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The price of Freedom is eternal vigilance—

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Thought for the Week: "The penalty for not doing anything when freedom is threatened, is to lose the freedom to do anything"

— J. Kesner Kahn.

MR. FRASER'S CRACKED RECORD: Like a cracked record, Prime Minister Fraser continues to repeat his claim that his Government's policies are solving Australia's basic problems. In his weekly radio broadcast last week-end, Mr. Fraser claimed that the country "was back on the road to economic health." Even many of his own colleagues do not believe what he is saying. A number agree with the realism of veteran Member, W.C. Wentworth, who announced last week that he would not be seeking re-election in his electorate because of his strong disagreement with the Fraser Government's finance-economic policies. Mr. Wentworth has consistently made the obvious point that one essential step to avert increasing disaster, was a substantial reduction in taxation.

While the Fraser cracked record continues to be played monotonously, from the United States comes a report that some economists fear that the non-Communist world is on the road to an even greater disaster than the Great Depression of the 'thirties'. The Herald, Melbourne of October 6th, quotes the Victorian director of the Australian Institute of Management, Mr. Ron Gilchrist, as warning that Australia was facing an "economic crisis". "The tragedy is that few people perceive it as such." Numbered amongst these must be the Prime Minister and his "advisers"!

Mr. Fraser presents as evidence of his "recovery" claim, that consumer spending was increasing. "Consumers were saving 12.5% of their pay cheques in the first quarter of this year compared with 19% in 1974." A study of Savings Bank figures shows that until June of this year depositors had kept pace with inflation by increasing their accounts at a rate which closely matched the inflation rate, thus maintaining the purchasing power of their savings. But this is no longer the case. The truth is that the Fraser-Lynch policy is

forcing consumers to spend more of their incomes to keep pace with inflation. Their financial reserves in the form of savings are losing their value. Many of the unemployed have been forced to draw upon their savings to maintain a reasonable standard of living. This is a strange type of "success". And then the Government's own poverty inquiry stated last week that the number of people below the poverty line is growing. Professor Ronald Henderson, an inquiry commissioner, said that the rising rate of inflation and unemployment was a major factor in the increased poverty line.

Mr. Fraser's cracked record keeps on insisting however, that inflation has now been "brought under control". Using his own figures, Mr. Fraser claims that the inflation rate has been reduced to 9.2%. Even if the prediction of a 3.25% increase the September quarter Consumer Price Index, quoted in connection with Mr. Justice Ludeke's calculations for the rise of doctors' fees last week, is proved excessive, it is almost certain that it will be at least 2.75%, and possibly 3%. It will certainly be in excess of Prime Minister Fraser's figures. But why attempt to juggle with statistics, as the Government now is attempting with unemployment figures, when the basic facts of Australia's deepening crisis are clear? Every day that the Fraser Government persists with its present policies, the closer it takes Australia towards an open revolutionary situation. No early election can resolve Australia's crisis. Members of the Fraser Government must be told to continue in office to implement policies of construction, not destruction, starting with the tax reductions promised in Mr. Fraser's policy speech.

COMING PARTY POLITICAL CONVULSIONS: The deepening finance-economic crisis is going to produce major party political convulsions affecting the whole of national life. Generally ignored by the press, an interview on the ABC's "PM" programme of Thursday, October 6th, with a spokesman for the Federal National Country Party, indicated the shape of things to come. He bluntly said that the Federal Coalition was in jeopardy because of the threat of re-distribution to the strength of the Federal National Party. When it was pointed out that the Liberals had a sufficient majority to govern in their own right, the National Party spokesman replied that this would not be the case after the next Federal Elections, at which the Liberals must lose seats. In spite of the comparatively large representation in the present Federal Parliament, the Federal National Party is threatened by an increasingly hostile rural electorate (which has not noticed the "recovery" mentioned by Prime Minister Fraser) together with re-distribution.

