the form enforces ....are to do with the current state of feminist biography (and the history of biographical form that it carries around its neck), with the legacy of a certain kind of women's history.

Steedman 1990:244

Steedman argues that postmodern theorists' interest in the separation of autobiography and biography, and the notion of the fragmented self, 'of splitting oneself off from oneself in order to write a life story' (Steedman 1990:243), restricts writers (and readers) from thinking or interpreting a life story in particular ways. Steedman believes that consideration should be given to non-traditional biographies, which can transcend the boundaries of autobiography and biography (Steedman 1990:244). Other writers of historical biography also urge a greater awareness of the constructed nature and hence 'fictional' nature of historical discourse (Nissen 1997:334). In any telling of another's life story Steedman claims there can exist 'shades' of autobiography of the narrator and she sees no harm in this. Writing about the problems of biography, Kay Ferres raises this question about the relationship between the biographer and the subject, and between knowledge relations, such as what is known and what is unknown. She asks whether feminist research can maintain a critical distance as writer and subject become closely

immersed 'in a complex series of identifications and differentiations' (Ferres 1994:46-7). While the writer and subject interact, some gaps must remain and the ambiguity of one's own life and another's life becomes caught up in a paradoxical text. It is within these gaps that some imaginings can take place. This raises two further questions. One, is the author a trustworthy narrator who understands the relationship between the private self and the public world? Two, is it possible to answer these questions within an historical text? Steedman confirms that it is possible, as the subject does not stand in isolation. There are hosts of outside voices that give witness to the political and social practices of a particular time and place in history. It is this discourse which enters from without and a series of events which drive the course of the narrative. In this way history becomes a persuasive device which allows the writer as the narrator and intermediary of these different voices, in conjunction with documents used to outline a life story, not only the authority of a story teller, but also confirms her authority as an historian (Steedman 1990:245).

While I use historical narrative as a rhetorical device in writing the life story of Irene Longman, it is my intention to concentrate on the interpretations than can be made of her life rather than on the narration. In order to resist undesirable closure, my biographical organization is designed to be seen as a beginning rather than the end. The purpose is to reveal what can be substantiated and what meanings and uses others can make of her life story. Steedman recounts that life stories can be told, and the experience of living and feeling can be organized in chronological order (or part themetical and chronological) to reach the conclusion of a life. Yet, it is only when the fragmented 'self' is unified can the subject be recognised in her entirety and 'come into possession of her own story' (Steedman 1990:247).

Problems associated with the constructed nature and hence ‘fictional’ nature of historical discourse used in the telling of a life story, and the suggestion that these devices only give the illusion of truth and objectivity, can be remedied by the use of historical themes of the past. To offset this problem, some of the themes I use include political history, the emergence of the welfare state, and the scientific approach to childcare, all critical discourses which have already been described by historians. In this way, by heeding the arguments of other historians can current interpretations be confirmed, adjusted or denied thereby giving the writer some claim to understanding truth and objectivity (Steedman 1990:245-6). As the first scholarly biography of Irene Longman, the purpose of this thesis is one of recovery and interpretation. My approach focuses on the historical process of her incorporation into social and political life and her agency in this process.



**PART 1.**

**POLITICAL LIFE.**

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 28, 1930. *Courier*

# PICTORIAL



Members of Parliament, who yesterday made a visit of inspection to the Department of Agriculture, photographed with officers of the Department. The Minister for Agriculture (Mr. H. F. Walker) is the third figure from the left in the front row.

## **Political Life**

### **The Contender**

I was but one of a band of local women who set out purposefully to secure certain reforms, and we all kept on until we got them.... We won, as we expected, for never, never would we admit defeat, even when the battle seemed to be against us.

Margaret Ogg, co-founder of the  
Queensland Women's Electoral League

Irene Longman received Parliamentary honours on the morning of Wednesday, 21 August 1929, when the official opening of the Queensland Parliament was held. Irene's sensational victory for the Country Progressive National Party in the electorate of Bulimba, formally regarded as a Labor stronghold, had excited a popular response. Due to the expectations of an unusually large crowd who were anxious to witness and participate in the success of the first woman to enter the Queensland Parliament, the ceremony was held in the more spacious Legislative Council Chambers of the Parliament (*Brisbane Courier* 22 August, 1929). Usually a great social event, this opening was exceptional, with some women without admission cards seen crowding at doorways, while the less adventurous stood outside the windows opening onto the colonnade, hoping to catch a glimpse of this remarkable woman (*Brisbane Courier* 22 August, 1929). Although the chamber was usually adorned with flags and pot plants, these were absent. A colourful parade of judges in scarlet robes, and military and navel personnel were complimented by great splashes of different shades worn by women present, and hats for women were the order of the day (*Brisbane Courier* 22 August, 1929). Amidst this colourful throng, was the woman everyone wanted to see.

At fifty-two years of age, Irene Longman's memorable features were her natural brown curly hair and soft grey eyes. Having sufficient presence and confidence, Irene had no

interest in following modern fashion trends. She was simply and modestly dressed in navy blue crepe de chine (dress length below the knee) (NCW 1924:2), her convictions being that dress should be modest and suitable to Queensland's tropical climate. As she particularly disliked wearing a hat, especially when she was speaking in public (Bayley 1995:PC), Irene was hatless. MacKinnon claims that some early professional women chose an asexual appearance as a strategy to avoid the gaze of men or 'as a way of avoiding the dangers of being seen as a woman intruding into a man's world' (MacKinnon 1997:147). This was not Irene Longman's way. She maintained her femininity with a mixture of the traditional and modern. With her shingled hair and no hat, she preferred comfort rather than the tedious conventions of style. Accompanying Irene on this momentous occasion was her husband Heber, and political friends from the Queensland Women's Electoral League, President Mrs. J.H. Goldsmith and organising secretary, Miss Margaret Ogg. (*Brisbane Courier* 22 August, 1929).

After members of the new Parliament had taken the Oath of Office and the official opening of Parliament had concluded, business in the Parliament began in earnest later in the day. The diminutive, quietly reserved Irene Longman took her place with other members of the Government, occupying a seat on the third cross bench on the Government side of the house (Qld. Liberal 1961:11).

Despite making history as the first woman to enter the Queensland Parliament, the celebration of this eventful day has long since been forgotten, as has Longman's contribution to Queensland's social and political life. It is probable that little attention has been given to Irene Longman because she only served one term in the Parliament in the years between 1929-1932. These were critical years in Queensland's history due to the

Great Depression. It must also be remembered that Irene Longman operated within a political culture where the liberal tradition of Australian politics was the underlying patriarchal assumption that politics was a man's domain.

The role of women was to be a complimentary one to that of men, and the expected feminine role focused more on home and family life. In effect, by situating women firmly within the private sphere, this legitimised the assumption that women were unsuited to political life, thereby marginalizing and obscuring women's political participation. Further, to locate Irene Longman's entry into the political arena as an aberration would only serve to trivialise her activities and diminish the hard work and commitment she gave to both the community and public life. So what made Irene Longman so exceptional? What made her an acceptable candidate for political life? What were the events that led to her dramatic entry into (and departure from) the Queensland Parliament? These are some of the questions I ask with the intention of bringing Irene Longman's political career out of obscurity and restoring it to a history of women, both in politics and cultural life.

While women were conspicuously absent from the Queensland Parliament until 1929, this did not mean women were politically inactive. Women's pressure groups and organizations were prolific with their activities centred on women's rights in many non-party organizations. Non-party organizations were strengthened by the formation of the Women's National Liberal Union in 1901, the Queensland Women's Electoral League in 1903, as well as organizations supporting the Labor cause, the Women's Equal Franchise Association and the Working Women's Trade Union. By 1903 women in Queensland had won the right to the vote in the next State elections (held in 1905), but were not entitled to become political representatives until 1915.

An indefatigable worker for women's organizations, Irene Longman after many years of service became the President of the National Council of Women (1921-25). This was a non-political association, affiliated with many other organizations that lobbied for specific women's rights. A long time member of the Queensland Women's Electoral League, Longman fought for equal representation on selection committees for non-Labor parliamentary candidates. This organizational experience made Irene Longman an obvious choice for selection as a political candidate (NCW 1959:10). The Queensland Women's Electoral League was one of the many organizations that worked to secure Queensland women the right to vote in State Elections in 1905. The League was extremely active in arranging the selection of suitable candidates for elections, encouraging private enterprise and opposing state intervention regarding individual rights and the independence of its citizens. Irene Longman's familial experience fostered her liberal convictions at an early age and played an important part in the formation of her political and social beliefs (Bayley 1995:PC). Consequently, it was logical for Longman to be drawn to an organization like the QWEL as members shared her political views.

Among women's groups there were ideological differences which divided them, yet all groups were united in their interests for the maintenance of the White Australian Policy and 'to secure just political representation in State and Federal Parliaments, and to safeguard the interests of women' (Young 1991:124-5). Even so, ideological difference sometimes caused friction. In a Labor Party publication, the *Worker*, criticism was levelled at the QWEL for its claim to run on non-party lines. The article claimed that the League 'was split into two factions, women of 'progressive instincts' and 'the silver tails' who dominated the women's league and who were 'ladies in all the prejudices and narrowness of class' (Young 1991:126). Still the QWEL maintained a 'middle of the road' course in politics and resisted

becoming amalgamated with any political party. They endeavoured to preserve their individuality and the right to protest against any legislation presented by any government that might be detrimental to women (Hacker 1994:112). Still, it must be said that while the QWEL did not support the Labor Party, up until 1929 they received little or no support from conservative parties.

The QWEL had fought for the right to be included in the pre-selection processes of the non-Labor parties, but after years of rejection of their preferred contenders, it decided to nominate its own candidate and Irene Longman was the first. When one of the Country Progressive National Party male nominees withdrew at the last minute, the CPN Party accepted Longman's nomination succumbing to pressure from the QWEL. The selection for a candidate for the electorate of Bulimba read: Mrs. Heber Longman, housewife of Woolloowin; Mr. W. Moore, saddler of Coorparoo; and Mr. J.H.C. Harper, journalist of Morningside. Irene Longman won pre-selection for what was considered the unwinnable seat of Bulimba. This electorate as well as being considered unwinnable, was a long way from home for Irene Longman. While in today's political climate she would have been strongly criticised for not living in the electorate, this was not a specific criteria for candidacy at that time. Contesting a seat so far removed from her own home must have been a handicap for Irene, but there were other favourable considerations that led to her candidacy.

In 1928, the QWEL was at its peak with branches throughout Queensland and a membership of over 20,000 (Hacker 1994:111). Realising that female representation was long overdue, and with such a strong support base, the organization made the decision to field a candidate in the 1929 elections. Convinced that committee work in women's

organizations would provide a foundation of knowledge for women to become good Members of Parliament, QWEL approached Irene Longman and she accepted. Of this proposal, Longman said:

The request came as a surprise and my first impulse was to refuse. However, being convinced of the need for women in our Legislatures and having consistently advocated their inclusion, I decided to accept and perhaps lead the way for others.

Longman 1950:4

The electorate of Bulimba, widely scattered and stretching from Stones Corner to Murarrie, was considered unwinnable by the CPN Party as Labor's hold on the seat seemed impregnable. Labor held the seat with a safe margin of 10.41%. Irene Longman was fully aware of this situation, and realised from the Party's standpoint the position was hopeless. When suggestions were made to Longman that she only got the endorsement because the seat of Bulimba was unwinnable, she said, "Well, I won't refute that". Still Irene Longman remained optimistic. If Labor's hold on the seat of Bulimba was considered impenetrable for the Country Progressive National Party, how was it possible for Irene Longman to achieve winning the almost unattainable seat in the State of Queensland?

Before her entry into Parliament, Irene Longman's intellectual interests were wide ranging and her work within women's organizations was well known. She was recognised as a learned and well-read woman, who had splendid qualifications for political life. Her impact as a public speaker was described as follows:

This lady is an earnest, vivacious speaker, has a pleasant contralto voice; her repartee is quick and sparkling, and she knows how to let the hammer of wit fall deftly on the diamond of originality.

Thurlow 1994:9



The claim that male relatives provided pioneering women candidates a legitimate entry into political life (Sawer and Simms 1993:77) does seem evident as there is something of a tradition of this in Australia up to the present<sup>3</sup>. Nonetheless, being a member of a political family must have certainly provided fertile grounds for Irene Longman's interest in pursuing a political career. Longman's brother, Percy Molineux had been the Farmers' Union and Independent member of the Legislative Assembly for Pittsworth on the Darling Downs (1915-20). Her younger brother, James Garfield Bayley was Nationalist MHR for Oxley and Deputy Speaker in the Bruce-Page Coalition in the Federal Parliament (1917-31), and later MLA for Wynnum in 1933-35 (Nairn and Serle 1986:139-40). Irene Longman's brother-in-law Jack Lister, (married to her sister Laura) subsequently was to become MHR for Corio in Victoria in 1917<sup>4</sup> (*Smiths Weekly* August 1928). While it has been stated that Irene Longman's sister, Miss J.B. Bayley was a member of the House of Representatives for Rydon (McMullen 1994:65), this is a case of mistaken identity. Irene Longman did not inherit a seat in the Queensland Parliament because of her family's representation. It was her involvement in the struggle for women's political and legal rights within women's organizations that lent strong support to her nomination and consequent election.

A statement printed in the *Daily Mail* (13 May 1929 p8) that Irene Longman was unique as she was the first woman to ever stand for a seat in the Queensland Parliament was not correct. The Labor Party had endorsed Henriette Turner for the unwinnable seat of Mirani in 1923. She was not successful, and Labor did not endorse another female candidate until 1957 (Fitzgerald 1984:48). Two other women had also been nominated for the Labor Party,

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<sup>3</sup> E.g. Dame Annabelle Rankin, Dame Enid Lyons, Jocelyn Newman, Kim Beasley, Simon Crean and Bob Katter.

<sup>4</sup> Married to Irene's sister Laura, Jack Lister had previously been a farmer on the Darling Downs and was the first Returned soldier to hold a seat in the Federal Parliament (Qld. Museum Memoirs 1956:58).

Mrs. Huxham and Mrs Anderson but neither had won the plebiscite. Mrs. Huxham, a Labor platform speaker and close friend of Irene Longman said ‘we will have to put up with sex prejudice for a long time’ (*Telegraph* 4 May 1929:16). Irene Longman realised that there was some prejudice against her from both some men and women, but believed this only came from those who were naturally conservative at heart, and not conversant with the trend of modern day politics (*Truth* 1929:7). Irene Longman did not like to be called a ‘conservative’ and claimed that ‘conservatism (with a small “c”’) was usually said to be of a masculine gender’ (Longman 1950:4). She held the view that there were different expectations regarding women’s place in society. While men still held on to the old mid-Victorian beliefs that women’s place was in the home (Longman 1929:62), women were more liberal and practical in their views, using a commonsense approach to their place in society (*Brisbane Courier*, May 4, 1929).

In the following section, we will travel with Irene Longman on the hustings, as she takes up the challenge and begins her strenuous campaign. It is not so much Longman’s campaign strategies that are important here, but the need to highlight other significant historical factors, which were central to her success.

## **The Campaign - 1929**

Three important factors were helpful to Irene Longman's campaign. First was strong support from the QWEL; second, was the disunity and unpopularity of the Labor Party at the time; and third, was the competent campaign waged by a united conservative party. The strength of the QWEL's support at no point ever wavered, even though there was media criticism concerning the power of the women's vote. Journalist Gibbs writing in the *Sunday Times* claimed that women would not vote for a woman candidate and conceded that Longman's greatest opposition would come from women. Gibbs claimed that more men than women had voted for Mrs. Longman in the plebiscite to choose the candidate. However, Gibbs does not give the composition of the selection panel, which was more than likely predominantly male. The QWEL women were more optimistic. They believed that the oft-quoted myth that women would not support their own sex and did not want them in parliament was out-dated and that their loyalty to the cause belied this myth. In the past some women voted as their husbands did, but women claimed 'not this time'.

Octogenarian Mrs Thomas, who lived in the Bulimba electorate in 1929, remembered Mrs Longman winning the election. "It was a great to do" she said (Thomas 1995:PC). She remembered Mrs Longman as 'a lovely lady' and said everyone liked her, but that she and her husband had voted for the Labor Party. The Thomas family, Catholics with one child, did not oppose Longman because she was a woman, but because their political beliefs dictated their support for the Labor Party (Thomas 1995:PC).

With a strong and authoritarian style of leadership, and close relationships with the Trade Union movement and the Catholic Church, the Labor Party in Queensland had held political power since 1915. By 1928, after bitter in fighting with the Australian Railway

Union, the Labor government had not endeared itself to many of its 'true believers' and had become disunited. With a worldwide depression looming, and beset by the Mungana scandal, the party's unpopularity increased. In the late 1920's rumours persisted that Cabinet Ministers were involved in deals regarding the state owned mines. When the Chillagoe mines and smelters turned out to be uneconomic, the then Premier, Ted Theodore committed the state to purchase the Mungana mine in 1922. When it was revealed that McCormack (later Premier) was a small shareholder in this mine (Fitzgerald 1984:34), he became the main target of attack. However, Theodore was also implicated by inference as it was known that he held shares in other mines that had dealings with the state (Kennedy 1980:293). McCormack had defended himself and Theodore against charges of corruption and the use of their position to trade in mining shares both in Parliament and in public (Murphy 1978:337), but the seeds of doubt had been sown.

These doubts contributed to an electorate shift towards the conservatives and away from Labor. This undoubtedly helped Longman enter the mainstream of political life. With support for the Labor Party waning, Premier McCormack's unpopularity increased. With the Labor Party divided, its opposition was convinced that the key to electoral success in an optimal preferential voting system was for anti-labour forces to be united (Costar 1978:376-7). Consequently, the Country Progressive National Party was formed in December 1925, loosely uniting the rural based National Party, the Northern Country Party, the Country Party and some Liberal members into its ranks, thus consolidating non-labour forces in its bid to defeat the Australian Labor Party. Arthur Edward Moore, who played a key role in the new Party's formation, became its leader (Fitzgerald 1984:24-37). In the Campaign of 1929, an escalating economic crisis was facing Queensland. Moore as leader of the CPNP waged a competent campaign focusing on unemployment and the ailing economy. With

slogans “Change the Government” and “Give the Boy a Chance” (Fitzgerald 1994:37), the CPN Party won wide electoral support. Confident of the support she received from the QWEL as the campaign proceeded, Irene Longman found she gained a lot of support from men, ‘many of whom exhibited the enthusiasm and zeal of converts’ (Longman 1950:5).

Irene Longman was gaining support for her campaign, even though there was little financial help given. In the Party ranks, no one believed that Longman had much of a chance so few funds were made available. Working from the CPNP committee room, City Buildings, Edward Street, Brisbane with Margaret Ogg authorising all printed material, Irene Longman spent most of her campaign in the electorate, meeting and talking with voters. Her campaign secretary was Mrs. Patrick Christensen<sup>5</sup>, a member of the Q.W.E.L.’s Debating Society, known as a woman who was vocally able and not afraid to meet any challenge. With no funds to start the campaign, Mrs. Christensen was ‘paid’ five pounds by the QWEL to cover expenses (*Courier Mail* 22 July, 1974, p12). Later, when it became clear that Longman was gathering support, money was provided by the Party organization (Longman’s Scrapbook:62).

The opening of Irene Longman’s campaign held at the Morningside Hall was a great success, considering she was in one of Labor’s strongholds. A large crowd attended, with many standing outside at windows and in packed doorways. Supporters were out in force. The hall was decked with flowers and music was supplied. Police were in attendance (Hacker 1994:67). After this successful launch, Irene Longman began her strenuous campaign. She door knocked at thousands of homes, asked constituents about their particular concerns, addressed meetings in halls and in the open air (McCulloch 1994:13).

Transport must have been difficult for her, as the Tramway only went as far as Balmoral<sup>6</sup> and did not extend to Bulimba until 1935. Most people living in Bulimba used the Ferry to cross the Brisbane River and travelled by tram to the Valley or the City. Living in Woolloowin placed Irene Longman at a great distance from her electorate (Black 1996:PC). This must have seriously restricted her mobility in covering such a large electorate. Nevertheless support was available, as women in the electorate who did have motor vehicles would often help out. Mrs. Christensen reported that they would doorknock a certain area, wait for a car, and then proceed to another section of the electorate. In an interview for the *Courier Mail* in 1974, Mrs Christensen recalled some of the events of the 1929 campaign. She claimed that modern day politicians did not realise to what lengths she and Irene Longman had to go to win votes. One constituent, believing that divine guidance was needed to make a decision about his vote, ordered Mrs. Christensen to her knees to pray with him (*Courier Mail* 22 July 1974:12).

Irene Longman was fortunate in receiving good publicity, particularly from the *Daily Mail*. Labor Premier McCormack had been critical of this newspaper and had withdrawn Labor's political advertising (Fitzgerald 1984:37). This worked in Irene Longman's favour. Letters of support from women were constantly sent into the daily newspapers supporting her campaign, but many were critical of her being given what they perceived as an 'unwinnable' electorate. 'A Woman Elector' wrote to the *Daily Telegraph*: 'The Party should offer Mrs. Longman the safe seat of Oxley and let Mr. Jolly<sup>7</sup> fight Bulimba'. Mrs. Christensen, as organising secretary for the Campaign Committee responded: 'Mrs Longman is confident and 'sport' enough to stand by Bulimba. A woman candidate does

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<sup>5</sup> Mother of Clem Christensen, Editor of Meanjin

<sup>6</sup> Bordering on Morningside and Hawthorne in those days

not expect preferential treatment'. *The Patriot* reported that [Longman] had a sense of humour, was 'no swank' and was often seen enjoying an ice cream on a hot day or eating her lunch by the roadside as she toured around the electorate. Even though Irene Longman received lots of good publicity, there were detractors. *The Catholic Advocate* did not support her candidature. With many working class Catholics and the Church supporting the Labor Party, *The Catholic Advocate* attacked the CPNP for having a woman candidate. A report claimed that the Nationalists must have been desperate to defeat their tenacious opponents, by turning to women for allies. The article continued:

The contemplation of a woman sitting in Parliament amongst 71 men creates the same kind of funny impression that the sight of a timid hare would amongst a yard -full of sheep. Members would feel indefinitely but, nevertheless, sensitively embarrassed. They would certainly not feel at ease, if friendly with her, to ask her as they do with the men, to have 'a drink'.

*Catholic Advocate October 25, 1928*

This journalistic rhetoric suggests Irene Longman's entry into the Parliament would greatly disconcert the political fraternity and cause disorder in the House. This prejudice was being used to marginalise Irene Longman's position as a worthy or capable candidate and at the same time to try to lessen the anti-Labor vote. Longman's opponent, was the sitting Labor member Mr. A.H. Wright, an Englishman, described as ambitious and vain. He used the same tactic. Branding Irene Longman an inferior rival, he commented: 'I am only being opposed by a woman' (Bernays 1931:337).

Bernays writes that Wright was full of confidence and self-complacency. In a conversation with Premier McCormack, Wright was heard to say: "I say Mac, you and I seem to be the only two people who are not worrying". "Oh," said McCormack, "Don't make any.....mistake. I am worrying, if you are not". An old campaigner like McCormack was

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<sup>7</sup> Previous Mayor of Brisbane

fully aware that victory should not be taken for granted and that unless candidates spread themselves widely throughout their electorates, they would be far from the top of the list on polling day (Bernays 1930:337).

On election day Irene Longman was successful, turning Wright's absolute majority of 1027 at the previous election into a majority of 401 for herself. Of Longman's victory, Bernays wrote:

And so it came to about that one little feeble woman, full to the brim with energy, overflowing with sympathy for her sex, simple, non-aggressive, ladylike to her fingertips, just metaphorically took A.J. Wright by the scruff of the neck and scrubbed the whole surface of the large Bulimba electorate with him, wiping out a majority of thousands (Bernays 1931:337).

These condescending comments reflect a perspective about women's limited physical and psychological capacities. They also carry a more hostile message to women, implying they are emotional and irrational beings quite unsuited for political life. This reinforces cultural assumptions that a woman's place is in the home, chastising the children and scrubbing the floors. Asked for her impressions, Irene said:

Even before I knew I could win, I found the people of the district so friendly and so sympathetic that I would not have exchanged the chance of Bulimba for an 'easy' seat. On my personal visits I found that there was a great thirst for general information, and men and women were often quite reluctant for me to leave their homes so eager were they to hear of new ideas and developments in public life.

*Brisbane Courier* 13 May 1929, p.17

Irene Longman had proven her physical strength in managing a very strenuous campaign. She also challenged assumptions that women were psychologically inferior. Identifying with 'Mary Wollstonecraft's model of rational, intellectual....woman' (Mac Kinnon 1997:134), Irene Longman's feminine approach to politics held that the entry of educated women, with ability, knowledge and wisdom, into Parliaments of the world would see these



institutions change and be more representative of all its citizens. She believed that educated women had the same reasoning capacity as men, but their difference and common-sense way of arranging things, would bring a new and distinct element into political life. Irene Longman did not believe that men should control political life. Women had the power to change things for the better, so a more just and equitable society could emerge (Longman 1962:1).

Following her success at the polls, Irene Longman was greeted with cheers and carried shoulder high into the Party room. One well-known politician enthusiastically cried “She’s the best man of us all”. Although Irene Longman graciously accepted such remarks, she later commented: ‘This somewhat doubtful compliment was received how it was meant, but with an inner reservation as to its significance and lasting quality’ (Longman 1950:5). Irene Longman’s doubts were well founded. After entering the Parliament, she was excluded from the Parliamentary Dining Room, and had to eat her meals on the veranda (McCulloch 1994:18). She did not have access to all rooms marked ‘Members only’. There were no female toilets in the building and there is no record what was done about this, but John McCulloch states this matter was not addressed until the arrival of the next female Member Vi Jordan, thirty-four years later (McCulloch 1994:18). As celebrations continued, in the euphoria of the moment, Irene Longman said:

“They call us Tory – at present we are Vic-tory and we hope later to be His-tory” (*Brisbane Courier* 3 May, 1929). That history was made that day did not escape the voters who happened to be women.

How did Irene Longman fit into the previously ‘Men only Citadel’ and what strategies and tactics did she employ? These questions will be addressed in the next section. Having a

woman in the House would not only be a new experience for Irene Longman, but also for the seventy-one politicians, who entered what had been a male stronghold since the inception of the Queensland Parliament for the past sixty years.

## In the House

Irene Longman's parliamentary career began in an atmosphere where doubts that Queensland was not yet ready for a woman to enter the Legislature were being freely expressed (Bernays 1931:338). There were more than a few MLA's who queried the wisdom of Parliament permitting a woman to invade a domain previously held sacrosanct, the prerogative of the masculine gender to frame the legislation of the State, declared a *Queensland Liberal* article (1961:11). Despite these misgivings, Irene Longman was acclaimed on the grounds that there was 'nothing aggressive about her' (Bernays 1931:338-9). Realising that she should 'insinuate' herself into the previously masculine domain, rather than throw herself at it, in her maiden speech she attempted to calm the fears of her male colleagues with the following assurance:

My desire to enter political responsibilities arises rather from a sense of duty than from the spirit of sex antagonism which is a natural outcome of ages of suppression and which bore a large part in the struggle for the emancipation of women.

