

Work and Welfare at Mt Lyell 1913 - 1923

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When Geoffrey Blainey wrote about the copper mining Mt Lyell Mining and Railway Company's welfare programme in his romantic history *The Peaks of Lyell*, he quoted the former General Manager Russell Murray's judgement that the programme was not welfare, but 'self-preservation'. Murray emerges as the genius behind the programme; it was his idea to build houses to accommodate his workers, to sell them groceries cheaply, to subsidise workers' clubs and support their recreation. Such was the power of the idea that he carried his reluctant directors with him, such was his success that he was able to thumb his nose at those companies at Broken Hill who scoffed at the programme. Such was its long-term success that the programme ushered in forty years of industrial harmony unparalleled in Australian mining.¹ The intention of this article is not to show that Blainey was wrong but to subject the Company's welfare policy to a different kind of scrutiny. It will argue that the programme was introduced in 1913 as part of a systematic programme to resolve various problems and that it became part of the well known 'welfare movement' only after World War One. It will argue that a fruitful way of analysing welfarism may be to examine the way in which it was incorporated into existing industrial relations. And finally It will argue that, because the Mt Lyell Company's programme represented a substantial intervention into the Mt Lyell community, and because it engendered particular responses from workers, it provides an opportunity to undertake a more complex analyses of the public-private divide between home and paid work, which has long dominated histories of work. The article begins with a review of recent writing about welfarism as a management strategy. It then proceeds to a description of the Mt Lyell company's operations. From here it moves to an examination of the programme's aims and assumptions leading into an analysis of how the programme was incorporated into Mt Lyell's existing industrial and social relations. It concludes with an evaluation of the programme as a tool of the management.

Welfarism and the history of work

Prior to the advent of labour process studies in the mid 1970s, North American and European sociologists of work labelled early twentieth century capitalism, welfare capitalism, arguing that the extent of welfare schemes in big corporations gave capitalism a particular welfarist character.² Richard Edwards, one of the first historians of the labour process, also conceptualized the first forty years of this century as the era of welfare capitalism, albeit that it was only one strategy designed to incorporate workers into the aims of capitalist organisations.³

In his next book, written with David Gordon and Michael Reich, Edwards dropped the concept of welfare capitalism altogether and replaced it with a more descriptive account of 'welfare plans' and so drastically reduced his account of welfarism's importance as a corporate strategy.⁴ This much-reduced conception became the orthodoxy in histories of work. Thus Sanford Jacoby, analysing welfarism in the context of employers' disenchantment with what he calls the 'drive system' of work relations, links it to the birth of systematic management in the USA. Jacoby usefully distinguishes between four aspects of welfarism. One kind, involving pensions, bonuses and housing, was designed to tie workers to continuous and loyal work. A second, including in-house welfare like tearooms, picnics and company magazines, tried to recreate the supposedly family atmosphere of small, patriarchal firms. A third, which involved 'family wages and mothers' clubs, tried to re-fashion the working-class family into an ideal bourgeois type. Finally, he suggests that welfarism after the First World War, adopted broader ideological aims of consensus, in order to establish the complementarity of labour and capital.⁵ The idea of paternalism clearly underpins Jacoby's arguments.

On the other hand, Alan Fox, after situating British welfarism in capitalist companies' search for control of workers through winning their consent to their employers aims, rejects arguments that it was either paternalistic or an extension of an earlier paternalism. Instead:

welfare policies were an afterthought grafted onto the steely outlines of the modern bureaucratic work structure, within which rank-and-file employees, pursuing their highly subdivided roles, were subjected to elaborate mechanisms of supervision, inspection and control; were far removed from the centres of power, responsibility and important decision-making; and were conscious of being used for other men's purposes which they had no share in formulating.⁶

Australian historians of work have not used the concept of welfare capitalism, perhaps because they began writing after it had gone out of vogue elsewhere or because they thought it was inappropriate to Australian conditions. Instead they distinguished between welfare programmes run by individual, paternalist employers in the nineteenth century and an ideology of welfarism which developed after World War One but argued that it was a representation of what had come before. John Hay suggested that post-war welfarism was a more complex instance of company housing programmes in the 1850s and 1860s.⁷ Gail Reekie, in her analysis of Sydney's big stores, claims that, to employers, welfarism represented the humanising of industry against an older authoritarianism in the context of the feminisation of the retail workforce. However, she suggests that it incorporated rather than replaced nineteenth century paternalism retaining paternalism's construction of women as both subordinate and in need of protection.⁸

Greg Patmore agrees that the origins of welfarism in Australia lie in nineteenth century paternalism and that it was 'formalised' after World War One, but extends Reekie's analysis by observing that welfarism was directed at both women and men and that in particular programmes, attempted to intervene in workers' lives 'beyond the factory gate'. Further, he shows it at first competed with other 'systematic' solutions to the problem of control, like scientific management, until it became one of a number of complementary management strategies.⁹

Chris Wright has recently characterised these welfare policies as the first 'systematic' and formalised attempt by capital to solve the problem of converting labour power into labour, arguing that this took place in an era when employers exercised 'simple control' in their workplaces through paternalist or authoritarian relationships. Welfarism sought to win the loyalty of workers by 'a demonstration of benevolence' to undermine militancy and to produce healthy, contented and more productive workers. He argues, nevertheless, that welfarism's significance should not be over-emphasised, it was but one strategy employers used in a period which certainly saw workplace relations made more complex by the introduction of arbitration, but which was still characterised by the exercise of authority by the entrepreneur or his/her delegates. If, as Wright argues, workers buckled under to management authority it was largely because of their unfavourable position in the labour market rather than (he implies) the institution of welfarism.¹⁰

Yet in the most comprehensive recent analysis of welfarism, Erik Eklund argues persuasively that at Port Pirie in South Australia between 1915 and 1929, Broken Hill Associated Smelters applied welfare programmes with ‘spectacular success’. Eklund contextualises welfare in the application of scientific, rational management to the workplace and goes on to show that at Port Pirie welfare linked the Company’s broad ideological agenda with a sweeping intervention in Port Pirie’s cultural life.¹¹

Ruth Barton’s account of the welfare policies of Electrolytic Zinc and Cadbury’s in Hobart also conveys a sense of the varying ideas behind welfarism. Cadbury’s Quakerist ideology of mutuality, harmony and sacrifice might have contrasted with Electrolytic Zinc’s Manager, Herbert Gepp’s ‘new liberalism’, an essentially political ideology that promoted class harmony and consensus, yet, for Barton, both these ideas were ideological responses to post war working-class mobilization, to the increase in worker militancy and radicalism.¹²

Wright’s and Eklund’s analyses points to one other factor in the history of welfarism; the geographical isolation of many companies which introduced it and the importance of locality in shaping the way welfare worked. And as Kennedy shows, a good number of these were mining companies associated with Broken Hill. Introduced in 1913 at Broken Hill by Amalgamated Zinc located at Port Pirie, then in 1917 again at Broken Hill by the major mining companies, welfare was clearly intended to make the towns more habitable and so reduce the dissatisfactions of the workforce. It may have succeeded at Port Pirie but it was a spectacular failure at Broken Hill where it foundered on the rocks of political and industrial conflict.¹³

Mauldon’s 1931 survey shows that the Australian welfare movement was a small one. There were fewer than 100 companies with welfare programmes in 1930, but they did employ between them 40,000 workers. A third employed over 1,000 employees and the majority of these, the big stores and factories, employed mostly females. In those companies with fewer than 1000 workers most employees were male. The range of provision varied widely but interestingly, only two of the hundred had co-operative councils, Broken Hill Associated Smelters at Port Pirie and Electrolytic Zinc. Mauldon blames union opposition for the relatively small array of welfare programmes but contextualizes this by observing Labor’s attempts to universalise welfare through state legislation.¹⁴

In terms of the history of work, the introduction of the welfare scheme at Mt Lyell took place in the period Wright designates as that of 'simple control'. Welfarism had no precedents at Mt Lyell so it did not build on an existing paternalism. It was clearly part of the birth of systematic management in Australia. While it was not quite the afterthought that Fox might suggest, it does appear to have been grafted onto an ongoing authoritarian management style, albeit, that eventually it became an integral management strategy. In terms of the national welfare movement it sits in the mainstream of welfare policies in that it was run by a management which did not allow workers a place in the formulation or administration of the programme. The Company's workforce was constructed as the passive consumers of the Company's benevolence. It does not sit in the mainstream of contemporary management strategies given the relatively small number of companies with welfare policies. Yet Mt Lyell's welfare programme was a leader in the field among mining companies. It predated the post war welfare movement although it did coincide with Herbert Gepp's first experiments at Broken Hill.

