



Home Style in New Zealand

Author(s): J. Theodore Anagnoson

Source: *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 8, No. 2 (May, 1983), pp. 157-175

Published by: [Comparative Legislative Research Center](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/439426>

Accessed: 14/06/2014 02:52

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at <http://www.jstor.org/page/info/about/policies/terms.jsp>

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.



Comparative Legislative Research Center is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *Legislative Studies Quarterly*.

<http://www.jstor.org>

Home Style in New Zealand

This paper analyzes the constituency resource allocations of members of the New Zealand Parliament, a legislature with both strong party discipline and small legislative districts. Close constituency contact is the norm in spite of (or perhaps because of) a lack of resources. Legislators return to their districts often or reside in their districts, handle casework personally, and make frequent local appearances. Cabinet ministers and older, more senior MPs are less likely to follow a pattern of close constituency contact; younger, less senior MPs are more likely to do so.

Much recent research has traced the parameters of U.S. congressmen's "home styles," especially that aspect which Fenno termed "resource allocation"—that is, how money, staff time, and the legislator's time are budgeted for such things as trips home, newsletters, and casework (Cover, 1980; Davidson, 1969; Fenno, 1978; Fiorina, 1977; Johannes and McAdams, 1981; Parker, 1980). These investigations have coincided with increased survey research into the advantages of incumbency; as a result we better understand how congressmen use the advantages of incumbency both to gain reelection and to serve their constituents (Jacobson, 1981; Fiorina, 1981; Yiannakis, 1981).

Data on how British MPs allocate resources have been reported by Cain, Ferejohn, and Fiorina (1979a, 1979b, 1980), as well as in the earlier work of Barker and Rush (1970) and King (1974). All of these researchers found that legislators were interested in constituency work, were active in their constituencies, and believed that constituency work could protect them from national swings against their party. Loewenberg and Patterson (1979) note that considerable interest in and attention to constituency work is not incompatible with a strong party parliamentary system. Studies of legislators in India (Maheshwari, 1976; Mohapatra, 1976; Narain and Puri, 1976) and Canada (for a review, see Clarke, 1978) also report much constituency activity among legislators.

We know a good deal, then, about resource allocation where party control is weak and districts are large (the U.S.), and we know something of resource allocation where party control is moderate and districts are medium-sized (Britain). This paper aims to describe the parameters of resource allocation in a national legislature in which the party system is among the strongest and the legislative districts are among the smallest in the world.

The legislature is New Zealand's, where one author terms party discipline "stricter than [in] any of the other 'Western' democracies" (Jackson, 1973, p. 118). At the same time that the parties strictly control their members' activities—especially voting—in Wellington, close constituency contact is reputed to be the norm. With only 20,000 voters and 35,000 residents per electorate, New Zealand has long had a style of politics more personalized than is possible in the United States, where there are over 500,000 residents and 150,000 voters per congressional district, or even in Britain, where there are 65,000 voters per electorate (Hill, 1976, ch. 10). How members manage both the constraints of their small, personalized electorates and those of a strong party is by no means obvious.

There is little empirical work on New Zealand MPs. Von Tunzelmann's (1980) is the only such study, combining an institutional analysis of the development of the MP's job over the last century with interviews of 17 MPs on their attitudes toward the resources presently available. She discusses the gradual development of the parliamentary job into a full-time career: MPs now have no concurrent outside occupation and little outside income, yet they do not have the resources compatible with a full-time position. MPs report that they make considerable personal sacrifice, mostly sacrifices of time, to serve in Parliament. Currently MPs are entitled to one-half a secretary-typist in Wellington, the use of their party's research unit (seven research officers for each party's MPs), and free telephone, postage, and domestic travel. Most members rely extensively upon their spouses and to a limited extent on the local party structure for help with their constituency work. While these services are a considerable improvement over what was available even two decades ago, Von Tunzelmann reports that most members would like more assistance and find the services available inadequate.

The speeches of Labour MP Geoffrey Palmer (1980a, 1980b, 1981) reinforce Von Tunzelmann's findings. Palmer reports receiving "about 15-20 fresh (constituency) inquiries per week" from his Christchurch central city electorate, with their general character "rather of the order that a low grade law clerk deals with in his first few years in a law office" (1980a, p. 7). He earlier reported interviewing MPs to estimate their workloads, finding 55 hours per week to be average, but now works "more than 70 hours many weeks, even when the House is out of session" (1981, p. 1). He concludes that "not all of the work is of the same intensity but there is far too much" of it (1981, p. 1; see also Hoadley, 1979, pp. 44-46).

This paper analyzes how New Zealand MPs allocate their resources in presenting themselves to their electorates. It ascertains what the MPs believe the electorate expects of them in their districts, what kinds of constituency activities MPs prefer, how they handle casework, how they use staff, and how much they use such linkages as newsletters and polling. It also

examines the factors which seem to explain any patterns discovered. The paper sets out these parameters, making appropriate comparisons to the U.S. and Britain, ascertains whether there are party, constituency, or electoral differences in the parameters, and proposes a four-part framework of factors that seem to govern the MP's choice of home style.