Longman QPD 1929:10

In her first speech in the House, Irene Longman, soft of voice but assertive, wanted it understood that she was earnest in the cause she represented, and aware of the problems facing the incoming government. While she was prepared to be a listener and to learn for the moment, there was little time for her to adjust to these new experiences. Irene Longman's maiden speech was delivered on 21 August, 1929, the first sitting day of the new Parliament (*Queensland Liberal* 1961:11). When Longman took her seat in Parliament, the government decided that to honour her as being the first woman to grace the Parliament, she should move the adoption of the Address-in-Reply to the Governor's speech. The gallery was crowded with women predominating among the spectators. As Irene Longman

rose to speak, she was greeted by enthusiastic applause from the packed gallery and from Members on both sides of the House. This evoked an admonition from the speaker, Mr. Charles Taylor and Irene Longman was asked to resume her seat. When order returned, Longman resumed her address. Such a welcome in the House must have been pleasing for Longman, but it would certainly have been unsettling and no doubt she would have been apprehensive about her performance. Of this speech Irene Longman recalled feeling a little nervous. "I never quite got over the butterfly feeling in my stomach just before making a big speech, but once I got started, I was all right" (*Brisbane Courier*, May 21, 1953,p.2).

Longman's speech clearly opposed the principles of socialism, which she said 'made the government the national landlord, the national employer and the national financier' (QPD 1929:11). She rejected any suggestion for 'the nationalisation of industry' supported by the opposition, and declared that by abolishing state enterprises 'social justice and political freedom' would be restored (QPD, Vol.153, 21 August, 1929 p.10-12). Irene Longman argued that the activities of the free market would deliver better outcomes than the government or other state mechanisms, her idea being that by shifting economic activities to the market, the whole population would benefit (WEL.1995:1-2). Working within a liberal philosophical framework, Longman accepted men and women as equal citizens. Longman believed that social justice and freedom should encompass all mankind and that the role of the state was not sectional but had sovereign power to 'ensure the peaceful and equitable opportunity of free exchange' (Gatens 1992:123). Longman states 'we will not forget the great principle that right and justice shall be denied to no man' (QPD 1929:12).

As a humanist, Longman uses this term generically to mean that as all rational human beings, men and women 'share the same natural state of equality (Yeatman 1995:47). Irene

Longman accepts the essential characteristics of men and women as being naturally given, but at the same time believes women are different because of their femininity and different ideas about social and moral duties. From a feminist perspective, Longman understands the interpretation of the woman question as an extension of liberal meaning in regard to liberty and equality. Longman positions herself against any form of class distinction, regarding it morally wrong to define people into 'classes' according to their social and economic status (Truth May 12, 1929:7). Longman vigorously attacked class consciousness and class hatred calling them 'worn out creeds which should be relegated to the limbo of forgotten things' (Longman Telegraph May 4, 1929).

As Judith Brett points out, politics is a conflict of principles, and as such, class carries a range of meanings and is essentially a contested concept (Brett 1993:32). With this in mind, it seems opportune to make some comparison at this point to distinguish quite clearly how feminist activists use different political theories in the prevailing intellectual tradition to engage in debate and to bring this understanding to the public world. To maintain a Queensland context I use the political approach presented by Ellen Violet Jordan.

As a member of the Labor Party and only the second woman to enter the Queensland Parliament (1966-1974), Jordan differed in many significant ways from her predecessor. Working her way up through the ranks of the Labor Party, she focused her attention on class based analysis. Jordan believed that a more just and equitable society relied on state intervention for the redistribution of power and resources. Jordan's philosophy recognised 'class' as representing collectively the ordinary working man and woman as one class in opposition to a minority group of rich and powerful who owned the means of production (Brett 1993:33). A proponent of the Marxist theory, Jordan espoused socialism seeking a

more even distribution of resources to the working class, believing that the infrastructure of government was necessary in order to survive the economic climate in Queensland. On the other hand, Irene Longman's political economic perspective was against state intervention in the market place, supporting free enterprise.

Despite these philosophical differences, both women shared a common cause, an interest in raising the status of women, proposing changes in education, careers and legal and political issues, and affirming their clear belief in the distinctiveness and legitimacy of a woman's point of view.

What must be considered in this comparison is that although Longman and Jordan were both 52 years of age when they entered the Parliament, they belonged to two distinct generations. Because of a different historical era, each was influenced by the discourses that prevailed at a particular moment in time. On the women's issue, from a socialist perspective, Jordan conceptualised women as a 'sex class' disadvantaged by discrimination, custom and a lack of status and opportunity. On the other hand, Longman's liberal perspective did not concede women as a 'class' but accepted the 'individual' notion of womanhood. Yet looking at women as a distinct social group, Longman believed that it was the selfishness of men that impeded women from reaching their potential, and she raised economic discrimination long before it became a political issue. She also advocated that women could improve their socio-economic position by way of education.

Jordan's starting point was that it was the economic circumstances of women's work, both in the public sphere and in the home, that was their greatest handicap, and focused on the difficulties women encountered in their dual role (Williams 1973:15). Although both

women approached the 'woman question' in different ways, they were both serious about freedom and equality for women. Both Longman and Jordan were motivated by social consciousness and a strong sense of justice, but their views were different because of their political theories and by class and cultural identities which informed their experiences of gender issues' (Cott 1992:49-60). Another important factor for their different approaches to political life was the historical era in which each woman participated.

Jordan faced different situations in the 1960s and 70s than Irene Longman did in the 1920s and 30s. Prior to the Second World War, Australia had been closely aligned with and influenced by all things British. By the early fifties, the interests of Australia and the British government had considerably proceeded in different directions. The signing of the Anzus Treaty in 1951 marked a turning point in Australian relations with both the United Kingdom and the United States of America. Both the Chifley and Curtin ALP federal government's economic strategy had led to 'a cutting of the apron strings which tied Australia to a declining British Empire...and towards the increasingly powerful American economy' (Beresford and Kerr 1980:166). This changed the structure of Australian capitalism from industrial to consumer capitalism and therefore posed different problems for women than were evident in the pre-war years.

With her long experience of working with women's organizations, Irene Longman was fully aware of the problems that women faced. However, her liberal feminism becomes more complex as the status of women in liberal theory and practice presents her with a number of paradoxes as she sees the situation of women in different ways. Longman realised for Queensland women in the 1920s and 30s there was little sign of equality, whether of pay, opportunity or status in industry, the public service or in other Government

appointments. Irene Longman did not advocate that women give up their domestic duties, but urged them to use their specific 'difference', their knowledge, experience and moral autonomy to secure for women equal opportunity and equal pay for similar work.

Efficiency, not sex, was to be the determining factor; to secure the economic independence of women whether married or single, and to open for women the door to the higher administrative positions of government and other public bodies (*Telegraph* 30 May, 1928). Because Longman saw the interests and needs of women as being different from men, she advocated that women should develop a political consciousness, and should challenge dominant male power. Irene Longman said 'women need not be afraid of being overpowered by the intellect of men' (QPD 1929:228). She did not believe that only men could politically represent women, and claimed that a woman's voice was needed to raise the special interests and needs of women and children. Because of the advances in technology, Longman believed women were no longer confined to the home, but should be given the opportunity through education to lead artistic, intellectual and socially useful lives. Longman claimed that women had been emancipated during the war years. With a shortage of manpower, women were able to take on working roles that were traditionally held by men.

Writing in the 1970s, Germaine Greer argued that the women's suffrage movement had won the vote for women but did little towards their emancipation. Greer claimed that when a small number of women did enter the Parliament, they simply represented women's interests in the form of social reform to protect women. On the positive side, Greer concedes that because the reforms eventually happened, this led to the next generation of women understanding their position (Greer 1970:11-13). However, to maintain that women



in the post suffrage years only concentrated on social reform negates the efforts and representation focused on women's economic independence. Longman certainly argued for social reform in policies affecting women and children because she felt they needed protection from laws and policies designed by men for men. But she also campaigned for citizen's rights and for an improvement in working women's wages. How then do we account for the contradictory positions Irene Longman presents?

On the one hand she seeks the recognition of women's sexual difference from men and on the other, makes compelling claims that men and women have the same rational and moral responsibilities to society. 'The co-operation of men and women in public life is the keynote of our modern life, and gives us hope for the future' stated Irene Longman in the House (QPD 1929:11). Her ideals were for growth and development of the human spirit. She was speaking of a new sexual identity where women were equal partners with men. Irene Longman's hope for the future was for a progressive society where women and men had equal rights, a society in which women could develop their specific capacities to the full, unimpeded by legal, social and economic restrictions and supported by men and women who shared these ideals. This society could be achieved with a spirit of co-operation, and the removal of barriers of sex. Institutional reform could lay the foundations for a new citizenship and a new type of state. While Longman spoke for equality she believed that because of women's natural feminine attributes, they should be responsible for the social and moral uplifting of society. She did not judge women as being superior to men, only that they were different.

One of Irene Longman's most successful representations while she was in the Queensland Parliament was the appointment of policewomen. Her representation in this instance not

only highlights the benefit of a woman's voice, but also helps to explain the contradictions of liberal theory and practice, and particular assumptions that are employed. Longman had constantly raised the issue of employment of policewomen since the end of the First World War, but the idea had been rejected many times by Police Commissioner Urquhart, despite the favourable reports from other states. During the war years, women had been admitted to the Police Force in Britain due to a shortage of manpower, and other Australian states except Queensland, had followed suit. After the war, because of their invaluable work, South Australia had doubled the number of women police, and in N.S.W. the Women's Liberal League were conducting a campaign to increase the numbers and duties of policewomen. Irene Longman had constantly advocated and lobbied strongly for women police during the 1920s, on the premise that women should take care of women because they shared a distinctive understanding of their own sex. She had not been successful. Because of her understanding of this problem and her political position, Irene Longman had received representation from both men and women all over Queensland asking for her support on this issue. As a Member of Parliament, this gave Longman more power to influence the Home Secretary, the Hon. J.C. Peterson, for the introduction of women into the Police Force (Mullen 1994:123). In the House her political rhetoric was that 'whether women were criminals or unfortunates, they deserved to be looked after by their own sex' (QPD 1930:2168). Women had been employed in Correctional Services in the Prison Department, but Longman had objected to women being arrested and searched by men, as she believed this experience was degrading and humiliating for them (Bayley 1996:PC).

As police officers' wages were being reduced at this time because of the worsening effects of the depression, this was a courageous step for Irene Longman. The Police Commissioner, W.H. Ryan complained that he was not pleased with the outcome, making it

clear he would prefer male Constables. The Police Union added their grievances, considering the move to accept women into the Force to be a 'bad one' (McMullen 1994:123). Despite this resistance, Irene Longman persisted and she finally convinced the Police Commissioner to accept the appointment of women police officers. From sixty applicants, only two women were selected. Eileen O'Donnell and Zara Dane were duly appointed in March, 1931 (QPD 1931:2167). Nonetheless, Irene Longman's success in this achievement was limited and she was undoubtedly disappointed with the results. Even though legislation was introduced, it did not necessarily produce the outcome expected, nor match up with the more progressive legislation of other states.

Irene Longman perceived Queensland to be behind the times in its thinking when compared to South Australia, where women police were sworn in, had full powers, worked the same hours and were called upon to carry out the same duties as male police officers (QPD 1930:1046). Queensland's first two policewomen were given police duties, but they did not have the powers of arrest. They were never Police Officers, just policewomen in plain clothes. They did not take the Oath of Office, nor were they given the rights to the Police Pension Scheme. Although these two women could have been sworn in under Section 6 of the Police Act 1863, which would have given them full rights to the Police Pension Scheme, they were never granted that privilege (McMullen 1994:124). Equal rights did not apply to these two workers. Aspects of their appointment were that they assisted in investigations where offences had been committed against women and girls. Their duties included escorting women prisoners, searching women offenders, looking after lost children and finding missing persons (McMullen 1994:124).

Little is known of the tremendous work these two women contributed to Queensland's policing history or what became of them. What is known is that Zara Dane resigned to marry, and Eileen O'Donnell chose to maintain her independence and continue her career. Nondescript reports appearing in Eileen O'Donnell's file state her conduct was good and her work satisfactory. Eileen served thirty-one years of policing in Queensland and became a well-known and well-liked identity throughout the State. In the *Brisbane Courier* on 24 May, 1942, just after she returned from the 'outback' where she had looked after Maud Toohey during her murder trial, the article recorded the acquitted woman's high praise for Eileen's compassion and kindness. Yet Eileen O'Donnell never earned the title of Constable, nor did she receive the powers or wages accorded to policemen. Symbolically, having no uniform, title, power or benefits kept Eileen O'Donnell totally invisible and hidden from view. In reality, women's absence from historical accounts confirms Steedman's theory that:

Women were not an absence by ... the social and legal barriers to their action; rather, their absence and obscurity were organized by a wide variety of political thought and by various theories of femininity.

Steedman 1990:249

These two policewomen were paid two hundred and fifty five pounds, ten shillings and sixpence (approx \$511.00) per annum, about half the rate paid to male police constables (McMullen 1994:124). Because O'Donnell's role was only to act in protecting women and children, considered appropriate women's work, this marginalised her efforts and legitimised her half-pay salary. This lower rate of pay implied that women's work was of lesser value than men's, reflecting women's natural abilities rather than their ability for skilled and productive work (Anderson 1992:229). Longman claimed that this antagonism shown towards women entering the police force was largely due to a 'fear complex'. She

said that men felt threatened because women could do the work well, and eventually could be paid the same as men (QPD 1930:2168). Irene Longman did not live to see the first woman sworn in and to wear an official police uniform in Queensland as this did not occur until 1964.

Although Irene Longman and Ellen Jordan adopted different theoretical approaches to the 'woman question' they both agreed it was a lack of opportunity and equal consideration that kept women in an inferior position. Both showed a concern for social injustice and inequality, which they felt needed to be addressed. It must be remembered, however, that both women operated in different historical settings, so their concerns and the discourses available to them changed. For example, Jordan's political activity was centered on the introduction of a 'total wage' in 1967. At the beginning of the seventies a decision was made for the introduction of equal pay for men and women for equal work, which had a substantial impact on employment patterns (McGuinness 1985:10) and drew criticism from a wide range of interested parties. The situation of wage structure in the 1920s and 30s, was totally different, as was the nation's economic position. This was the historical setting for Irene Longman's political activity.

Irene Longman was critical of the wage structure and thought the present system futile in fixing a basic wage. The system she referred to was introduced in 1907 when the Harvester Judgement established the basic wage based on the amount of money necessary for a man to support 'in frugal comfort', a wife and three children, thus indexing the man's right to a higher wage and duty to support his wife and family. This in turn provided the ideals of the provider husband and the homemaker wife, and the parallel fear of women workers as a threat both economically and in occupational status (Walby 1983:30). Longman stated that

a basic wage, by which a single man obtained as much as a man with a large family was pointless and the system needed to be changed. First, she recommended a structure that included a family allowance so that families with more than three children could live decently (*Brisbane Courier* 20 January, 1931). Second, she argued that if women were to become economically independent, there should be equal pay for equal work. When women received a little over half the wage of a male worker, Longman stated that any intelligent person, irrespective of politics should recognise the urgent need to assist those on low income (*Brisbane Courier* 27 May, 1932).

Longman said she regretted that the current economic situation did not allow for these changes to take place at the present time. In the past, government members failed to see (or did not want to see) how these measures would help low-income workers and their families (*Brisbane Courier* May 27, 1932). Longman argued that the inequalities between men and women were based on women's sexual difference and not on their abilities. She claimed that the principle of a 'living' wage was a sound one in theory, but in practice it did not provide a fair or adequate wage distribution. She said she found it ironic that a country 'which rings with platitudes from pulpits, platforms and legislative chambers that children are the nation's greatest asset' (QPD May 30, 1930) only recognised the family unit of being husband and wife with two or three children. She was critical that there was no legislative sanction given to the teaching of scientific methods of birth control and the rational spacing of families, yet when families had more than three children, they were not adequately provided for.

## **A Family Allowance**

A long time supporter of child endowment, Longman had assembled facts and figures before her entry into Parliament. Well prepared, and with knowledge not only at a national level but of international systems in operation, Longman was presenting papers urging adjustments to the basic wage be made, in order to provide families with more than three children an adequate and fair wage to live on. In an address to the Women's Club in Brisbane in 1928, Longman expressed the hope that in Queensland, the government would soon realise that some system of family allowance would have to become 'the logical corollary of the living wage principle'. In her speech, she explained that family allowances were already being paid to Commonwealth Public Servants, and in New South Wales in 1927 a Family Endowment Act came into force. In New Zealand, a small beginning was made with two shillings per week paid for each child after the second child, in families whose weekly income did not exceed four pounds per week. In France and Belgium, since 1923, the state paid a family allowance for each child in excess of three. The success of this equalisation system operating in Europe, Longman claimed, was that large-scale enterprises also contributed and paid according to capacity and directly to the employees. This allowance was distinct from wages.

In Australia debates centred on the effectiveness of the Arbitration Commission, a quasi-judicial body set up in 1904 to manage wage fixing. Critics of this arbitration system argued that intervening in and regulating labour markets did untold damage to the Australian economy. Decisions of the Arbitration Commission, which affected the cost of employment without regard to the state of the economy, had an adverse effect on both workers and employers, particularly in times of labour market weakness. Irene Longman

said ‘we need to realise industrialism is the servant and not our master’ (QPD 1931:227). She argued that the spirit of commercialism should be more about people and not about money. She believed that problems with collective humanity remained unsolved because, while science and technology had advanced rapidly, the art of organising human relationships had been too slow. The question she asked was that if industrial relations were about people, why were the interests of the unemployed and families ignored? (QPD 1931:227). Irene Longman clearly positions herself against the functions of the Arbitration Commission as a wage setting body.

In her address in the Parliament, she argued that under the present system in Australia, because the basic wage provided for single men, industry was paying for over 450,000 imaginary wives and more than 2,000,000 non-existent children, while the needs and cost of rearing many living children were not being recognised. She maintained that introducing a family allowance would bring about a more equitable redistribution of wages, without creating any additional charge to industry or the national wealth. Irene Longman was not successful in her bid for this readjustment in Queensland. Supporting an endowment to be established by the Commonwealth, Longman believed that part of the problem in presenting this case was that in Australia the conservative Bruce-Page Federal government considered that such schemes should remain associated with the basic wage (QPD 1931:228). With a Federal election looming, the government’s purpose in maintaining this connection was to widen the authority of the Federal government by centralised wage fixing. Under the banner of ‘comparative wage justice’ the government wanted to ‘eliminate award wage differentials between States, so that uniformity of wage rates across Australia’ (McGuinness 1985:8-9) became the rule.



The fact that industries in the states differed in many ways, didn't seem to be important. Queensland's economy was based mainly on rural industries while the southern states were the major manufacturing centres.

The States refused to give over total control of wage fixation to the Commonwealth (QPD May 30, 1930). Another problem associated with this issue was that because of the economic depression, general wage cuts of ten per cent applied under both State and Federal awards (Scutt 1992:271). These wage cuts affected all workers, but more so women because the 'needs' of male workers as the family breadwinner were given priority by those determining the notion of wage justice (Scutt 1992:271). Even though Irene Longman realised her plan was not likely to gain support due to the present economic crisis, the time was not conducive to a successful outcome. She was hopeful that an adequate system would be put in place when the depression was over (QPD 30 May, 1930).

There was certainly strong support for this family allowance, as evidence placed before the Commission on child endowment appointed by the Federal Government in 1927 showed. Although opinions differed greatly as to details of a scheme to be implemented, there was support from professional and business people, economists, representatives of Government departments, commercial bodies, health and welfare associations and social organizations which showed that some form of family allowance was desirable (*Brisbane Courier* May 30:1930). The universal implementation of Child Endowment introduced in Australia in 1941 (Harris 1992:295) would have satisfied Irene Longman as her concerns for a more equitable living wage had finally been met. She would have been pleased that her efforts had not been in vain.

As Irene Longman moved around her electorate representing her constituents, she became aware that many were out of work and had been for some time, and said this saddened her. Wage cuts of the 1930s affected all workers, but more so women. Women did not fare well as the needs of male workers were given priority (Scutt 1992:271). The division made between men's work and women's work and maintained by distinctions between male and female spheres justified this priority. Fearful that women would take over men's work, the tradition that men worked while women stayed at home, took precedence when jobs were scarce. Exacerbated by the worldwide depression, unemployment was at a high level.

Queensland was the only state with a system of unemployment insurance, but it proved inadequate. The limitations of this scheme made it necessary for the government to take some action to supply work and sustenance for the growing number of unemployed. In formulating a new scheme the government introduced a special income tax to provide for an unemployment relief fund (Murphy and Joyce 1978:385). Supporting this Bill, Irene Longman spoke of the necessity to treat the Unemployment Tax Bill as a bi-partisan effort to lift the spirits of people and better their conditions. She regarded the democratic principle of assisting fellow-citizens an obligation and claimed it was 'far better that many people should be employed at a fair wage rather than that a few people should be employed at the basic wage' (QPD July 23,1930:182).

Recalling that Irene Longman had not previously been a member of a political party, but had come up the ranks through her work in women's organizations, suggests that she was not totally committed to party politics, but rather to the greater good for the greater number of people. This may account for the support she got as her speech brought praise from the opposition side of the House.

Mr. Hanlon (ALP) Ithaca said:

The Hon. Member for Bulimba has introduced a new note into this debate. In fact, she has contributed the only worth-while sentiment that I have heard from Hon. Members opposite during this debate, and one that will find an echo in the hearts of everyone on this side of the House and everyone outside the House (QPD 1930:183).

Irene Longman had not forgotten the interests and needs of the women of Queensland, and was critical of parts of the Bill being presented. Provisions were made for relief work in the Unemployment Relief Tax Bill, but no such plans were made for women mainly because there were very few avenues (considered women's work) open to them. Mr. Stop (ALP Mt. Morgan) supported Irene Longman's amendment, claiming that the only section of the community whose interests were entirely forgotten were the women workers of the State (QPD 1930:208). However, Longman challenged the Labor Party member, asking if the opposition was so concerned about the welfare of Queensland women, 'why did the Labor Party and the male organized Trade Unions support the concept of a 'family wage', which preserved male privilege and undervalued the work of women?' (QPD 1930:586). To cover the economic difficulties faced by the unemployed female worker, Irene Longman moved that a special board be set up to control funds set aside for unemployed women workers and requested that women be allowed to assume administrative responsibilities on this board (QPD 1930:586).

Supporting Longman's amendment, Mr. Dunlop (Independent Rockhampton) said that women should look after themselves, and indeed, were quite capable of wielding political power. Despite this support, Dunlop did not want Irene Longman to get the credit for her amendment. Dunlop declared that women electors of the state should know that the credit for this matter was due to the efforts of the opposition (QPD 1930:586). Accepting the amendment, the Secretary for Labor and Industry (Hon.H.E.Sizer, CNP Sandgate) asked

Dunlop why he didn't move such an amendment if he and his colleagues were so concerned for the unemployed women in Queensland (QPD 1930:230). Consequently, it can be seen that Irene Longman was in the forefront of recognising the social problems for women of the 1920s and 30s were economic ones. Her vision for a social wage rather than a fixed basic wage was well ahead of her time, as this concept was still a long way off.

### **Social Reforms**

While Irene Longman protested against wage injustices suffered by working women, this was only one of the inequities women had to face. She also campaigned for protective legislation and reforms to defend women and young girls from sexual exploitation, insisting on the same moral standards for both men and women (QPD 1930:1747). The problem for early feminists was masculinity. If women were to attain freedom and equality, the sexually independent 'new woman' needed a 'new man' that could match her at all levels (MacKinnon 1997:134). Irene Longman recognised this problem of masculinity and was concerned about the double standards imposed on the women of Queensland.

In Queensland women's sexuality was policed and women suspected of being prostitutes were harassed and subject to government regulations. These practices were used only in relation to women and not to men. Women could be arrested for prostitution, physically examined and if found to have a venereal disease were compulsorily detained and incarcerated in gaol until declared cured (Radi 1990:33). Irene Longman suggested that the modern way to deal with prostitution was for non-interference by government, but with the provision of facilities for notification of venereal disease. She strongly campaigned to change the British styled Contagious Disease Act, initiated in Queensland in 1867 and still in force in the 1930s. 'Queensland was the first and for a long time, the only Australian

colony to follow Britain in enacting this legislation' (Reekie 1994:19). Although the British Act was introduced to control venereal disease among the armed forces, it allowed the detention of women suspected of prostitution in port and garrison towns (Beddoe 1983:208). In Queensland the legislation 'was extended to cover all women in the civilian population'. Suffragists and social reformers in Queensland, such as Mary McConnel, Emma Millar and Leontine Cooper, and in southern colonies women such as Rose Scott and Vida Goldstein, had long challenged this iniquitous Act. In fact it was the frustration of the Womens' Christian Temperance Union, lacking political power to influence legislation such as the Contagious Diseases Act, which motivated women throughout Australia to organize suffrage societies (Young 1991:97).

Having read and studied very closely discussions of these health issues overseas, Irene Longman claimed that in places where the regulation of women had been eliminated, there was found to be greater morality and no greater spread of venereal disease. The system of voluntary free and confidential treatment had been implemented in England and the results of health reports had shown a decrease in the occurrence of disease (Radi:1990:33). Irene Longman 'did not want to make a moral disquisition of this issue' (QPD 1930:1747), but appealed to Members of the House to deal with the problem by legislating for changes in the law, so that women could be dealt with in a more humane and dignified way. Longman was unsuccessful in her demands for change and although there were minor concessions, this oppressive Contagious Disease Act remained on the statute books in Queensland until 1973 (Reekie 1994:20).

In terms of liberal theory, Longman was able to connect her concern for sexual double standards with government intervention in private life. She believed that excessive

government involvement in the private life of the individual was harmful to women, as it placed the freedom of the individual into the hands of the law (Caine 1992:181).

Addressing the Parliament on the issue of prostitution, Irene Longman said her concern was that outdated laws made by men for men were oppressing women. Her worry was that women were detained in institutions controlled by men, and after their release from gaol, there was nowhere for them to go except back to their former life on the streets. Irene Longman called for probationary homes to be set up so that, rather than being incarcerated, women could receive help, enjoy a certain amount of home life and be provided with occupations which would make them economically independent, if they so desired (QPD 1930:1747).

Within a feminist framework of the 1970s, Summers (1975) and Dixon (1976) were critical of the measures adopted by early social reformers. Summers claimed that early feminists did not seek to argue for a sexually independent woman whose maternal status was immaterial, but rather reinforced women's role as mother and carer of the family, thereby limiting their participation in the public sphere (Summers 1975:364). Feminists of the 1970s argued that reforms proposed by early women activists for the rehabilitation and redemption of prostitutes were simply a strategy to maintain the image of the 'family' where the wife and mother were seen as the 'good' asexual woman, in opposition to the 'bad' sexual stereotype of the prostitute. Contemporary feminists point out that these early feminists may have been misunderstood.

Irene Longman was sympathetic towards prostitutes. She placed the blame firmly on legislation which condoned the masculine right of men to trade in the exploitation of

women's bodies for their own sexual pleasure, saying 'that sometimes men forgot that if it were not for the 'brothers' those poor 'sisters' would not be in that position' (QPD 1930:747). Irene Longman campaigned for changes to laws that were detrimental to women, believing this would bring about moral and social transformation. She believed that men and women should have equal responsibilities regarding social and moral duties and that the management of sexuality was important if society was to progress. As attitudes towards the appropriate behaviour of men and women were strongly entrenched in family life, Longman recognised reforms directed towards the functions of wife and mother and the rearing of children were required.

