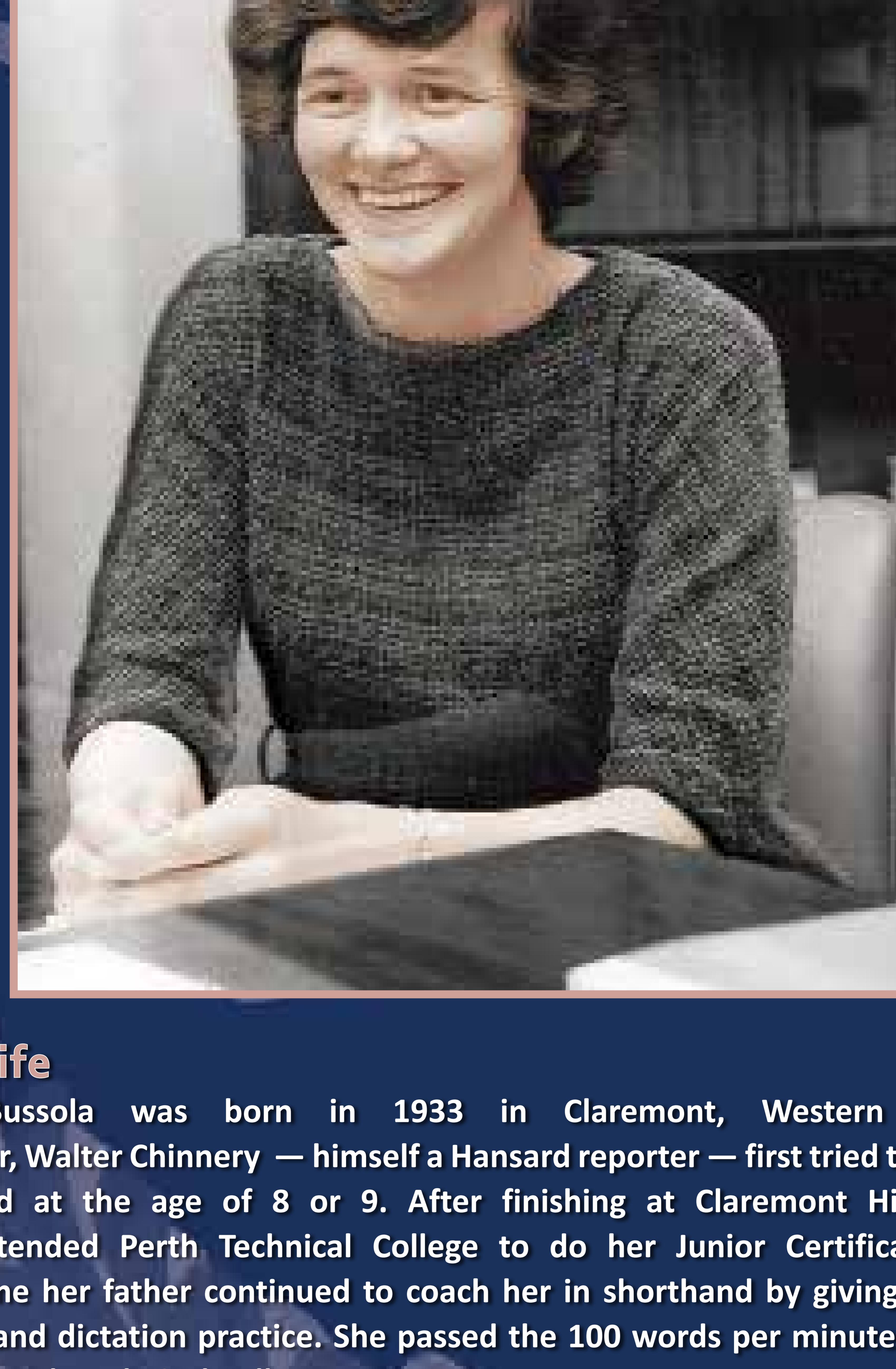


Jessie Bussola

The First Female Chief Hansard Reporter in Australia

In 1979, Mrs Jessie Bussola was appointed Deputy Chief Hansard Reporter, and two years later, in 1981, she became the first female Chief Hansard Reporter in Australia.



Early life

Jessie Bussola was born in 1933 in Claremont, Western Australia. Her father, Walter Chinnery — himself a Hansard reporter — first tried to teach her shorthand at the age of 8 or 9. After finishing at Claremont High School, Jessie attended Perth Technical College to do her Junior Certificate, during which time her father continued to coach her in shorthand by giving her speed building and dictation practice. She passed the 100 words per minute speed test while at Perth Technical College.