Where did the company's welfare programme fit into the regime of control of its workforce? There is no hint in the Company records that scientific management techniques were used in this period although in 1920 the Company introduced a rudimentary personnel office and in 1921, a card index of present and past employers.¹⁵ Nor was management's authority in this period vested in the technical control provided by automated processes. The Company did, however, adopt what Edwards called 'bureaucratic control', that is it established complex schemes of job classification and tied these to hierarchical pay scales which ultimately became institutionalised in arbitration court awards.¹⁶

Fundamentally, control rested with senior management which routinely dismissed workers it thought were trouble-makers and blacklisted them to effect their removal from Mt Lyell altogether.¹⁷ In 1912 it formulated and posted sets of rules for both underground and surface workers.¹⁸ These rules, among other things, made it clear that the Company's supervisory staff, its gangers, shift bosses and foremen were its frontline of control. They were able to hire and fire and, more importantly, could decide what justified a dismissal. They also exercised minute-by-minute control over work using the common techniques of persuasion and intimidation. The Company, then, exercised that authoritarianism that Wright suggests is characteristic of simple control, '... demanding employee obedience and punishing non-compliance through strict disciplinary codes and the threat of dismissal'.¹⁹

But this kind of control worked best at the level of waged labour when large numbers of workers were gathered together and where surveillance was easier. However a substantial number of miners worked on contract and it was by the judicious use of contracts that the company tried to control its most valuable and most organised workers, its skilled miners. Mt Lyell's contract system worked on four principles. Contracts were given to miners who worked in isolated stopes who the Company hoped would police their own work. Miners working in big, open stopes where supervision was easy were more likely to be put on wages. When skilled miners were in short supply the Company preferred wages, believing that miners would conspire to raise the rates. Recognising that contracts engendered competition among the miners, the Company set its own rates and waited till the tenders reached them. If they did not, the men were put on wages. Finally, the Company held back 10 per cent of contractors earnings and returned it only on the successful completion of the contract. The over-riding principle was simple. Whatever produced the most output at the cheapest price was used.²⁰

The company's basic problem was that it could rarely attract a sufficient number of skilled underground miners and labourers prepared to work in its open cut mine. In other words it was rarely able to rely on the discipline of the labour market to keep its workers in line. Hence it invested ceaselessly in the search for labour saving technology: automatic feeders for its blast furnaces, a new converter, steam shovels at the open cut, all of which enabled it to lay off men. But metallurgical advances offered the greatest scope. In 1921, when copper prices had hit rock bottom, Murray, by then the acting General Manager, had begun to search for radical savings. Re-organisation and retrenchment were his first solutions, but in 1922 he abandoned the pyritic smelting process that had made Mt Lyell and his predecessor as manager, Robert Sticht, famous and adopted the new flotation method. Abandoning the ores heavy with iron and sulphur from the Mt Lyell mine that had been used to smelt the richer North Lyell ores, Murray reduced output in the latter to just one shift, smelted in just one furnace and retrenched a quarter of the workforce.²¹ Changing technology had delivered to the Company cuts in production and labour costs, and in the context of falling copper prices had also ensured its survival. Yet the problem of control still remained. The welfare programme continued, albeit in a reduced way. Clearly welfare was to be one permanent front in the battle for control.

Mt Lyell

In 1913 the Mt Lyell Mining and Railway Company dominated Tasmania's mining landscape. It was established by that group of investors whose fortunes were made at Broken Hill and who invested widely in mining in Australia before World War One, the most notable of whom were William Knox, Bowes Kelly and William Jamieson.²² It was 80 per cent owned in Britain but controlled by its Melbourne Board and managed on site. By Tasmanian standards it was huge. In 1913 about 3000 men worked for the Company in three departments: the mines, the smelters, and the railways that transported copper from Queenstown to Strahan for shipment.

The Mt Lyell field is about 15 miles inland from the coastal town of Strahan, on Tasmania's wild west coast. It is cold, wet, isolated (in 1913 it could be reached only by the Company's own railway), desolate, and like the surrounding mountains, utterly barren, its vegetation destroyed by the sulphur which spewed from the smelters, and re-generation prevented by both sulphur and run-off from Queenstown's rain.

Queenstown, located in the valley on the western side of Mt Lyell, was the major town on the Mt Lyell field. It was where the General Manager lived and it was the location of the Company's smelters. Its population of about 4,000 in 1911 was largely but not solely dependent on the smelters and the Company's railway for its living. It was also an administrative and commercial centre and had a quite diverse population including the majority of the Company's white-collar staff. Gormanston, in the eastward valley of Mt Lyell, was where miners and mine management lived, including Russell Murray who was the engineer in charge of the mines until he became Assistant General Manager in the early 1920s. Linda, a neighbouring town and closest to the mines was the archetypal miners town, with miners journeying the short distance to work in either the 'Blow', the Mt Lyell open cut, or the North Lyell underground mine. The social distance between the two miners' towns and Queenstown was as great as the topographical distance between them. Blainey refers to a journalist's description of these completely different worlds, to the strange and unrecognized miners who never came over the mountain to Queenstown except for funerals.²³

Until 1940 when several women began work in the office, Mt Lyell's mining workforce was entirely male. The mining workforce was divided into six segments: management; professional and technical staff; administration and clerical staff; the

supervisory staff; 'practical' or skilled miners, tradesmen and engine drivers; and finally, the mass of semi-skilled and unskilled workers, such as truckers, navvies in the open-cut, timber-getters, mullockers and labourers. Whilst there was some small occupational mobility between labourers and miners and between miners and supervisory staff, there was all but none between the rest. The only opportunities for women to undertake paid work were in the towns. Electoral rolls and censuses show a sprinkling of women in the clothing trade, in the professions such as nursing, working as domestics or running small businesses.²⁴ However their role in generating income and resources was much more important than their marginal role in the local labour market suggests. Though the question of generating income for their families in the informal economy is more difficult to quantify, women were involved in providing board and lodging, bartering and selling services like washing and ironing.²⁵ Given Mt Lyell's climate, landscape and sulphur drenched soil, and the difficulty of growing vegetables or keeping animals, there may have been limits placed on the exchange of goods.

The Company wielded virtually unrivalled power in the towns. By 1913 it had taken over practically all other mining companies. It dominated local government, and other centres of authority like the hospital and the tourist association. Through its Hobart solicitors it wielded considerable influence in Tasmanian politics and, when its interests were in jeopardy, it did not hesitate to bluster and threaten to pull out of Tasmania altogether. It had enemies, though, in the Labor Party in Hobart, among them ex-employees who had made the transition to state politics. But the Labor Party was a benign and conciliatory Party; its politics were often at odds with the sentiments of Mt Lyell's workers who, nevertheless, regularly supported it.²⁶

The company's sole rival for power on the west coast was the local union movement. By 1923 there were seven unions at Mt Lyell, the biggest of which was the Australian Workers' Union.²⁷ This union arrived in the area in 1917, having swallowed up the Federated Mining Employees Association, itself the descendant of the old Victorian Amalgamated Miners' Association to which the local union had affiliated early in the century. The Federated Mining Employees Association won its first federal award in 1911 and committed itself to arbitration although this commitment at Mt Lyell was never quite unreserved. For example at a 1914 Tasmanian union conference the local branch attempted to withdraw from the arbitration system but was ruled out of order by the union's

president who contended that 'it was in conflict with the constitutional method they had accepted by having their grievances settled by arbitration'.²⁸ Notwithstanding that commitment the local Mt Lyell branch maintained a certain distance from head office and it fought frequently with Company management and at times with other unions on site.

When the Australian Workers' Union arrived at Mt Lyell little changed. There were still tensions between the local branch and head office which frequently headed off local industrial action. Relations between union and management, too, remained much the same, although, looking back in 1938, the then acting General Manager praised the Union in a letter to head office, observing that it had never broken an agreement or award.²⁹ Indeed, in the 1930s, the Union and management began to combine to remove communists from the field.³⁰ The Union's commitment to arbitration remained and may indeed have been strengthened but results were mixed; pay rises in the later years of the war and, after an application to the Federal Arbitration Court by the Company, a pay cut in 1921. Arbitration, while it offered the local unions protection had proved to be a mixed blessing.