Data

Interviews were conducted in late 1981 with 30 MPs, approximately one-third of the House membership of 92. The sample was representative of the House by party, by cabinet status and Maori status, by representation of rural or urban districts and of North or South island districts, and by margin of victory. Ministers were somewhat oversampled; they compose one-third of the sample but only 22 percent of the House. However, in this way the data provided some insight into how ministerial status affects constituency work in a parliamentary system. The interviews were conducted while Parliament was sitting, several weeks before adjournment and the beginning of the election campaign. Those interviewed were cautioned at appropriate times that the focus of the interviews was on the period when Parliament was in session. (During the last decade Parliament has met on the average for over half the year.)

Most of the interviews lasted about a half hour with very few interruptions, although one lasted only 10 minutes as the MP prepared to go to the airport (long enough to ascertain that he was very unassertive in his constituency relationships) and several lasted about an hour. Judgments about individual constituency styles were checked with several outside observers, who agreed in virtually all cases.

Forms of Constituency Relationships

In New Zealand, MPs are compelled by parliamentary and party rules to be physically present within the Parliament buildings while Parliament is sitting, usually four days (Tuesday through Friday) per week.¹ In addition, all MPs serve on parliamentary Select Committees; these often meet while Parliament is not in session, entailing attendance in Wellington during some of these periods as well. Party control is sufficiently strong that few MPs defect from party votes.² Levine notes that:

the pressures upon politically dissident MPs may be compelling. . . . In this respect New Zealand parties approach in practice the philosophy of democratic centralism espoused by socialist and communist parties. Once a decision has been taken, party members in Parliament close ranks absolutely, and departures from agreed upon policy are viewed with utmost seriousness (1979, p. 46).

Given these constraints, the opportunities used by American congressmen to stay in their electorates for long periods when Congress is not in session are less possible, and the British example of constituency agents has not been duplicated in the New Zealand House. How do MPs meet the expectations of their small personalized electorates and the expectations of a strong party?

Time Spent in the Constituency and on Constituency Work

The typical New Zealand MP lives in his constituency, commutes to Wellington weekly while Parliament is in session and for Select Committee meetings when Parliament is not in session, and returns to the electorate from Friday afternoon to Tuesday morning, spending most of that period (except Sunday) on constituency work.³

Almost all New Zealand MPs (about 83 percent) live in their constituencies. The 17 percent (5 of 30) who do not are all cabinet ministers, who are provided with housing in Wellington. Even so, half the ministers interviewed still have their chief residence in their electorates, with their spouses taking advantage of the free spousal travel to come to Wellington for any required social gatherings.

Most MPs return to their electorates at least once a week while Parliament is in session; the five who return less often (either "once a fortnight" or "most weekends") are all cabinet ministers. Four of these five have rural or small-city electorates and safe or somewhat safe districts,⁴ all are over 40 years old. Those who do return more than once a week (obtaining special permission from the party whip's office to give a speech in the electorate during the week, for example) exhibit no clear patterns of age, party, marginality, or ministerial status, as shown in Table 1.

Cain, Ferejohn, and Fiorina's sample of British MPs returned home less often; they report that over 80 percent of congressmen and 90 percent of British MPs return to their districts at least twice a month. Comparable figures for New Zealand MPs would be 100 percent returning at least twice a month and 80 percent returning at least four times a month.

MPs in the sample average 29.6 percent of their time on constituency work by their own estimate.⁵ MPs with safe electorates spend an average of 3 percent less time than those with marginal ones; ministers spend 9 percent less than nonministers (but even here the range among the ten ministers surveyed was from 10 percent to 35 percent). There are no differences between those from large city electorates and those from small towns and rural areas. There are substantial differences between the parties, but these are largely explained by the ten ministers among the 17 National Party MPs in the sample.

Over two-thirds of the MPs surveyed spend from 25 percent to 35 percent of their time on constituency work, including time spent on

TABLE 1
 Frequency of Constituency Visits
 By Ministerial Status, Marginality, and Party^a
 (in percentages)

Frequency	<i>Minister</i>		<i>Marginality</i> ^b		<i>Party</i> ^c		All
	No	Yes	Marginal	Safe	National	Labour	
Every two weeks	0	20	0	10	12	0	7
Every weekend (not regularly)	0	30	10	10	18	0	10
Every weekend (regularly)	75	20	50	60	35	85	57
Every weekend and during the week	15	20	20	15	23	8	17
Every night (lives in electorate)	10	10	20	5	12	8	10
Totals ^d	100	100	100	100	100	101	101
(N)	(20)	(10)	(10)	(20)	(17)	(13)	(30)
Statistics ^e	g=-.41 tc=-.29		g=-.42 tc=-.24		g=-.08 tc=.06		

^aMPs were asked, "How often do you go back home (in times per month)?"

^b"Marginal" indicates marginal or highly marginal electorate; "safe" indicates safe or fairly safe electorate. See note 4.

^cLabour category includes one Social Credit MP.