Another first for women

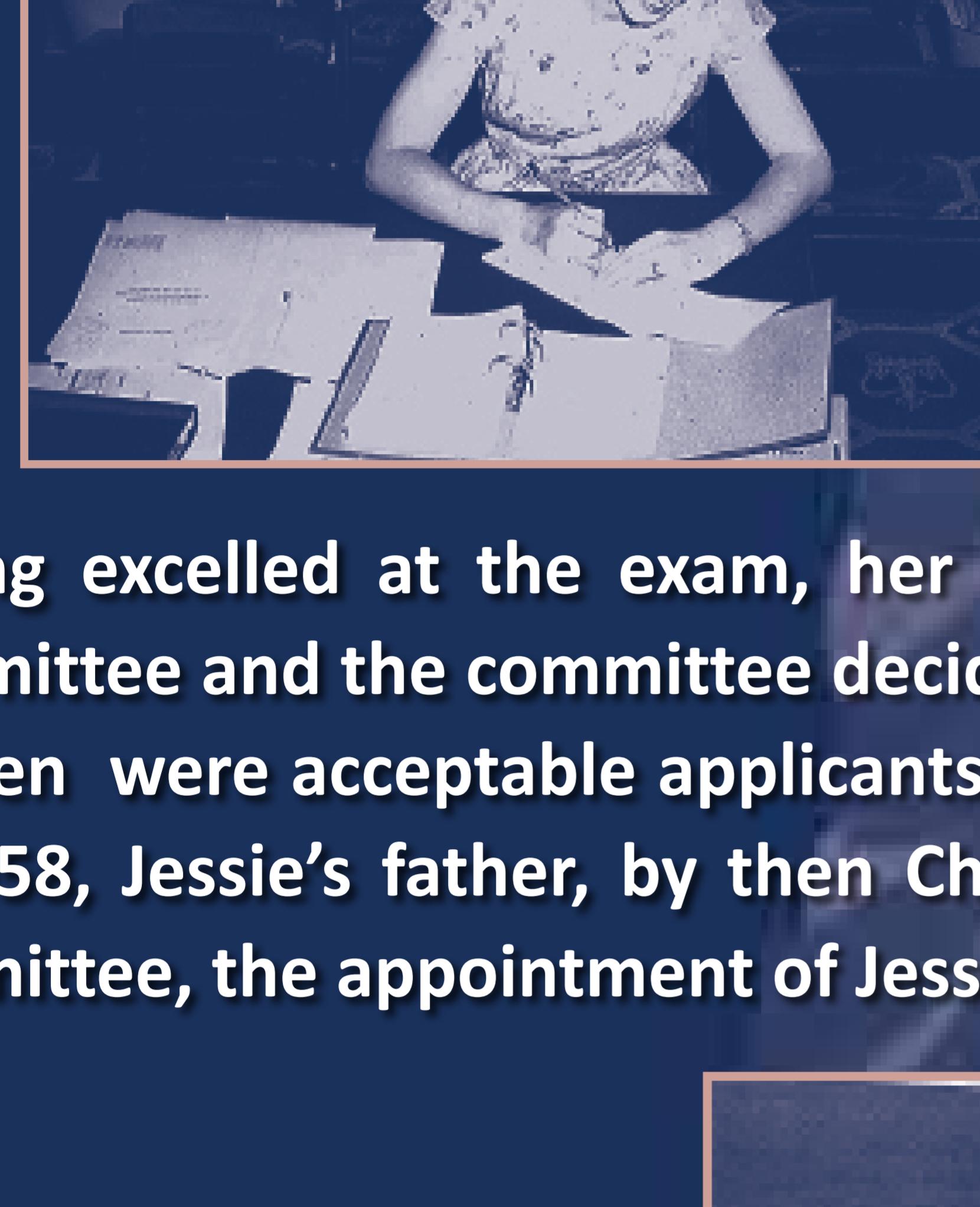
JESSIE Isobel Edwards, 24, makes front-page news on August 8 by becoming the first woman appointed to the Hansard reporting staff at State Parliament and Australia's first female Hansard reporter. Her annual starting salary is £1465. Mrs Edwards' father, W. J. Chinnery, is the Chief Hansard Reporter and taught his daughter shorthand when she was 12.