In this period of the 1920s and 30s, domestic duties and motherhood were emotionalised through articles and advertising in women's magazines and in literature and art. This tended to make women desire motherhood as the most fulfilling career for women. The formation of the Housewives Association (1920) and the Country Women Association (1922) provided organizations through which women were able to channel their traditional skills as good housewives and mothers (Game and Pringle 1983:128). The C.W.A. was to become the largest and most influential women's organization in Queensland reaching a membership of 20,000 by the 1950s (Wood 1958:200). This mobilisation of women proved to be a powerful force for claiming rights as mothers based on their status as citizens (Lake 1999:72). While some feminists argue that the importance placed on becoming 'good wives and mothers' was the very idea that limited women's participation in the public sphere, Judith Brett claims that this 'contradiction is more obvious than real, for the advocacy of the home is more about the primacy of certain values than about where women should spend their days' (Brett 1992:53). Brett contends that 'the home was both the centre of women's social experience and the basis for their political values (Brett 1992:53). Women

did not consider their maternal status as immaterial as suggested by Summers (1975), but as maternal citizens, they claimed one of their rights was for economic support from the state in recognition of their work. As a result of the efforts of women activists, Prime Minister Andrew Fisher introduced a maternity allowance of five pounds, as a one-off payment on the birth of each child. This allowance included unmarried mothers, but excluded non-white mothers (Lake 1999:72-75).

Part of Irene Longman's recognition of the difficulties mothers faced would have come from remembering her mother's experiences with childbirth and infant care. So it seems logical that Irene Longman would accept maternal and post natal care, the setting up of baby clinics and the emergence of medical experts as a benefit to Queensland mothers. What concerned Longman and some women's groups, particularly the Mothercraft Association, 'was the centralised control held by the Queensland government over all aspects of infant welfare work' (Selby 1994:85).

As Wendy Selby points out, it was the unique legislation implemented by the Labor government with the introduction of the Queensland Maternity Act in 1922, which placed greater 'emphasis on providing maternal and infant welfare services to women' (Selby 1994:83). What was unique about this legislation, was that it gave the government complete control over infant welfare. This 'well-organized, centrally and fully government financed infant welfare scheme with personnel, [was] committed to converting women all over Queensland to 'clinic' ways (Selby 1994:95). This brought about different responses from modern day mothers. Longman conceded that these baby clinics had been the finest institutions inaugurated in Queensland, and while she gave credit to the Labor Party for establishing these clinics for the protection of mother and baby's health, she maintained it



was the efforts and representation of women's organizations, affiliated with the National Council of Women, that had awakened public awareness to the problems facing women and children (QPD 1929:1045). Influenced by new scientific methods and international ideas, Longman believed women needed access to new knowledge, and the advice of modern day experts. This focus on infant and maternal health and the growing knowledge about mothercraft and child development enabled women to challenge a view of themselves as tied to pregnancy and childbearing. This empowered women to make claims for their rights as citizens and to demand to be paid for their work as individuals. As maternal citizens it was 'most important, mothers needed the economic support that would secure their capacity and right to mother' (Lake 1999:72). Longman strongly supported the rights of mothers to security and independence and made demands for state involvement.

Considering Longman had claimed that excessive government intervention could be harmful and encroached on the rights of the individual, this would seem to be a contradiction of her political philosophy. How can this shift in political thinking be explained? Within Australian traditions of social democracy political theories were not universal or immutable, nor did they arise from one source only (Gillman 1988:187). Early in the twentieth century, dominant *laissez-faire* liberalism was challenged by a new liberalism that saw the role of the state as one necessary for the health and welfare of the population. Interested in the general principles applicable to a wide range of personal and social problems, Irene Longman recognised that these principles had to be reviewed and re-stated in light of increasing knowledge and experience. To meet the growing economic problems, Longman found she had to shift her position to social liberalism.

In the early decades of the twentieth century, women activists envisaged that by using the State's power and resources, it would provide women with security and independence. They considered that the state could be utilised 'to defend and protect otherwise powerless women against too powerful men' (Lake 1997:97). While this strategy of the early activists was not successful, they led the way for future feminists to effect policy changes. What Marilyn Lake makes clear is that when women of this early period set out 'to achieve the moral, economic and physical independence', it was associated with their rights as equal citizens (Lake 1994:97). In the new and emerging nation of Australia, women's 'political attention was drawn to the implications of citizenship and how they could make it work specifically for them' (Lake 1997:95). This interpretation helps to explain why Longman combined liberal theories with feminist ideas to effectively enter into public debate (Lake 1997:95).

Recalling Irene Longman's words 'I am not likely to forget the interests and needs of the women of Queensland' (QPD 1930:228), it is understandable that the health and welfare of mothers and children was a priority for her. Still she maintained her stand that total control by government was harmful. Speaking on the Health Acts Amendment Bill (1930) she argued that it was essential that the health of the community should be preserved and protected. She called for more efficiency in the health service and claimed that more co-operation was needed. Concerns in Queensland in the 1920s and 30s of increased urbanisation and the falling birth rate ensured that health and hygiene became the focus of political attention. The infant mortality in Queensland was less than in any other state, being 54.5 per 1,000 births in 1927, and 45.5 per 1,000 births in 1928. Compared to New Zealand, which was 38.7 per 1,000 in 1928, Longman argued that child welfare needed urgent attention if Queensland's maternal and infant mortality was to be arrested (QPD

1929:1045). What had disappointed Longman was that because the infant welfare program was expensive, the CPNP had restricted funds for baby clinics (Welby 1994:85). She objected to this undue political interference by Government, which penalised the citizens of the state (QPD 1931:1521). To counter this lack of government funding, and as part of a community based effort, Longman was able to support and assist the Mothercraft Association to set up a baby clinic in her electorate of Bulimba during her term of office.

Instead of total government control, Longman's preference was for greater co-operation between state and local government working together with active and influential community based organizations. This indicates that the democracy that Irene Longman was committed to was one that:

signifies the attempt to organize society as an association of moral equals, in which the concepts of equity and [citizen] participation are seen as the major organising principles of social life which,...should be applied to as many spheres of society as possible.

Emy and Hughes 1991:103

Of the thirty-nine occasions (including questions) Irene Longman rose to speak in the Parliament, she referred to matters specifically related to women or children thirty-one times. While the State had been receptive in providing welfare resources for infants and children, it had been less responsive in supporting women's economic independence within marriage (Lake 1999:82). Although Irene Longman advocated that a greater knowledge of mothercraft and child development would contribute to women's power to negotiate for better conditions within marriage, she believed that outdated marriage laws offered little freedom or liberty to women as citizens, confining them more forcibly into a powerless position within marriage.

As MacKinnon points out, feminists of this period were concerned with ‘the effects on women of bearing and raising large numbers of children, they deplored the involuntary nature of motherhood and challenged the dominant view of male sexuality’ (Mackinnon 1997:55).

The ideal marriage for Longman was a companionable one, and although she upheld the sanctity of marriage, she did not think that marriage should be indissoluble. She stated that it was ‘the height of immorality to condemn to perpetual misery two people who found it impossible to live together in harmony’ QPD 1931: 1796). Part of the problem Longman claimed was that marriage laws were not in accordance with modern ideas and conditions of life. She argued that marriage laws enacted in Sweden in 1920 were more progressive and should be adopted in Australia. The marriage laws in Sweden incorporated full equality between partners in the marriage contract. This established the wife as having the same independence as the husband, and the woman’s work in the home was legally recognised as of economic value (QPD 1932:2134).

Aware of the hardships that marriage could bring, Longman realised it was women and children who suffered when marriages broke down, or in cases of desertion. While she held a wide range of modern views, Longman realised she had to take a pragmatic approach to debates in the House. Seeking to use her political influence to bring about changes in the Divorce Laws, Irene Longman advocated a uniform Divorce Act to correct the existing anomalies between the various States of Australia. Longman urged that these laws be revised and reconstructed with due regard to personal liberty and favoured the Scandinavian model for two particular reasons. First, this model permitted divorce after one year’s separation. In Australia, the period of desertion constituting a cause for divorce

varied, being three years in some states and five years in others. Lunacy was recognised in some states but not in others, and in Tasmania desertion carried a three-year jail sentence (QPD 1932: 2136). Second, in the Scandinavian model, divorce cases were given a great amount of privacy, being held in camera with only the result made public.

Speaking of the Vagrants, Gaming and Other Offences Bill, Longman welcomed and supported the provisions of the Bill aimed at prohibiting the publication of photographs and accounts of divorce proceedings, arguing that these items should be censored. Longman reminded Members that a similar measure, introduced in the House of Commons in 1926, had been well received through Great Britain (QPD 1930:1746). Because marriage and divorce laws were so out of date, Longman declared that it was the ‘very spicy items’ about domestic disruption, which were used to sell newspapers. Considering it obscene and degrading, she abhorred the current practices of some newspapers of both individuals of a marriage having their private lives exposed and the intimate details of their domestic life made public. Longman complained that both partners of a marriage and the public who purchased these publications were being exploited for commercial profit (QPD 1930:1746). Although Longman advocated limits to freedom of the press when it came to ‘lurid’ details of divorce cases, she entered the parliamentary debate on censorship of films and literature with some ambivalence.

In the 1920s, with the print media expanding and cheaper editions of deluxe books coming onto the market, this extended their potential readership beyond those who could afford the expensive editions previously available. However, a long list of new books had been prohibited from entering the Commonwealth. Longman stated that a great deal of harm had been done by unwise censorship by men who had no conception of the beauty of literature

nor the great wealth that was to be found in the old and modern classics. She urged a rational and commonsense approach be adopted towards censorship, adding that ‘women had been excluded from any political decision making regarding the censorship of literature on the assumption that intellectual ability was the province of men’ (QPD 1931:1796). While she shared concerns about the effects on young minds of exposure to American films and cultural values, she argued that students’ access to books such as Geddes and Thomson’s *Sex* and Arthur Keith’s *The Human Body*, not protected as medical books, should not be restricted. Longman believed that students and those interested in literature who did not have sufficient money to spend on the finer editions were disadvantaged since they were barred from acquiring cheap paper covered copies (QPD 1931:1746).

Longman was known to spend a lot of time quietly reading and researching in the Parliamentary library, so there was laughter in the House when she told Members that:

Some of them [prohibited books] have found a resting place – probably before the censorship was imposed – on shelves of our library. I have no intention of mentioning the names of those books, otherwise the quiet of the upper library might be somewhat disturbed.

QPD 1931:1746

This suggests that Longman valued literature as a source of knowledge, and indicates her concerns regarding the changing patterns of education.

Although Queensland came into the twentieth century lagging behind the other states, changing circumstances had transformed education. The Queensland State Education Department did away with girls’ schools and women Headmistresses and combined boys and girls under Headmasters. The scholarship system had taken a new form and the long-sought Teachers’ Training College was established (Holthouse 1975:82-83). Although

Longman regretted the phasing out of women head teachers, her main concern was that all children throughout the state had equal opportunities for education. What she questioned was whether young people were getting the right education.

Alarmed at the large number of young people out of work because of the economic crisis, her vision for job opportunities focused on different kinds of education, which would be appropriate for urban and rural students. Because of Queensland's geographical size and decentralisation, Longman urged that encouragement be given to young people to take up life on the land. This would not only give them work but at the same time would enable Queensland to be further developed. With a decrease in the rural population, Longman supported any move to the land as a way to help repopulate and decentralise the population, as well as easing unemployment (QPD 1931:1055). Her love of the land and a sense of place that had been nurtured from her early days in colonial Tasmania, led her to encourage young people to seek work outside the crowded cities. What is contradictory about Longman's position is that she argues for the same advantages for all students, yet delineates difference in subjects of study. Courses for girls at Agricultural Colleges should be similar to those given to boys she claims on the one hand, but adds that this 'need not include hard manual work' (Brisbane Courier 1931 SB:72). Yet she maintained that girls are capable of many aspects of outwork, 'they could be taught to grow vegetables, raise chickens and with Queensland's abundance of fruit and sugar could produce preserved goods of the highest quality' (Brisbane Courier 1931 SB:72).

Longman saw this as valuable work and deemed that women were equally capable of being producers, at the same time maintaining the domestic quality of this work. This she claimed would prepare them for marriage and family life. She quotes as proof the strength

of the Country Women's Association where women both worked the land and managed a household. One of the reasons for Longman's encouragement of young people to work on the land was that loans were being made to farmers to enable them to give employment. Nonetheless, there was strong opposition raised to this practice as in general workers' wages had been cut and working hours had been extended. Irene Longman was to come under fire from the opposition for comments passed on this issue. She was genuinely trying to help young people find work in the country but she was disappointed when they didn't take up the offer 'because their mothers wouldn't let them' (QPD 1931:1055). She would find work for young people and was paying the fares for them from her parliamentary salary (Bayley 1995:PC). What she found frustrating was the general apathy shown towards work and the unpreparedness of the young to work on the land. She claimed 'that girls preferred to work in the crowded city as typists, an occupation that did nothing to prepare them for their most important career, that of being a wife and mother' (QPD 1931:1055). Within a social context, Longman did not believe that being a wife and mother were natural instincts, but were particular characteristics that needed to be learnt by experience and parental guidance. It was parental guidance and cultural values that Irene Longman addressed when speaking at a Presbyterian Church function in her electorate. Referring to the spirit of hardihood and independence of Scottish ancestry, Longman said "Don't let them [the children] lose that spirit, don't bring them up too softly' (Brisbane Courier January 20, 1931). This comment bought an angry response from Joe Collings, the state Organizer of the Australian Labor Party.

Addressing a meeting held in Longman's electorate, Collings asserted '[it] is concentrated cruelty for Mrs. Longman to talk thus, seeing she had her salary as member for Bulimba, her husband another one as Director of the Queensland Museum and being childless, there



were no little ones in the Longman household to be reared, either hardly or softly'. He continued that 'the Longman home contains all the things indicative of culture and refinement and of comparative affluence which the homes of the electors did not have' (*Daily Standard* December 22, 1930). While Collings continued to write his letters to the newspaper, Longman's supporters rallied to her defense. In a letter to the *Brisbane Courier* on 20 January, a letter from 'a busy mother' stated that 'in Longman we have a woman of well-balanced mind, a woman who can feel emotion without showing it and who prefers to appeal to the common sense of the electors'. This letter clearly illustrates that thinking women did not accept the dichotomy of rational man and irrational women. Collings continually challenged Longman through letters to the *Daily Standard* castigating her for her claims that 'with good management, there was no need for anyone to go hungry' (*Daily Standard* Jan.5 1931). Longman maintained her dignity by refusing to reply.

Instead, she initiated the formation of a woman's branch of the Social Service League for the relief of distress. Irene Longman was aware of the hardships women were facing, and she knew from personal experience that the women in her electorate were wonderful managers. Mrs. C. Thomas' recollections of that time confirmed Longman's view. Mrs. Thomas said that 'although times were difficult and her husband did three days work for the 'relief' subsidy of eighteen shillings, there was always food on the table'. Women helped each other. Some worked voluntarily for St. Vincent de Paul, making pyjamas and other clothing for the needy. When her little girl grew out of her shoes, she would hand them in to St. Vincent de Paul, and get a replacement of a larger size. Mrs. Thomas' husband, a carpenter, did odd jobs for those who were employed, usually for the amount of two shillings. People grew vegetables and shared most things with their neighbours (Thomas PC:1996).

Collings' motive for this attack was Irene Longman's increasing popularity, which the Labor Party found threatening and wanted to diminish. It also demonstrates a conflict of political philosophies, and how these political beliefs are used to understand and order each particular experience (Brett 1992:31).

The Labor movement sees itself as representing the working class members of society, believing that the conservatives only serve the interests of the rich and powerful. The opposing view of the conservatives is that they see themselves as drawing support from across all classes, so as to be able to develop policies to benefit all sections of society (Brett 1992:31). Collings' speech was to appeal to the working class, particularly those out of work and suffering from the effects of the depression. Longman's approach could be seen by her opponents as 'an attack on the collective solidarity of working-class politics' (Brett 1992:33) as she was strongly against any idea of class distinction. Longman's response was for independent individualism of all citizens, but also for those dependent on state services, such as children, the elderly, the sick and the needy.

While this explains one aspect of political discourse, it does not make clear why Collings chose to politicise Irene Longman's private life. Contemporary feminist Toril Moi calls this strategy as 'using the personal to discredit the political' (Moi 1990:33). By challenging the meaning of social and cultural values, Longman becomes the archetype of the 'unworthy' or 'selfish' woman. Moi explains the double effect of this patriarchal approach. Firstly, by concentrating on the personal, opponents avoid having to defend their politics and secondly, Longman is perceived to be pursuing her own interests without concern for others. She becomes the unfeminine woman, devoid of any nurturing or motherly instincts.

Within a political context, this implies that Longman is incapable of any normal concern for other people and her political choices are not the outcome of the particular consideration of the issue at hand, but the emotional outcome of her own personal problems (Moi 1990:33).

Irene Longman's conduct and speeches in the house indicate that she was an able politician acting in the best interests of the people of Queensland, and to further improve the status of women within a democratic system in which she firmly believed. Nonetheless, Longman realised there was something wrong with the political discourse of liberalism that excluded and denied all human beings from social and economic equality. Her particular concern was that women in both the workforce and in the home were excluded from the decision making process of government. Convinced that the women of Queensland should have representation and a voice in the Parliament to raise these concerns, Longman was determined to return at the next election in order to complete the work she had set out to do. However, there were three major factors working against her - the continuing economic crisis, a redistribution of electoral boundaries, and the increasing unpopularity of Premier Moore.

Queensland had suffered less than some other states during the worldwide depression of the 1930s (Murphy and Joyce 1978:384) but ineffective economic policies were still affecting Queenslanders. This did little to ensure public confidence in the Moore government. However, it was not only the members of the present government that suffered its effect, as coincidentally, the depression 'destroyed every Australian government that was unfortunate enough to encounter it' (Murphy and Joyce 1978:376). Working against Irene Longman was a redistribution that changed the boundaries of her electorate. The 1931 redistribution

reduced the number of seats from seventy-two to sixty-two, by abolishing seven Labor seats and only three CPNP. This not only raised the ire of the Labor Party, but also caused dissatisfaction among members of the CPNP. It had been suggested that Premier Moore allowed Cabinet Ministers to influence the drawing of the boundaries for their own benefit, rather than in the interests of the party as a whole (Coster 1978:394).

In the redistribution the seat of Bulimba lost nearly three thousand voters from the southern end of the electorate, where Longman held strong support from the Norman Park branch of the Women's Electoral League. For Irene Longman, the electorate of Bulimba became a much more difficult seat for the Nationalist to win, as the best part of her support went into the electorate of Maree (*Brisbane Courier* 5 January, 1932). This further strained relations between Irene Longman and Premier Moore (Bayley 1995:PC). There were already tensions beneath the surface as Longman was critical of some of Moore's austerity measures and his strong moral belief that women's proper place was in the home. He was a gentleman farmer, described as a conventional conservative of charming personality (Coster 1978:376), but he made little impression on Irene Longman. Annoyed that when she called at his home on Party business, Moore would not invite her inside, but would leave her standing on the steps to speak with her, she privately stated that despite his principled stance, 'Moore was certainly no gentleman' (Bayley 1995:PC). If she ever felt that she was being edged out, Longman made no comment, but she became more determined to continue the struggle for representation (Bayley 1995:PC) in order to continue pressing for the removal of impediments for economic and social justice.

Premier Moore's unpopularity increased, not only throughout Queensland, but also among his own ranks as many CPNP supporters became openly critical of him. This made his

position as leader of the Party more vulnerable (Costar 1978:391-2). Also, in the midst of an economic crisis, Premier Moore had purchased historic Bulimba House in 1930 (Turner-Jones 1990:20) at the same time publicly denouncing workers who demanded a forty-four hour working week as 'parasites' (Murphy and Joyce 1978:394). Longman's chance of re-election in the seat of Bulimba was looking slim. Irene Longman was faced with an electorate disenchanted with Premier Moore's mismanagement of the economic situation and increasing unemployment. In 1931, the Bureau of Economics and Statistics estimated that the real level of unemployment in Queensland exceeded 30% of the workforce (Costar 1978:385). As well as an added unemployment relief 'tax', Moore increased weekly working hours from 44 to 48 and reduced the basic wage rate (Murphy and Joyce 1978:385). The government also repealed the rural workers' award, which Longman had strongly supported. This disqualified rural workers from unemployment benefits, leaving these benefits only available to those under a registered award (Nolan 1974:50-51). For Irene Longman, the forthcoming election presented an almost impossible task.

With the greater part of her electorate (and her support) now in the seat of Maree, Longman could see that her best chance for re-election would be to nominate for selection of that electorate. That there was dissatisfaction within the party itself seems evident, as two other nominees, Mr. L.W. Luckins and Mr. Ainsworth joined Longman in challenging the sitting CPNP Member for Maree, Mr. Tedman. Mr. Luckins won the plebiscite, so Longman was left with the difficult task of campaigning and trying to retain the seat of Bulimba (Telegraph 24 March, 1932). Now well known and no longer a novelty on the political scene, Longman's second campaign experiences were a lot different from her previous one. Although she continued to get good press coverage, it was not necessarily the exposure she wanted. Newspaper headlines reporting political activities in the Bulimba

electorate read: 'Wild Scenes', 'Unabating Din', 'Rank Hooliganism', 'The Age of Chivalry is Past' and 'She's a Briton' (*Brisbane Courier* 13 May, 1932) (Telegraph 13 May, 1932).

When Irene Longman addressed meetings she was welcomed by prolonged cheers, boos, whistles and catcalls, which she took smilingly, but her voice was often drowned out by noise. The *Telegraph* 13 May, 1932 reported that Longman was 'faced with organized disorder worse than that experienced by any other candidate', and that even 'some of the staunch Laborites were ashamed of the behaviour Irene Longman had to contend with'. The report went on to say despite the disorder, Longman 'did not once break down or falter'. The manner in which Irene Longman faced these ordeals was a tribute to her force of character and self-control, as well as a display of great courage' (Telegraph 13 May, 1932).

Irene Longman did not win the seat of Bulimba. While particular political events had worked to Longman's advantage in 1929, a biased redistribution of electorates, inappropriate electoral practices and mismanagement of economic policies of CPNP government, saw Longman become a casualty of the strong electoral shift back to Labor in the election of 1932.

Like other women who led the field in pioneering new professions for women by daring to claim positions which by custom remained the preserve of men, Longman had faced some prejudices and difficulties that she was prepared to accept by reshaping her relationships with others. Irene Longman's characterisation of the woman citizen emphasises reason, freedom and independence. She recasts motherhood as an economic and political status,

rather than a biological fact and differentiates it from notions of virtue associated with separate spheres ideology. It was necessary for Longman's feminism that women's specific capacities for gentility, compassion, morality and domestic virtues, which were all part of women's femininity be recognised, but she maintained that these attributes did not limit women from participating in public life. Nor does she privilege difference. Rather she seeks women's inclusion into politics as equals and the incorporation of values of justice and equality into private life (Fallon and Ferris 2002:p4)

Irene Longman only crossed the floor of the house on one occasion, voting against the continuance of the privilege of free railway passes for ex-legislators. This action did not bring any censure, and there was little resentment shown to Irene Longman by sitting members, although they often expressed their views in a language of difference as follows:

Mr. J.P. Edwards (Member for Nanango CP)...the hon. Member for Bulimba took up the motherly side of the question... (QPD vol.153, 16Oct. 1929, p.961)

Mr. P.Pease (Deputy Premier (1932-40 ALP)

The action of the government in sending out the hon. Member for Bulimba to see how the electors view their legislation was most cowardly. They sheltered themselves behind that lady's skirts...(QPD, vol.156, 14 October, 1930, p.1571)

Mr. W. Forgan Smith (Premier 1932-42, ALP)

...They [government members] address the old women of both sexes who are members of the Queensland Women's Electoral League who attend their meetings (QPD, vol.159, 22 July,1931, p.38).

Then leader of the opposition, Forgan Smith's comments bought a swift response from Irene Longman. This was the only occasion Longman was angered by the sexism she encountered in the House. In her response, Longman said:

'The hon. Gentleman had no conception of the part women are playing in modern life....and that the organization [QWEL] was comprised of intellectual and practical women who take a big interest in the everyday life of the State' (QPD, Vol.159, 22 July, 1931:38).

Staunchly loyal to the women's organizations she was closely affiliated with, Irene Longman was determined to point out the value of these organizations and women's continuing interest and influence in raising public awareness to any legislation the government was considering. Previously, when Irene Longman had attempted to 'say a few words on this subject,' (a matter concerning a deputation of women from the NCW to the Attorney General), she was promptly gagged by the Temporary Chairman as being 'out of order' (QPD 1931:910. Irene Longman was challenging the notion that politics was men's business only. Contemporary feminist Marilyn Lake points out that there some misconception that post suffrage feminists failed politically because they had not succeeded in winning Parliamentary seats. Certainly women seemed to be reluctant to stand for elections, but 'had developed their own mode of doing politics' (Lake 1999:13). Rather than seeking representation, many women's organizations preferred to be independent of party politics and worked towards effective policy changes for social reforms, 'deciding on its own platform and priorities and placing its demands on the political agendas of all parties' (Lake 1999:13). Those women who aspired to independent representation were stalled by the strength of the two major political parties (Lake 1999:13). Those women like Irene Longman, who did enter State parliaments such as Edith Cowan, Nationalist (WA 1921-24), Millicent Preston Stanley, NPA (NSW 1925-27) and Mary Holman, ALP (W.A. 1925-39)(Lake 1999:11), all contributed to public life quite significantly, sharing a commitment to putting human welfare, especially for women and children, at the top of their agendas.

As Alison MacKinnon explains, educated women who chose non-traditional professions needed 'to reassess their identities [and] this reshaping of relationships was an essential part of the process (Mackinnon 1997:5-7). Longman was aware that in politics she would be



under attack at times, and she was prepared to take what ever came her way. Of her experiences as a woman legislator, Longman said it was ‘very strenuous but I enjoyed it, and I wouldn’t have missed it for worlds’ (McCulloch 1994:20). Although she did expressed her disillusionment with party politics, she encouraged women not to abandon a career in politics, urging them to first seek election to Local Government bodies and then progress to State Parliament. Her advice to women was not to worry about party politics, but to choose a seat where they thought they would have a chance of winning and to go all out! (Longman 1950:3). Reflecting on her time in the Parliament in 1953, Longman said:

Intending women legislators should take as great an interest in all human affairs as in those mainly concerning women if they want to win....Women need not be afraid that they will be overpowered by the intellect of the men in the House. ...I found, and I think the position remains, that there were only a few men on either side of the House who were as mentally alert as the women with whom I worked (*Brisbane Courier* 21 January, 1953 p.2).

As a legislator, considering the critical times existing when Longman was in the Parliament, and her time there was of a short duration, her political activities demonstrates she was able to exert some influence over policies that affected women and children. She was successful in having the Children’s Court Act amended to allow for separation of adults from children and to allow for privacy. This enabled a change in venue from the sordid surroundings of the Police Court to a special room in the State’s Children’s Department. She achieved the introduction of legislative power to appoint an advisory panel of one man and one woman for difficult cases of juvenile delinquency. She continually advocated for better facilities for the disabled, and sought to have amendments made to the Contagious Diseases Act. This unjust piece of legislation, she believed perpetuated sexual double standards where women’s sexuality was policed, thus discriminating against women but not men. She effected the establishment of women police officers, with the appointment of two women during her term of office. Longman

promoted a uniform Divorce Act to correct the existing anomalies between the various states of Australia. She supported legislation for the appointment of women JPs and the appointment of women to juries. Irene Longman spoke passionately for equal pay for equal work, for a family allowance or increased child endowment, issues she had pursued since the early 1920s. That they had not been achieved was a great disappointment to her. However, these concerns remained the focus of political action among women's groups throughout Australia. Longman continued to work for the benefit of women and families, becoming the first President of the Queensland Citizens League in 1934.