^dColumns may not add to 100 percent because of rounding.

^eStatistics are gamma (g), Kendall's tau b (tb), or tau c (tc).

weekends. This statistic is very similar to the British situation, where King reported a typical MP spent from 25 percent to 40 percent of his time on constituency work (quoted in Loewenberg and Patterson, 1979, p. 173). Cain, Ferejohn, and Fiorina report a wider range in Britain in 1979, with 6 percent of MPs reporting that they spent 10 percent or less of their time on constituency matters and 38 percent of MPs spending from 41 percent to 60 percent on these matters. In New Zealand the lowest percentage is 10 percent, and that is from a minister; the lowest figure from a nonminister is 23 percent. And only 14 percent of the New Zealand MPs spent more than 40 percent of their time on constituency matters. The narrower range seems to be owing to the more uniform work week enforced by the parliamentary rules on attendance and to the MPs doing virtually all casework themselves.

A regression of time spent in constituency work on district characteristics (urban vs. nonurban), district marginality, belief in the payoff from constituency work, and ministerial status explains less than 30 percent of the variance. Only ministerial status is significantly, and negatively, related to constituency work.⁶ This reinforces the conclusion that most MPs spend from 25 percent to 35 percent of their time on constituency work, with few systematic variations except the lower percentage for cabinet ministers.⁷

If party, electoral considerations, and personal or district characteristics do not explain the major portion of the variance, why do some MPs devote more or less time to constituency work?⁸ Part of the answer is a technicality of the measurement, which is based upon the MP's own estimate and thus contains some error. (Each MP's estimate, however, was checked in general against his schedule for the preceding two weeks.) Most of the answer is that MPs seem to pursue constituency work because of internal motivation; they either like it or they don't and therefore do relatively more or less of it. Those who don't like it spoke continuously of their "ministerial responsibilities" as keeping them from their electorates or of the importance of casework to Parliament. Those who do like it tended to emphasize the pleasure of interacting with people on a one-on-one basis. Contrast these two MPs' answers to a question about why they do constituency work:

It's the best part of the job, for several reasons. It keeps you in touch. The locals come in just to talk. School leaders come in. Even people with matrimonial disputes come in. You're a bit of a Citizen's Advice Bureau. It's the most rewarding part of the job. When you push paper up here, you do nothing. There [in the electorate] you have accomplishments and change people's opinions.

I think there are reasons why I do constituency work. I think the electorate expects you to be available, to get ready access and for you to find instant solutions.

There are a few electorates in New Zealand where one must do a relatively large amount of constituency casework (chiefly urban and poorer electorates with many housing and unemployment cases), and there are several safe, rural ones where the expectations seem considerably lower. Each of these, of course, probably attracts MPs more interested in the work emphasized in the constituency. Within these broad limits, how much constituency work an MP does seems to be his choice, provided the minimum standards of the electorate are met.

Pattern of Work in the District

Most MPs follow a standard pattern at home: answering messages on Friday evening, holding constituency clinics or surgeries on Saturday mornings, attending local functions on Saturday afternoons and evenings, and attending to cases with local governments on Mondays.⁹ Sundays are

generally free, although some MPs have party meetings on Sunday night and one mentioned a particularly persistent constituent who called early Sunday morning for several weeks. Ministers must be in Wellington for cabinet meetings on Monday; this necessitates special arrangements for handling cases, as explained below.

Table 2 indicates some differences in political activity. Almost all MPs attend sporting or other public events on Saturday afternoons; those who don't were all older MPs with safe districts. Fewer older MPs pursue either of the more strenuous activities of holding constituency clinics or pursuing constituents on Saturday nights.¹⁰ But half the cabinet ministers attend these functions, half had held constituency clinics the weekend before their interview, and eight of the ten ministers hold clinics from time to time. Whether this seems a lot or a little constituency activity depends upon one's perspective. While the ministers as a group do less than other MPs, their activity seems extensive for people with portfolio responsibilities.

Only 24 percent of the sample (7 of 30) send their own newsletters, usually to a select list of up to several hundred supporters or opinion leaders. Several members send periodic newsletters to all households in the electorate, usually by having party workers drop them in individual mailboxes. (MPs cannot address newsletters to "postal patrons," as U.S. congressmen can.) None of the ministers send newsletters, but almost half of the under-40 group does; several of the latter had also talked with U.S. congressmen about constituency work, and in particular about newsletters. Many of those who do not send their own newsletters insert a column in the local party newsletter, which is customarily sent to all local party members. In 1981, an election year, just over a third of all MPs interviewed indicated that they had done some polling in their districts. MPs with marginal districts were much more likely to have polled (60 percent vs. 25 percent).

Patterns of Staffing

Most MPs have some additional staff help to assist with constituency work, but much of this is done by spouses as unpaid secretaries and message takers; two-thirds would like more staff in the electorate. Almost half have electorate offices open regular hours. Clear party and geographic differences help explain why additional staff have not been provided for MPs.