Speaking to the Federal National Country Party Federal Council last

week-end, Mr. Doug Anthony revealed publicly for the first time the friction inside the Coalition. He said: "After we came back to office in 1975 the National Country Party pushed very hard for the re-introduction of the 20% tolerance (it is now 10%). We also put up an alternative proposal for consideration. But it was made clear to us that these proposals would not get through the Senate because some Liberal Senators would vote with Labor against them." But providing the National Country Party finishes with the balance of power after the next Federal Elections, it then will be in a position to fight to ensure that effective representation for the rural communities is not further eroded. But, as the NCP spokesman said on "PM", this could mean a break in the Coalition.

While a desperate rural Australia is attempting to survive by a much more militant political approach, as witnessed by the activities of the Cattlemans' Union, the continuing growth of the Don Chipp Party indicates that both the Labor and the Liberal parties are under threat of the loss of many of their supporters. While we can discount the fact that 31% of the electors have indicated in a recent public opinion poll that they would "consider" voting for the Australian Democrats at the next Federal elections, what cannot be discounted is that 8% firmly state that they would support the Australian Democrats if an election were held "today". If the Federal Coalition continues to flounder along its present disaster course, it can be confidently predicted that the Chipp Party's prospects must improve.

Our prediction is that Australia is now well on the way to new political realignments. The present Fraser Government, in spite of its large majority, is now living on borrowed time. The only hope of avoiding growing political fragmentation is for the Liberal Party to "clean house", return to its traditional principles and make the necessary financial adjustments to make those principles practical. But we doubt if there is enough health left for this to happen. However, political fragmentation could lead to a situation in which the Senate becomes of much greater significance and the States take the initiative in promoting the policies necessary to keep the Commonwealth free and secure.

BRIEF COMMENTS Father Pascal Slevin, the Roman Catholic missionary expelled from Rhodesia, claims that he learned of many black Rhodesians who had been beaten and tortured by Rhodesian troops. But he admitted he had never been a witness. He says that the blacks "see the guerrillas as their liberators". The 1300 blacks who have been brutally murdered by the terrorists did not find them liberators. The most charitable comment one can make about Father Slevin is, that like the recently-expelled Nun, who quoted Marxist slogans, he

is a little soft-headed. But, like Bishop Lamont, he will be manipulated by people who are much more hard-headed.

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If the Fraser Cabinet Ministers were genuine about their growing verbal attacks upon Communist Trade Union leaders, they would implement the type of policies which would deprive the Halfpenny's of situations which they can exploit. A drastic reduction in all taxation, starting with Sales Tax, would do more to hurt the Communist leaders than verbal assaults. The basic cause of the power strike in Victoria is financial.

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Just when the Australian sugar industry was faced with big problems, with customers like Japan attempting to take advantage of a world glut of sugar and lower prices, Communist China indicates that it is interested in a big sugar purchase from Australia. While such a purchase will help, in the short term, Australian sugar growers, it will make Canberra even more subservient to Peking. We wonder if those strong "anti-Communists", Fraser, Nixon and others, have ever read a Communist treatise on the use of "trade" to further International Communism! And how is the proposed big sugar export to Communist China to be financed.? Perhaps international financier, S.G. Warburg, associated with the Commonwealth Sugar Refinery Ltd., could answer that question?

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Professor Bill Ford of the University of N.S.W., told a Sydney forum on migrant and industrial relations last week-end that migrants should use their votes to "make sure this is a truly, multi-cultural society." Professor Ford urged that migrants should use the tactics of the Women's Electoral Lobby. Professor Hill has, unconsciously no doubt, indicated one of the problems about "multi-cultural societies." Each minority group is manipulated by the power seekers to dominate the majority. The Dispossessed Majority, by Wilmot Robertson (\$6.75) is the classic on this important subject.

1977-78 BASIC FUND OPEN: In spite of rising costs, the League's 1977-78 Basic Fund is to be held at the same as for last year, \$45,000. The League is confident that expanding activities will provide the major finances if the Basic Fund is filled. A full report on League progress, programmes and the Fund shortly. But can we have some "pace-makers" to come forward to get the Fund moving?

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