# From the Oral History collection: Frank Jennings Audio transcript

Frank: I found him easy to work with. Pacified me pretty quickly. You know, there was no outburst from him at any stage. One thing that I’ll always remember is he would never drink on his own. He’d always have a couple of martinis before dinner, before he went home for dinner, in the evening after work. But he’d never go in and drink on his own.

If Parliament wasn’t sitting and there were no ministers there, he’d invite me in to have a drink. The chat was not work, really work; family. He really loved his kids and grandkids. Talk about sort of bouncing the kids on his legs and knees, and things like that, the grandkids. Those were good times. He’d talk about my kids and cricket of course. Cricket would get an honorable mention more often than not and general things that are happening day to day, but really didn’t get to any hard political issues. Occasionally he’d bounce something off of me, but he didn’t have me there for ideas. The ideas came from his political party or from the department.

If there were other members around he would like have a drink with and a chat with, we’d get them around at six o’clock, half past five, six o’clock or whatever, or half past ten at night before heading off home, ten o’clock, half past ten. He would have a drink a few times a week. I remember once he came out, it must have been about half past ten, probably a Thursday night at the end of a Parliamentary week. I was asleep on the desk, on my papers. He put his hand on my shoulder and he said, “Okay, Laddie, time to go home.” I was always Laddie. How can you get angry when the boss calls you Laddie [laughing]?

He was often thought of as arrogant and a dictator in cabinet and so on, but I remember one day Cabinet was sitting and while Cabinet was sitting, I could go in and do some reshuffles of the papers and so on. I went in and here he is sitting at his desk reading. I thought, “What’s on?” So I backed out again. I found later that he’d been roiled in Cabinet by Jack McEwen. So he’d come out of the cabinet and he was reading Shakespeare to settle himself down, presumably. He did this for half an hour or so then went back into Cabinet.