The sheer variety of staffing patterns can be seen in Table 3. Given that MPs are entitled to one-half a secretary-typist in Wellington and no staff in their constituencies, the variety is perhaps to be expected. About a quarter (7 of 30) of the MPs in the sample have no additional staff help at all; another third (10 of 30) use their spouses to take messages. Beyond that, there are a variety of patterns, as indicated. There are no differences on these patterns

TABLE 2
Typical Constituency Political Activities
(in percentages)

Activity	<i>Marginality^a</i>					All
	Marginal	Safe				
Attending sporting or other public events on weekends						
Regularly	90	58				68
Occasionally	10	16				14
Rarely	0	26				17
Totals	100	100				100
(N)	(10)	(19)				(29)
Statistics ^b	g = .75 tc = .31					
	<i>Minister</i>		<i>Age</i>			All
	Yes	No	<40	40-50	>50	
Holding constituency clinics						
Yes	50	85	100	75	45	73
No	50	15	0	25	55	27
Totals	100	100	100	100	100	100
(N)	(10)	(20)	(11)	(8)	(11)	(30)
Statistics	g = -.70 tb = -.37		g = -.85 tc = -.51			
Attending banquets, visiting pubs, etc. on Saturday nights						
Regularly	50	79	100	62	40	69
Occasionally or rarely	50	21	0	38	60	31
Totals	100	100	100	100	100	100
(N)	(10)	(19)	(11)	(8)	(10)	(29)
Statistics	g = -.58 tb = -.30		g = -.83 tc = -.56			

^a“Marginal” indicates a marginal or highly marginal electorate; “safe” indicates a safe or fairly safe electorate. See note 4.

^bStatistics are gamma (g), Kendall’s tau b (tb), or tau c (tc).

TABLE 3
Staff and District Office Patterns
(in percentages)

Staff Assistance	<i>Minister</i>		<i>Marginality^a</i>		All	
	No	Yes	Marginal	Safe		
None	15	40	0	35	23	
Spouse takes messages, sets up appointments	45	10	50	25	33	
Party volunteers handle routine cases	5	30	30	5	13	
Ministerial private secretaries used extensively	0	20	10	5	7	
Employs someone in electorate (4 members) or Wellington (1) or spouse handles cases (2) ^b	35	0	10	30	23	
Totals	100	100	100	100	99	
(N)	(20)	(10)	(10)	(20)	(30)	
	<i>Age</i>			<i>Party</i>		All
	<40	40-50	>50	National	Labour ^c	
Regular district office						
Yes, at home or in the electorate	55	25	36	29	54	40
No	45	75	64	71	46	60
Totals	100	100	100	100	100	100
Statistics ^d	gamma = -.26 tc = -.17			gamma = .47 tb = .25		

^a“Marginal” indicates a marginal or highly marginal electorate; “safe” indicates a safe or very safe electorate. See note 4.

^bSpouse handles routine cases without intervention of MP.

^cCategory includes one Social Credit MP.

^dStatistics are gamma (g), Kendall’s tau b (tb), or tau c (tc).

by type of district or party, but none of the ten ministers has a paid staff member, which seems surprising given that several ministerial districts are urban, marginal ones where a staff member could clearly be of use.¹¹ And MPs with safe districts fall into all categories, from no staff to paid staff. Several safe districts appear to be electorates where the use of paid staff by an aggressive MP has made the district safer. All of those with marginal districts used help of some kind; none falls into the “no staff” category.

Table 3 indicates further that those with district offices tend to be younger or Labour MPs. About 40 percent have district offices open for regular office hours, with seven of the offices (23 percent) outside of the home and five (17 percent) in the members’ homes. Almost everyone (24 of 29; 83 percent) advertises office hours or a location and time when the MP can meet with constituents, always in the local giveaway (“shoppers”) newspapers and often in the local or regional newspapers as well.¹² One MP stated straightforwardly that if he didn’t advertise, no one would be around on weekends when he visits the small towns of his rural district. Of the five who do not advertise, all have safe electorates and are older.

On their desire for additional staff, the members clearly split along party, geographical, and generational lines. Two-thirds (18 of 27) of those interviewed favored more staff for each MP, with 14 of the 18 favoring a constituency agent to work on cases, following the British model. Urban, Labour and young (under 40) MPs strongly favored a proposal for more staff, while rural or small town, National party and older MPs are each split approximately down the middle. The reason the present National party government has not moved toward instituting such help is certainly clear; the governing party (and most likely the cabinet, given that it is older and more senior) seems quite split over the proposal. The Labour party, on the other hand, is in favor of the proposal and has made it part of their election platform (Christchurch Press, 1981).