A modest and gentle lady, Irene Longman did not look for praise or expect any rewards but she would have been pleased about having a Federal Electorate named in her honour. Sixty-four years after her entry into the Queensland Parliament, following a redistribution of Federal seats, new boundaries stretching south from Warril View and Laidley, and north to Caboolture, including Lowood, Esk and Fernvale and part of Bribie Island now constitute the new electorate of Longman (Thurlow 1994:9). It was a great disappointment to Longman that no other woman had succeeded her into the Queensland Parliament. No other woman was to enter the Queensland Parliament until Violet Jordan in 1966. Irene Longman's abilities as a politician and an eloquent advocate for the place of women in public life was reflected in the speech given by the then Premier, the Hon. G. Nicklin, during the Motion of Condolences moved in the Parliament at the time of Longman's death in 1964 (McCulloch 1994:18).

The late Irene Longman was a very able representative and was imbued with a sense of dedication and high purpose. She spoke with clarity and vigour on matters affecting women and was an eloquent advocate for the place of women in affairs, not only in this House but also in private life after she was defeated....she was a woman of great character, capacity and ability, who gave of her best in the service of this State and its people

QPD 1964:12

Mr. Duggan (Toowoomba West-Leader of the Opposition) in paying tribute to Longman as the first woman to enter the Queensland Parliament said:

In those years there was not quite public acceptance of the candidature of women for public office. Indeed, it is suggested by women's organizations today that it is still very difficult for women to gain nomination and acceptance in parliamentary and city council fields. ....For Mrs Longman to gain acceptance when the prejudice against women was greater than it is now was indeed a personal triumph....she was a very patient woman, a very earnest woman and she worked very hard in the interests of women.

(QPD, Vol.238, 19 August, 1964, p.13)

From a previous CPNP Member of the House, the Hon. Mr. Frank Bulcock who was there when Longman held her seat of Bulimba, the remarks were not so generous. Conceding, however, that all parties would benefit from having more women Members of Parliament, he wrote:

I recall no resentment against Mrs. Longman among sitting members. There was however a curiosity to discover how the first woman would fit into the Parliamentary picture. So when the Government decided that Mrs. Longman should move the Address-in-Reply in 1930 some of us felt that our curiosity would be partly satisfied. Her speech was a thoughtful, sincere contribution calmly delivered and without undue emphasis. It was not a brilliant first speech, but it drew congratulations from both sides of the house. She was never a prolific speaker, but apparently "Just had to speak" on matters of social importance with which she was familiar.

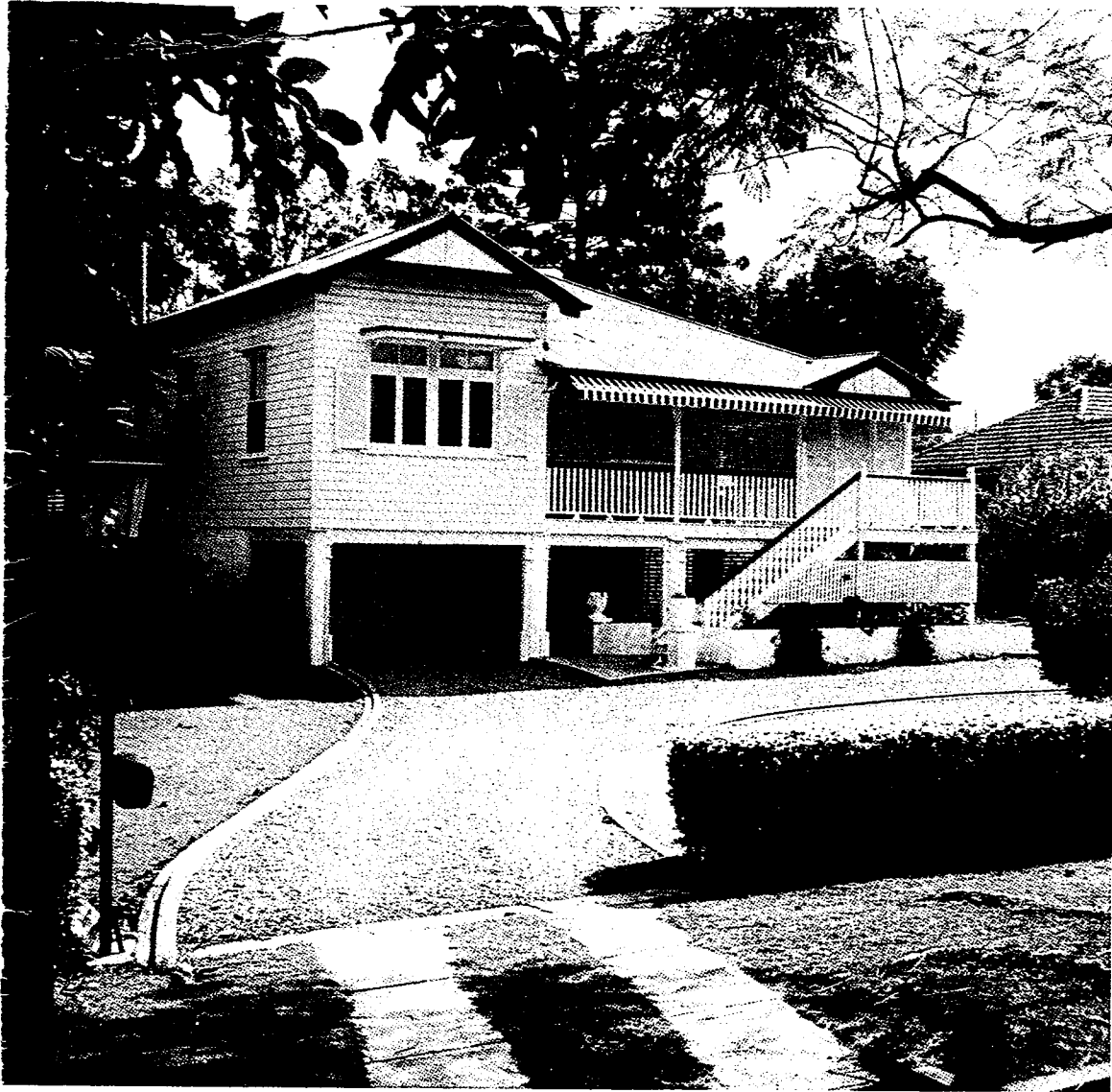
Courier Mail 21 October, 1964, p.24

In order to illustrate the changing and complex nature of Irene Longman as an individual, it seems appropriate to first demonstrate the origins of her religious, social and political values and beliefs, and second to evaluate how these beliefs and values interact with her feminist ideas and activities (Caine 1992:3). To this end, the following chapter will explore Irene Longman's experience of family life. This background may be able to shed some light on family influences, as well as political ideas and traditions that were to shape her

future. Readers should note, however, that such experiences and the attitudes derived from them are shadowy and not easy to discern. This results from ‘the “private” sphere of the family [being] less accessible to the historian than the “public” arena of parliamentary and political debate (Dyhouse 1989:6). To surmount this inaccessibility, I have relied on the knowledge of other historians and feminist writers, oral history and memoirs, as well as a little fiction to grasp a sense of place. I listened to other voices in the hope of discovering an insight into Irene Longman’s intellectual and feminist development. The following chapter will be divided into three parts - first, her early childhood in an imperialist and settler community; second, her growth and development through education; and third, her personal and married life.

**PART 2.**

**PRIVATE LIFE.**



"Cotley" Irene and Heber Longman's home at Chelmer



The Garden

## **A Colonial Childhood**

### **The Huon Valley**

Irene Longman's father, James Molineux Bayley, was eleven years old when he arrived in Australia with his family. The Rev. T.A. Bayley, his wife Martha and children Joseph and Catherine (17 years), John Henry (14 years) and Annie (9 years) all embarked at Liverpool on the 5<sup>th</sup> April, 1862 on the '*Lightning*', arriving in Melbourne on the 3<sup>rd</sup> June, 1862. James was the sixth child of the family as two older family members, Lydia and Thomas remained behind (Sandaver 1995:PC). A traditional Englishman, who always referred to England as 'home', Thomas was a compassionate man concerned with the needs of others, especially the poor (Sandaver 1995:PC). Following in his father's footsteps, James went on to study for the Ministry, completing his examinations at Heathcote in Victoria in 1872. He became a Minister of the United Methodist Free Church. On the 20<sup>th</sup> June, 1872, James married Mary Alice Frencham.

Mary Alice's father, Henry Frencham and mother Alicia Gainfort were both born in Ireland. Henry's father was in the English Army stationed at Wexford. Alicia and Henry Frencham arrived at Port Phillip in Melbourne in 1840 from Wexford with an infant child, Elizabeth. Seven other children were born in Australia, Mary Alice being the middle child. Henry became a journalist with a Melbourne newspaper, then an auctioneer and Manager of several gold mines (Sandaver 1995:PC).

The marriage of James Bayley and Mary Alice Frencham was a happy union. In a rare letter<sup>8</sup> (held by Fay Sandaver) written by James to Henry Frencham asking for Mary Alice's hand in marriage, James declared his happiness depended on spending his life with Mary Alice (Sandaver 1995:PC). In 1873, the Rev. James Bayley and his wife arrived in Hobart Town where James took up his post as Methodist Minister.

The records show that on the 16th February 1875, James was ordained a Minister of the Independent Congregational Church. The Rev. C.G. Clancy writing on the United Methodist Free Churches in New South Wales offers a possible explanation for James Bayley's change from Methodist to Congregational. He states that the Methodist

denomination was always small and weak in the early days in Australia and stipends were not always assured. The Congregational Church was more affluent and was making attractive offers to ministers who were facing financial hardships (MacDonald 1996:PC). Between 1875-1885, James Bayley ministered to the small population living in scattered settlements of the Huon Valley (Sandaver 1995:PC).

The first Bayley child, Laura Frencham, had been born in Hobart on 3<sup>rd</sup> June, 1873. Six more children were to be born in the Huon, all at Franklin, the administrative centre of the district. Mabel Alicia was born on 8<sup>th</sup> April 1875, and in the historic year of 1877, which saw the end of the penal colony in Tasmania, Irene Maud arrived on 24<sup>th</sup> April. A fourth daughter Lily, born on 24<sup>th</sup> December, 1878 only lived for Christmas Day and died on 26<sup>th</sup> December. Two sons followed. Percy Molineux was born on 21st December 1879 and James Garfield on 26<sup>th</sup> March, 1882. This child was probably named after U.S. President, James A. Garfield<sup>9</sup>. On 22nd January 1884, Myra Annie's arrival was announced. Myra was a delicate baby needing extra care. She was diagnosed as having Dropsy (a colloquialism for heart disease) and died at the age of fourteen years after contracting Rheumatic Fever (Bayley 1995:PC).

The Bayley family was harmonious and affectionate typifying Victorian ideals with James working in the public sphere, and Mary Alice devoting most of her energies to domestic duties and the care of their children. This ideal of family life was deeply held by Irene who later asserted 'it made lives meaningful, and gave men and women a sense of their individual being' (Longman 1921:5). Later it would be Irene's childhood identification with her patient, suffering mother that would shape her feminist activities. Her interests in eugenics, household management and birth control would all influence her demand for 'women's rights' so women could have a better future.

Irene Longman's childhood memories of her father were of a different nature. Known as a good man, James Bayley had considerable standing in the local community. Yet he could sometimes be stern and impatient (Bayley 1995:PC). Irene Longman's niece, Betty Bayley, recalls Irene saying that while her father was stern with the boys, he was less so with the

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<sup>8</sup> Held by family historian, Fay Sandaver.

<sup>9</sup> Assassinated in 1881



girls. He sometimes showed impatience, especially when teaching Irene to play the piano. Irene's mother would gently admonish her husband, saying that patience would achieve better results (Bayley 1995:PC). With her brothers and sisters as constant companions, Irene led an active life, exploring the local surrounds, and enjoying country life in colonial Tasmania. In a speech made on 12th July, 1950 to members of the Women's Electoral League in Brisbane, Irene recalled her youth.

My earlier years were spent very happily among the orchards of the Huon, playing and dreaming on the banks of that lovely river. The sight and scent of the pink and white blossoms even now bring back tender memories and the apple is still my favourite fruit.

Longman 1950:1

The apple industry had well and truly begun its rapid climb to economic dominance by the time the Bayley family left the Huon in 1886. In fact, their departure from Tasmania more or less coincided with the first shipments to Britain. The growing of small fruit was also an important and developing industry, with a jam factory in operation at Franklin. In addition to fruit products, timber was also an important export. The banks of the Huon and the surrounding hills were all heavily timbered. Thick bush was never far away from any family living in the Huon (Woolley 2000:PC).

While Irene Longman's reminiscence of her early childhood suggests happiness, for James and Alice Mary's generation times had been very hard. Rearing a large family on the modest stipend of a Minister of religion would have presented some financial difficulties. This would have placed a considerable strain on the family. A further burden for Alice Mary would have been the absence of James from home due to the extensive number of small communities in his care. The distances travelled by James to provide services for the scattered population of the Huon and the mode of transport had been arduous. As the settlers themselves built many of the early roads in the Huon, they were

often little more than cart tracks (Woolley 2000:191). While most of his journeys would have been on horseback or horse-drawn carriage, it is likely that some travel by water was necessary, particularly to reach outlying communities such as Port Cygnet and Southport. After having occupied the Congregational pulpits in the Huon district for eleven years, where he and his family made many friends, the Rev. James Bayley was transferred to Rookwood in New South Wales (Woolley 2000:PC).

### **Sydney Town**

The year of 1886 saw many changes for the re-settling family. Recalling this move, Irene Longman said:

When my father...a minister of the Congregational Church and my mother removed to Sydney with their young family of six we went from one beautiful spot to another.

Longman 1950:1

While Irene Longman speaks of the beauty of her new surrounds, she remains silent about the darker side of life in Sydney Town. The three years between 1886-1888 were to be tragic and sad years for the Bayley family. After only a few months in Sydney, eleven-year-old Mabel Bayley was drowned in a creek near the railway at Rookwood. This tragedy was reported in *The Tasmanian*. Whilst gathering ferns by the creek, her seven-year-old brother Percy, fell in the water. Mabel jumped in to save him but was drowned herself. The boy was saved by some people who went to the spot attracted by the cries of four-year-old James, but Mabel's body was not discovered for several days. The report concluded that 'Miss Bayley, who two years ago was a successful exhibitor in the Board of Education exhibitions, had many friends in Tasmania who will hear with sincere regret of her untimely death' (July 10, 1886:24).

Three months after this tragedy, Mary Alice Bayley gave birth to her eighth child, another son who was to die two weeks later. In 1888, when Irene was only eleven years old her mother, after sixteen years of marriage and the bearing of eight children, died on the 19th January. Although this heartbreaking event devastated the family, it was fairly typical of the times. During the nineteenth century, Australian families often had a large number of children (an average of 7) and 'repeated childbearing left thousands of women with debilitating injuries or in permanent ill health', even causing premature death (Lake 1999:19).

This, undoubtedly, was a difficult time for the family. In 1889, with five children in his care, James Bayley was moved to Leichhardt in New South Wales. In need of the companionship of a wife and also a mother for his children, the following year the Rev. Bayley married Selina Josephine Hawkins, a widow with a young son named Frank. Rev. Bayley had officiated at the wedding of Selina and Thomas Hawkins at Shipwright's Point on 7 July 1878, so the Church undoubtedly linked the families. Thomas Hawkins was drowned when the ketch *Rocket* foundered off the East Coast of Tasmania in April, 1880. It is likely that the two young wives with small children, isolated in small villages in colonial Tasmania, forged a strong bond of friendship. Probably, it was kind-hearted Mary Alice who asked Selina to keep a watchful eye on her family (Sandaver 1995:PC).

The Bayley children were unhappy about their father's re-marriage. It is likely that their love and loyalty to their mother was why little mention of Selina is recorded in their family history. Only one word seems to remain to describe their stepmother. This was that she was 'aloof'. That Selina was seen as being a cold and unsympathetic woman indicates that there certainly was resentment, but this may have abated over time. Selina was to bear

James two more sons, Ralph Olaf born in 1891 and Ewart Gladstone in 1893. Despite James Bayley's remarriage, he maintained an affectionate interest in the development of all his children. Close kinship ties were formed and the importance of family was strongly embedded into their lives. Irene particularly, had a great love for her half-brother Ewart that was to continue throughout his life.

Ewart Bayley was named in honour of the British Prime Minister of the day. Interest in Gladstone's radical program was being carefully watched in Australia, where debate centered on a union of the colonial states and a notion for democratic rule. What kind of democracy, was a vital question in these debates. Whilst there were enemies and state rivalries against Federation in Australia, which had been discussed over the past two decades, many despaired of it ever eventuating. Meanwhile in Britain, Gladstone had pledged to extend the country franchise, reform the structure of local government and revise land laws. Gladstone's program was for a move away from aristocratic traditions and individualistic liberalism, and towards policies advocating strong social reform (Barker 1975:8-9). Although there had been an increase in general wealth in Britain, poverty and squalor had not been eliminated so a crusade for social justice was being proposed. Gladstone accepted the doctrine that the State had a duty to assist individuals who found it impossible to manage difficult situations unaided (Barker 1975:183-4). While the radicals did not want to see socialist doctrines forge ahead, they did protest about existing indifference to pressing social problems. They advocated cheaper housing for the poor, a shorter working day, care for the workers in old age, land acquisition for the agricultural worker, and free secular education for the young. What Gladstone envisaged was a democratic nation, achieved by reducing the power of the elite class who ruled by inherited title, wealth or through the church. As the Gladstonian epoch came to a close in 1894, he

had sown the seeds of a 'new' liberalism and the notion of a welfare state. These events would most likely have been discussed in the Bayley household.

It has been claimed that James Bayley was not interested in politics (Mack 1953 p58-70), but this is not correct. As a close friend of (Sir) Henry Parkes, Premier of New South Wales for most of the period from 1886-91, Bayley was particularly interested in the Federation of the Australian colonies. The notion of a united political constituency aligned with nineteenth century reforming liberalism was compatible with Bayley's ministry, as there was a strong mix of theology and politics. Reading and interpretation of the Christian scriptures held a pre-eminent place in the belief and practice of Congregationalists. Influenced by nineteenth century attitudes of enlightened self-consciousness, Congregationalists have been characterised by a liberal turn of mind both in church and politics. In an ordained ministry where there was no official ranking such as deacon, priest or bishop, 'all members of the congregation, irrespective of sex or class were expected to exercise ministries of witness, pastoral care and service to the world' (Gaden 1891:19). The Victorian virtues of hard work, prudence and self-sacrifice were part of the Bayley's family culture and provided a sense of familial identity. As an individual, Irene Bayley was shaped by these cultural experiences.

Her politically minded father must have influenced Irene Bayley as politics were discussed in the home (Bayley 1995:PC). With such a strong family basis for open discussion, Irene was able to develop an easy rapport with men and women from an early age, and enjoyed stimulating and challenging dialogue on a range of topics which interested her. While there were some assumptions that Victorian women should be mainly excluded from political and social debate, confining themselves to domestic activities, these were notions to which

Irene Bayley paid little attention. She was adept at all the domestic skills of a typical young Victorian woman, filling her days with churchgoing, visiting, jam making and solicitous care when there was illness in the family. Irene Bayley was more interested in finding a role for herself outside this narrow sphere.

Brought up as a nonconformist Christian, Irene Bayley would have realised early in her life, that women had a place in evangelic, pastoral and practical work, not only within the church but also in the wider community. Considering that women were regarded as the keepers of morals and their basic career was in marriage, an important tenet of the church's teaching was equality before God of each person's individual value and dignity, irrespective of sex or class. This social consciousness gave Irene Bayley a sense of responsibility and an eagerness to be active in community life.

Reflecting on the role of women in the era of Irene Bayley's mother, it can be related to the position women held, as initiated in the American tradition. Moving away from the strict and harsh traditions of European Calvinism, nonconformists assumed a more missionary zeal. In America, as in Australia, this was necessary because of the opening up of new colonies and increased immigration. To be successful, church leaders recognised they had to 'meet the needs of a decidedly non-intellectual and frontier population' (Douglas 1977:36-37). In the second half of the nineteenth century, American liberal nonconformists set about establishing the correct feminine role for women in the church. By elevating and revering women, they both praised yet constricted the latter's role. The belief that 'through their unselfishness women would bring "comfort and blessing" to the world' (Douglas 1977:45) was offset by women knowing their place in society. They were to play a passive role, usually tending to children's prayers at night, reading the Bible, attending the sick and

the needs of the poor and the teaching of Sunday school. By accepting this passive role and performing good works as a personal example to 'others', women 'had no comparable official profession' (Douglas 1977:45), but worked in a voluntary and altruistic capacity. In this way, women became invisible and unable to assert their own feminine individuality. Nonetheless, even in these early times, women were active in pursuing change. As Ann Douglas explains, educated middle class women, even though they courted both the notion of admiration and limitation 'were engaged in a struggle for identity and esteem' (Douglas 1977:45). Women's strategy was to formulate and adopt a 'theory of influence,' an approach that was later taken up 'by the suffragists and other avowed feminists' (Douglas 1977:45). Thus it is possible to understand how Irene Bayley was influenced by her religious and political beliefs, yet desired both self-identity and esteem. At some time in her career, Irene Bayley must have concluded that to assert her feminine individualism and have some influence in moral and social power, she would have to emulate her father as a teacher and speaker in the public arena.

## **Education**

Nonconformists emphasized the reading and interpretation of the Bible, which stimulated the idea for public education for all children, including girls (Gaden 1981:17-18). This was a pursuit strongly advocated by Rev. James Bayley. Along with Henry Parkes, Bayley had been a powerful activist for free and secular education. According to the 1879 edition of Walch's *Almanac*, James Bayley was a member of nine different school boards, and the 1885 edition of the same book, states that he was the Chairman of both the Franklin and Upper Huon bodies. It was, in fact, largely due to Bayley's efforts that the first public school in the Upper Huon had been opened in 1880 (Woolley 2001:PC). While the family's move to Sydney in 1886 caused some upheaval in their lives, and times were hard, James

Bayley realised the importance of education for his children, so they attended local Sydney schools. Whereas the Bayley family was not wealthy, there were certain privileges granted to the children of Ministers of Religion. This enabled Laura, Irene, Percy and James Garfield to gain a good education.

Irene Bayley completed her education at the Sydney Girls' High School and Sydney Church of England Girls' Grammar School (Redlands) where her intellectual development was encouraged. Recalling her school days in a speech to the Women's Electoral League in 1950, Irene said:

All my schooldays were spent in Sydney and very happy they were. I was fortunate in always having Head Mistresses of fine personality and intellectual ability who gave us, what seems to-day to be largely lost in the hurry and scurry of examinations, time to read and develop an appreciation of literature and history.  
(Longman 1950:3).

There is some conjecture about Irene's claim that all her formal education was received in Sydney. There was certainly a school in Franklin when the Bayleys lived there. The Public Schools Amendment Act of 1873 required all children aged between 7 and 14 who lived within two miles of the local school to attend that institution. Given her father's attitude to the provision of education in the Upper Huon, he surely would have been keen to set an example for other parents who may have been less convinced about the merits of sending their children to school. It is not clear therefore, why Irene Bayley would not have attended the public school at Franklin. It was possible to obtain an exemption on the grounds of poor health, or if the child was receiving private tuition, but it is not known whether either of these situations applied to Irene.



On completion of the two elder girls' education in Sydney, it was Laura who stayed at home to help with the younger members of the family. Irene Bayley wanted to be self sufficient and independent. When in 1895, the family moved to West End in Brisbane for Rev. Bayley to take up the post of Minister of the Congregational Church in Brighton Road, Irene remained in Sydney accepting a position as a trainee Kindergarten teacher. As a daughter of the Manse, Irene Bayley was brought up to be genteel and ladylike and Kindergarten teaching was considered an appropriate occupation for her. Kindergarten work in those days was dismissed as either acceptable social work for respectable middle class women, or an occupation which would prepare young women for 'marriage, motherhood and the perpetuation of family values' (Donkin 1988:155-56). This perception came about because 'the two strands of education and philanthropy developed side by side' (Roberts 1997:116). It may have been these sentiments which encouraged Irene Bayley's father to allow her to stay in Sydney to do her training. Irene, on the other hand, desired economic independence and freedom from domestic responsibilities, and the opportunity to pursue a career in teaching.

The founder of the Kindergarten movement in New South Wales at this time was Maybanke Wolstenholme who was a household name in New South Wales in the 1880s and 90s. Deserted by her husband, she first ran a boarding house and then founded a school in order to support her family. Aware of the injustices faced by women and children, she worked tirelessly for social betterment through education. Her remarkable achievements with a like minded group of people also included campaigns for federation, the right of women to vote, for fair property and divorce laws as well as adult and sex education. Her interest in educational issues such as kindergartens and playgrounds were paramount. Wolstenholme believed these were places where little children should learn about self and

society through play. At an early age, children would then acquire civic and social virtues 'and transmit them to a wider society via their homes' (Roberts 1997:187).

In her selection of student teachers, Wolstenholme first looked for young women who were interested in becoming professional educators. Second, she chose intellectual girls of some refinement who could be kind and loving towards children. Wolstenholme was not simply offering philanthropic ideals, but rather a serious profession in teaching. In 1895, together with a group of enlightened educators, she began working tirelessly for the introduction of childcare and early education (Roberts 1997:116).

Irene Bayley was among the first Kindergarten student teachers in New South Wales. This was the beginning of a new life for her. New knowledge was to open up a world of possibilities, not only in a professional sense, but also as a foundation for later experiences. In the next section I will examine how Irene Bayley reassessed her new identity and how she positioned herself in terms of her professional experiences. The intention is to review her intellectual development and to show how her reading of early childhood philosophers was to become a foundation for her ideas of joining education to philanthropic activities.

## **The Educator**

Irene Longman's status as a politician should not overshadow her contribution to public life as an educator. Her training in methods of early childhood learning influenced her public work in later years. Her own family experiences made Irene realise that mothers needed help with childcare. Her father's involvement with education and school boards may have awakened Irene's sense of vocation, and made her aware of some of the new and advanced methods of teaching that were becoming popular. At this time, teaching as a career was attractive to reformist women as they believed the organized influence of educated women was specifically valuable as they could 'go out into the world as the representative of all women, their virtue and integrity an example to all' (MacKinnon 1997:160-1).

At the end of the nineteenth century, when the kindergarten movement was evolving, there was controversy and division over the purpose of such establishments. Philanthropists and social reformers believed that the re-socialisation of working class children was most important. By teaching young children good hygiene and manners, it was hoped that these characteristics and ideas would infiltrate their homes. On the other side of the divide were the educators, who believed the development of each child's special abilities was the most desirable outcome and influence in early childhood learning (Reiger 1985:164).