The Union's commitment to arbitration was not initially matched by the Company. It had been pulled extremely reluctantly into the system. Nevertheless, while its critical perspective remained, management was pragmatic enough to accept the reality of arbitration and although it won some cases and lost others it cannot have been unhappy that industrial conflict had been institutionalized in the arbitration system.

From 1913 the Company rode the rollercoaster of international copper prices induced by the First World War. Its 1913 profit results were down because the fire at the North Lyell underground mine put its operation on hold. The uncertainty of war meant its 1914 profits were low. However, by 1915 its profits had soared because of a guaranteed copper price and high prices.

After the war copper prices plunged by about 50 per cent and the Company's profits fell by over two-thirds. It paid no dividends to shareholders in 1921 and 1922, concentrating instead on building up its reserves. It recovered throughout the 1920s until in 1929 its profits returned almost to the level of the glory years of 1905-7.³¹ That the Company survived the post war shakeout when every other copper producer in Australia collapsed was a tribute to both the skill, imagination and ruthlessness of its management.

Welfare and the Company's rationale

Contrary to Geoffrey Blainey's account, the inspiration for Mt Lyell's welfare programme came from the Company's Melbourne directors in February 1913, just four months after the North Lyell underground mine fire which killed 42 men. This tragedy was the culmination of an 18-month period of bitterness between miners and management. In 1911, long standing tensions blew up into a two-month strike. In early 1912, a rock fall killed three miners in the Mt Lyell underground. Such was the discontent among miners over the safety of the mines that the conservative state government sent a secret commission to Queenstown to investigate safety. The commission never did its job; it arrived on the same day as the fire and all the commissioners could do was help in the rescue of the miners trapped below.³²

The directors responded to the turmoil in two ways. Plainly dissatisfied with his management, they kicked Sticht upstairs to oversee the Company's entire operations and hired one of the commissioners, Basil Sawyer, to superintend the Mt Lyell operation.³³ More importantly, the Company secretary wrote to Sticht seeking answers to seven questions. What improvements could be made to the plant or ways of working? Were the men working satisfactorily and if not, how could contentment and good work be secured? What was the percentage of 'unsatisfactory' men? How many men were needed to bring the operation to full strength? Were the shift bosses loyal to the Company? What precautions were taken against fire? And finally, what could be done for the welfare of the Company's employees? The board's answer to the last question was to recommend night schools, subsidized leisure and fuel, housing and transport to work.³⁴

Plainly the directors wanted a substantial review of the workings of the Mt Lyell field and several points are clear from these questions. Firstly, they wanted to re-establish control over their workers by re-establishing authority at the copper face. Secondly, they wanted to increase output. Thirdly, they were concerned about shortages of labour. The motives for the question on welfare lie in both the problem of maintaining control and the need to attract and keep labour.

If the context of the introduction of welfare programmes before the war was specific to the Company's problems at Mt Lyell, after the war the impetus was wider. By 1919 the welfare programme had been working at Mt Lyell for six years and the Company seemed pleased with the results. By 1919, too, the welfare movement had begun in Australia. The

industrial relations consultant and chief Australian proponent of welfarism, Gerald Mussen, had been appointed to run Broken Hill's welfare programme the year before and had delivered his creedal text in Adelaide early in 1919.³⁵ Two years later, the Commonwealth Government set up an Industrial Hygiene and Medical Division in the Public Health Service and its Advisory Council on Science and Industry published surveys of overseas welfare programmes in its bulletin.³⁶

At Mt Lyell management worried more about practical problems; the perceived shortage of miners, particularly during the war, an industrial complex working at part capacity (only one smelter out of three permanently working) and profits forgone. Management did not attribute this labour shortage to its own policies; naturally none of the managers Sticht asked to answer these questions would admit to any dissatisfaction among their workers.³⁷ So Robert Sticht blamed first the war and then what he believed was the softness of Australian workers since the war and their preference for city life.³⁸ Yet he did recognize one seemingly insoluble problem; that Mt Lyell was a terrible place to live. 'Nowhere to go and nothing to do', was how he once put it, and he could not bring himself to criticise too harshly those new workers who got off the train at Queenstown station then got straight back on again.³⁹

The Company began its welfare programme very quickly after Sticht received the secretary's letter in 1913 and carried it through into 1914. It began by selling coal and firewood at cost. Families were given a free fare and two reduced fares to Strahan for holidays. It renovated the Linda and Gormanstan recreation grounds and a Queenstown park, supported a Queenstown technical school project and bought new X-ray equipment for the Queenstown hospital. It carried provisions to the smaller settlements at the Comstock and Kelly Basin and donated money to Empire Day celebrations. However most money was spent on housing. By 1914 the Company had bought 36 cottages in Gormanston and rented them out. It relocated more from Strahan and combined two larger ones at Gormanston for a boarding house for 25 single men. It built and bought more in 1914, selling some to 'steady hands'. It built another boarding house in Gormanston and bought several blocks for development.⁴⁰

The second wave of the welfare programme began when the Company realized that financially, the war was more a blessing than a curse. It bought a Gormanston hotel for another boarding house and it built more houses. It bought a hall in Linda, again for single

men, and put up a shelter-shed in Queenstown for men using the haulage to travel over the mountain to the mines. In 1917 it purchased another hall which it let to the Linda Pastimes Club and late in 1916 it sponsored the building of the Queenstown Recreation Club. It also agreed to subsidize a branch of the Young Men's Christian Association in Queenstown and a branch of the Returned Soldiers and Sailors Imperial League. In 1918 it purchased a hall and installed the Young Men's Christian Association in it.⁴¹

After the war had ended the Company entered a new field and began slaughtering livestock and selling meat in Gormanston and Linda at discounted price.⁴² It also entered into an agreement with an insurance company to accept and commission insurance policies for its workers, paid to develop the Strahan picnic ground and set up a temperance bursary for local children.⁴³

In 1919 the Directors sent another questionnaire to Queenstown to survey staff on what other welfare initiatives the Company should consider. The resulting programme continued what the Company was already doing, but several new initiatives were also introduced including the creation of a social welfare committee staffed by the Company's officers. It subsidized the Gormanston and Queenstown bands and bought their instruments. It bought an ice machine, subsidized a boot maker, provided cheap Sunday excursions to Strahan, built a hall at Kelly Basin and provided a caretaker for the Gormanston Working Men's Club. It continued to build and rent houses and in 1920 gave workers the option of rent-purchase. Then, finally, in mid 1920 the Company bought a grocery store in Gormanston, adapted another store in Queenstown to sell groceries and set up its own Queenstown butchery. By late 1920 such was the extent of its welfare programme that it owned every house, the butchery and the only general store in Gormanston. All up, by October 1920 the Company had spent £85,367 on welfare, including £45,547 on housing in Gormanston alone.⁴⁴

The responses by management to the two questionnaires from the directors are particularly revealing about relationships within the Company and between the management, workers and the Mt Lyell towns. Clearly the inspiration for welfarism came not from management but from the directors who were manifestly unhappy about industrial relations at Mt Lyell and the effect it was having on output. While Sticht was not afraid to suggest that it was his job to manage and not theirs, his position within the Company had been weakened by two years of crisis. Significantly, too, whilst Sticht assumed the right to

condense, summarise, recommend or reject the suggestions of his subordinates, it was really Russell Murray's ideas that drove the programme.

Sticht was in many ways typical of the generation of managers from the U.S.A. brought to Australia to manage Australian companies, men like David Baker at B.H.P.'s Newcastle Steelworks and Hoover and his successors on the Western Australian eastern goldfields.⁴⁵ He was hostile to unions, contemptuous in private of Australian workers and baffled by the arbitration system, which he was never able to use in the same way that Baker,⁴⁶ for instance, did. On the other hand, Murray had climbed the Mt Lyell ladder when unions and arbitration were a fact of life. Certainly he liked neither but on the whole was much more pragmatic about both. He was also a more imaginative and ruthless manager than Sticht. He saw the wider ideological frame and the propaganda benefits of welfarism more clearly. And when the time was ripe to abandon the Stichtian metallurgical legacy he seemed not to have hesitated a moment despite the human cost involved.