Patterns of Handling Casework

Most MPs in New Zealand require appointments at their surgeries, take cases from outside their districts, and handle casework through close personal ties with local governmental bodies, especially those bodies handling housing and employment matters. Appointments are quite a common requirement for seeing MPs in New Zealand, even at their constituency clinics or surgeries. Sixty percent of all MPs require them, with some differences between urban and rural MPs. That percentage rises to 70 percent for rural and small town MPs and falls to 50 percent for urban ones, several of whom said that they considered appointments an imposition upon their poorer constituents. Appointments are usually arranged with a staff member if there

TABLE 4
Casework from Outside District
(in percentages)

Handles Cases from Outside Own Electorate	<i>Party</i>		All
	National	Labour ^a	
Yes, with enthusiasm	29	46	37
Yes, but reluctantly; refer some to other MPs	71	54	63
Totals	100	100	100
(N)	(17)	(13)	(30)

^aCategory includes one Social Credit MP.

is one, or with spouses or the MP himself. MPs who held surgeries did so for an average of just over three hours per week, with an average of 19 people appearing during that time. There were no consistent differences between the parties on these matters, although younger MPs tend to have longer surgeries and see more people. A slightly higher proportion of British MPs hold surgeries, but the New Zealand MPs hold theirs more often. Loewenberg and Patterson note that about half of British MPs hold them at least every two weeks (1979, p. 173). Cain, Ferejohn, and Fiorina note that 85 percent of British MPs who hold surgeries did so “every month at least, and 56 percent said that they held them every two weeks or more” (1980, p. 15).

New Zealand casework is partisan in some unexpected ways. One might expect some opposition MPs to complain about their treatment by the bureaucracy; however, only one offered an example in which he felt the bureaucracy decided a case unfairly because the MP was part of the opposition. In fact several opposition MPs noted cases where the bureaucracy had given them what they felt was superior or extra careful treatment as members of the opposition. No MP said that how he handled a case would depend upon the party membership of the constituent. But several said that constituents from outside their electorates often wanted MPs of the constituent’s own party to handle their problems. Several especially partisan MPs said they decided whether to handle a case from outside their own district on the basis of the constituent’s own MP’s party: cases from their own party’s MPs were referred to that MP; those from the opposition were processed with alacrity.

Overall 37 percent of the MPs handled cases from outside their districts with enthusiasm (as shown in Table 4), with some difference between the parties. Another 38 percent handled cases from outside the district if the case fell within their area of responsibility or interest. Cabinet ministers often handled such cases from outside their electorates, for example, and

TABLE 5
Members with Close Ties with Local Government Officials^a
(in percent of each row category)

Group	%	(N)
Urban	79	(14)
Rural/Small town	31	(16)
Minister	30	(10)
Nonminister	65	(20)
National Party	41	(17)
Labour ^b	69	(13)
Under 40	82	(11)
Age 40 to 50	63	(8)
Over 50	18	(11)

^a“Close ties with local government officials” means MP has constant communications with local officials, sees them regularly in their offices (every week or two), and visits their offices on cases. Distant ties are those by which the MP sees local officials mostly in occasional deputations and does not visit their offices regularly.

^bCategory includes one Social Credit MP.

shadow ministers the same. Lawyers (8 of the 30 MPs sampled) often responded that constituents with minor legal problems would seek out the nearest lawyer MP from their own party for some informal—and free—advice.

How MPs handle cases and relate to local governmental offices is clearly an issue which differentiates MPs in New Zealand, as shown in Table 5. “Local government” here includes both local offices of central bureaucracies, such as the Ministries of Housing or Labour, and local government officials, such as the members of city or county councils. Table 5 indicates that urban, Labour, and younger MPs, as well as those who are not cabinet ministers, have a much higher probability of having close ties with local government officials.

Ministers must work out special arrangements for handling casework (see Hill, 1976, ch. 11 for a description of ministerial casework in the 1960s). About half of our sampled ministers sent all cases over to their fellow cabinet ministers for “ministerials,” a cabinet officer’s decision. When ministers receive cases in this manner, they send them down the hierarchy to the appropriate local government office, and then a reply goes back up to the minister for his signature. Most other MPs consider this to be the least effective way of accomplishing casework, resulting in the local official’s resentment at having a quick time limit placed upon his work and in routine disposition of the case. The rest of the cabinet members interviewed seem to be extraordinarily able at handling cases; they use their private secretaries, party volunteers, or law students as unpaid helpers. Two specifically mentioned using their private secretaries extensively in handling casework, with one

giving out both the MP's and the private secretary's work and home phone numbers. Several ministers had systems whereby the constituent's case was recorded (on dictaphone, on paper, etc.) in the constituent's presence for subsequent action by private secretaries or party volunteers, reserving subsequent MP intercession only for particularly difficult cases. Such a system allows the minister to interact directly with the constituent but minimizes the time he spends on each case between the initial contact and ultimate disposition.

Determinants of Home Style

The close attention to constituency matters evident in the home styles of New Zealand MPs is partly a function of the small size of their electorates. But beyond that, there are four factors which seem important in producing both the pattern of close relationships and the variations in the pattern.