The Kindergarten Union held its first meeting in New South Wales in July 1895. Among those present were Maybanke Anderson (Acting President), Miss Arnold and Miss Liggins (Principals of Redlands School), Miss Brown (Kindergarten Director Redlands) and Miss Scheer (Kindergarten Director, Wesleyan College, Ashfield). The three objects of the Union were: '(1) To set down workable kindergarten principles; (2) To get these

principles introduced in to all New South Wales schools; and (3) To open free kindergartens where possible in poorer urban centres' (Roberts 1993:110). The objectives of the Kindergarten Union suggest a combination of ideas. Undoubtedly, the reformist enthusiasm of Arnold and Liggins informed their own school's teaching and this would have been transmitted to Irene Longman.

After a lot of thought and a great deal of study, Mrs Anderson and Miss Liggins opened 'the first Free Kindergarten in the British Empire' in the inner Sydney suburb of Woolloomooloo in 1896. With only fifty pounds in the bank and a small amount of discarded furniture, this was a courageous step for the Union to take, but as Maybanke Anderson declared, the centre was opened in 'the true sweet kindergarten spirit' (Roberts 1993:110). The idea of the 'child garden' was to allow the developing child to be active in a fitting way, and this activity would permit 'the flowering of a child's inborn capacities' (Steedman 1990:82). However, the reality of that ideal was far from evident. Maybanke Anderson described this kindergarten as 'small, ugly, ill-ventilated and badly furnished' (Roberts 1993:110), but claimed that difficulties were lightened because of a small band of enthusiast who kept on with their earnest work (Roberts & Kingston 2000:215). As the number of children attending escalated, it became evident that more assistance was required. Anderson decided that to overcome this problem, suitable student teachers could gain practical experience by helping in the Kindergarten in the morning and receive training for themselves in teaching methods in the afternoon (Roberts and Kingston 2000:215). This then was the beginning of the professional training of Kindergarten teachers.

Although Irene Longman has left no record of her experiences as a teacher trainee, it is likely that she did some of her practical training at this kindergarten. We can glimpse a little of these experiences by reflecting on the experiences of another young woman. Olive Gray at 21 years of age was later Director at the Woolloomooloo Kindergarten for two years. She described her time there as very distressing. Supervising 100 children between three and five years old, with five or six student teachers and several assistants to help, Olive Gray found the situation almost hopeless. Olive was most affected by the poverty and misery of the ragged and flea-ridden children, but she believed this was because she was too young and inexperienced to cope with the situation (Roberts 1993:116-117). While there is no way of knowing whether Irene Bayley had similar feelings to those of Olive Gray, it seems that young Irene also found the Free Kindergarten distressing, because on completion of her training, she continued her teaching career within the established private school system.

Part of Maybanke Anderson's creed was that the State and its policy makers should not neglect the education of the most valuable and vulnerable, its children. In a November 1895 issue of her fortnightly paper *Women's Voice*, which she had started in August 1894, Anderson quotes the philosophy of great thinkers to remind readers of the importance of early childhood education (Roberts 1993:110).

Aristotle told his disciples that State education should begin in early childhood and that the plaything of the child should have a bearing upon the life and work of the man. Plato insisted on bringing children together from three to seven so that good habits might be implanted. Juvenal said that the character is made at seven. To come to later times Kant said that the first seven years of a child's life are the decisive years in his history."(Roberts 1993:111).

When Anderson first started to implement Kindergarten ideas and teacher training at her Maybanke College, it was German philosopher Friedrich Froebel's (1782-1852) educational

theory and methods she put into practice. She employed a Froebel-trained teacher, Fraulein Scheer to train Maude Fox to take charge of the Maybanke College Kindergarten (Roberts: 1993:109). Froebel's innovative methods were also taken up in the United States and Britain. But Anderson did not work alone. She was surrounded by like-minded friends including Margaret Windeyer, Rose Scott, Louisa MacDonald, Mr. and Mrs Edgeworth David and Francis Anderson (Maybanke's second husband). This group, all with practical educational experience, was striving for 'more professional ways of doing things [and] for new ways of acting and thinking' (Roberts 1993:101:113).

The criteria for selection of students for the profession in teaching were that they be intellectual girls of some refinement with a great love of children. Brought up to be genteel and ladylike, Irene's father would have considered Kindergarten teaching to be a respectable occupation and one which prepared Irene for 'marriage, motherhood and the perpetuation of family values' (Donkin 1988:;55-56). While higher education for girls had been introduced in New South Wales in 1882, many were strongly opposed to University education for young women. These sentiments were expressed in the *Bulletin*: 'a girl who has a received higher education is generally a prig and a poser' (Roberts 1993:159).

Higher education was also considered harmful for women and the human race. Both would suffer if women's energies were diverted from their reproductive role and channelled instead into intellectual pursuits (Jalland 1986:15). These sentiments were not encouraging and as MacKinnon points out, without a scholarship university education was not possible for many young women (MacKinnon 1997:87). Irene's father certainly encouraged her study and assisted her with money for tuition, books, clothes and lodgings. Both Irene's younger brothers were to go on to tertiary education having gained scholarships to the

Brisbane Boys Grammar School (Bayley 2001:PC). Considering Irene's family background where good works were expected as part of daily life, it may have been thought that higher education would interfere with the charitable work, which was considered essential training and a proper occupation for any respectable young lady.

It would seem that Irene Longman accepted these expectations and was content with selection for Kindergarten teaching. Living and training at Maybanke College, Irene was exposed to less confronting notions of women's place in public life. It would have been from these beginnings that she later became involved with the Suffrage movement, the National Council of Women, the Playground and Kindergarten Association - all activities that Maybanke Anderson had promoted at the end of the nineteenth century. Equally influential was the work of Froebel and other kindergarten philosophers whose theories helped lay a strong ideological foundation for education innovations and reforms, which would carry over into Irene's adult life.

The origin of these philosophical ideas began in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. 'Working within a Romantic appropriation of Kantian philosophy, [Froebel] evolved an educational system for young children based on the notion of the human being an organic unity, with the human mind as a spontaneously formative agency' (Steedman 1990:82). Froebel believed in the unity of God, nature and humanity, and the idea that education would promote the natural development of a child's personal spiritual being. Continental philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau was another key figure in the principles of educational provisions, which stressed the natural and spontaneous growth of a child. In his study of children's literature, Humphrey Carpenter writes of the 'Golden Age' when the understanding of childhood is linked to the biblical story of Adam and Eve, and

‘growing up becomes synonymous with the loss of Paradise’ (Carpenter 1985:9). However, Carpenter claims there was a change in attitude in the nineteenth century when writers moved away from the connotation of ‘sin and loss’ placing the emphasis on the notion of the ‘garden’ being an enchanting and healing place. This idea was portrayed in Frances Hodgson Burnett’s magical story of *The Secret Garden* in 1911. While other commentators argue that Rousseau and other continental philosophers had little influence on British educational practice, Steedman points out that Froebel’s method had a ‘substantial middle-class audience... [due to] extensive discussions of his theory in family magazines and childcare manuals’ (Steedman 1990:82).

Froebel’s method recommended the spontaneity of the mind be stimulated by activities through action and play. This incorporation of movement and colour, in a metaphorical space - ‘the garden’ - allowed children to interact with nature, thus enabling them to develop their innate characteristics (Steedman 1990:82). Froebel’s theory did not advocate open-air education, but the garden symbolised an institution where children could associate with other children in an atmosphere that ‘would protect the child against the corrupting influence of society, and the dangers of nature’ (Steedman 1990:96). Another important legacy of Froebelian thought was that through education women could become professional mothers. This theory influenced Irene Longman’s later thinking, particularly in arguments in the early decades of the twentieth century about the training of young girls as nurturers of small children and the education of mothers in the principles of mothering.

On graduating, Irene Longman left the Maybanke College to take up residence as a boarder with the Tannant Edgewater David family. Both academics, David and his wife Cara (Caroline) were committed to improving the quality of education in New South Wales. A



noted geologist and explorer, Edgeworth David was to become Professor of Geology at the Sydney University. His wife played a significant role in designing the curriculum and syllabus for almost every level of teacher training in New South Wales. It was in this environment that Irene Longman's interest in science and literature was to flourish. Both Professor and Mrs David belonged to a distinguished group 'who worked for the ideals of adult learning and the uniting of science and literary arts' (Roberts 1993:145). This group formed the Australasian Home Reading Union, an organization set up to foster inter-colonial links with the separate Australian colonies 'for the purpose of developing a taste for recreative and instructive reading among all classes of the community and directing home study to definite ends' (Roberts 1993A:145-7). It was also through her long time friendship with the David family that Irene Longman developed an interest in the geological history of Australia (Longman 1950:6).

Because Irene's higher education was mainly woman centred, living with such a socially prominent family as the Edgeworth David's (later to be Sir and Lady David), provided her with the opportunity to extend her intellectual repertoire and enjoy socialising with a wider range of people. While she had always admired the educational contribution of women, she now learnt to appreciate the contribution of men and recognised them as teachers and valuable sources of knowledge (Longman 1950:6).

During this time Irene Longman taught at Normanhurst, Ashfield and at Sydney Girls' Grammar School (Nairn and Serle 1931:139-40). Her career was interrupted in 1898 when tragedy again touched the Bayley family and Irene was recalled to Brisbane on the death of her fourteen-year-old sister, Myra, from rheumatic fever (Sandaver 1995:PC). Although she remained close to her family throughout her life, Irene chose to pursue an independent life

separate from the responsibility of family commitment. In 1899, she took up a teaching position at the Rockhampton Girls' Grammar School.

Her life in Rockhampton was a spartan one, as the headmistress was very strict with the teaching staff. Irene recalled that socially there was little to do, even reading in bed in the evening was not allowed (Bayley 2001:PC). In this environment, holidaying with her family and pursuing other interests must have been enjoyable for her. One such interest was Sunday school teaching, which Irene found to be an interesting forum for creative experimentation. Within this context, and as an advocate for Froebelian thought and method, she was able to disseminate these ideas through public speaking.

Reading a paper before the teachers of the Queensland Sunday School Union in Toowoomba in 1900, Irene explained how Froebel's philosophy could be applied to Sunday School teaching. 'Talking about God's goodness could help children understand the family and family love' she said (*Brisbane Courier* 1900:Feb 28,np). She believed this expression of an ideal family life, which made her own life meaningful, could also be adopted by the teaching profession. Using their experience and the new methods that were now available, she believed that resourceful teachers could become an extension of the family unit. By inspiring the habits of unselfishness, kindness and perseverance in their pupils, teachers could help to further the development of children, thus benefiting them all their lives (*Brisbane Courier* Feb.28, 1900 np). This illustrates how Irene Bayley's close identification with Victorian Christian family life established a framework for her own activities. While she believed a woman's basic career was in marriage, 'this' she said 'should not stop women from pastoral or practical work in the wider community' (Longman 1950:2). This may indicate that Irene still had aspirations of marriage and

children. In 1901 the Bayley family were relocated to Toowoomba. These were changing times, with the Federation of the Australian colonies and the end of the Victorian era. It also marked the beginning of a new aspect of life for Irene Bayley.

## **Love and Marriage**

At the Bayley home “Talara” on the range at Toowoomba, by 1904 the whole family was changing direction. Percy and Laura had married, and James had left Australia to study at Stanford University in America (Sandaver 1995:PC). The four young Bayley adults were to become an interesting group deeply involved in politics. Although Irene had experienced an independent life away from the family, her ideal of independence did not exclude the desire for love and marriage. A chance meeting with Heber Longman at the railway station in Toowoomba drew Irene and Heber closer together. On 29<sup>th</sup> January 1904, at the Toowoomba Congregational Church, a close family friend, the Rev. Lundy (Bayley 1995:PC), married Irene Maud Bayley and Heber Albert Longman.

Heber Longman, the son of Fredrick Longman, a Congregational Minister of liberal views and his wife Susan (nee Passmore), was born on 24<sup>th</sup> June 1880 at Heytesbury, Wiltshire in England. He was educated at Emwell House, Warminster where he was encouraged in his leanings towards botany, geology and archaeology. He qualified and worked as an engineer in England, but because of a chest weakness, had emigrated to Queensland in 1902 (Nairn and Serle 1931:138-139). On taking up residence in Brisbane, Longman took a day trip to Toowoomba carrying with him a letter of introduction to the Rev. James Bayley. There was no personal connection between the families, but there were ties through the association of similar church teachings. As fate would have it, the Rev. James Bayley was at the Toowoomba railway station meeting Irene, who was returning home for holidays. While it is impossible to know Irene’s feelings on this first meeting, it did become part of their family folklore that Heber said, “the first woman he was formally introduced to on Australian soil, seized him and married him!” (Bayley 1995:PC). So it could be assumed

that marriage was firmly on Irene's agenda. Irene was 26 and Heber was 23. While it was Irene's intention not to rush into marriage until the right man came along, it seems she was not afraid to take the initiative when she met Heber Longman.

Irene and Heber's romance was not a whirlwind event, as they courted for two years and then mostly by letter. Unfortunately, no correspondence remains today, but Irene's only surviving comment was an inscription on a wedding photo: "Like lambs to the slaughter". She must have felt some trepidation, as she wondered about two innocents starting out on life without knowing what the future held for them both. Even so, the ideal of the companionate marriage of intellectual equals as eloquently described by John Stuart Mill in his work *The Subjection of Women*, (Rendall 1987:3) must have been attractive to Irene.

As children of the Manse, both Irene and Heber Longman shared the same religious and political convictions as well as other educational and literary interests. True to her beliefs that marriage and domesticity should not stop women from other practical work, once married and settled in Toowoomba, Irene worked along side her husband helping him run his recently acquired newspaper. It would seem that Irene Longman did not see a distinction between work at home and work in the public sphere. However, this could suggest more of a commitment to the economic security of their partnership.

Longman had bought the plant of a defunct newspaper and produced a news-sheet "The Downs Post". This spirited publication attracted local support and businessmen formed a small company to produce a weekly paper called *The Rag*. George Essex Evans became Editor and Longman sub-editor. When Evans withdrew because of ill health, Longman became Editor and renamed the paper *Citizen* (Nairn and Serle 1931:138). It was in this

paper that Irene Longman wrote a children's page under the name of 'Aunt Tabitha' (Bayley 1996:PC). Unfortunately none of these papers survived.

Keenly interested in the plant life of the district, Heber Longman became a diligent collector and initiated the Field Naturalists' Club of Toowoomba, with Irene joining him in his botanical research. When Dr. Ronald Hamlyn-Harris of the Toowoomba Grammar School staff was appointed Director of the Queensland Museum, he invited Heber Longman to join him as a scientific assistant, and Longman gladly accepted this appointment. While Heber Longman lacked formal qualifications he established a considerable reputation as a scientist over the next forty years, taking over the role of the Director of the Queensland Museum from 1917-1945 (Nairn and Serle 1931:140). He published seventy scientific papers notably on fossil vertebrates and also contributed popular articles to the local press and spoke to many societies. ([bsparcs@asap.unimelb.edu.au](mailto:bsparcs@asap.unimelb.edu.au)). This change of employment for Heber Longman meant they left the provincial town of Toowoomba to live in the more urbanised Brisbane. This was in 1911 when the Longmans took up residence at 'Cotley', Oliver Street, Woolloowin. This was a change in lifestyle for Irene Longman. No longer able to work beside her husband in his new position, she turned her interests to a wide range of social, political and economic issues.

Since the turn of the century, new scientific ideas were becoming popular and challenging social and religious beliefs. Heber Longman was greatly influenced by Thomas Henry Huxley, a famous English zoological lecturer whom he greatly admired (Bayley 1996:PC). Huxley had been critical of the ambiguity of Charles Darwin's phrase 'survival of the fittest' claiming that 'fittest' had the connotation of 'best', hence a moral tone was inferred.

He argued that moral directives did not take into account conditions of natural phenomena (Huxley in Ridley 1997:396-7). Huxley's belief was that life evolved naturally rather than supernaturally, and he introduced the word 'agnostic'. As scientific methods had been unable to prove or disprove the existence of God or a spiritual world, Huxley's philosophy promoted the rejection of religion in favour of real-world human endeavour (Desmond 1997:249). Humanism with no dogma and no supernatural theories began to figure strongly in intellectual enquiry and debate. As Dorothy Thompson points out, it was such intellectual enquiries that 'provoked movements which demanded greater changes or which resisted change. Institutions came under scrutiny and....became subject to rational critiques and to movements for social reform' (Thompson 1987:57).

Heber Longman may have influenced his wife's acceptance of Huxley's humanist theory. Still it must have created a religious crisis for her. Irene Longman understood that women and men were called to the ministry of praying, preaching and service as equals, yet she became aware that the strict adherence of the interpretation of the scriptures had a negative effect on women. The scriptural teachings that women were subordinate to men and that wives should submit or defer to their husbands, relegated women to a secondary role. For this reason, Irene Longman began to question religious beliefs that oppressed women and legitimised their inferior status. She stated that 'the promise to obey' in marriage vows was an absurdity, and the idea that a wife must be subservient to the will of her husband was not a formula for a happy marriage (*Courier Mail* June 12, 1961). Irene Longman did not challenge the institution of marriage per se, only the process of deferring to the authority of men within a familial structure. Huxley's theory of human endeavour, as well as Herbert Spencer's assumption that 'human society was evolving gradually towards a higher stage in

which love and permanent monogamy would prevail' (Bland 1987:142) led to the vision of the ideal marriage.

Irene Longman expressed the view that solutions could be found through scientific investigation, experiments and the use of reason. For example, the recognition of an evolutionary origin of man, and solutions to social problems could be made through research into the nature of human beings (Longman Courier Mail, 17 February, 1954). Thus it can be seen that rather than accepting the theological view of understanding human nature, Irene Longman pursued sociological study.

Irene Longman saw education as the key to human advancement and integration, and believed these ideals would lead to a future without inequality and exploitation. She suggests science could be used in a creative way, believing this would solve human problems, preserve human dignity and ensure freedom for individuals along with due social responsibility without theological restraints (Longman *Courier Mail* 1954). In this way, Irene Longman does not take an aggressive non-religious position, but offers this philosophy as a positive alternative to a life based on Christian belief (Gillman 1988:187).

Heber and Irene Longman's life together was one of mutual support and their marriage was a happy union. Together they shared a love of language and developed a wealth of literary knowledge. Irene supported Heber's work in science and zoology and at their home they worked side by side in a book-lined study. Their library reflected the Longman's shared interests in 'science, history, philosophy, biography, great literature, drama and, not least amongst them, poetry' (Herbert 1954, p.88). The Longmans may have exchanged their Bible for the Oxford Companion to English Literature (Bayley 1996:PC), but they



maintained a great respect for other peoples' religious beliefs. Many of their friends belonged to church groups, some holding high positions, such as Dr. Wand, Anglican Archbishop of Brisbane, and Dr. and Mrs. Felix Arnot among the laity. 'Their home was a meeting place for a wide circle of friends and visiting scientists with whom their common and diverse interests were intertwined' (Herbert 1954, p.86).

Among the many international visitors was a research team from Harvard University and the grandson of Thomas Huxley, Sir Julian Huxley. Heber Longman was a member of the Philosophy Circle, the Thirty Club and the Rationalist Society. The Longmans entertained moderately, usually having guests to dinner, or playing bridge. What they enjoyed most was their Sunday afternoons, when they entertained on the spacious verandah of their Chelmer home or in the garden having intellectual discussions with friends. Among this group was Professor and Mrs. Cumbrae-Stewart, Professor and Mrs. Herbert and their son John (later Liberal MLA for Sherwood) and Mr. and Mrs. Christensen and their young sons.

While the Longmans were a couple devoted to each other, their greatest disappointment was that they remained childless. During the first twelve years of marriage, Irene Longman suffered seven miscarriages (Bayley 1995:PC). Writing on this subject, Pat Jalland points out how miscarriages were more dangerous for Edwardian women than birth at full term. 'In the days before blood transfusions and antibiotics, miscarriages could cause the death of the mother as well as the foetus, or involve prolonged illness' (Jalland 1986:160). Doctors were aware of the dangers of miscarriage but there was very little they could offer in the way of prevention, apart from periods of inactivity and enforced bed rest (Jalland 1986:160). While it is unknown what professional advice Irene Longman sought in Toowoomba, when

in Brisbane she was attended by Dr. Lillian Cooper and later by Dr. Christina Rivett. Enduring intense pain and suffering, there was little complaint from Irene who coped bravely with support from her husband. Although she must have eventually resigned herself to a life without children, when she was in the company of friends with little children, she was noticed to often have tears in her eyes (Bayley 1995:PC).

Without the responsibility of caring for children at home, Irene Longman was able to accompany her husband on many of his expeditions looking for ‘the remains of dinosaurs, ichthyosauri’ and other similar items (*Patriot* 1929:4). In the *Patriot*, Irene Longman was described as an ‘avid reader of literature and a woman who had a long association with dry bones, ancient relics, hard scientific facts and prehistoric monsters, and a knowledge of pre-Adamite conditions’. Irene and Heber Longman certainly became what Tom Griffith called ‘hunters and collectors of antiquities’ with Heber searching for material to place in the Museum. It must have been exciting for Irene to visit the site at Durham Downs in Queensland in May 1926, to view the new discovery of the *Rhoesaurus Brownei*, a middle Jurassic-age dinosaur that had been described and named by Heber Longman. To this day, it remains the largest Australian dinosaur known (*Telegraph* 31 May, 1929).

The Longmans’ holidays together were mainly spent in scientific work and ranged from fossil hunting in western Queensland to idyllic visits to coral islands on the Barrier Reef. Irene particularly enjoyed the time spent on Masthead Island, where she and Heber would supervise English students exploring the island. The young people were so much fun, and together they would all make up songs and verses to while away the time. One remnant left from these idyllic trips was Heber’s: ‘I like walking on the beach – with my wife who is a peach!’ (Bayley 2001:PC).

When Irene Longman became the centre of attention during her election campaign, Heber often accompanied her, sitting quietly by smoking his pipe. He was always a presence in the background. When asked what his thoughts were, Heber Longman said: ‘When my wife was first endorsed as a candidate, I felt a strong desire to go out West and hunt for new fossils, but that feeling changed and I wouldn’t have missed it for worlds’ (*Brisbane Courier* 13 May, 1929 p7). One campaigner expressed the view: ‘that because of Irene’s shared interest in fossil hunting, she should feel quite at home in the Queensland Parliament’ (*Brisbane Courier* 13 May, 1929 p.17).

As Irene Longman shared her husband’s interests, he also supported her work with women’s organizations by often being a guest speaker. At the Brisbane Women’s Club in 1929, Heber Longman’s address was titled “Wonders of the Past”. In this lecture, Longman informed members of two important discoveries made by women. The late Mrs Hill was responsible for the research on a very fine species of fossil plants found near Bellevue Station in Queensland. He also showed the audience a dental plate representing an ancient relative of the Queensland lungfish, which had been found at White Cliffs NSW, by Mrs. T. Pattison (*Telegraph* May 31, 1929). Heber Longman’s lectures were not always about the past. Addressing the National Council of Women, he spoke on “Some modern day problems”. ‘Man has largely failed, and the world awaits the organized forces of women to lead the way’, said Longman. He stated that ‘in the realm of morality, men have done most of the talking, while women had done most of the work’. Quoting Benjamin Kidd, a noted sociologist of the day, Longman agreed that civilisation has been on the wrong track, becoming obsessed with ‘force’ and urging women to take their rightful place so that any ideals could be achieved (*Daily Mail* 11 May, 1918).

While evolutionary theories may have provided Irene Longman with the knowledge of human progress, it does not adequately explain her feminist ideals or her understanding 'of the repression of religious practices and how the teaching of the church hindered women's individual freedom' (*Daily Mail* 6 August, 1933). I believe Irene Longman's understanding of women's sexuality may have been greatly influenced by the poems and novels of George Meredith, which she enjoyed and read many times (Bayley 1995:PC). Though Irene Longman's thoughts on Meredith's work are unknown, it is recognised that he became popular with the women's movement during the years 1887-1914 because he was 'superlatively feminine' (Review of Reviews, Sept 1894 p.320). Evidence of Meredith's influence can be assessed when compared with the experiences related by intellectual and feminist, Dora Russell, in her autobiography, *The Tamarisk Tree*. Russell's life story is particularly interesting as she, like Longman, was preoccupied with public affairs and causes for women. MacKinnon points out two salient points about literary texts. One, that they are useful sources of evidence in tracing how women reshape their personal lives. The other is that they give us a glimpse of how women position themselves 'in relation to any array of possible futures as thinkers, social activists ...[and] fashioners of a renewed relationship between the sexes' (MacKinnon 1997:11). With this in mind, Meredith's poems and Dora Russell's 'quest for liberty and love' are useful texts for tracing some of the unknown and shadowy aspects of Irene Longman's experiences.

The struggles and emotions experienced by Irene Longman in rejecting her religious beliefs are not known, however, Russell's experiences of her emotional struggle with the acceptance of a religion of suffering was solved by 'two small leather bound volumes of Meredith's poems' (Russell 1975:38-39). For Meredith, a church that denied the body with

the fear of hell was repressive and unnatural. It had lost its vitality and was only a shallow form of religion. Meredith's essential thought in "The Thrush of February" reiterates the 'fading star' of the church's teaching:

It strives without a mark for strife;  
It feasts beside a famished host;  
The loose restraint of wanton life;  
That threatened penance in the Ghost.

Spellman 1970:11).

Russell states 'I came to reject the religion in which I had been brought up and to form by degrees a view of life by which to determine my actions' (Russell 1975:39). After reading Meredith's poems and all his novels, Russell 'found that he had ideas as to what women were really like' (Russell 1975:39). Meredith understood sexuality and claimed that men and women should be guided by 'the higher powers of the body' (Spellman 1979:13) and that one 'should have the mystic experiences of feeling oneself to be an integral part of the very structure of nature' (Spellman 1979:13). Meredith's understanding of women's sexuality is expressed in his *Reading of Earth*.

She, the white wild cherry, a tree  
Earth-rooted, tangibly wood,  
Yet a presence, throbbing, alive,  
Because earth-rooted, alive.

Russell 1975:39

Meredith speaks of married life, and explains that sensual pleasures were natural and should not be repressed through fear of punishment. He could not envisage a just society evolving while women were repressed and had no voices or power in domestic life (Spellman 1970:23-4). Perhaps it was the influence of Meredith's thoughts that inspired Irene Longman's spiritual rather than a religious ideal for 'thinking' women.

Irene Longman was confident that women's position of powerlessness could be altered so that 'certain ways of life' could be changed (*Brisbane Courier* 1929:6). She urged women to enrol in organizations that would fight to secure positions and conditions for women. Irene Longman places an emphasis on 'women's individual civil right, including the rights of a woman over her own person' (Longman *Telegraph* 1932:62). Addressing the Annual General Meeting of the National Council of Women in 1924, she said:

We need to pause, to clear the haze out of our eyes. We must have time to read, to study, to consider and to contemplate, to listen to those 'great voices from life's outer sea'. It is difficult not to be conquered by these headlong days, but before we can help others, we must possess our own souls.

Longman 1924:6

It was a new generation of women, whom Irene Longman spoke of when she said: These women were able to work in the public sphere, without 'abandoning their domestic virtues or femininity, as it [was] these particular attributes which defined woman's femininity and their 'difference' from men (*Sunday Truth*, April 28,1928). Women were 'reshaping expectations of home life' (MacKinnon 1997:110) and changing sex relations. Although most women accepted conventional heterosexual marriage, they were speaking out about marital rights. The marriage debate centred around two issues. First, that marriage was immoral when sex was imposed on women, often resulting in enforced pregnancy. Increasingly women linked this lack of freedom to slavery or prostitution. Second, that women once married became the sexual property of men, given the doctrine of conjugal rights (Bland 1987:146). Feminists in Australia, as in the western world were claiming the right to determine control of their own bodies (MacKinnon 1997:9).