Jessie Bussola

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First Female Hansard Reporter in Australia

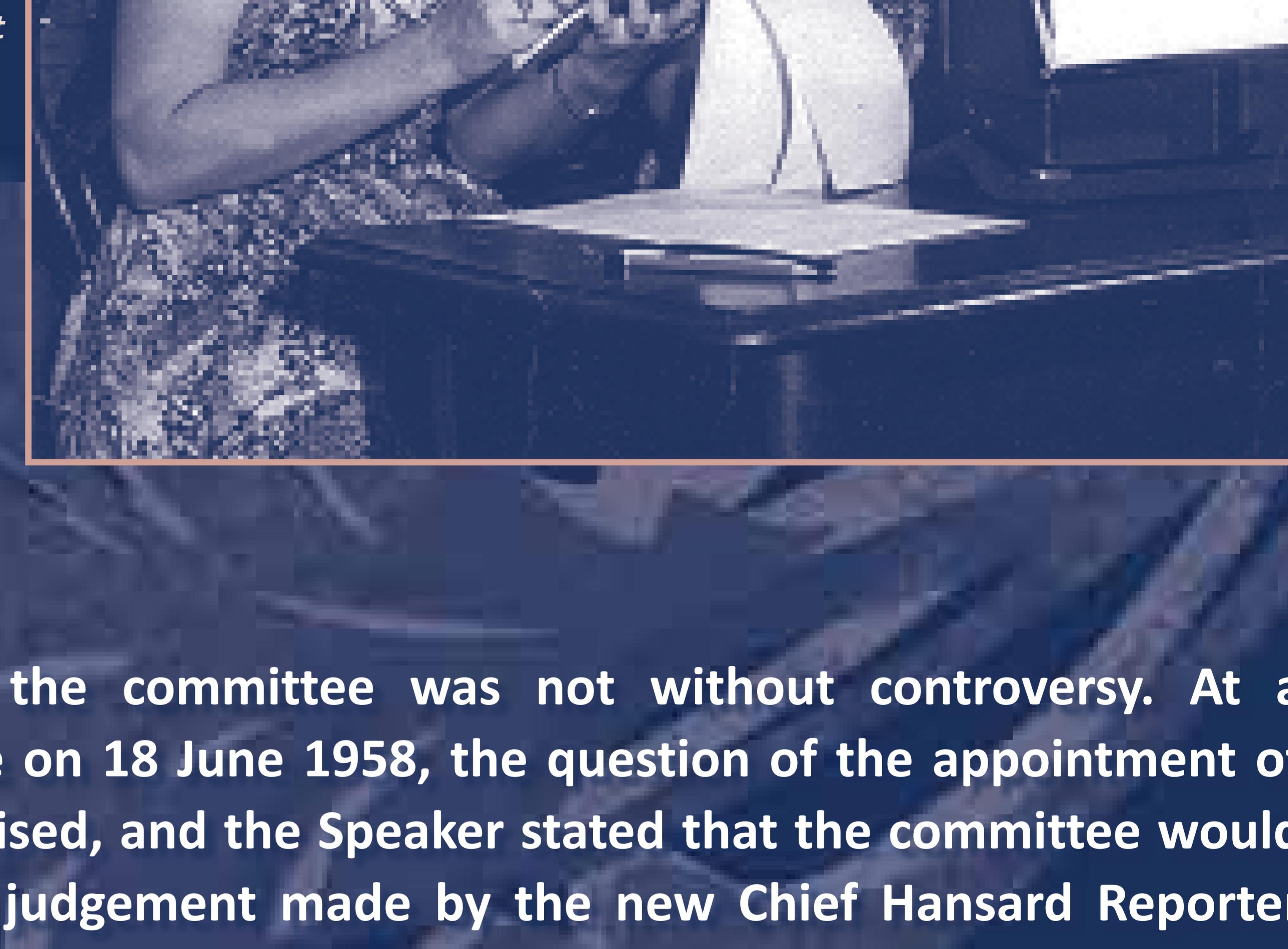
Jessie worked in a variety of clerical and teaching positions, hoping to one day become a Hansard typist. In those days females were not appointed as Hansard reporters. In 1958 the position of Hansard reporter was advertised in all Australian capital cities. The position was only open to men and an applicant was appointed but later withdrew. Jessie persistently asked her father to allow her to sit the entrance exam until he finally relented and administered the test.



Jessie Bussola, First female Hansard Reporter in Australia. She was later appointed Chief Hansard Reporter (1981-1986). Image c.1958.

Having excelled at the exam, her results were presented to the Joint Printing Committee and the committee decided to reopen the search; this time stating that women were acceptable applicants. At a meeting of the Joint Printing Committee in 1958, Jessie's father, by then Chief Hansard Reporter, recommended to the committee, the appointment of Jessie as a Hansard reporter.

Jessie Bussola pictured (left) dictating to Olive Lampee c1956. Jessie is reading from her shorthand notes to the typist. Jessie's job was to dictate AND edit the speech to an acceptable literary standard as well as outline the "form" involved for all the procedures that happened during the 10-minutes that Jessie was in the chamber.



Appointment

Jessie's appointment by the committee was not without controversy. At a meeting of the committee on 18 June 1958, the question of the appointment of women applicants was raised, and the Speaker stated that the committee would be guided largely on the judgement made by the new Chief Hansard Reporter when all applications had been received. This was further discussed and it was resolved that Jessie be appointed to the vacant position of Hansard reporter as from 22 August 1958.