Ministerial Status

Ministers have obligations to speak across the nation and therefore less time for speeches and surgeries within the electorate. Ministers must also be in Wellington on Mondays for weekly cabinet meetings, a day when many MPs handle constituency work with local governmental offices. Party meetings, often scheduled for Monday nights in constituencies, must then be moved to Sunday or occasion an airplane flight home. The constituency, in short, sees less of a minister than an ordinary MP, and the minister in turn must develop alternate—usually more efficient—ways of handling case-work. The tradeoff for the constituency is that it receives the prestige of its member serving in Cabinet. Whether the tradeoff is substantial enough to reward cabinet status is unclear, since most cabinet members represent safe districts. Some ministers have mixed feelings about constituency work:

Well, it depends upon what kind of politician we want to become. From the standpoint of efficiency, it is ludicrous for members of Parliament to spend inordinate amounts of time doing this "Citizen's Advice Bureau" type of work. But do we want ministers to become high executives? I have a love-hate relationship with the whole process. . . . "Another weekend away from the family, dealing with people's small problems." The other part of me says: "Hoorah, it's the most rewarding part of the job." I like the warmth of contact from someone who says you've helped them. What is the efficiency of democracy? If efficiency were everything, I wouldn't be a "small d" democrat.

Ties to the Local Party Organization

Two factors tend to reinforce localism. The first is that the local party organization nominates and renominates the local candidate. The expectations of the local party organization are important both for sitting MPs and for those wishing to become MPs. The second factor is that the

party organization raises campaign funds and the local electorate is usually the source of those funds.

Thus what the local party expects of the MP matters. And local parties, in the view of the MPs interviewed, want to see the MP active on the local level. They want the MP to attend local party meetings and hold surgeries. They are willing to accept the prestige of a cabinet post against some lack of local attendance, but even there a strong norm of localism operates in all but the most secure electorates. MPs report that local party organizations are not very demanding on home-style activities (but almost all MPs adhere to the usual pattern of close constituency contact) and accept the tradeoff of cabinet status for presence in the electorate. Two typical comments:

Well, they (the local party organization) are very supportive, but very critical, even to the point of heckling sometimes. They complain to me as their MP on issues; that is, they support me personally very strongly but are critical of the government and party on issues.

The threat of not being renominated. I make demands on them for manpower. They want visibility, not just two weeks before the election. People want access if they have a problem. They like to see me at the branch meetings. I go to every other one, which is better than my predecessor. If I moved my family to Wellington, there would be . . . political problems. . . . It would not occur to me to do that unless I became a cabinet minister.

Given that, the control of MPs by party organizations appears to be more a set of anticipated reactions than a set of overt controls. MPs appear to regulate their behavior to minimize the possibility of the local party's failing to renominate them. The easiest way to do this is to fulfill the standard expectation: be home every weekend.

All MPs also attend local party executive meetings, and where there are not too many local branches they attend party branch meetings as well. Some MPs have well over 20 branches, making universal attendance impossible, but even there, they attend some.

The Desire, Ability, and Style of the MP Himself

There are clearly differences in what MPs want to do. Some don't want to return to the district every weekend, particularly if they represent large rural districts and returning means more than a single one-hour plane ride. (Fortunately for MPs, these are also among the most secure districts.) Some don't want to spend most of every weekend traveling from place to place in their districts. With these MPs, there is a conflict between their own desires and those of their party organizations.

There are also differences in the kinds of constituency work that people prefer. Almost everyone interviewed seemed to like the endless round of sporting events, club openings, agricultural and pastoral shows, and other

public events that almost every MP questioned attended all weekend. Only a couple frowned upon attending these programs, and they were more than counterbalanced by the several who said that if they were not invited to some opening in their districts, they called to find out why. In contrast, only a few preferred extending this to Saturday evenings with pub visits and other ways of seeking out constituents.

Another difference concerns styles of handling casework. Some encourage casework by having long and frequent surgeries and taking any case or problem regardless of what the constituent himself has done about the problem (these MPs tend to have districts with many housing and employment cases and poorer people). Others discourage cases by not holding surgeries very often, by insisting that the individual go through local procedures before the MP will take the case, or by requiring the constituent to state the case fully in writing. Several of the MPs who insisted that local procedures be followed before they would take the case were most tenacious in pursuing cases in which they felt the constituent had a genuine grievance, in some cases for years.

Character of the Local Electorate

The character of the electorate is important both as to the kind of people who live there and the kind of topography. The kind of people influence the kind of cases one is likely to receive. Rural electorates tend to produce few cases overall and of those few, many farm loans. Poorer urban electorates tend to have very high numbers of cases overall and lots of housing and employment problems, many of which cannot be resolved satisfactorily. Electorates with recent immigrants from the Pacific islands tend to have many immigration cases. Topography either increases or reduces travel time, making one Saturday morning appearance in a single location sufficient to cover the entire electorate or making several Saturdays' travel necessary to provide each small population center with a one-hour appearance.

The context in which the MP chooses to meet constituents may also vary according to the district. Several suburban MPs said that their constituents did not want to attend a surgery per se but preferred a "cottage" meeting, at which a question and answer format was used and refreshments served.