Irene Longman accepts that all humankind is equal, yet she takes into account women's difference and the 'powers and capacities that women have developed in their historical and

cultural context (Gatens 1992:125). Irene Longman does not reject the dominant discourse of home, wife and motherhood, but considered women capable of combining a career with home life (*Brisbane Courier* 1929:63). She believed that women were not attempting to change economic and political structures, nor were they seeking to become the same as men, but were developing a new role for themselves by reshaping their personal lives. For Irene Longman it was not a case of either/or choices, as women's specific difference was their strength.

Nonetheless, in the reshaping of her personal life, Irene Longman retained one old habit of life in the rectory and abandoned another. She could not abide washed clothes hanging on the clothesline on a Sunday. Yet she rebelled against the notion of total abstinence. Growing up listening to her father's preaching on the evils of drink and the strict adherence to the virtues of temperance may have influenced her later ideas of personal freedom and the pleasure of a social drink. Betty Bayley recalls Irene telling her that her brothers used to sing "Oh yes, we like a social glass, but it must be filled with water" (Bayley 1995:PC). Still it was not only the church that preached about the evils of drink. Women also rallied in an attempt 'to persuade men to change their ways [and] to take the pledge of abstinence' (Lake 1999:32). The Woman's Christian Temperance Union was a powerful lobby group for women's political rights, among them their demands for prohibition. They rallied throughout Australia in an attempt to 'curb the availability of alcohol' (Lake 1999:66). Yet the WCTU was not an organization Irene Longman embraced. This could have been for the same reason Maybanke Anderson had given for not joining the WCTU. In a letter to the *Sydney Morning Herald*, 13 May 1925, she explained that not all women were attracted to the WCTU, because they 'did not appear. . .to make an appeal to the general public' (Roberts and Kingston 2000:348).

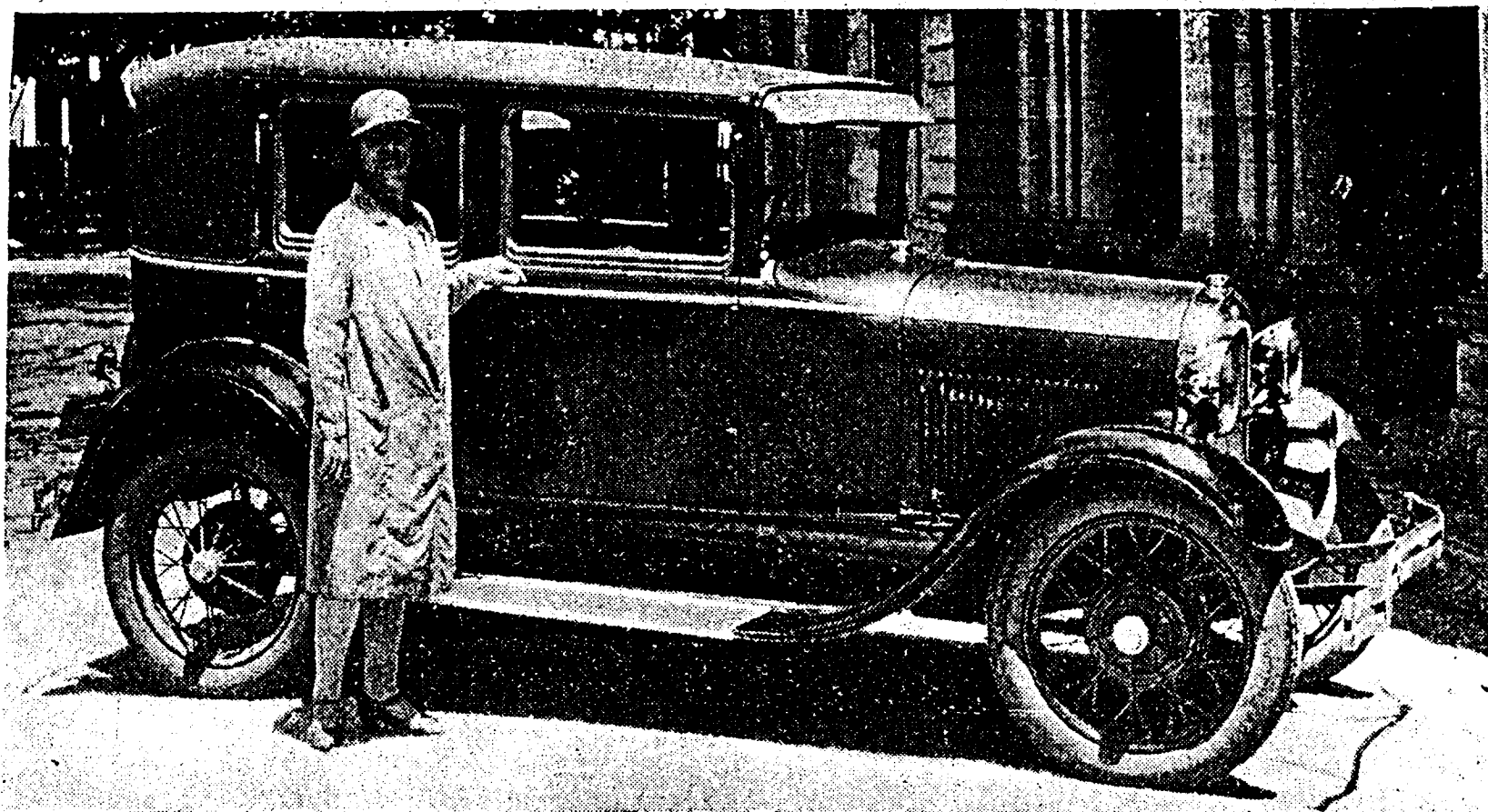
Irene Longman retired from public life during the Second World War to care for her husband. As Director of the Queensland Museum, a shortage of funds and staff resulted in overwork and contributed to Heber Longman's ill health. He died at his Chelmer home on 16 February 1954. Irene was in her seventy-seventh year, and although now a frail and slight figure, she was still vitally interested in public affairs. 'The years had not dimmed the bright mind and her spirit was strong and unwavering' (Qld Liberal 1961:11).

With a happy marriage and a successful career, did Irene Longman 'finally manage to combine those two seductive but elusive goals - love and freedom'? (MacKinnon 1997:xiii). She certainly lived a full life as teacher, housewife and politician. Yet this remains a narrow view of her career considering she spent more than thirty years preoccupied with public affairs and causes for women and children. In the next section, the activities of Irene Longman within the public domain will be further explored.



**PART 3.**

**PUBLIC LIFE.**



QUEENSLAND'S LADY MEMBER.  
Mrs. Longman, M.L.A., outside Parliament House with her Ford Fordor Sedan.

## **Public Life**

### **Education**

When Irene Longman nominated for a seat in the Queensland Parliament, she declared her occupation as 'housewife'. The term 'homemaker', preferred by women today, was not used at that time. Happily married, with a husband she could talk to and express her ideas, did Irene Longman desire more from life than love and marriage? How did she make the transition from housewife to politician and what were her experiences along the way? What we do know is that Longman found another network outside the home. She enjoyed social and intellectual support and company with a whole community of women who were actively involved in a wide range of educational, cultural and political interests.

Reflecting on the entry of Irene Longman to the Parliament in 1929, a claim that her one term in the House was simply an aberration or 'an accident of history', tends to diminish her achievements. Even though 'an accident of history' has a certain linguistic fascination, her career was not confined to these three years as they were only a small period of a longer career in public life. Irene Longman's triumphant accomplishment was not simply an accident, but rather a collection of events coming together over a long expanse of her career and predominantly achieved by her long term commitment to public life.

On her entry into political life, one columnist wrote that the rare paradox which distinguished Longman was that she was 'a woman politician and a feminist' (*Telegraph* September 24, 1929). Even though she had worked in the public arena for two decades there is no record of Irene Longman referring either to herself or to others as a feminist, although the term had been in use in Australia for twenty years. After she lost her parliamentary seat, Irene Longman founded the Queensland Citizenship League. Margaret

Ogg, her longstanding supporter and founder of the QWEL, was vice president and Lilian Cooper was patron. In 1934, as the first President of the Queensland Citizenship League, Irene Longman declared her feminism. At this time, interest in QWEL was waning as this organization had become more partisan, and its policies more closely aligned with the depleted opposition, following Labor's decisive victory in 1935. QWEL rhetoric was virulently anti-communist. In addition, the 'unilateral and autocratic' style of the President, Elizabeth Goldsmith, coupled with the discovery of financial irregularities, plunged the organization into turmoil.

The object of the Citizenship League was to refocus attention on Longman's key agenda in getting more women into politics and securing their economic independence (Fallon and Ferres 2002:4). In her address to members, Longman publicly declared her position by stating 'as members of this league we are all feminists, intent on obtaining for all women that freedom of opportunity, both economic and legislative, without which we cannot fully develop our personality' (*Telegraph* 16 June, 1934). Even though Longman maintains an emphasis on men and women having different social roles within the private sphere, she insists on women's equality as citizens, campaigning to break down legal and political barriers that kept women from participating as equals in the public arena. Irene Longman's interests were wide ranging, and she joined many organizations where she was able to interact with a variety of people, making lasting friendships and achieving the ability to lobby different sections of government along the way.

Irene Longman strongly believed that for women to attain economic independence and occupational opportunities, education was certainly a major key to human advancement and integration. Affirming the right of every individual to the fullest possible development,

she believed 'the ideal would lead to a future without inequality and exploitation' (Longman *Brisbane Courier* July 11, 1934). These women took their citizenship seriously, and sought not only individuality but to recognise the human basis of 'citizenship as a collective resource' (Lake 1999:141).

This section of the thesis will explore the full development of Irene Longman's personality by describing her involvement in education and cultural institutions. The aim here is to develop an account of the ways the careers of professional women like Irene Longman demonstrate evidence of the modes of incorporation of gender difference into the civil sphere. Their efforts to redefine the limits of citizenship and their pursuits of an ideal of ever-expanding solidarity largely focused on work in cultural institutions such as libraries, reading circles, schools and kindergartens (Fallon and Ferres 2002:1).

With a Kindergarten Diploma and plenty of experience in early childcare, Irene Longman dedicated her energies towards working with other people's children. In 1913, Longman became the supervisor and trainer of students for the Creche and Kindergarten Association at Fortitude Valley until 1915, when the new Training College was opened at Kangaroo Point (Wood 1958:194-5). By identifying with the struggle her mother had suffered, always busy and tired rearing a young family, Irene Longman understood that parents needed help in raising their children (Bayley 1996:PC). Through her experiences of her early teaching days in Sydney, Irene Longman recognised the problems families faced without male support. Sympathetic to the hardships faced by working women, Longman understood that Crèche and Kindertartens served two main purposes. First, they were important as this type of care allowed mothers to work so they could keep their family together and help strengthen the ties between mother and child (Daniels and Murname 1980:126-7). Second,

they provided a good moral environment for children so they could develop healthy minds and strong bodies. Longman said this would ‘teach them to become good citizens’, thus benefiting both the child and the community’ (Longman QPD 1930:910). This work with the Creche and Kindergarten Association led Irene Longman to recognise the need that existed for other groups of children, particularly to provide play, care and facilities for older children and adolescents in the City. To this end, she became involved in the Playground Movement.

The Playground Movement began in 1913 following an address to the National Council of Women by the Founder of the Association, Miss (Mary) Josephine Bedford, who told the meeting of the need for supervised and organized play and recreation as demonstrated in Europe and America, where similar Playgrounds had previously been established. A provisional Committee was set up with its first meeting being held on July 7, 1913 at the home of Dr. Lillian Cooper in George Street, Brisbane. Irene Longman became Honorary Secretary. The National Council of Women recognising this new Association as an excellent undertaking, adopted the recommendations presented by the committee on August 9, 1913 and welcomed the Association as an affiliate of the NCW (Smith, Information Sheet PARAQ p.20).

From these beginnings, the Playground Association came into being in 1918. Josephine Bedford drove this Association under the auspices of the National Council of Women. Irene Longman was to have a long association with Josephine Bedford and her friend, Lillian Cooper. The establishment of the first free supervised playground and free children’s library in Paddington in 1918 was the outcome of a close collaboration and cross fertilisation of Bedford and Longman’s respective expertise: Irene’s Froebellian’s ideas

about the importance of spontaneous play, and Josephine's American experience. Bedford had visited the United States with Lilian Cooper in 1912, attending lectures on public playgrounds for children at Berkeley and observing work in a number of US cities. In 1913, Bedford gave a paper outlining the work being done in America. Josephine Bedford and Longman worked together to plan a strategy for acquiring land and planning approvals. Similar work was being done in the United Kingdom with Margaret McMillan being one of the outstanding women in the field of childcare, outdoor playgrounds and adult education. A lecturer, writer and member of the Independent Labour Party, McMillan's involvement in child education coincided with that of Irene Longman, during the period between 1894 until the 1920s. Although McMillan was involved in writing proposals and policies for the Labour Party, she did not have the vote, and the Labour Party had not won government (Steedman 1990:38). Nonetheless, McMillan's activities in the public sphere highlight similar patterns to those in Australia and the United States.

McMillan was elected to three Bradford School Boards during the period 1894 until 1902 (Steedman 1990:38). At the time, Bradford was one of the fastest growing industrial towns in the United Kingdom, with workers living in tenements or shared divided dwellings. With no sanitary facilities and a high infant mortality rate (Steedman 1990:107), McMillan set out to try to improve the lives of workers and their children. She joined the Froebel Society, and encouraged teachers to add to their educational experience and to gain professional expertise in child development by studying new and innovative child care theories. In 1910, McMillan founded an open-air centre at Deptford for children of working parents, with the emphasis placed first on health, hygiene and a healthy body, and second, educative leaning through play (Steedman 1990:173).

In Brisbane, after five years of planning, lobbying, seeking financial help from the public, councils and government, the children's Playground and Library at Paddington was opened. Four years later, in 1922, a second playground was opened on the corner of East and Wickham Streets, Fortitude Valley. Not satisfied with two playgrounds, the committee of the Playground Association recognised the need for yet another Playground in the over-populated area of Spring Hill, which in the 1920s was a slum. Pauline Smith writes:

[Spring Hill] was home to thugs, sly groggers, prostitutes, pimps and gunmen. This environment was made even worse when the police cleaned out the Sydney underworld. As a result, many of Sydney's worst criminals came up to Brisbane and took over Spring Hill. It was the foolish outsider who ever dared venture into this area, either day or night. Robbery and bashing were accepted as part of life 'on the hill'.

Smith: PARAQ

As opposed to the urban rejuvenated development of Spring Hill today, the situation then was so critical that Archbishop James Duhig suggested that the Brisbane City Council should demolish the entire area and re-develop it under the name of Queenstown. This did not happen and the Spring Hill playground was opened in 1927. These community playgrounds gave the children of the city a free, safe and supervised play area. They also introduced a community spirit to the families trying to hold on to some sense of dignity and morality amid the backdrop of vice and violence that predominated in an area fast becoming industrialised.

It was through her committee work with the Playground Association that Irene Longman soon became the leader of an enthusiastic Town Planning Association. Longman was optimistic that 'civic pride' coupled with a 'spirit of responsibility' could save Brisbane from becoming an 'outsized, overcrowded city like Sydney with slums festering at its heart' (Longman 1950:1-2). Longman was thinking particularly of Surry Hills, which she must have recalled from her teaching days. According to Ruth Park who had lived in Surry Hills



during the war years and described it in her memoirs *Fishing in the Styx* (1995), Surry Hills was ‘an uncared for scrubby old dockside area of Sydney. It was a chaos of roofs, dunnies, fetid alleys, stairways, old lime pits, quarries...and doss-downs of iron and old sacks’ (Park 1995:204). In her novel *Harp in the South*, Park uses Surry Hills to point out its disadvantages. ‘Most Sydney people persist somewhat biasedly, perhaps, in thinking of Surry Hills in terms of brothels, razor-gangs, tenements and fried fish shops’ (Park 1948:148). Park recalled the squalor of Surry Hills but did not condemn the people who lived there.

As public health issues were gaining prominence, housing reform also became more apparent as a growing hygiene awareness instigated the need for improved sanitation. Kareen Reiger has described improved living, and points out that as new domestic technologies such as electricity and gas products came onto the market, the ideal of improved family living brought together a range of professionals, all interested in transforming urban housing away from industrial areas. Irene Longman simply wanted to see the end of slum housing. She connects the physical environment with moral well being, believing that once an area was cleared of slums, families would benefit and their living standards would improve.

Influenced by British and European trends and changing architectural prototypes (Reiger 1985:44-45), Irene Longman favoured utilitarian and aesthetic initiatives for Brisbane’s future. Irene Longman led a deputation, appealing to Town Planners to develop a distinctive Queensland architectural style, which would express the spirit of Queensland’s tropical and sub-tropical climate (Longman 1924:4). The homes she favoured were the early colonial types with spacious rooms and wide all-embracing verandas. She was not

impressed with (as she called them) the ugly square-box-on-stilts type of cottage, which she described as ‘those new little bizarre houses with pernicky verandas’ (Longman 1924:5). While her bid to influence Town Planners on her choice of house design did not eventuate until much later, the rapidly expanding urbanisation in the 1920s, and the need to meet housing demands saw a boom in the building industry, with the cost of a house starting as low as 259 pounds. The popular workers dwellings, usually with four bedrooms and a front veranda, were built on ‘stilts’ to provide extra living space underneath as well as being used to dry clothes in wet weather, and as an area for children to play. The distinctive ‘Queenslander’ had been born and ‘had become synonymous with its inhabitants’ (Craik 1994:145). Later Longman was to live in a typical Queenslander with spacious verandas, surrounded by her much loved Jacaranda and Leopard trees.

What Irene Longman was interested in was a balance between development and the environment. A keen advocate of environmental protection, she was critical of government policies which she believed threatened the extinction of native flora and fauna. In 1919, the Queensland government declared a six-month open season during which millions of koalas were killed. In 1924 Longman led a deputation to the Acting Premier requesting the government refrain from proclaiming an open season on this tree dwelling marsupial. This request was denied, but by 1930 the koala was protected although there was no call for the protection of the gum tree on which they survived (Carter & Murray 2000:16).

Irene Longman’s knowledge and varied interests demonstrated that women, if given equal opportunity for a good education could take their place as equals with men. It was through her involvement in many diverse organizations and the National Council of Women, that Longman began to recognise the greatest handicap for many women was their social and

economic situation. While in theory the suffrage had made women equal citizens of the new nation state, in practice women were excluded from full participation based on the assumption that women's place was in the home, responsible for domestic and child rearing duties.

### **Cultural Organizations**

While women's organizations in Queensland were prolific, each with their own agenda, most were affiliated with the National Council of Women, an organization both national and international. The aims and objectives of the NCW served no one single interest, social, political or religious, but women were able to present a unified and mutual understanding of the social and economic problems faced by women. This enabled them greater cohesion and political solidarity and a better chance of having government listen to their demands for improving the status of women and of family life in general (NCW 1956:24). Of her time as President of the National Council of Women (1924-1928) Irene Longman said:

Being in this position...means that one is in touch with the work of all women's organizations and understands their aims, methods of work, difficulties and successes. In fact, a President of the National Council of Women would be au fait with community needs throughout the State and aware of what was going on in other Australian States, and in other countries which are members of the International Council of women.

Longman 1950:3-4

In her NCW Annual Report of 1924, Irene Longman expressed her admiration for the work of volunteers who gave up their time to help benefit the needy. Responding to criticism that it was only the wealthy middle class who worked for the community, Longman explained that many working men and women with very little wealth were working for others in worse circumstances (QPD 1931:22).

In her committee work, Longman held strong views and her intellectual approach was always formal and correct (Smiths Weekly 1929:11). Longman would write to Secretary of the NCW addressing her as 'Miss Hill' giving her instructions on the points she would like made in the correspondence, but outside of committee work, she and Helen Hill maintained a close friendship. Longman states that there was never anything but friendliness of relations between women in the NCW and the Country Women's Association and this helped to bring together ideas and to centre the needs of both city and country women (Longman 1924:1-2). The *Daily Mail* described Irene Longman as articulate with the ability to write easily. She was an eloquent speaker and 'enlivened her speeches with sparkling wit, a touch of dramatics, and a clever turn of phrase'. She was popular and well liked, and women associated with her saw her as a political leader (*Daily Mail*, April 30, 1929). While Longman said she enjoyed addressing meetings and attending functions, she did not like the mundane and time-consuming work of fund-raising (Longman 1924:1-2).

Longman was pleased when the Mayor of Brisbane, Alderman W.A. Jolly invited her to represent the women of Brisbane to welcome British Parliamentary delegates in 1924. One of her proudest moments was the invitation from the Lady Mayoress to give the address of Welcome to Amy Johnson, following her historic landing in Brisbane. Referred to in the press as 'Johnnie' Johnson, Longman made sure that the aviatrix was welcomed as a heroine for all women by calling her 'our Amy, our Amy beloved'. Longman said 'women had to remember to be proud of the tremendous amount of energy to the art of learning how to fly, the perseverance, ability, grit, determination and courage Johnson had demonstrated to reach her goal' (Longman *Brisbane Courier* March 30, 1). Longman enjoyed these social speaking engagements, but there were more serious meetings and discussion on her agenda. Her first year as President of the NCW was a busy one, with

Irene Longman attending thirty general and executive meetings, fifty-five smaller meetings and twenty-seven meetings of affiliated societies (NCW 1928:4). These activities must have disrupted her home life considerably.

Along with other women who shared her interests, Irene Longman sought to advance political literacy among women. She performed the intellectual work of reading and evaluating literary texts, writings, papers and reviews of leading women thinkers (Allen 1994:94). She was a member of, and regular speaker at the Lyceum Club, and presented lectures and papers on a wide range of issues. The Lyceum Club formed in 1919, was an association for women interested in the advancement of literature, journalism, science, art and music and was open to both town and country women. The purpose of this organization was to promote good feelings and comradeship through knowledge acquired by personal association. In 1921 this cultural group became affiliated with the London Lyceum Club (John Oxley Library P367 LYC C1), thereby keeping members up to date with what was happening overseas. Like other cultural groups such as the Women's Literary Society in Sydney (founded by Rose Scott), women discussed and debated social and cultural issues which women shared.

Women in the bush were also incorporated into this movement through the Queensland Bush Book Club. Longman was a foundation member of the QBBC, founded in November 1921 and not disbanded until 1967. This club was modelled on a similar club in NSW. The idea was formulated at a meeting of the Lyceum Club and put to a public meeting held in the Lady Mayoress' rooms the Brisbane City Council.

The Bush Book Club had no axe to grind. It was an association of women near enough to the pioneering days to know something of the loneliness of the bush...children of the men and women who cleared the wilderness before

they made their homes. We were non-sectarian and non-political always, our aim was to give something to the lives of the men and women whose work is of national importance in Australia. Booklovers being a fellowship the world over, we felt that we in the cities could give the country people what we obtain so much more easily than they in their remoteness (Fryer MS F15 28).

The organizational skills of the committee and foundation members are evident in the way the club was made operational. Members paid an annual subscription to receive parcels of three months worth of reading. Irene Longman belonged to a small group of city women who with the generosity of city business, individuals, organizations and the State Government were able to reach many thousands of readers in places inaccessible to a School of Arts Library. The first task was to collect books, magazines and illustrated papers. The committee relied heavily on generous donations from private citizens, and from sponsorship such as that which initially came from the efforts of the Brisbane Courier, the Brisbane School of Arts, the Commercial Travellers Club, the Commonwealth Bank and Rotary. An arrangement was made with the Library Board of Queensland to supplement the list. Queensland Railway provided a free delivery service, leaving parcels at sidings to be collected by subscribers. Other transport often included coach or by horseback. The aim of the club was to dispel the loneliness of the bush and to offer friendship as well as keeping people in the bush informed. In the busiest years up to 30,000 books were in circulation to readers whose taste was mainly for popular light reading. Apart from its subscribers the Club distributed books to lighthouses, prison farms and other institutions (Fallon and Ferres 2000:4).

In 1915, Irene Longman gave an address on 'The Value of Literature' to the East Moreton Teacher's Association, who met at a new school in Woolloowin, the suburb where the Longman's then lived. Longman's address, published in the *Queensland Education*

*Journal*, reveals the scope of her own reading as she canvasses the ways literature is valued; by poets, whose pleasure is in aesthetics; philosophers, who ‘seek new realms of thought’; historians documenting ‘the growth of social consciousness’; scientists, ‘a record of searching out the unknown’ (and whose own writing has literary value); mystics seeking ‘the revelation of the infinite’; social reformers, who ‘find in literature a mighty power for good’; and lovers, for whom literature is ‘a mirror of passion and devotion’. Reading can offer private pleasure, ‘an escape’ from cares, but Longman emphasised its public utility. She did not disparage popular culture, but her own preference for the classics is evident. She welcomed mass production because it made the best literature widely available. Irene Longman gave praise to contemporary writers, applauding the benefits of paper backs, magazines and short stories now appearing, along with *People’s Books*, *Everyman* and *Home University Library* which Longman believed were a boon for students and readers of limited means. She questioned the definition of a classic book and said her preference was the Sainte-Beuve’s explanation:

A true classic is an author who has enriched the human mind, who has really added to its treasure, who has got it to take a step further; who has discovered some unequivocal moral truth, or penetrated to some eternal passion in that heart of man where it seems where all is known and explored, who has produced his thoughts or his observation, or his invention under some form no matter what, so it is great, large, acute and reasonable, sane and beautiful in itself, who has spoken to all in a style of his own, yet a style which finds itself the style of everybody, in a style that is at one new and antique, and is the contemporary of all the ages.

Queensland Education Journal, April 1, 1915

Longman’s advocacy for the importance of literature was the belief that reading was the activity that most effectively distributed the exercise of intelligence among citizens (Fallon and Ferres 2002:7).

Irene Longman was a much sought after speaker at functions related to education. Considering that her lecture on the Value of Literature was given in 1915, suggests that Irene Longman was quite adapt at public speaking and advocated knowledge as an important part of human development. While she quotes the writing of Mrs. Browning's *The Cry of the Children* and the works of Olive Schreiner, she makes no mention of the gender difference between writers or readers. In an Address to the Brisbane Women's Club in 1921, Longman introduces 'a contempory of all the ages' when she speaks of Leonardo da Vinci. She claimed that while biographers spoke of da Vinci in tones of mystery, she saw him as a man vastly ahead of his times, as his writings predominated in activities and the discoveries of succeeding ages, such as velocity, steamboats and flying machines. Elaborating that as well as a painter, da Vinci was also 'a sculptor, architect, poet, writer, musician, mathematician, engineer, inventor, anatomist, chemist, geologist, botanist, astronomer and philosopher'. Longman believed that while da Vinci was not always fully understood, his genius projected itself down into modern times and therefore takes a place among modern thought. In his infinite variety, she believed that he 'stands today as an epitome of the spirit and of the Renaissance in all its manifold activities, whether in art or knowledge'.

Irene Longman's ability to speak as an accredited educator gave her confidence to contribute and criticise cultural representation as she become more conversant with current discourses. What must be taken into account is the context of Irene Longman's activities. As she expanded her interests, new issues and concerns would take her in other directions. Literature remains an important source of knowledge for Longman, as her speaking engagements highlight the wealth of her knowledge and the breadth of her interests. In the next section her interest in feminist writers and the woman question will be explored.



