



Giblin's Platoon: The trials and triumph of the economist in Australian public life

William Coleman, Selwyn Cornish, Alf Hagger

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Around 1920 there formed a friendship of four men who were to be at the heart of Australian economic thought and policy-making over the next 30 years: L.F. Giblin, J.B. Brigden, D.B. Copland and Roland Wilson. This book tells their story. As economists, they were to become key figures in the debates of the day, staking sometimes controversial positions on protectionism, central banking, industrial relations, and federalism. As public figures they were at the hub of several events punctuating their times: the Premiers' Plan of 1931, the Bretton Woods conference of 1944, and the inauguration of the United Nations in San Francisco in 1945. As leading public intellectuals, they spoke out on censorship, appeasement and defence. As four men who really counted in Australian public life, they were decisive in the establishment of the Australian National University, the Commonwealth Grants Commission, and the modern form of the Australian Public Service and the Australian Bureau of Statistics. Giblin's Platoon comprehends the personal and intellectual dimensions of their lives, as well as depicting them in political and cultural contexts. It recounts their chequered relations with Jack Lang, John Curtin, S.M. Bruce, R.G. Menzies, and J.B. Chifley, as well as their encounters with the Bloomsbury group, Joseph Conrad of the Jindyworobaks, and William Dobell.

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