Given the job in 1913 to canvass ideas from his subordinates, Sticht sought responses only from his departmental heads and two others, an old employee and local councillor, C. Witham, and the Company's local solicitor, E.A. Winch. He didn't ask anybody else. The major absence was the Company's workers who were perceived as being merely the passive objects of the Company's benevolence. Likewise he did not ask the local unions. Carus Driffield, the engineer in charge of railways, ruled out workingmen's clubs on the grounds that they might become a focus for 'unionistic doctrine to the company's detriment'.⁴⁷ Sticht thought the same. Unionists would use clubs to 'denounce or oppose the employers, thus undermining instead of creating loyalty and appreciation'.⁴⁸

If the absence of workers in the 1913 questionnaire was revealing so too was the all but complete invisibility of Mt Lyell's women and children and their lives and discontents. Only Witham had anything to say about women and that was really an expression of his mystification as to just what women wanted.

No survey of the condition of life at Mt Lyell can claim to be comprehensive which does not attempt to deal with the important influence exercised by women. I know of many instances, where men who were inclined to be contented with their lot have been induced by the complaints and grumblings of their womenkind to quit the field. I do not pretend to understand the complexities of feminine motives and it is possible that the discontent so frequently and candidly expressed by Queenstown womenfolk of all grades of society may be only the local manifestation of a revolt which assumes strange forms in other countries. I cannot offer any solution to this difficulty, it would

scarcely be practicable to transport the shops and arcades of Smith Street and Chapel Street to Lyell so as to enable the ladies to revel in a saturnalia of cheap sales, yet I fear that nothing short of such a step would reconcile them to the discomforts and drawbacks of the present environment.⁴⁹

In the second questionnaire, sent to Mt Lyell in 1919, the directors canvassed a range of new programmes. Two of them concerned pay – paid leave and a wage bonus – but both were ruled out by Sticht. The others amounted to more orthodox welfarism: facilities for employees at Strahan, improved accommodation, cheap trains, a new town to replace Gormanston, co-operative societies for the sale of goods, better communications between the Lyell towns, a welfare officer or committee, superannuation, subsidized halls, assistance to bands and a communal laundry. This time the Company asked 25 of its staff to respond, including six foremen and a shift-boss, two clerks, a timekeeper and three draughtsmen, plus Witham and a Mr. Plowman, the secretary of the Young Men's Christian Association.⁵⁰

Once again workers were still seen as the objects of benevolence, not active subjects in the decisions being made. Unions, now, rather than being the enemy, were all but ignored, perhaps because of the arrival on the fields of the more compliant Australian Workers Union and several years experience of arbitration. There were no references to the workplace or the labour process although most replies were in favour of paid holidays and a few supported attendance bonuses. One engineer proposed first aid training, greater attention to safety, 'restaurants' at work, an improved apprenticeship scheme, change rooms at the machine and railway shop and hot and cold showers. Another engineer advocated a suggestion box.⁵¹ On the whole, however, the staff's idea of workplace reform was superficial, contoured no doubt by Sticht's idea of management prerogative.

In the 1919 survey women's satisfactions and discontents appear much more frequently. Boarding houses and a softgoods factory for work for girls referred by the drafting staff,⁵² domestic schools, a public laundry 'to make the work of women easier', the employment of maternity and visiting nurses and the inclusion of women in social activities and movements were suggested by the Chief Metallurgist.⁵³ Most of those who mentioned women advocated a public laundry, but disagreed about who would use it. Basil Sawyer, the then local Superintendent, believed the 'better class' of women would not use it if the 'lower class' did.⁵⁴ One engineer suggested introducing labour saving devices to homes. Others urged the introduction and use of electricity.⁵⁵ Witham and Plowman noted the

advantages to be gained from electricity: lighting, hot and cold water in kitchens, bathrooms and laundries, and heating. Plowman went further to suggest building homes specifically for the domestic requirements of women, central courtyards for children's play and drying clothes, a combined hospital and maternity home and a 'manufacturing and sales department' in the Company to provide work for girls and boys. Witham, by now not so ignorant of women's desires, suggested that women be considered partners in the work of social betterment.⁵⁶ Plainly he and Plowman were both more imaginative and worldly than most of the Company men; in the case of Plowman, from the Young Men's' Christian Association, perhaps this was because he was part of a wider reform movement. He was sufficiently adventurous to suggest that the Company should end the blanketing of Mt Lyell by sulphur from its reduction works.⁵⁷

The responses, then, were different after the war. If the disinterest of the Company's senior management in women's issues before the war was a product of Mt Lyell's and their own isolation, clearly after the war that isolation had begun to fade. The complex processes that Kerreen Reiger calls the disenchantment of the home, that is the application of rational and scientific principles to reform of the domestic sphere, had come to Mt Lyell, at least in the minds of some company officers and their associates.⁵⁸ Clearly, too, some in the Company had begun to think about paid work for the region's girls. Women's entry into the paid work place during and after the war, a process which the *Melbourne Age* called 'the greatest and perhaps the most threatening social change worked by the abnormal conditions of almost five years of war' had opened some eyes in Queenstown to women's right to paid work.⁵⁹ The growing post-war assertiveness of feminist politics and the loosening of social restrictions on women's behaviour had a similar effect. The work Mt Lyell women had done in organising fund-raising for the district's war effort had also raised their social and political profile.⁶⁰ Sticht, himself recognised that things were different at 'the Lyell' when he wrote in 1920:

the demands of the family for housing accommodation have expanded, and it is nowadays desirable to cater to the wishes of the married man, especially his wife in such matters ...⁶¹

The welfare programme and welfare politics

This paper now looks more closely at three aspects of the welfare programme – clubs, housing and the sale of commodities – in terms of the way they altered the existing relations between Company and workers, the way they impacted on the local communities and their implications for women.

Management clearly regarded the social clubs it supported in three ways: first, as means by which it could seduce workers away from a popular culture it was not a part of and did not like; secondly as places where doctrines of loyalty, respectability, and commonality might be fostered; and thirdly as places where model ‘industrial citizens’ might be formed. In all the discussions among management there was a heavy emphasis on recreation of an improving kind, an alternative to the pub and the picture show. At one level the intention was pragmatic; grog caused inefficient workers, inefficient workers for one reason or another left town.⁶² There was little direct discussion of the relationship between the Company’s policy on clubs and its likely ends but it is possible to discern those ends: sobriety, respectability and corporate loyalty. Though the Company supported sporting and other ‘respectable’ clubs, its ideals were the Young Men’s Christian Association and the Returned Soldiers’ and Sailors’ Imperial League. Senior management regarded these as places where good habits would be fostered, where loyalty to the Company would be encouraged, (Sticht believed the Returned Soldiers and Sailors’ Imperial League had a particularly strong voice among workers), where subversion of the Company would not be tolerated and where Company officers might keep a strict eye on things.⁶³

The Company’s other initiative in this field was to subsidize in various ways working men’s clubs. Management was dubious about these clubs at first, but when it began to consider seriously, and later to adopt subsidies, it tried to establish its own control over the clubs. When in 1919, Gormanston miners first broached the idea of a club Sticht wrote:

It would be an easy matter to put the most prominent bosses on the committee, men whom everybody respects and whose judgement everybody values, and yet who are amenable to counsel from us.⁶⁴

This did not work at Gormanston and Sticht had to settle for whatever influence the caretaker he paid for could exert.⁶⁵ But he had more success at Kelly Basin’s hall, where the Company insisted it appoint three out of the six committee men, and with the bands, where it appointed two out of six.⁶⁶

In the long run, supporting the Clubs gave management a chance to parade its benevolence publicly, to use the rhetoric of reconciliation and harmony which had, by 1919, begun to inform its public statements. When Murray opened the Linda Pastimes Hall in 1919 he spoke at length about 'the spirit of co-operation', and he continued this theme later at Kelly Basin:

It was accepted throughout the world that the welfare movement had come to stay and would progress. There was no great gap between employer and employee, and if ever there was one, this sort of thing would bridge it.

The more ebullient Driffield expressed the idea more bluntly.