## **Politics and Feminism**

With access to the writing of other women, the difference of sex had a powerful influence on women not only as human beings, but as assumed 'other'. The debates raised by women moved them into positions of paradox. Along with other women who shared her interests, Irene Longman performed intellectual work of reading and evaluating literary texts of leading women thinkers (Allan 1994:94) and presented lectures and papers on their positive position towards the emancipation of women. Because Longman thought that the intellectual efforts of prominent women had been neglected for too long, she wrote an article which appeared in the *Brisbane Courier* (July 5, 1929).

In this article Longman expressed her admiration of three women 'rebels'. Mrs Wollstonecraft, Florence Nightingale and Mrs. Pankhurst. She believed they did more than any others throughout the ages to promote the emancipation of women. The main thrust of Longman's text was to convey how these women had been greatly misunderstood and how public conception of them was all wrong. She stated that their work was not passing but permanent and just as relevant for today and the future. Longman called them 'the thinkers, the few who thought today what the rest of the world would think tomorrow' (*Brisbane Courier* July 5, 1929).

Longman wrote that feminist objectives were by no means new, as they had existed since 1792, when Mary Wollstonecraft wrote her *Vindication of the Rights of Women*" (*Telegraph* 10 June, 1934). She claimed that these exceptional women in the past had fought to secure conditions for women that enabled them not to have power over men, but to have power over themselves. Irene Longman argued that little attention was taken of their work

because in the eighteenth century, women's words were not considered worthy of consideration. 'Women's education was non-existent and women were expected to be 'man pleasers' with a little piety thrown in. If women had any knowledge, it was best for them to keep it a profound secret' (*Brisbane Courier* July 5, 1929).

Through Irene Longman's understanding of Wollstonecraft's text she is able to rethink and articulate many of her ideas regarding the 'women question' within the context of her own time. Longman, like Wollstonecraft, realised that the liberal principles of freedom, equality and rationality should be extended to women, and that women had a duty to themselves to become rational beings and good citizens. Understanding how Wollstonecraft asserted these rights in her own life, Irene Longman was confident that women's position of powerlessness could be altered. She urged women to fight to secure positions and better conditions, placing an emphasis on 'women's individual civil rights, including the rights of a woman over her own person' (*Brisbane Courier* July 5, 1929).

Of her second rebel, Longman did not like the sentimental perceptions of Florence Nightingale, particularly in connection with her work during the Crimean War. What she believed had been neglected was that Nightingale was 'a hard-headed woman, clear of brain and of dominating will' (*Brisbane Courier* 5 July 1929). While a gentle nurse she was also a woman who could storm at the War Office till the deplorable conditions she faced were remedied. The splendid nursing profession that existed today, Longman claimed, was due to the efforts and dedication of Florence Nightingale. Writing on women's politics fifty years later than Longman, Jane Rendall seems to share Longman's view. Rendall states that women such as Florence Nightingale, who had a sense of their temerity, were public speaking, giving evidence before parliamentary committees and Royal Commissions

even though they were conscious of social convention. Revolting against poor conditions, and a lack of professional training for young women, Nightingale was determined to be involved in the reorganising of the nursing profession (Rendall 1987:19). Her unwavering determination did not come without some suffering. Of aristocratic birth, Nightingale's rejection of marriage and the choice of a public career, cut her off from the social background of her family and most of her female contemporaries (Thompson 1987:79).

Another misunderstood social reformer of the past according to Longman was Mrs. Emmeline Pankhurst. Of this radical and militant leader in the suffragette movement, Longman said she was a woman of one idea. That idea was the injustices of the subjection of women, dominated and looked on as lower than man. A one-time member of the Women's Liberal Association, Pankhurst had resigned from the Liberal Party and joined the newly formed Independent Labor Party. She formed the Women's Social and Political Union with the sole purpose of putting in a more concentrated effort to gain the vote for women in Great Britain.

However, many women both supporters and non-supporters of the suffragette movement were not happy with new developments, such as the militant approach led by Pankhurst. When Pankhurst led a demonstration outside the opening of Parliament in 1906, fights broke out and ten women were arrested, many conservative women condemned their actions (Steedman 1990:135). Their behaviour was met with indignation. It was deemed 'silly and pointless', 'too outrageous' and 'in dragging their womanhood through the mire, they had somewhat sullied the dignity of woman' (Jalland 1986:214-5). Margaret McMillan, although she denied ever being a suffragette, wrote in support of the women in prison and urged women to rally behind them (Steedman 1990:135-6). Longman, like

McMillan, saw these actions as heroic and acclaimed Pankhurst's strategy 'as the most brilliant piece of electioneering in history' (*Brisbane Courier* July 5, 1929). Longman refers to the misconception that when women crossed the line of perceived conventional behaviour, they were referred to as emotional, hysterical or irrational. Although filled with passion and enthusiasm for her cause, Longman claimed Pankhurst was always under control and there was never any hysteria in her public life (Longman Scrapbook p.43).

Longman wanted to identify with these remarkable women, who rebelled against the social mores of their time by challenging the institutionally enforced authority of males over females. Women were entering the public sphere, engaging in debates, demanding the full citizenship rights that had previously eluded them (McKinnon 1997:134). Faced with the paradox of acknowledging that women share the same rational human nature as men, but were treated differently, Irene Longman shifts her focus to a patriarchal framework, declaring it was men who held women back from reaching their full potential:

I have heard men say women should remain sheltered and cared for in the home as public life is too severe for them. This is foolish as women take part in industrial and professional work and women should use their talents for public good. Men should not restrict a woman's sphere of influence but should help them to reach their potential in high positions in the country. In an educated and tolerant democracy, it is unthinkable that the opinion of the wife and mother, so important in the home should count for nothing in public life.

Longman 1929:42

Irene does not claim that women are oppressed in the patriarchal family, but rather that their influence and power is undervalued. Longman's view was that with the support and co-operation of men, women would be able to develop their talents and take their place in public life. Longman challenged the dual system of public and private spheres where the activities of men in the public sphere are more valued than those of women in the private sphere, as she recognises the two spheres as being interconnected. So between the space of

public and private, and the perceived notions of masculine/feminine differences, women could negotiate for a greater role in public life (McMullen 1994:106-7). Consequently, as a rational intellectual, Longman challenged the gender order, preferring to work in the public sphere as men did, but at the same time enjoying support and domestic life with her husband.

Her association with women's organizations shaped Irene Longman's political aspirations, especially with the National Council of Women. Her mentor, Maybanke Anderson, together with Margaret Windeyer who had first hand experience with the American model, formed the NCW in Sydney in 1895 (Irving 1997:173). Longman was president of this organization in Queensland from 1921-1925 and was active in many of its affiliated organizations. Her nomination was endorsed by the QWEL, which mobilised its considerable resources to publicise Longman's candidature for political representation. The QWEL was one of the many organizations that worked to secure Queensland women the right to vote in the State elections of 1905. This organization aimed to promote political knowledge among women, to elevate women's position and to guard the interests of children. The league was extremely active in arranging the selection of suitable non-labour candidates for elections.

With liberal convictions of individual rights and the independence of all citizens and a strong opposition to socialism and compulsory arbitration, it would seem logical that Irene Longman was drawn to an organization such as the QWEL, as her policy interests corresponded very closely with their platform. Although QWEL members were more inclined towards the Conservative Party, women from a variety of interest groups including the Women Workers' Political Organization, shared an interest in securing just political

representation in State and Federal Parliaments and particularly in safeguarding the interests of women. Helen Irving points out that ‘what made these societies distinctive was that the women organized and ran them themselves and they gave women, therefore, experience, confidence and self-awareness in the political realm’ (Irving 1996:2-3).

It was through her work with the National Council of Women that Longman began to recognise women’s greatest handicap was their economic situation. When the Maternity Allowance, which was paid to all mothers, was threatened by restrictive means testing, a women’s conference was organized to defend this economic benefit to mothers. Held in Melbourne in 1923, this conference organized by the NCW, attracted representatives from 120 women’s organizations, and a great deal of publicity ensued. Muriel Heagney representing the Clerks’ Union supported the retention of this allowance, as did Edith Cowan, (Australia’s first woman in Parliament) representing the NCW of West Australia. Irene Longman, Queensland’s NCW delegate said ‘that rather than abolishing the allowance, the government should double it’ (Lake 1990:79). While Longman did not get the results she wanted, the power of women’s voices ‘in support of the idea that the mother had political and economic rights forged a powerful political solidarity’ (Lake 1999:79) and defeated the government’s cost cutting plans. Longman spoke again on this issue in the Parliament in 1930, but was unable to bring legislative pressure on the government when the Maternity allowance was means tested and reduced to four pounds.

At a time of escalating fiscal problems, Longman believed that welfare benefits to mothers became a low priority for government. As this had been the only welfare allowance subjected to a salary test, women activists regarded this measure as sacrificing the

acknowledgment of the common status of women for the sake of reducing national expenditure (Lake 1999:79).

On the one hand Longman espouses the non-interference of the state, while on the other, she sees the state as an instrument for the implementation of social welfare. This contradiction might be explained by Longman's belief that collective welfare should be seen as an integral part of all citizens' social needs. She did not see welfare as a safety net for the disadvantaged. It was this thinking that welfare should take the form of a broad social wage that propelled her to support equal pay for women and for the introduction of a family wage, supplemented by child endowment.

Representing Queensland at the Royal Commission held in Melbourne in 1927 to enquire into the viability of a child endowment scheme, Longman supported child endowment as a supplement to a family wage fixed for the individual, irrespective of sex and social responsibilities. Longman's most controversial causes related to women's economic status. She argued strenuously that women, whether married or unmarried, had the same right to work as men. She went even further, arguing that wives who stayed at home should be paid by the State and that motherhood should be recognised as a profession (*Daily Mail* April 30, 1929). In support of these claims, she cited legislation enacted in Denmark and Sweden. As Marilyn Lake has noted, Longman's evidence at the Royal Commission on Child Endowment (1927) was greeted with incredulity. Her claim that wives were entitled to payment was radical enough, but the implications of economic independence went further.

Astonished Commissioners questioning Longman about her advanced 'theory' asked:

Your theory is that the State should pay the wife for services rendered to the State?

Yes, we say that her services to the State are as great as those of the man; and, therefore, that those services should be paid for as an independent economic unit.

Women could live apart from their husbands? That is an alteration of existing conditions?

Yes, absolutely. It is revolutionary, and that is what we wish (Lake 1999:105).

What Longman was proposing was a challenge to the gender order of family life, but her efforts were defeated for two reasons. The Royal Commission rejected these revolutionary ‘theories’ on the basis that first, it would affect the status of the husband and father within the family unit, and second, that it presented a threat to the basic family wage paid to men (Lake 1999:106). These were specifically what Longman wanted to change. Longman believed that with economic independence women would have a more equitable standing and would be equal in the decision making within the family unit.

While not all women had independent means or had achieved economic independence, women, either single or married, became active citizens in social reform. They concentrated on social reforms relating to sexual exploitation and the double standards of men, which were seen as a violation of women’s bodily integrity, and degrading for all. These social reforms were part of the legacy of nineteenth century women activists in Britain and America and influenced political agendas in Australia. Women focused on defending members of their own sex, while strongly opposing the sexual prerogative of men, which made women subject to male control. Questions about prostitution, the Contagious Disease Acts and the age of consent were the basis of women’s concerns for the protection of women and girls. Irene Longman was an advocate for these reforms. Women activists like Longman were often criticised by feminists of the 1970 for their puritanism



and prudery and for their neglect of the domestic side of women's sexuality (Summers 1975:339). Taking into consideration the context of the times in which Longman lived, this criticism seems difficult to sustain.

Irene Longman was not making a moral claim but rather a political one. She argued that moral and spiritual reform efforts were no longer appropriate if women were to give new political meaning to social reform. Longman would not deny that in the past women extended their influence outside the home, continuing their traditional role as moral guardians of the family and the community' (Walkowitz 1980:131). For example, in Victorian England Josephine Butler, the leader of a campaign against the Contagious Diseases Act and the evils of prostitution, positioned these issues as political questions, yet 'she saw no solution to the sexual oppression as being possible until the kingdom of God was established on earth' (Caine 1992:156). Walkowitz suggests that it was the frustration of only limited gains for women in this period that led 'to the militancy of the Edwardian suffragists' (Walkowitz 1980:255). Their slogan of 'Votes for women and chastity for men' still portrayed women as the moral and spiritual guardians but did little to protect women. Instead it led to women's sexuality being more regulated and policed by repressive legislation.

It was this control and policing of women that Irene Longman was to strongly fight against, not on moral grounds, but with rational thought and a common sense approach. In fact, Longman stated that people needed to be protected from the 'Mother Grundys of the world' (QPD 1931:2329). Speaking on Radio QGR about 'The death of Mrs. Grundy' (Teleradio May 11, 1931 p.23), Longman explained that the censure of manners and morals no longer had any significance in the language of this progressive age. Longman believed that if

women were to gain any political ascendancy, the woman question should not only be positioned within the realm of political economy, but should also rely on scientific knowledge and rational thought rather than religious superstition.

After the First World War, there was an increased interest and greater public discussion on female sexuality, marriage and reproduction, which posed challenges and problems for feminists of the 1920s. Women were talking about sexual freedom, the restructuring of family life and personal relationships. There was no one set of ideas about women's sexuality. Some women challenged the conventional expectations of womanhood by choosing to remain single, choosing greater autonomy and freedom from married life, while others took up issues with the physical aspects of their maternal role. Often women's life long friendships were formed by their interaction through a host of organizations, but as McKinnon points out in her work on first generation professional women, 'the notion of choice between marriage and career [was] insufficient... {and} 'friendships often extended well beyond clubs and associations', as women who chose to live with other women, often committed themselves to life long relationships. Whether these relationships were companionable or sexual, women in the early years of the twentieth century never spoke of themselves as lesbians (McKinnon 1997:144).

Two friendships that continued throughout Irene Longman's public life were her close association with Lillian Cooper and Jean Bedford. There is no way of knowing what kind of personal relationship these two women shared, although in a biography of Dr. Lillian Cooper, Lesley Williams (1991) states that Lillian's story could not 'be told without constant reference to Mary Josephine Bedford as their lives were so intertwined' (Williams 1991:xiii). Sharing a house in London while they studied, they were never to separate.

Travelling together Cooper and Bedford arrived in Queensland in 1891. When Dr. Cooper left to join a medical team linked to the Serbian Army in the First World War, Bedford signed on as an orderly (Williams 1991:51). As Cooper and Bedford were inseparable in life, so too in death these life long friends who contributed so much to improving the welfare of women and children in Queensland now share a grave high on the hill at the Toowong Cemetery in Brisbane (Williams 1991:xiii). Longman liked them both, but worked more closely with Bedford for a number of years in many associations. Lillian Cooper and Josephine Bedford, both already firmly established in Brisbane by 1911 when Irene Longman arrived from Toowoomba, encouraged her to become involved in public life.

With opportunities for some women to become self-supporting, the focus of social reform was turned towards married women and their right to control their own bodies. An essential element of women's sexual autonomy was their freedom from compulsory motherhood. While most women accepted the role of wife and mother as a major source of their self-definition, they interpreted it in different ways from men. Longman believed women should control their own sexual future. While Longman positions herself within the framework of liberalism and is insistent on the rights of the individual, how does she offer a critique of the control of women's bodies by men? To solve this dilemma, she uses the framework of Darwin's social theory and the then new interest in Eugenics to open up the concerns of sexuality. Eugenics had a popular following at this time in Europe, North America and Australia and covered a wide range of controversial ideas. Longman turned to eugenics as a scientific method to broaden attention towards the importance of women's primary role as mothers.

As current population discourse emphasised the essential need for the growth of a white Australia, women were being blamed for the decline in the population. Concerned with the preservation of a population of Anglo/Celtic dominance, the social statistics of demographers gained prominence in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century (McKinnon 1997:56). By way of these statistics it was explained how the large number of Australian born women were different from their mothers. In Australia, the number of live births per married couple averaged 6.8 in the nineteenth century, but by 1908 the average family size was reduced to 2.6. The findings of the Birthrate Commission held in New South Wales in 1912 referred to this decline as a 'grave disorder sapping the vitals of a new people, dispelling its hopes, blighting its prospects and threatening its continuance (Alpine, Foster, McKiernan 1987:119). This 'disorderly' conduct was attributed to women's selfishness.

Longman's interpretation touches on the personal needs of mothers and motherhood, claiming that by controlling and limiting the size of their families, women would produce healthier and happier children, be less burdened mothers, thus contributing both to the community and the nation (*Brisbane Courier* May 13, 1930:9). As future citizens, Longman's concern was for both physical and mental development, so she focused on increased knowledge, which reflected her interest in scientific and rational thought. Irene Longman accepted motherhood as a noble calling for women, but realised that this was not possible while women did not have equal power to make decisions about family life (QPD 1930:12). She believed that women should question the institution of marriage and re-evaluate their position. 'Mothers,' Longman said, 'should never be forced into the position they occupied years ago, when the women's sphere was regarded as 'the kitchen, the church and children.'

The great majority of women do not admit any right to dictate to them the size of their families. Intelligent women are no longer mechanical breeding machines for swelling the fighting power of a nation **nor the numerical power of a church** (editorial deletion). Science has shown them how to space their families so each child can obtain the care and attention that it should have.

Longman, *Daily Mail*, 6 August, 1933

Stern words from Longman. She supported scientific intervention as being beneficial, but at the same time she viewed any interference of the state and church as restrictive. Nonetheless, women were taking the initiative and there was greater public discussion on contraception, abortion and sexual pleasure.

An important source of knowledge for women about their bodies and reproduction was advice in literature of the day, which focused on marriage and sexuality and engendered interest and debate on women's issues. Apart from the widely circulated *Australian Women's Mirror* there were other publications such as the work of Marie Stopes. 'Her advice in *Married Love* [1918] and *Enduring Passion* focused on sexual technique and performance, and she insisted that women needed orgasm' (Ferres 1993:153).

In her memoirs, British actor Joan Plowright writes that her mother, married in the mid 1920s, did not much welcome her husband's attention in the bedroom. Later confiding in her daughter, her mother said that this was because neither she nor her husband knew very much about the art of lovemaking. So she bought a copy of Marie Stopes' *Married Love* and left it lying around in the hope that her husband would read it too (Plowright 2000:11). There is evidence that Stopes was widely read in Australia through Marian Piddington's professional contact with her. While Stopes' writing explained the art of love making, and

advocated sexual satisfaction as beneficial to women's health, she was not promoting promiscuity or free love, but insisted that this knowledge be confined to married love (Ferres 1993:153). Australian feminist Brettana Smythe's *Love, Courtship and marriage* and *The Limitation of Offspring* were also widely circulated throughout Australia and welcomed by women.

A strong advocate of women taking control of their own fertility, Longman encouraged women to seriously consider birth control practices. One of Irene Longman's associates from the Lyceum Club and founding member of the Mothercraft Association, Dr. Phyllis Cilento, a specialist lecturer in mothercraft at the University of Queensland and mother of three, supported Longman's view. Cilento claimed that one of determining factors in the rise and fall of the birth rate was social expectations and the attitudes of women themselves towards childbearing. Women were not encouraged to practice birth control, because it was not considered 'nice' at the time (Cilento 1984:42).

Women may have been influenced by religious values and considered contraception immoral or sinful, as this was a strong defensive argument used to deter women. Yet information about contraceptive devices was well known and readily available over the counter of some pharmacies or by mail. Condoms, which were used both as a contraceptive and a preventative of disease were unacceptable to middle class women because of their connotation to brothels and prostitution (McKinnon 1997:29). Still it must be remembered that unlike the contraceptive pill introduced in the 1960s, the contraceptives of the 20s and 30s were awkward to use, difficult to retrieve and the popular Rendels' Wife's Friend caused irritation (Cilento 1987:77). From a medical perspective, Cilento was critical of the government and some medical practitioners for not endorsing the use of

contraceptives. She claimed that it was decidedly unethical if not illegal, for doctors not to give their female patients advice on contraception (1987:77).

While Cilento addresses the attitude of women in the discourse of birth control, she omitted 'the harmonious decision-making couple' (McKinnon 1997:234). Irene Longman does take this couple into consideration. Her assessment was that in an ideal companionable marriage, women had the power to control their own reproductive life with reasonable female/male negotiation and co-operation. However this assumption needs further clarification. If husbands were wearing sheaths, practising 'coitus interruptus' or periodic abstinence, there must have been some influence from wives to have these practices adhered to. On the other hand, there must have been some co-operation from husbands for the use of other contraceptive methods unless women were using these means without their husbands' knowledge. Although the latter was possible as Brettana Smyth informed her readers that her quality product French Pessaire Preventif was the only one of its kind that could be used without the husband's knowledge (McKinnon 1997:103), it would seem that relationships between men and women were finally changing. The suggestion that women were taking control of their own bodies tends to recommend fertility control was one of reciprocal action. Yet women were changing their attitudes towards married life and Longman was a strong advocate for legislative change for the status of women in marriage.

Irene Longman complained that the government shelved progressive ideas that embodied modern conceptions which women's organizations had been advocating for years, and yet nothing had been done about it. One specific problem was the availability and legal sale of contraceptives. She urged that public opinion should make itself more articulate so that the government may take heed, and 'thus raise marriage and domestic relationships to a higher

plane. There will be a greater happiness and a more hopeful outlook for the welfare of the race when this is brought about' *Brisbane Courier* Oct 30, 1932). Comments like these raised criticism from contemporary feminists who questioned how these women of the 1920s and 30s could embrace the theory of eugenics, 'without any apparent recognition of how such discourses buttressed racism' (Allen 1994:178). Curthoys (1989) also questioned why so many like-minded liberals accept popular international discourses of eugenics, which were associated with fascists ideologies and the subordination of women, at a time when the idealisation of womanhood and their role as mothers of future generations were being emotionalised.

In order to understand this contradiction, it is necessary to appreciate the intellectual climate of the 1920s and 30s. With a declining birth rate and fears for racial purity, the debate about eugenics and racism was dominant. While it appears that Irene Longman embraced the theory of eugenics, it was not its ideology that was acceptable, as she strongly abhorred any notion of Fascism and the idea of a superior race. What we need to look at is how her feminist ideas were interwoven with other strands of thought to explain her point of view. Among these practical strands were advanced methods of mothering, health and hygiene. Mothering was a learned practice rather than a natural disposition. Longman did not want to see the diminution of motherhood, but at the same time she did not want women to have to carry all the burden of family life. She believed that changing the position of women in society would create a different society. She advocated that 'equal economic rights and responsibilities...would help to make marriage a true partnership for mutual benefit, comfort and service' (*Brisbane Courier* Jan 29, 1935).



On the other hand, Longman wanted women to accept new scientific methods of mothering and for young adolescent girls to be educated in domestic science. One important strand of eugenics was sex education, which was usually discussed in relation to health and hygiene, particularly in the fight against venereal disease. Longman strongly supported the view that women should understand new and updated knowledge about the reproductive process and to be able to pass this on to their children. In 1928, Irene Longman had organized a series of lectures on sex education to be given by overseas lecturer, Miss Gwen Evans (B.SC. London). These were successful and Longman had wanted another series of talks to be given, but was disappointed when women showed little interest, and further lectures did not eventuate (NCW 1928:18).

On the issue of eugenics fostering racist beliefs, we have to consider that the White Australia Policy and assimilation policies were put in place by governments of men, and Irene Longman was critical of these policies. She claimed that ‘today the burden of our white Australia is pressing heavily and unfairly in the parents of young families, especially on the mothers’ (*Brisbane Courier* March 30, 1928). That she was referring to white women cannot be denied, but it would seem to be unfair to assume that Irene Longman was inherently racist, considering her anthropological interest in the history and culture of the Aboriginal people. Evidence of this interest was an invitation from the Bishop of Carpentaria, extended to Irene Longman and her husband to visit Thursday Island and the various Aboriginal stations in far north Queensland. This invitation was extended to the Longmans because they took a great interest in the Aborigines.

Bishop Stephen wanted to promote up-to-date knowledge of these peoples, and an understanding of the progress Aborigines had made in the past fifty years. He assumed that

the Torres Strait and Aborigines were becoming more civilised under the auspices of the church, and 'that the time is not far distant when these people will all be exempt from the restrictions and inconveniences of the Aboriginal Acts' (Stephen, May 24, 1929). Stephen was concerned that 'little is known officially by the Government about them, [as] no official of the Aboriginal department has visited the Mitchell River Reserve during my period of seven years in the North' (Stephen May 24, 1929). Their assimilation and integration into the white community was being denied. There were no roads in the north, and isolated Aboriginal settlements were only accessible by boat. This did not stop a report from the Queensland Chief Protector John Bleakley, relating to the sexual abuse of Aboriginal women and girls in North Queensland, being presented in 1928. Bleakley suggested that the influence of 'a good motherly woman' would carry more weight in discouraging miscegenation than any legislation to disallow these practices (Lake 1999:114).

Even before the government or the NCW intervened, Irene Longman had interested herself in the welfare of the First Australians and consistently advocated that social welfare benefits be granted to Aboriginal and 'part-Aboriginal' women (NCW 1956:22). Longman recognised the Aborigines as a different race, and from an anthropological position would not have perceived them as uncivilised, but in the process of evolution. With Aboriginal affairs controlled by each state, the Queensland Labor Government considered the National Council of Women an appropriate organization to assess the treatment of Aboriginal women. They asked this organization to take an interest in Aboriginal affairs. In 1924, as President of the NCW, Irene Longman began organising visits to the Aboriginal settlement at Cherbourg and social gatherings were arranged for Aboriginal families in housing settlements (NCW 1956:22). While she recognised the importance of economic freedom

and independence of women, she did not focus on the rights of Aboriginal women to independent lives, but was concerned for the abuse of women by white men and the importance of women's place as mothers (Paisley 2000:18-24). As a humanitarian Longman, while recognising the difference of race, interprets motherhood as a universal experience. However, contemporary feminists and historians are challenging this concept and the work of white women with Aborigines.

Aboriginal historian, Jackie Huggins, raises two important points. First, she claims that by addressing the welfare of Aboriginal women and children, the white women's movement had overlooked the position of men, who when they were lucky to get work, were poorly paid. Second, that while the women activists were advocating contraception and birth control, Aboriginal women were being subjected to unwanted sterilisation. She argues that white women did not understand that it was not only families that needed consideration, but also the extended family and communal networks that were vital to Aboriginal life (Huggins 1994:70-71). Longman understood Aborigines as 'other' with a different traditional culture and a history with strong spiritual connection to each other and the land.

Fiona Paisley, in *Loving Protection: Australian feminism and Aboriginal Women's Rights 1919-1939*, credits humanitarians and woman activists of that period with having respect for Aboriginal culture. She argues they were active in pro-indigenous reform, seeking to improve conditions of those living in reserves and for better educational and health services (Paisley 2000:13-26). Although white women may have been motivated by compassion for the injustices faced by Aborigines, within the limitations of the White Australia Policy and assimilation policies put in place by governments, they could not have understood the sense of displacement experienced by Aborigines. It was only in the latter half of the twentieth

century that Aborigines' experiences of 'lost children' and 'lost land' were spoken about and placed on the political agenda.

