Since I have now been your Member in the Federal Parliament for just on four years I thought it might be appropriate to tell you how I try to organise my time so that I may be a useful representative of this electorate. I think it is necessary that I do this since, after four years experience in Parliament, and since for the last three years I have also had the added complication of trying to maintain some sort of family life in this job, I have found it necessary to re-organise my approach. My two chief purposes have been, firstly to keep in as close touch as possible with electors so that I may be a true representative of all interests in this area and, secondly, to try and make some useful contribution to the Parliamentary Government of this country.

Since I have been married I have adopted the practice of staying in Canberra for the whole time while Parliament is sitting, and then devoting all my time to the electorate when Parliament is in recess. For several reasons this, I think, is the only sensible arrangement. It is hard enough as it is to maintain any sort of family life in this job, and if I am travelling backwards and forwards each week Parliament is sitting it becomes impossible.

Quite apart from this, during my first year as Member, when I did return to Wannon each weekend, I found I could not devote sufficient time to the Parliamentary side of my duties. If I am to be a useful Member this is of first rate importance.

There is one exception to this rule I make. If people from my electorate wish to see me urgently on matters relating to Government legislation that is being introduced in the House then, quite obviously, I must make myself available to see them. An example of this occurred over the Health Act in the Spring Session of 1959 which has just concluded.

When Parliament is sitting I keep in touch with Wannon by writing articles for the local press on proceedings in Canberra or on other matters that I feel are of local interest. During this time I also have weekly talks from 3HA every Sunday evening and from 3YB on Thursdays at 1.30 p.m., I also maintain touch with the electorate through these radio talks.

In view of this arrangement I have made when Parliament
is in recess I spend my whole time in the electorate, and am always available to meet people personally if they wish to contact me. I try to cover the whole area from Peterborough to the South Australian border, and from the coast to just south of Horsham during each summer and each winter recess. As there are many small centres that I like to visit you can see that this takes some time. I advertise in the local press so that electors will know when I am visiting their area and they can then see me if they wish to about any problems they want to bring to my notice.

I don't want to end on a gloomy note, but many people in this electorate are experiencing the first drought in this area for a great number of years; a great number of people have been forced to reduce the number of stock they hold. I think most people are taking this drought philosophically because we all know we have had a run of good seasons since the war which may well have been without parallel in our history and, therefore, I think many people have half expected that this run of good seasons would not continue indefinitely.

It is worth noting that droughts are regarded in completely different forms in different places. There are many places in Australia where they call it a drought if they have had no rain for twelve months, where six months dry is normal and where a drought of up to two or three weeks is possible. If we go to the other extreme, in England it is officially called a drought if it doesn't rain for fourteen days, and I remember being amused by the British News Service, when I was there ten years ago, saying "the drought has now entered its nineteenth day", and the next day they would say it had entered its 20th day, and I think it broke on the next day.

We, in Western Victoria, are probably somewhere between these two extremes. If we have one bad year we should be able to look forward with a certain amount of confidence to a good season in the next, so here's hoping for an early autumn break in the coming year.
Please remember if there are matters you wish to talk over with me, you can always contact me at Nareen or through Commonwealth Parliament Offices, 316 Post Office Place, Melbourne. Please remember I am always ready to meet you personally and to do what I can to be of service.

Finally, may I wish everyone a Happy Christmas and a Prosperous and Peaceful New Year.