He then declared the hall open, and as they had only the Company to thank for it, asked them to join him in three hearty cheers for the Company's directors ...⁶⁷

Workers did accept and use most of the clubs the Company set up or supported, incorporating them into the networks that formed local working class culture. However, it is clear that this acceptance was mediated by suspicion of the Company's motives and a desire to be independent of the Company's control. So at Gormanston the miners resisted the attempts of management to control the local club.⁶⁸ And ultimately the Company's hopes for the Young Men's Christian Association were dashed. In 1920 it had 300 members but 76 of them were Company staff, 87 were 'outsiders', probably local business men, 55 were artisans, 23 were apprentices and only 62 were 'working men', the 'lower order' of workers, the men the Company wanted to reach. Sticht recognized the Association's problems.⁶⁹ Firstly, it excluded Catholics who, he suggested, made up a majority of the Company's workforce; secondly, it was dominated by his staff and so his workers distrusted it; thirdly he recognized its evangelical, Christianising intent, and, of course, it was in Queenstown. Although about 25 per cent of miners lived in Queenstown and took the haulage up the mountain to work (Sticht called these 'the more socially advanced of the miners and contractors'), this was not the population Sticht hoped to civilise. He did not consider Queenstown's smelter workers to be a problem.⁷⁰ They represented a more stable workforce, with a smaller turnover of workers than in the mines. They were also less inclined to join unions, more inclined to own their homes and were more subject to his gaze from his mansion overlooking the town.⁷¹ It was Gormanstown

and Linda that he wanted to civilise. So Russell Murray was neither surprised nor upset when the Association began to decline and by mid 1924 it had all but collapsed.⁷²

Housing was the problem that first led management into welfarism, for the very good reason that Mt Lyell's housing stock was abysmally poor. Any photograph of contemporary Queenstown will show a motley collection of lean-toos, tents, tiny cottages and run-down shacks, and Gormanston and Linda were both much worse.⁷³ The boarding houses and hotels where single men lived were expensive, cold, uncomfortable or plain run down. Doing something about housing to attract and keep workers was plainly in the Company's interests. But more was at stake than mere comfort. Providing housing gave the Company an opportunity to exercise control over its workers as landlord over tenant, hence to intervene directly in the family economy of its workers. It also gave management the chance to do some social engineering. To encourage miners to move to Gormanston it provided houses at Queenstown only for staff, and to hasten the demise of that 'difficult community', as Sticht once called Linda, it bought and built houses for miners only at Gormanston.⁷⁴

The Company's main aim, though, was to attract and keep what it called a 'better' class of workers, stable, loyal and reliable men. So by 1920 the Company rented out 100 houses in Gormanston to married men, and later, began to sell them on a rent-purchase basis. The rental scheme, Sticht complained, was not particularly profitable, returning between five per cent and seven per cent a year, but he looked to the bigger picture: better housing to 'settle the men'.⁷⁵ Reintroducing the rent-purchase scheme in 1924, after it had been abandoned some years earlier, Russell Murray remarked that the scheme was a safeguard in times of threatened industrial action'.⁷⁶ Clearly he believed that ongoing financial obligations would dissuade workers from strike action.

The Company wanted married men, but a substantial proportion of its workers were single men and its options regarding housing single men were limited. Normally they 'batched' in shacks in smaller or larger groups, boarded with families or stayed in boarding houses. Perhaps it was these conditions that engendered what management often described as their 'wandering spirit', their restless character which brought them to and drove them from Mt Lyell very quickly. The Company's boarding houses, with their spartan but improved comfort were designed to tame this wanderlust.⁷⁷

The unions at Mt Lyell never opposed the Company's housing programme and the Company never had trouble filling its houses or selling them. Yet at one Arbitration Court hearing in Queenstown in 1921 the Secretary of the Australian Workers' Union did accuse it of renting its houses only to staff and better-paid employees and not to the basic wage workers who he represented.⁷⁸ Certainly staff got privileges that others did not, but the Company denied that only staff got houses insisting that most were rented by miners and mine workers.⁷⁹ The local boarding house keepers were worried by the Company's plans but Sticht dismissed their complaints on the grounds that they were overcharging their boarders unconscionably.⁸⁰

If the Company's housing policies seemed to be welcomed by workers with little overt conflict the sale of commodities was more controversial. Selling commodities began in 1913 with the sale of firewood and coal to workers at below cost and continued with the butcheries and groceries in Gormanston and Queenstown. That the Company made regular profits from these last two ventures was manifestly secondary to the savings it made in wages. By 1919 wages movements through the Commonwealth Arbitration Court had been tied to the Knibbs cost of living index and, after 1921, they were tied to quarterly movements. Queenstown had its own index. The benefits of just one butchery to the Company's wages bill in the context of the index and adjustments was explained to the directors by Russell Murray in 1923.

I have computed the effect which an increase in the price of meat would have on the basic rate as fixed upon the Commonwealth Statisticians figures; I find that an increase of 1d per pound all round would result in advancing the basic rate by 3¹/₂ P.D. On our present number of about 900 men, this would mean £13 2s 6d pd or say £80 per week, equivalent to about £1150 for the period in question; during which the cost to the Company was only £117 14s 0d.⁸¹

Murray regarded these figures obvious proof that the sale of commodities did fulfil the Company's main aim, to reduce its wages bill. Blainey claims that the scheme was so successful that Queenstown had a lower cost of living than either Melbourne or Hobart.⁸²

There were other benefits to the Company too. In times of industrial conflict, storekeepers in the Mt Lyell towns sometimes had to make choices between the Company and its workers. Sticht offered little sympathy to most of those the Company was forcing out of business. Some, he remarked to his directors, had 'never been loyal'.⁸³ These were probably the shopkeepers who had supported striking miners in 1911. Others were looked

after, because they were friends of the Company or because they had enough influence to demand some consideration. The sale of commodities implied another side benefit too. The Company began to exert even further control on the commerce and culture of its towns, by increasing employment beyond its works, increasing control of ordering and distribution and, as we shall see later, exercising control over what consumers could buy and how they could buy it.

It was the potential power that the sale of commodities gave the Company which worried the politically radical Hobart labour movement paper *The World*, which wondered in 1919 what the workers were letting themselves in for. One editorial read:

In the future the employees of the Company will be more than ever in the hands of the Directors. If the men go on strike, the butcher, the baker will cease to call, the grocers doors will be closed and the draper will go on holiday. Even a little outbreak of Bolshevism and the raiding of the Company's stocks would not carry the strikers far. From the standpoint of the miners, therefore, there is reason to look upon the Company's reform as the gift of the Greeks.⁸⁴

Clearly the critique of Mussen's welfare programme developed by militants at Broken Hill, that it represented 'palliatives', 'sops' and 'doles' to 'chloroform the workers' had reverberations across Bass Strait among Hobart's militants.⁸⁵ Yet these sentiments did not spread through Mt Lyell where, on the whole, unions and workers seem to have welcomed the programme as a way of reducing the cost of living. The opening of the Gormanston butchers' shop was welcomed by one Australian Workers' Union official who commented that the initiative might solve the Company's labour shortages because the reduced prices would also represent an increase in wages and reduce inflation.⁸⁶ Before the grocery stores opened, however, the local Australian Workers' Union branch lobbied management to underwrite a co-operative store like that at Port Pirie in South Australia, a venture which would have given the Union a substantially greater influence on the field. Given Sticht's initial reluctance to countenance any stores, it seems that the unions forced his hand, although Sticht later suggested that local workers were really hinting that the company should 'set up shop'.⁸⁷

The stores became part of the industrial tug of war at Mt Lyell in two other ways. The Mt Lyell unions found that the 47 items covered by the Knibbs index covered only 60 per cent of a family's usual purchases, or the *actual* cost of living. The unions' tactic in the Arbitration Court, then, was to admit the low prices of the 60 per cent but to argue that the

price of the other 40 per cent of goods not on the index had increased, thereby justifying a pay rise. The Company's answer was to refer to the provision of fuel, which was not part of the 60 per cent and made up a significant proportion of the 40 per cent, and which the Company provided at below or at cost.

Evidence of price fluctuations was taken by the Arbitration Court when it visited Queenstown. Witnesses sympathetic to the Company—Company staff and some local shopkeepers gave evidence on one side; union officials, workers, wives and other shopkeepers gave evidence for the union. Press reports of these hearings show that they became part of local class conflict where watching crowds barracked and catcalled those giving evidence for the Company. The stakes were high. Sticht's correspondence shows this; critiques of the union evidence, praise for the Company's; satisfaction at his successes resonate through his correspondence with head office.⁸⁸

For the first few years of their existence the Company stores charged a ten per cent surcharge for credit purchases so, rather than reducing prices for credit customers, the surcharge actually increased them. It was a very common custom at Lyell for families to 'book-up' goods then pay them off at the next pay day or to run permanent accounts, so the surcharge represented a substantial cost to the workforce. Yet in 1920, a deputation protested to Russell Murray about his plan to abolish credit.