The interaction of these four factors—ministerial status, the desires of the local party organization, the preference of the individual MP, and the character of the local electorate—produces the differences analyzed in this paper. These converge to produce three patterns or styles of resource allocation. The first is the standard pattern of close constituency relationships. The second is more characteristic of cabinet ministers, who perform less

constituency work overall. Cabinet ministers are less likely to live in their electorates, return to their electorates less often, spend less time on constituency work, and are less likely to advertise their presence in the electorate. They are likely either to be very efficient at handling constituency and casework—often substituting ministerial private secretaries or party volunteers—or to have such safe districts that these substitutes are less necessary. Both of these patterns seem to have existed at least since World War II, owing to the small legislative districts and relatively short travel times.¹³

A third pattern seems to be more recent, having developed in the last decade and characterizing younger, less senior MPs, and (to a certain extent) urban and Labour MPs. Such members place more emphasis on constituency work: they are more likely to have a district office, to favor more staff help for MPs, to send newsletters, to have longer surgeries and see more people in them, and to have close personal ties with the local bureaucratic offices, useful contacts for casework. Younger MPs are more likely than older ones to be out doing constituency work on Saturday nights.¹⁴

Besides these variations, what emerges from this survey of constituency relationships among New Zealand MPs is an overwhelming impression of close constituency work, of MPs with very small districts who live in them, return home often, and do an astonishing amount of constituency and casework themselves. The strong party system, if anything, reinforces this tendency by removing national policy and parliamentary votes from the responsibility—and influence—of the individual MP. There is a tradeoff here, of course, in that all this constituency work may not be sufficient to keep an MP from being swept from office in a national surge toward a different party, but that is a subject for another paper. Here New Zealand MPs' constituency relationships have been documented as very locally oriented indeed.

J. Theodore Anagnoson is Assistant Professor of Political Science, University of California, Santa Barbara, California 93106.

NOTES

I would like to acknowledge the assistance of the Fulbright grant program for travel and research assistance while in New Zealand, the advice and comments of Dr. W. Keith Jackson of the University of Canterbury, Christchurch, and the comments of Stanley V. Anderson, Clive Bean, and the editor and referees of this journal.

1. Part X of the Standing Orders of the House of Representatives (New Zealand) 1979, provides that MPs "shall attend the service of the House" unless excused by the Speaker (p. 34). The rules of the Labour Party (caucus rules) state that "any member desiring to leave the precincts of the chamber while the House is sitting shall first notify the whips . . . , and shall not leave the building without the consent of the leader or the whips" (Rule 18, version of 2 February 1964). Communication from Professor W. Keith Jackson, 16 August 1982.

2. The number of MPs who defect from party votes is certainly far fewer than in Britain. For a review of the postwar decline of party voting in Britain, see Epstein (1980) and Schwarz (1980). For the New Zealand experience, see Levine (1979, pp. 45-47) and Jackson (1973), who compare New Zealand with Britain. One consequence of tight party discipline is that there are no votes or other public positions with which to assess the ideological positions of individual MPs.

3. Candidates for Parliament do not have to live in their electorates to be nominated, but of those who do not virtually all move to their electorates for the duration of the campaign. With changes in electorate boundaries every five years, however, MPs occasionally find their homes outside electorate boundaries; one MP lived one-tenth of a mile outside his electorate. His residence was not an election issue.

4. The National Business Review estimates each electorate's marginality on the basis of the previous vote, demographic trends, the quality of the candidates, and redistricting, if applicable. Each electorate is placed on a four-point scale: safe, fairly safe, marginal, extremely marginal. See National Business Review, 1981.

5. MPs were asked, "Can you give me an approximate time breakdown of the proportion of time you spend on constituency work?" If necessary, they were informed, "This includes both time in the electorate and time in Wellington." The range was from 10 percent and 15 percent (two cabinet ministers with very safe electorates) to 50 percent for three MPs (one urban, one suburban, and one from a small regional city). Only four MPs were unable to give a precise estimate; these were recoded to 25 percent on the basis of their general comments and the average amount for other MPs who followed similar patterns in their constituency work.

6. The regression equation is as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Percent of time spent in constituency} = & 34.1 \text{ (Constant)} - .25 \text{ (Urban)} \\ & (10.1) \quad (0.07) \\ & - 3.34 \text{ (Safe District)} + 3.98 \text{ (Payoff)} - 9.61 \text{ (Minister)} \\ & (0.97) \quad (1.04) \quad (2.82) \end{aligned}$$

$$R^2 = .29$$

The T statistic is in parentheses. All variables are dichotomous, with 1 indicating the presence of the condition and 0 indicating its absence. $F = 2.39$.

7. Home style can be a campaign issue, but tends not to be. It seems to be more prevalent in reinforcing an image of an MP as "a good constituency man" or "a good man." In the 1981 New Zealand postelection voting survey, in which those surveyed were given two chances to respond, only 18 percent of the sample mentioned any characteristic of the local candidate as having influenced their vote; responses to the national parties, their philosophies, and their leaders were far more common.

8. An informal assessment has some of the more issue-oriented MPs of both left and right doing, if anything, more constituency work than moderate MPs. One would suspect that this constituency work gains them the freedom to voice their views.

9. Hill (1976, p. 270) notes that the pattern in the late 1960s was for members to hold surgeries on Mondays. Hill also analyzes data on individual complaints.