Meanwhile, for white womanhood, their fitness for the role of mothers of future generations was being publicly debated in the media. With a declining birthrate, and fears for racial purity, an article that appeared in the Daily Mail on 30 October, 1932 fuelled a further debate about eugenics and racism. This article reported that the German Minister for the Interior, Dr. Frick had stated

That Germans had over-glorified mannish, athletic, and professional women. [Hence] the nation was in danger of becoming senile through the growth of liberal ideas which destroyed the family sense and desire of children.

In response to these comments, the Catholic Archbishop of Brisbane, Dr. James Duhig said:

that excessive participation by women in sports, and particularly in sport not suited to their sex, was very detrimental not only to the individual but to the whole race. It militated against motherhood, and moreover, doctors agreed that physically it seemed to unbalance woman and make her mannish.

Two medical opinions expressed the opinion that excessive participation by women in sport, especially that which necessitated a severe strain, was detrimental to health and to childbirth. Irene Longman's comment was that women's participation in sport had been beneficial. Her swift response was 'Does it never enter into the brain of man to conceive that girls play for the sake of the game and not for the sake of aping men' (*Courier Mail* January, 13, 1935). Nor did she agree with Dr. Frick that the instinct of motherhood was any less in women today, and was critical of the 'cry of the mental troglodytes' that 'a woman's place was in the home' (Longman *Telegraph* June 16, 1934). Longman argued that women had widened their horizons in leisurely pursuits, occupations and professions in recent years. They had not become mannish, 'but the foolish prattle from pulpits, platforms

and the press about what is still largely thought of as “the sex”,’ (Telegraph June 16, 1934) still dominated discussions on the role of women in society. Of Dr. Duhig’s comment that women should marry young and have large families, Longman said, ‘from the standpoint of modern thought, such views are both economically and ethically unsound’ (*Brisbane Courier* Aug 6, 1933). Never one to sit back on major issues, Longman strongly objected to advice being given about family size by what she termed ‘a celibate priesthood’.

The second issue raised by Dr. Frick and, one that must have made many wary of eugenic methods, was that he had introduced a bill for the sterilisation of the unfit. What constituted ‘unfit’ was not made clear, yet one medical opinion concurred that Dr. Frick’s comparisons of the costs of supporting lunatics, cripples and unskilled labourers were economically sound. Longman remained fairly reticent about this issue, her only comment being ‘this question demanded extreme care’ (*Daily Mail*, 30 Oct. 1932). Longman must have asked herself the question of who should judge what constituted ‘unfit’? As President of the Association for the Welfare of the Mental Deficient, Longman was sympathetic to the treatment of these people and concentrated on how to raise the standard and care given, particularly of the young.

In determining who would be classed as unfit Longman, influenced by the work of Thomas Huxley, would not have limited unfitness to simply physical or mental functions, but to a wider continuum which included a material environment. As mental deficiency was a concern for an emerging new nation, Longman must have been affected by the insensitivity of both the language and the propositions suggested by the German Minister. In looking for a source of Longman’s knowledge in working in this area, we have to look back to her

early days of teaching and her knowledge of Froebel's method and ideas of a symbolic space for the education of children.

It is appropriate here to recall Margaret McMillan, a leading Froebelian theorist who worked with retarded children in Bradford in 1908. She drew on the work of French physiologist and psychologist, Edouard Sequin (1812-80) who founded a school for mentally retarded children in Paris in 1837 (Steedman 1990:194). While Froebel's method of working with children remained at a sensory stage, Sequin insisted on methods that led to the 'psychological awakening of the brain' (Steedman 1990:194). Sequin's work with abnormal children was later adapted to the British educational system, and was published by Maria Montessori after 1911 (Steedman 1990:194). Steedman points out that McMillan had certainly read Sequin's work and endeavoured to popularise it in the late 1890s, however it did not gain recognition within the British education system until after Montessori's had been published. With the close links between Britain and Australia, and educational work and ideas published in journals in Britain being available in Australia to those interested in the latest methods of teaching, it is more than likely that Irene Longman knew of these new methods of child psychology and encouraged her work with mentally deficient children.

The most consistent and recurring themes in Irene Longman's works are her demands for education and an improved environment for the common good of humanity as well as for the nation. She believed that the mentally ill should not be indiscriminately incarcerated in institutions. Irene Longman wanted the establishment of homes and centres where these people could be treated according to their individual needs and adequately cared for by nurses specially trained in mental work. Longman complained that while women had continually asked the government to take steps with regard to the well being of the mentally

deficient, especially to the conditions under which young girls were living at the Dunwich Benevolent Asylum, nothing had been done. However, through her constant lobbying of government departments, she was later successful in having defective girls removed from Dunwich (*Daily Mail*, Feb 22, 1931). As early as 1922, Longman had led a deputation to the secretary for Public Instruction, and was successful in bringing about the establishment of 'opportunity classes' so the special needs of the intellectually backward child could be met (Nairn and Serle 1986:139)(QPD 1929:946).

Irene Longman's public life highlights the diversity of her interests and concerns. She was to continue advocating these agendas when she entered the Parliament. She worked tirelessly for the removal of existing social, political and legal restrictions that excluded and denied women as equals from reaching their full intellectual and personal development. Challenging conventional notions of gender, both publicly and privately, Irene Longman was able to negotiate a greater role in public life as an active participant in a variety of ways, dedicating her life's work to the welfare of others. Irene Longman's feminist vision for a just society was one in which women used their 'difference' from men to bring about a more equal society.

She continued to urge women to think internationally, to take a leading part in their country's politics and to work towards world peace. Her niece Betty Bailey recalls that when Irene was in her eightieth year, she signed a 'peace' petition and had been gently censured for doing so by long time friend John Herbert, who claimed it was a communist organized petition. As a past President of the Queensland Women's Peace Movement, this bought a quick response from Irene Longman. 'Well, at least they are doing something about it!' (Bailey 1997:PC). She was critical of party politics claiming it was too sectional,

dividing communities, instead of taking account of overall communal needs. Longman's observation was that women more or less disliked party politics as they felt they stood for the community as a whole. While she understood there was little opportunity for women to enter parliament unless they aligned themselves with one party or the other, Longman's vision for the future was that one day 'the party' could be taken out of politics and then men and women best fitted to transact the affairs of the people would be elected to govern (*Daily Mail* July 19, 1930). This hope certainly did not come to fruition, but Longman would have been delighted with the tremendous political advances made by Queensland women. Today's Parliament contains thirty-three women spread across all parties and represents almost forty percent of the seats, with only two members independent of any political party (*Courier Mail*, March 31, 2002, p40).

How do we sum up the life of this extraordinary woman? As we look back at the experiences of Irene Longman, she emerges as a significant participant of changing times, just as her life too had been changed by the historical events of her time. In her private life she experienced both love and sorrow. In both her public and political lives, there were successes and disappointments. The re-creation of Irene Longman's experiences is not simply a story of accomplishment or compromise, but a story of women's struggle for equality and freedom. It also reflects 'the dominant male values and attitudes of the time' (Irving 1996:vii) and the difficulties for women to achieve formal political representation.

Irene Longman's years of service were not exclusively for women, but extended to the whole community. She strongly advocated cultural, literary and political knowledge as an important part of human development and important for the purpose of thought and action.



At a personal level, her greatest strength was the community of women with whom she worked. Women worked together in a spirit of co-operation to improve women's place in society, and they set out purposefully to secure social reforms. Combined with her own personality, courage and commitment to advance the status of women, Irene Longman emerged as a contender for a seat in the Queensland Parliament. This was a victory long awaited and although 'so hard the conquering' in the words of Margaret Ogg: 'We won, as we expected, for never, never would we admit defeat, even when the battle seemed to be against us' (Margaret Ogg WEL 1929).

Abraham Lincoln once said 'The ballot is stronger than the bullet' and this was something Irene Longman undoubtedly understood. Living her life by the maxim you can never, ever give enough service, she was not just a woman of her time, she was a woman for all times.

## APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Women Candidates for the Queensland Parliament 1923-1966

Appendix 2. Letter from Irene Longman to constituents in Bulimba

Appendix 3. Index to Parliamentary speeches 1929-1931

Appendix 4. Irene Longman's Maiden Speech - Address in Reply

Appendix 5. New Federal seat of Longman

**WOMEN CANDIDATES FOR THE  
QUEENSLAND PARLIAMENT 1923 - 1966**

NAME	ELECTION YEAR	SEAT	PARTY	% of VOTE
Henriette Turner	1923	Mirani	ALP	48.98
Irene M Longman	1929	Bulimba	Country Prog/Nat	51.8
Irene M Longman	1932	Bulimba	Country Prog/Nat	35.19
Marion E Steel	1932	Brisbane	Independent	1.97
Alice H Chambers	1932	Warwick	Queensland Party	2.79
Nora L Solly	1935	Cooroola	Women's Politic Ass	33.36
Mary E De Mattos	1938	Logan	Independent	1.95
Mary E De Mattos	1947	Maryborough	Independent Labor	20.31
Mabel A Matyer	1941	Enoggera	Independent	6.38
Florence Milburn	1941	Kennedy	Communist	10.86
Ruby M K McGrorty	1941	Kurilpa	Independ Socialist	5.07
A E Tipper	1944	Fortitude Valley	Liberal	39.51
A Deanne	1944	Townsville	Qld Peoples Party	16.06
Hilda F Brotherton	1947	Bulimba	Peoples Party	29.54
C Phelan	1950	Haughton	Communist	1.92
L Hansen	1953	Brisbane	Communist	5.51
M P Lahey	1953	Kelvin Grove	Liberal	38.08
A J Slater	1953	Kurilpa	Communist	1.77
L M Derrick	1953	Kurilpa	Liberal	30.72
N C Taylor	1953	Nundah	Liberal	38.08
J E Hinds	1953	Port Curtis	Liberal-Country	32.24
F A Johnson	1953	Mackay	Liberal	35.46
J Ryan	1953	Hinchinbrook	Liberal	20.44

M B Gordon	1956	Windsor	Liberal	43.71
M M Fisher	1956	Sherwood	Independent	2.44
R Pilbeam	1957	Rockhampton	Independent	10.01
Vera Lacaze	1957	Toowoomba	Independent	3.08
N T Carver	1960	Aspley	Labor	40.21
Grace D Plunket	1960	Albert	Independent Country	1.59
Jean Reville	1960	Belmont	Qld Labor Party	10.79
I G Weir	1963	South Coast	Labor Party	19.27
Gabrielle Horan	1963	South Brisbane	Liberal	31.38
Dawn L Stanton	1963	Baroona	Liberal	29.4
Mary E Andrews	1963	Yeronga	QLP	10.12
Nancy Green	1963	Callide	Country-Liberal	5.47
Mary E Ryan	1966	Clayfield	QLP	10.61
S C Nord	1966	Wynnum	Communist	1.62
L A Burke	1966	Rockhampton North	QLP	8.62
G E M O'Sullivan	1966	Toowoomba East	Independent	0.42
Naomi A Grulke	1966	Somerset	QLP	3.23
Ellen V Jordan	1966	Ipswich West	ALP	41.9

To the Electors of Bulimba,  
Greeting!

I much regret that, owing to the large area of the electorate, I have been unable to meet all of you personally.

On May 11th, for the first time in the history of Queensland, you will be given the opportunity of returning a woman to Parliament.

Politics are as much the concern of women as of men. In most civilised countries to-day women are doing valuable work as members of Parliament, but in this respect Queensland is behind the times. There can be no true democracy where only one sex is directly represented in Parliament.

Women naturally understand better than men questions dealing with the welfare of women, children, and the home. In political life they stand for sane, practical legislation.

No political party can claim the monopoly of social reform measures. Women of all parties have led the way in demanding and stimulating such legislation.

For the past eighteen years I have been engaged in public welfare work in Brisbane.

Having taken a prominent part in the work of big organisations I have represented the women of Queensland at several important Inter-state conferences. My knowledge of social and economic problems should be of value to the Electorate and to the State.

I am an Australian by birth and have spent the greater part of my life in Queensland.

I am not entering political life for what I can get out of it, but for what I can put into it.

I am opposed to waste of public money in such socialistic experiments as do not benefit workers or add to the prosperity of Queensland. Although some State enterprises, such as public utilities, are essential, we need to encourage private and co-operative enterprise in this great, but largely undeveloped country.

We need more industries, more factories, more and better production, and permanent jobs for those out of work.

The ideal of a Government should be the preservation of the safety, peace and prosperity of the people, not the art and science of capturing and keeping office.

I strongly disapprove of the action of the present Government in raising Members' salaries from £500 to £750 directly after the last election, especially at a time when unemployment was prevalent, and when the promise made to provide pensions for widows and orphans was dishonoured.

Do not be misled by mis-statements. I am utterly opposed to any lowering of the standard of the basic wage; so is the Party to which I belong.

Should you do me the honour of returning me as your representative I am prepared to devote my whole time to the interests of Bulimba and of the State.

Sincerely yours,

*Irene Longman.*

VOTE THUS:

☒ **LONGMAN, IRENE**

☐ **WRIGHT A. H.**

Authorised by M. A. Ogg, Committee Room, City Buildings, Edward St., Brisbane  
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## **IRENE LONGMAN'S MAIDEN SPEECH**

### **ADDRESS IN REPLY**

**Mrs LONGMAN:** I beg to move -

“That the following Address be presented to His Excellency the Governor in reply to the Speech delivered by His Excellency in opening this the first session of the twenty-fifth Parliament of Queensland:-

May it please Your Excellency, -

We, His Majesty's loyal and dutiful subjects, the Members of the Legislative Assembly of Queensland, in Parliament assembled, desire to assure Your Excellency of our continued loyalty and affection towards the Throne and Person of our Most Gracious Sovereign, and to tender our thanks to Your Excellency for the Speech with which you have been pleased to open the present session.

The various measures to which Your Excellency has referred, and all other matters that may be brought before us, will receive our most careful consideration, and it will be our earnest endeavour so to deal with them that our labours may tend to the advancement and prosperity of the State.”

Mr Speaker, to have been chosen for such a duty I esteem a very great honour – an honour to the electorate which I represent, and an honour to the women of Queensland – (Hear, hear!) – who will appreciate it as a recognition of their entry into parliamentary life of this State. On their behalf I can assure hon. Members that the desire to enter into political responsibilities arises rather from a sense of duty than from that spirit of sex antagonism which is a natural outcome of ages of suppression and which bore a large part of the struggle for the emancipation of women. The co-operation of men and women in public work is the keynote of our modern life, and gives us hope for the future. As the first woman to enter the masculine fastnesses of this House, I would express appreciation of the very generous welcome which has been accorded to me by hon. members.

In listening to the Speech of His Excellency this morning, we could not but feel that the programme put forward there shows that this Government is determined to carry out the mandate of the people of Queensland, given with no uncertain voice on 11<sup>th</sup> May last.

**Government Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mrs LONGMAN:** For fourteen years Queensland had wandered in the wilderness of Socialist-Labor rule, lured at first by bright promises of lands of ease and vistas of idyllic field where we would obtain the maximum of comfort and prosperity by the minimum of effort. But it was a mirage leading to the morass of debt and to the slough of unemployment.

**Government Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mrs LONGMAN:** It is because of this that the people of Queensland have asked for reversal of that policy, and today this Government stands prepared to carry out the mandate of the people of Queensland.

**Government Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mrs LONGMAN:** The underlying principle throughout that programme is the desire and determination to abolish State enterprises, and to restore social justice and political freedom. The Government are of opinion that the way to do that is through private enterprise, or, as I prefer to call it, personal enterprise, seeing that it partakes so largely of a public nature. Personal enterprise is needed to develop the vast resources of our State and the Government have that clearly in view in the programme put forward for the coming session.

It is interesting to glance back to some three years after the Labor Government came into office, when they published "Socialism at Work", and to note how in the intervening period Socialism has actually worked out. The position is pathetic by reason of the results which are now so pronounced – so many Queenslanders out of work, despite the hopes that were held out of bringing prosperity to this land of ours through the intervention of the State in industry. Based as it is on false economic grounds, that idea has been exploded. Socialism, in so far as it stood for the principle of the common good, has won its victory long ago; but it is a back number so far as the nationalisation of industry is concerned. Today, probably no one but Bernard Shaw – and however much we may enjoy Bernard Shaw and be amused by him, we would not think of adopting his principles as practical politics – probably no one else would stand for the Government being the national landlord, the national employer, and the national financier.

A pleasing feature of the programme for the current session is the proposed legislation to remove the harassing restrictions which of late years have hampered industry up to the point that many industries can carry on no longer. The encouragement of increased land settlement is one of the chief objectives of the Government. In that policy lies the salvation of Queensland; and the government will do much in that direction by removing the harsh restrictions, the dictatorial powers, the irksome regulations which have lately prevented the country from developing in the manner that it should have done. The legislation which is foreshadowed in this direction – and which the Government intend to pass – will overcome many difficulties. Fourteen years ago the Labor Government thought that the prosperity of Queensland would be assured by imposing restrictions on the man on the land. The Labor Government promised to do wonderful things in regard to land settlement – to throw open land to those who were not able previously to get it – but unfortunately, not only for the people concerned but for the State as a whole, matters did not work out as expected. And now we are concerned that the land of Queensland should be thrown open and that we should have more settlement.

I note that Griffith Taylor, that most uncompromising critic of those who would say that the great part of Australia consists of fertile land, says that at least 21 per cent of the land of Australia is fair farming country, and at present only 2 ½ per cent of that area is under agricultural settlement. Only 2 ½ percent out of that 21 per cent! Then he goes on to say that, notwithstanding the large area which perhaps may never be settled, the south coastal and eastern coastal districts are really fitted to carry about 20,000,000 people. So



we have room for expansion; and in Queensland the Government are determined that they are going to increase land settlement, and so make for prosperity.

In that connection we have one of the most important things mentioned in His Excellency's Speech this morning, and that is that the question of growing better and more suitable grasses in the State is to receive consideration, and I hope that before very long soil survey throughout Queensland which will enhance the value of the land and the value of our grasses.

**Government Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mrs LONGMAN:** In connection with industrial matters I note that there is to be introduced a Conciliation and Arbitration Bill. This is most necessary, because in the past, and especially of recent years, our industries have been hampered by restrictions, and by differences between employers and employees and between industry and the unions. We do need to have peace in industry. That is a trite saying of late, but it is worth thinking of; it is one worth speaking about, and it is worth working for on every occasion; and I am pleased to say that the Government are endeavouring to bring it about. We are going to work for the people in industry. The time has long since gone by when the employer stood against the employee, although, perhaps those who belong to the opposite side of politics to this Government sometimes think that we are always out for the employer against the employee. That is quite an exploded notion, and should have been related years ago to the limbo of forgotten things. The workers really know that that is not so, and it does not exist except in the imagination of the party opposite. We realise that it is not only on one side that conciliation is needed. Professor Brigden said recently that the unions have not faced economic realities, and that the employers, as a whole, have not faced human realities. It is those human realities which our government realise are important in connection with this question.

I should like to say a few words about the Apprenticeship Act. One of the crying evils of recent years has been the way in which the girls and boys of Queensland have been neglected, and I say that any system that could result in hundreds of boys throughout the State being out of work is a criminal system. I say it is a system that should have been stopped years ago. It has failed because of that one thing alone. Our boys and girls – the most important asset of our country today – have been suffering of recent years because of that. In my own electorate, in common with other electorates, we all know of it. We know that one of the most serious features of life today has been the way in which boys have not been able to find work after they have left school. Now we are not setting out to introduce child labour – we are all of us against that. (Hear, hear!) It must be remembered that life has moved, and, while Queensland has reversed the policy of the late Government and we have got back to the policy of private enterprise which was held fourteen years ago, we are not going back in ideas. Thought has moved in those fourteen years. Advances have been made in sociology and great progress has taken place in scientific work and thought. We are full of advanced ideas, and one of them is that our boys and girls must be provided for. I am pleased to see that in the coming session we are going to try to provide work for our boys when they leave school, and we are not going to keep to any old-fashioned ideas; we are not going to hold to any out-worn shibboleths and say we cannot override them. We are going to override them for the good of our boys and our girls...

**Government Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mrs LONGMAN:** I note that the Jury Act is to be amended. For some time past we have had the position in Queensland of justice going at times astray because our jury qualifications are too wide. We have had at times people serving on juries who have not been fitted, either mentally or morally, for the position, and I am glad to see that is going to be altered. (Hear,hear!)

John Adams, who was the second President of the United States of America, said that in order to govern so complicated a machine as his country, it was necessary to have the meekness of Moses, the patience of Job, the wisdom of Solomon, added to the valour of David. (Hear, hear!) These qualities are needed in Queensland today; and I have no hesitation in saying that they are to be found among Government members.

**Government Members:** Hear, hear! and Opposition laughter.

**Mrs LONGMAN:** If we should be deficient in meekness, let us hope that it will be supplied by hon. members opposite. (Government laughter). It is a difficult time, and, do not forget it, we are faced with immense difficulties. We have taken over at a time when the country was getting far away from the prosperity which Queensland should always have had; and, in order to face these difficult times, we have to work together; and I would appeal to the members of the Opposition to work with us, and to forget those mere party interests which may militate against the prosperity of the whole of our country. Let us put our country first.

**Government Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mrs LONGMAN:** This is a crisis in the history of Queensland. Let us say that, whatever happens, we are going to put Queensland first, and that we are going to put on one side our own little party differences. As a matter of fact, there have been failures. We have had experiments and they have not all worked out well. Things have been done by the past Government which have failed absolutely. I would like to give all credit to them for those things which have succeeded; but at the same time there have been errors, and I appeal to hon. members opposite to do as I have suggested for the good of Queensland – not to give us all opposition, because it is good to have a certain amount – but to remember that there is a lot of work to get through this session, and that we have to do it.

Although this is a difficult time, I think there is no need to be unduly gloomy. There are wonderful natural resources in this State of ours. We have latent mining assets. We have wonderful areas of agricultural land. We have wealth in the seas. Many of our industries are in their infancy, and our trade and commerce must be developed. What we need is hard work and hard thinking.

**Government Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mrs LONGMAN:** I feel sure that the government are prepared to give hard work and hard thinking to these great problems of Queensland. Queensland should be the foremost State in this Commonwealth of Australia. Queensland, I think, will be the foremost State in Australia.

**The TREASURER:** We intend to make it so.

**Government Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mrs LONGMAN:** We intend to make it the foremost State, and we are going to put in a lot of hard work and a lot of hard thought; but we will not forget that we stand for all the people of Queensland, that we are not a sectional Government – (Opposition laughter) – we will not forget the great principle of Magna Carta that right and justice shall be denied to no man.

**Honourable Members:** Hear, hear!

# New seat for state in revamp

By CHERYL THURLOW

QUEENSLAND will have an extra Federal MP following the release yesterday of proposed changes to the state's electoral boundaries.

The redistribution creates three marginal Labor seats with the new electorate of Longman notionally swinging to the National Party.

Australian Electoral Commission Queensland officer Bob Longland yesterday said 331,321 voters would find themselves in different electorates as a result of the changes.

The new seat of Longman rings out Brisbane, taking voters from four old divisions.

It covers areas including Bribie Island and Caboolture as well as most of the Esk and Laidley shires.

Rapid population growth in the south-east Queensland region created the need for an extra division, bringing the state's total House of Representative seats to 26.

No changes have been made to Groom, Leichhardt and Maranoa. Some small additions were made in Capricornia, Dawson and Kennedy.

Minor changes have been recommended for Hinkler, Herbert, McPherson, Lilley, Wide Bay and Bowman.

Australian Electoral Commission Brian Cox said: "The major changes that are being proposed are concentrated in the high growth areas in the south-east corner of the state,

most notably along the major highway corridors north and south of Brisbane, including the Sunshine Coast and Gold Coast and Brisbane itself."

Longman is expected to be marginally National, however strong growth in the Caboolture Shire would improve Labor and Liberal hopes.

National Party state director Ken Crooke yesterday said that he expected objections from Kingaroy residents who have been included in Fisher, which has Caloundra as its major community base.

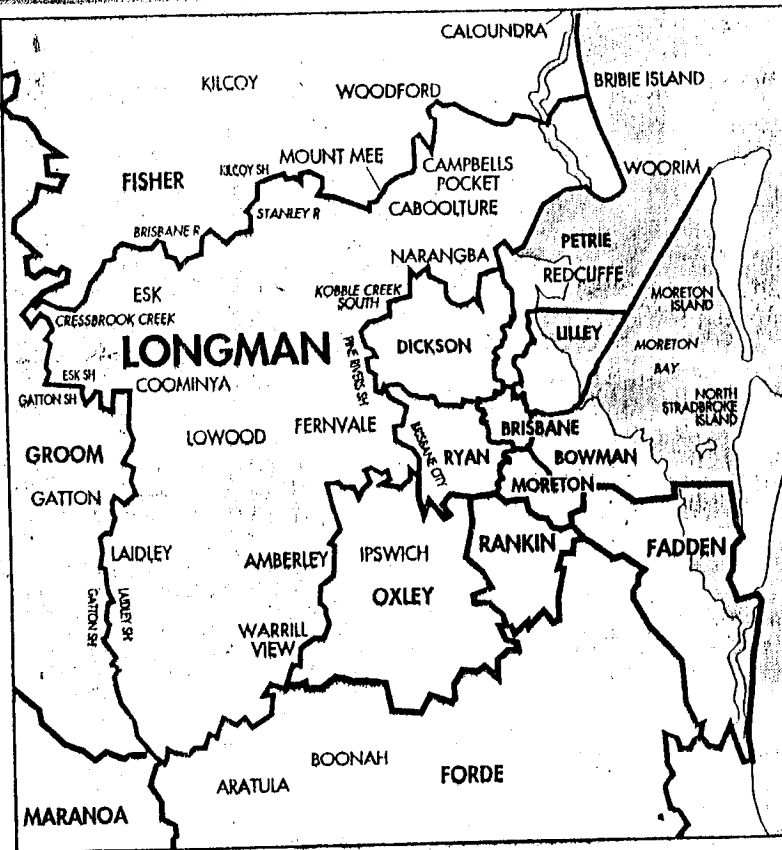
With three-cornered contest discussions dominating the National Party's conference yesterday, Mr Crooke said there would be no immediate decision on whether to run a candidate in Fisher if it includes the party's heartland of Kingaroy.

Sitting Liberal MHR for Fisher Peter Slipper said it was sensible to include Kingaroy in Fisher, which already covers the Nunango district.

The proposed changes firm up Federal Attorney-General Michael Lavarch's position in Dickson and Labor colleague Arch Bevis's hold on Brisbane.

But the Labor seats of Griffith, Moreton and Forde would be highly marginal and Paul Neville's grip on Hinkler diminished. Labor's vote in Rankin would be expected to improve.

Objections to the Queensland redistribution proposals must be lodged by August 22.



IRENE Longman... 'vivacious speaker'

## First lady honoured

QUEENSLAND'S new federal seat has been named in honour of the first woman elected to State Parliament.

Irene Longman (1877-1964) won the seat of Bulimba in 1929 for the Country (National) Party.

The southside seat had been regarded as an impregnable Labor stronghold but Mrs Longman won with a majority of 400 votes.

Before her defeat with the downfall of the Moore Government in 1932, Mrs Longman's achievements

included recruiting the state's first female police, changing the handling of juvenile delinquency cases and moving the Children's Court from the Police Court precincts.

Her impact on the State Parliament was described in a report prior to her defeat: "This lady is an earnest, vivacious speaker, has a pleasant contralto voice, her repartee is quick and sparkling, and she knows how to let the hammer of wit fall deftly on the diamond of originality."

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