In order to assist people at present unable to pay cash owing to being a fortnight behind, the Mt Lyell Co. will kindly allow them to begin paying cash immediately and pay their accounts now owing in fortnightly instalments [sic] if they will call at the office and beg the favour. Why should those men who have regularly for years paid for their goods be asked to go and humbly beg that their account be paid piecemeal? It is treating them as though they are bad debtors. It is an insult to their sense of dignity and a working man has a sense of dignity as well as other mortals.

When Murray replied that the Mt Lyell shopkeepers had always charged extra for credit, one member of the deputation, A. Davern, riposted:

the other storekeepers never professed to run a welfare scheme, nor did they employ the men whose cash they wanted before the men received it.⁸⁹

The deputation clearly distinguished between company and non-company stores, regarding credit given by the former as representing a mutual benefit, an informal link between workers and local businesses. The Company resolved the issue in 1921 by abolishing credit altogether.⁹⁰ One wonders whether local workers reflected on the *World's* editorial.

How did considerations of gender inform the Company's welfare programme in the three areas already discussed? In the first place management ignored all the suggestions of its staff for alleviating women's discontents, except in one instance. Only one person responded to the Company's questionnaires by suggesting that it establish or subsidize women's clubs.⁹¹ The initiative to establish a branch of the Young Women's Christian Association in Queenstown came from Queenstown women. Sticht was initially ambivalent about the proposal which asked for Company support, remarking that women were less important to the Company's aims than men. For management, helping men's clubs was paramount because they were one of the prime sites at which its version of the model male industrial citizen might be made. Yet he relented, agreeing that help would be 'gracious'.⁹² The branch was opened with much fanfare in 1920.⁹³

The other prime site was the home. The Company obviously regarded wives and families as a stabilizing influence on husbands, fathers and sons, making them less likely to leave the district and less likely to cause the Company trouble. The married worker was ipso facto more desirable than the single man because it thought single men were more mobile, militant and therefore less susceptible to discipline. Nevertheless the Company regarded the married worker's family as his dependents. The houses the Company made available were predicated on this notion. The Company did not ask women how they wanted their houses designed. At first it bought existing 'cottages' and renovated them, but it built its houses to its own specifications. They were in all cases based on the Company's vision of what a miner's house should look like. The houses it built in 1914 were terraced, square, drab and cheap; a kitchen, living room and two bedrooms (no bathroom or laundry), and two verandahs presumably to permit conversion to sleepouts. The Company knew that mining families boarded male relatives or strangers, a practice that in effect saved it spending money on accommodation for single men. The design implied common living spaces; a living room, for instance, used for bathing, a kitchen used for washing. Laundries, bathrooms, storerooms were built into designs only from 1917.⁹⁴

The sale of commodities clearly had gender implications too. The language of 'workingmen's dignity', used by the deputation to Murray regarding the credit surcharge, is particularly revealing of the men's sense of themselves. The implication in the language used is that men were not only workers for the Company but its customers as well. It was men who paid the bills, and the abolition of credit was a slight on them as working men.

Thus their identity, even over a domestic issue like shopping, was still couched in terms of work. What this seems to contradict was the common practice in which miners handed their wages to their wives and got spending money back. It was wives and children who did the shopping, not men.⁹⁵

There is a substantial historiography now on the relationship between gendered identity and work which shows how manliness was imbricated with manual work (and how much more so when work involved 'taking on' the earth itself).⁹⁶ Mike Donaldson suggests that the patterns of authority at work stripped masculinity away from men in the work place, making it necessary in the minds of the men for it to be re-established at home.⁹⁷ Andrew Metcalf has argued that coal miners in New South Wales northern coalfields act out social class through two distinct masculinities; larrikinism and respectability, the latter asserted through the claims to dignity demanded of workers by the bourgeoisie itself.⁹⁸ The language of the deputation to Murray suggests that Metcalf is correct in the second half of his argument. The Company's interest in single men suggested he might be right in the other.

As might be expected the Company used a different kind of division in its discussions of its workers. It did not want larrikins, single men inclined to wildcat strikes or hooliganism in the streets of Linda or Queenstown. It did want respectable, hard-working and loyal workers, good industrial citizens at work, around town *and* at home. But trade unionists were unrespectable, subversive, disloyal and gullible in their willingness to follow their leaders, and their leaders' politics. Sticht and Murray sometimes described Australian workers as a whole this way.⁹⁹ For Sticht, perhaps, this was due to his unfamiliarity or discomfort with Australian mores; nevertheless he did save his particular contempt for unionists. To management the Company's welfare programme was organised to help workers see through working-class dogma, for an adult appreciation of their virtuous employer.

A second implication of the Company's policies and the workers responses illustrates how fluid the division between home and work was. Despite the interest of some of the Mt Lyell staff in the problem of women and Sticht's own recognition after the war that women demanded some consideration, the Company did very little for them. Clearly women were supposed to experience welfare as dependents not of the Company but of their husbands and fathers. The Company's language was predicated on a strict separation between work

and home; the objects of welfarism were workers as workers. Yet explicitly the Company wanted to intervene massively in the private space of its workers. In two of the instances we have seen, the clubs and the sale of commodities, male workers responded as masters of their own private space. They did so, however, in ways which recognised that self interest allowed the Company's authority to invade that space and in ways which recognised that a bridge had been set up to cross the public-private divide. But the bridge went only so far.

Conclusion

The preceding account draws three main conclusions. Seeing how welfarism became part of the industrial relations between boss and workers is necessary to understanding its totality. Secondly, Mt Lyell's welfare policies represented a welfare *movement* only after World War I. Although they were originally a reaction against Stichtian authoritarianism, ultimately they came to be based on the ideology of class consensus, albeit with certain very practical outcomes in mind. Thirdly, they did not represent welfare capitalism, rather they were but one strategy in managements endless search for control. The difference between Mt Lyell's welfarism and its other workplace strategies was that welfare shifted the search for control into the workers' homes and hearts. Thus welfarism represented a very substantial intervention in the private lives of workers and their families. Having said that, it is clear that welfarism implies a more complex link between private and public spheres than historians once argued, not just because of this intervention but also because workers responded in ways which assumed the porous nature of that division.

Important though welfarism was at Mt Lyell it did not solve the Company's post-war problems. Changes to the labour process did that. Mt Lyell had made Robert Sticht famous. He had developed his pyritic smelting process in the early days of the Company, using the Mt Lyell open cut ore with its heavy iron and sulphur content to smelt the copper ore. In 1921 Russell Murray, in the face of the fall in copper prices, had begun a process of re-organisation and retrenchment but in 1922 he abandoned Sticht's pyritic process for flotation. He no longer needed the ore from the Mt Lyell mine, he was able to reduce the output from the North Lyell mine to one shift and smelt it in just one blast furnace.¹⁰⁰ He sacked a quarter of his workforce who, with no other work available left Mt Lyell in the hundreds. In consequence, Queenstown's population fell by half in one estimate.¹⁰¹ The Company did continue its welfare programme, albeit on a drastically reduced scale in line

with the greatly reduced size of its workforce. So welfare offered workers and their families precious little protection when the company undertook reforms to the labour process. At Mt Lyell then, welfare can only be conceptualised as one part of management strategy. The Company could never be defined with the label welfarism, yet even when its post-war problems were apparently solved, the Company maintained its welfare programmes. Welfarism had become a permanent part of the Mt Lyell industrial scenery.

Endnotes

¹ G. Blainey, *The Peaks of Lyell*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1967, pp. 233-6.

² See for instance S. Brandes, *America's Welfare Capitalism 1880-1940*, Chicago University Press, Chicago, 1976. D. Brody, 'The Rise and Decline of Welfare Capitalism', in J. Braeman, R. Bremner & D. Brody, (eds), *Change and Continuity in Twentieth Century America. The 1920s*, Ohio State University Press, Columbus, 1968.

³ R. Edwards, *Contested Terrain. The Transformation of the Workplace in the Twentieth Century*, Basic Books, New York, 1979, p. 90, but see generally pp. 90-97.

⁴ D. Gordon, R. Edwards, M. Reich. *Segmented Work, Divided Workers: the Historical Transformation of Labor in the United States*, Cambridge University Press, New York, 1982, p. 141.

⁵ S. Jacoby, *Employing Bureaucracy. Managers, Unions, and the Transformation of Work in American Industry, 1900-1945*. Columbia University Press, New York, 1985, Ch. 2.

⁶ A. Fox, *Man Mismanagement*, Hutchinson, London, 1985, p. 78.

⁷ R. Hay, ' "For the benefit of the company". The Development of Employers' Welfare Schemes in Australia, 1886-1980,' Unpublished Paper, Deakin University, 1980.