10. Unfortunately, age and years of service in Parliament are clearly intertwined in the sample, correlating at .61. Several home-style variables were checked against both age and number of terms served and show declines against both variables. The term "young" should be interpreted as referring both to young MPs and to those who have served only one or two terms. Older MPs, conversely, have served, on the average, five terms.

11. But many ministers use their two to three private secretaries (these are professional personnel, not clerical) for greater or lesser amounts of constituency work, as discussed above.

12. Fewer U.S. congressmen and British MPs advertise; this seems to be a difference in cultural tradition and perhaps the availability of media.

13. The major change between this description and Hill's (1976) description of MP casework in the late 1960s is the increase in weekend work, which parallels the expansion of weekend activities in the country (opening of shops on Saturdays, etc.).

14. See note 10.

REFERENCES

- Barker, Anthony and Michael Rush. 1970. *The Member of Parliament and His Information*. London: Allen and Unwin.
- Cain, Bruce E., John A. Ferejohn, and Morris P. Fiorina. 1979a. "The Roots of Legislator Popularity in Great Britain and the United States." *Social Science Working Paper 288*. Pasadena: California Institute of Technology.
- . 1979b. "The House is Not a Home: British MPs in Their Constituencies," *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 4:501-523.
- . 1980. "The Demand for Constituency Service in Great Britain and the United States." Presented at the Annual Meeting of the Western Political Science Association Meetings, San Francisco.
- Christchurch Press. 1981. "MPs Overworked." May 26, p. 6.
- Clarke, Howard D. 1978. "Determinants of Provincial Constituency Service Behaviour: A Multivariate Analysis," *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 3:601-628.
- Cover, Albert D. 1980. "Contacting Congressional Constituents: Some Patterns of Perquisite Use," *American Journal of Political Science* 24:125-135.
- Davidson, Roger H. 1969. *The Role of a Congressman*. New York: Pegasus.
- Epstein, Leon D. 1980. "What Happened to the British Party Model?" *American Political Science Review* 74:9-22.
- Fenno, Richard F., Jr. 1978. *Home Style: House Members in their Districts*. Boston: Little, Brown.
- Fiorina, Morris P. 1977. *Congress, Keystone of the Washington Establishment*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- . 1981. "Some Problems in Studying the Effects of Resource Allocation in Congressional Elections," *American Journal of Political Science* 29:543-567.
- Hill, Larry B. 1976. *The Model Ombudsman: Institutionalizing New Zealand's Democratic Experiment*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Hoadley, J. Stephen, ed. 1979. *Improving New Zealand's Democracy*. Auckland: New Zealand Foundation for Peace Studies.
- Jackson, W. Keith. 1973. *New Zealand, Politics of Change*. Wellington: Reed Education.
- Jacobson, Gary. 1981. "Incumbent's Advantages in the 1978 U.S. Congressional Elections," *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 5:183-199.
- Johannes, John R. and John C. McAdams. 1981. "The Congressional Incumbency Effect: Is it Casework, Policy Compatibility or Something Else?" *American Journal of Political Science* 25:512-542.
- King, Anthony. 1974. *British Members of Parliament, A Self Portrait*. London: Macmillan and Granada Television.
- Levine, Stephen. 1979. *The New Zealand Political System*. Sydney: Allen and Unwin.

- Loewenberg, Gerhard and Samuel C. Patterson. 1979. *Comparing Legislatures*. Boston: Little, Brown.
- Maheshwari, S. 1976. "Constituency Linkage of National Legislators in India," *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 1:331-354.
- Mohapatra, M.K. 1976. "The Ombudsmanic Role of Legislators in an Indian State," *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 1:295-314.
- Narain, I. and S.L. Puri. 1976. "Legislators in an Indian State: A Study of Role Images and the Pattern of Constituency Linkages," *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 1:315-330.
- National Business Review. 1981. *NBR Outlook*. October. Wellington: Fourth Estate Newspapers, Ltd.
- Palmer, Geoffrey. 1980a. "Reflections from Within: From Professor to Politician." Presented to the New Zealand Political Studies Association Conference, Christchurch.
- _____. 1980b. "Problems With the Welfare State." Presented to the New Zealand Political Studies Association Conference, Christchurch.
- _____. 1981. "Helping Constituents, A Portion of the Labour Party's Policy on Open Government." Presented to the New Zealand Political Studies Association Conference, Christchurch.
- Parker, Glenn R. 1980. "Sources of Change in Congressional District Attentiveness," *American Journal of Political Science* 24:115-124.
- Schwarz, John E. 1980. "Exploring a New Role in Policy Making: The British House of Commons in the 1970s," *American Political Science Review* 74:23-37.
- Von Tunzelmann, Adrian. 1980. "Membership of the New Zealand Parliament: A Study of Conditions 1854-1978." Presented to the New Zealand Political Studies Association Conference, Christchurch.
- Yiannakis, Diana E. 1981. "The Grateful Electorate: Casework and Congressional Elections," *American Journal of Political Science* 25:568-580.