⁸ G. Reekie, ' "Humanising Industry". Paternalism, Welfarism and Labour Control in Sydney's Big Stores, 1890-1940,' *Labour History*, no. 53, November 1987.

⁹ G. Patmore, *Australian Labour History*, Longman Cheshire, Melbourne, 1981, Ch. 6.

¹⁰ C. Wright, *The Management of Labour: A History of Australian Employers*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1995, pp. 21-24 and pp. 214-219.

¹¹ E. Eklund, ' "Intelligently Directed Welfare Work"? Labour Management Strategies in Local Context: Port Pirie, 1915-1929', *Labour History*, no. 76, May 1999. See also his 'Managers, Workers and Industrial Welfare: management strategies at ER&S and the Sulphide Corporation, 1895-1929', *Australian Economic History Review*, Vol. 37, no. 2, 1997.

¹² R. Barton, 'Co-operation and Labour Management at Electrolytic Zinc and Cadbury Fry Pascal between 1918 and 1939,' M.A. thesis, University of Tasmania, 1989, passim.

¹³ B. Kennedy, *Silver, Sin and Sixpenny Ale. A Social History of Broken Hill, 1883-1921*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1978, pp. 145-9, 161.

¹⁴ F. Maulden, 'Co-operation and Welfare in Industry', in D. Copland (ed.), *An Economic Survey of Australia*, The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences, November, 1931, passim.

¹⁵ Robert Sticht to Secretary 24 February 1921, in General Manager's Correspondence [hereafter GMsC] 5/1/19/91, Melbourne University Archives [hereafter MUA]

¹⁶ Patmore, *Australian Labour History*, p. 136.

¹⁷ The best known example of this is when the Company sacked the Australian Labor Party member of the Tasmanian House of Assembly, J.J. Long. Blainey, *Peaks of Lyell*, pp. 202-203.

¹⁸ C. Fox and M. Lake, *Australians at Work Commentaries and Sources*, McPhee Gribble-Penguin, Melbourne, 1990, pp. 108-9.

¹⁹ Wright, *Management of Labour*, p. 5.

²⁰ For an overview of the contract system see R. Murray to R. Sticht, 22 October 1909 in GMsC January 1908 to June 1909, MUA.

²¹ Murray set out the changes in a letter to the Company Secretary, 3 March 1922, in GMsC 5/1/21/98 MUA. See also *Zeehan and Dundas Herald*, 31 March 1922.

²² Blainey, *Peaks of Lyell*, passim.

²³ *Ibid.*, p.185.

²⁴ Electoral Roll for Census Division of Darwin. Sub-divisions of Queenstown and Gormanston. In Queenstown, of 789 women on the roll, 701 gave their occupation as domestic duties. The next biggest categories were dressmaker 15, nurse 12, school teacher 14, and shop assistant 9. Only a small proportion of the 701 were doing domestic work in paid employment. According to the 1911 census, only 63 females were engaged in domestic service and attendance. In Gormanston, of 150 women, 143 gave their occupation as domestic duties. In Linda, of 104, 98 gave their occupation as domestic duties. In the Gormanston local government area (which included Linda), only 29 women were recorded as domestic servants. Queenstown was plainly a much more diverse community. See Census of the Commonwealth of Australia 1911, Vol. 3, 'Occupations', pp. 1804, 1806.

²⁵ See for instance Sticht's recognition that each Mt Lyell household occupied by a married man contained two miners. Robert Sticht to Secretary, 12 December 1919, in GMsC 5/1/15, MUA. See also E.J. Wedd, *Linda. Ghost Town of Mt Lyell*, Mercury Walsh, Moonah, 1987, pp. 3 and 10, in which Wedd describes the washing his mother did for pay 'to make ends meet' (Wedd's father was a miner) and how, when his brother got work and gave his wages to his mother, she reduced the washing to just a 'few of her special customers'. Generally on the informal economy see J. Matthews, *Good and Mad Women: the Historical Construction of Femininity in Twentieth Century Australia*, Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 1984.

²⁶ Barton, pp. 12-16. For a fuller account of Tasmanian labour politics see H. Reynolds, 'The Island Colony: Tasmanian Society and Politics 1800-1900', M.A. thesis, University of Tasmania, 1904, and W.A. Townsley, *Tasmania. From Colony to Statehood, 1803-1945*, St David's Park Publishing, Hobart, 1991, Books 3 and 4.

²⁷ In addition to the Australia Workers' Union they were the Federated Engine Drivers and Firemans Association, the Amalgamated Society of Engineers, the Federated Electrical Trades Union, and unions representing carpenters, bricklayers and painters. Robert Sticht To Secretary, 19 March 1921 in GMsC, 5/1/91, MUA.

²⁸ *Zeehan and Dundas Herald*, 19 April 1914.

²⁹ Acting General Manager to Secretary, 12 April 1938, in GMsC, Vol. 209, MUA.

³⁰ R. Murray to Secretary, 3 May, 1940, in GMsC, Vol. 223, MUA.

³¹ *Wild Cat Monthly*, 6 December 1930, p. 542, (held at Noel Butlin Archives, Australian National University).

³² Blainey, *Peaks of Lyell*, Ch. 22.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 229.

³⁴ Secretary to General Manager, 11 Feb 1913, in Mt Lyell Mining and Railway Company Limited collection at NS 726/5, Tasmanian Archives [hereafter TAS.Arc]. This collection has been at the Archives for many years. In 1995 when the mine changed hands all existing records at the Queenstown offices were given to the Archives. They were, at March 1996, only part catalogued.

³⁵ G. Mussen, *The Humanising of Commerce and Industry*, G. Hassell and Son, Adelaide, 1919.

³⁶ Reekie, 'Humanising History', p. 4.

³⁷ See the various responses to the questionnaire Sticht to Secretary, 21 March 1913. E.C. Driffield, Superintending Engineer Railways to General Manager, 2 April 1913, G. Wright, Chief Mechanical Engineer to General Manager, 27 March 1913, R. Murray, Engineer in Charge Mines Department to General Manager, 3 April 1913, H.J. Clarke, Engineer for Supplies to General Manager (no date), C. Witham, 'Conditions of life and work at Mt Lyell', April 1913 and A.A. Winch to General Manager, 24 April 1913, in Mt. Lyell collection, NS 726/5, TAS.Arc.

³⁸ See for instance Robert Sticht to Secretary, 14 January 1916, in General Manager's Correspondence, 5/1/8, Mt Lyell Mining and Railway Company Collection, MUA. This collection was given to this archives in the 1960s. It contains the Melbourne office's correspondence as well as material from Queenstown.

³⁹ Robert Sticht to Secretary 21 March 1913, in Mt Lyell Collection, NS 726/5. TAS.Arc.

⁴⁰ Robert Sticht to Secretary, 5 May, 8 July 1913, Basil Sawyer to Secretary, 21 October 1913, in GMsC 5/1/4, MUA. See also Basil Sawyer to Secretary 20 February 1914, 26 June 1914 in GMsC 5/1/5, MUA. See also *Zeehan and Dundas Herald*, 29 April 1914.

⁴¹ Sticht to Secretary 12 September 1916, GMsC 5/1/8. Sticht to Secretary 30 January 1917, GMsC 5/1/11. Sticht to Secretary 26 February 1918, 1 March 1918, 29 March 1918, GMsC, 5/1/13, MUA. See also *Zeehan and Dundas Herald*, 14 February 1917 and 25 April 1917.

⁴² *Zeehan and Dundas Herald*, 17 March 1919 Sticht to Secretary, 31 January 1919, GMsC, 5/1/17, MUA. For instance, the stores charged eleven pence per pound for sirloin instead of the thirteen pence other butchers charged, and eight pence instead of ten pence per pound for sausages.

⁴³ Sticht to Secretary 10 January 1919, 4 February 1919 and 4 April 1919, GMsC 5/1/15, MUA.

⁴⁴ See Sticht's general survey. Sticht to Secretary, 3 December 1920. 'Welfare Work', General Manager's Correspondence, 5/1/17, MUA.

⁴⁵ C. Wright, 'The formative years of management control at the Newcastle steelworks, 1913-1924', *Labour History*, no. 55, November 1998. R. Hartley, 'Bewick Moreing in Western Australian Gold Mining, 1897-1904: Management Policies and Goldfields Responses', *Labour History*, no. 65, November 1993.

⁴⁶ C. Wright, 'The formative years of management', *passim*.

⁴⁷ Driffield to General Manager, 2 April 1913.

⁴⁸ Sticht to Secretary, 21 March 1913.

⁴⁹ C. Witham, 'Conditions of life and work at Mt Lyell', April 1913 in Mt. Lyell collection, NS 726/5, TAS.Arc.

⁵⁰ Secretary to General Manager, 12 March 1919. GMsC, Mt Lyell Collection 5/1/15. MUA. See the 'Key to Synopsis of Welfare Reports', R. Sticht to Secretary, 14 May 1919, GMsC, Mt Lyell Collection, 5/1/15, MUA.

⁵¹ The replies are summarised according to each individuals response and can be found with the Key to Synopsis of Welfare Reports. Categorising the responses according to occupation would be interesting but beyond the scope of this article.

⁵² See response no.1 in 'Synopsis of Welfare Reports', in Robert Sticht to Secretary, 14 May 1919, GMsC, 5/1/15 MUA.

⁵³ See response no. 17 in *Ibid*.

⁵⁴ See response no. 18 in *Ibid*.

⁵⁵ See response no. 24, in *Ibid*.

⁵⁶ See responses nos 16 and 23 in *Ibid*.

⁵⁷ *Ibid*.

⁵⁸ K. Reiger, *The Disenchantment of the Home*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1985.

⁵⁹ Quoted in P. Grimshaw, M. Lake, A. McGrath, M. Quartly, *Creating a Nation, 1788-1990*, McPhee Gribble/Penguin, Melbourne, 1994, p. 218.

⁶⁰ Wedd, *Linda. Ghost Town*, p. 52.

⁶¹ Robert Sticht to Secretary, 3 December 1920, in Letter Book, 'Welfare Work'.

⁶² E.C. Driffield to General Manager, 2 April 1913, in Mt Lyell Collection at NS 726/5, TAS.Arc.

⁶³ See for instance R. Sticht to Secretary, 12 September 1916, GMsC, Mt Lyell Correspondence, 5/1/8 at MUA, regarding a subsidy for a workers club in Queenstown. *Zeehan and Dundas Herald*, 14 February 1917, for the support given to the already existing Linda Pastimes Club. Re the RSSILA, see Robert Sticht to Secretary, 23 September 1919, GMsC 5/1/15, MUA.

⁶⁴ R. Sticht to Secretary, 28 April 1919, in GMsC, 5/1/15, MUA.

⁶⁵ R. Sticht to Secretary, 31 August 1920, in GMsC, 5/1/17, MUA.

⁶⁶ *Zeehan and Dundas Herald*, 8 and 14 August 1919.

⁶⁷ *Ibid*.

⁶⁸ R. Sticht to Secretary, 28 April 1919, GMsC, 5/1/15, MUA.

⁶⁹ *Ibid*.

⁷⁰ See for instance R. Sticht to Secretary, 1 March 1918, in GMsC, 5/1/13. MUA.

⁷¹ See the photograph in C. Fox, *Working Australia*, Allen and Unwin, Sydney 1991.

⁷² R. Murray to Secretary, 22 May 1924, in GMsC, 3 April -30 June 1924, Vol. 113.

⁷³ See photograph in C. Fox, *Working Australia*.

⁷⁴ R. Sticht to Secretary, 28 April 1919 and 12 December, GMsC, 5/1/15, MUA.

⁷⁵ R. Sticht to Secretary, 3 December 1921, in Mt Lyell Collection, Part Catalogued at P131/4/9, TAS.Arc.

⁷⁶ Russell Murray to Secretary, 17 July 1924, in GMsC, Vol. 114, MUA.

⁷⁷ Robert Sticht to Secretary, 12 April 1920, GMsC, 5/1/17, MUA.

⁷⁸ *Zeehan and Dundas Herald*, 18 June 1921. See also Robert Sticht to Secretary, 16 June 1921, in GMsC, 5/1/19, MUA.

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- ⁷⁹ Robert Sticht to Secretary 3 May 1921, at 5/1/19, GMsC, MUA. Staff got free accommodation, firewood, electric light and railway travel.
- ⁸⁰ Robert Sticht to Secretary, 21 March 1913, in Mt Lyell Collection at NS 726/5. TAS.Arc.
- ⁸¹ Russell Murray to Secretary, 13 December 1923, GMsC, vol. 105, MUA.
- ⁸² Blainey, *Peaks of Lyell*, p.235.
- ⁸³ Robert Sticht to Secretary, 24 September 1918 in GMsC, 5/1/13, MUA.
- ⁸⁴ *The World*, 8 April 1919.
- ⁸⁵ Kennedy, *Silver, Sin and Sixpenny Ale*, p. 161.
- ⁸⁶ *Launceston Examiner*, 12 February 1919.
- ⁸⁷ Robert Sticht to Secretary, 3 March 1919, in GMsC, 5/1/15. MUA. Sticht, at one point, wrote to Melbourne regarding stores at Gormanston and Queenstown. There was, he said, no demand for one at Queenstown where there were 'good men' to run it. There was at Gormanston, but there were no men there 'of intelligence and probity', to run it. Robert Sticht to Secretary, 2 November 1920, in GMsC, 5/1/17, MUA.
- ⁸⁸ See for instance Robert Sticht to Secretary, 3 December 1920, GMsC, 5/1/17. MUA. Robert Sticht to Secretary, 3 December 1920, Letter Book 'Welfare Work', 31 August 1920 – 2 November 1921, Mt Lyell Collection, part catalogued at p. 131/4/9. See also *Zeehan and Dundas Herald*, 21, 22, 23 June 1917 and 20 June 1921.
- ⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 16 October 1920. Why the use of credit? Firstly it saved householders the trouble of keeping change. Secondly, it allowed children to buy without risking cash. Thirdly it enabled workers to pay when the company paid them.
- ⁹⁰ Robert Sticht to Secretary, 2 November 1921 in Letter Book 'Welfare Work', *op.cit.*
- ⁹¹ See response no. 17 in 'Synopsis of Welfare Reports', GMsC, 5/1/15 MUA.
- ⁹² R. Sticht to Secretary, 28 April 1920 in GMsC 5/1/85, MUA.
- ⁹³ *Zeehan and Dundas Herald*, 21 September 1920.
- ⁹⁴ For 1914 see 'Plans Workman's Cottage', in GMsC, 5/1/15, MUA. For 1917 see the plan 'Proposed Workmen's Cottages for Mt Lyell Mining Co.', attached to B. Sawyer, Local Superintendent to Secretary, GMsC, 5/1/11, MUA.
- ⁹⁵ On handing over wages see Wedd, *Linda. Ghost Town*, p.3.
- ⁹⁶ See for instance, P. Willis, 'Shop-floor culture, masculinity and the wage form', in C. Clarke, J. Critcher and R. Johnson (eds) *Working-Class Culture. Studies in History and Theory*, Hutchinson, London, 1980. and C. Cockburn, *Brothers. Male Dominance and Technological Change*, Pluto Press, London, 1983.
- ⁹⁷ M. Donaldson, *Time of Our Lives*, Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 1991, chapter 1 but esp. pp. 78-9.
- ⁹⁸ A. Metcalf, *Sex and Solidarity. Fraternity, Patriarchy and Labour History* in T. Irving (ed.), *Challenges to Labour History*, University of New South Wales Press, Sydney, 1994, passim, and see more generally his, *For Freedom and Dignity*, Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 1988.
- ⁹⁹ See for instance, Robert Sticht to Secretary, 14 January 1916, GMsC, 5/1/8, MUA; Report, Sticht to Secretary, 1 September 1911, in Secretary's Correspondence, 'Mine, 1911', Box 73, Mt Lyell Company Collection, MUA.
- ¹⁰⁰ On the re-organisation see for example, *Zeehan and Dundas Herald*, 1 and 4 August 1921. For details of the metallurgical changes see R. Murray to Secretary, 17 February 1922, in GMsC, 5/1/21, MUAes.
- ¹⁰¹ T. Reeves, Queenstown. 'A Copper Mining Town of Tasmania', B.A. Hons, University of Tasmania, 1957, pp. 95-6. On the reduction of the number of workers, the Company put off 332 of its then 1200 or so workers, including one-third of its miners, and 150 single men in Queenstown alone. R. Murray to Secretary, 7 and 14 March 1922, in GMsC, 5/1/21. MUA; *Zeehan and Dundas Herald*, 31 March 1922.