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*The price of Freedom is eternal vigilance—*

Vol. 13 No. 45

December 2nd, 1977.

Thought for the Week: "We do not negotiate on the basis of the 'give and take' principle. We have nothing whatsoever to give...we will not make any concessions because our proposals do not form the basis for a barter deal."

—Nikita Khrushchev (address at Tirana, May 1959)

PROMISES! PROMISES! PROMISES! It is clear that the nature of the Federal Election campaign has changed from what was originally anticipated by the Fraser Government. Mr. Fraser's assessment that he might lose up to 20 Members in the House of Representatives, and one or two Senators, but still leaving him with a comfortable majority in both Houses, was endorsed by most political observers. But suddenly the electoral situation appears rather different, with some public opinion polls indicating that Whitlam could win with a small majority. Well-known pollsters have changed their assessment of a few weeks back.

Mr. Fraser's policy speech reflected the changed situation. He has been forced to concede that he is in danger. The strong vote for the Australian Democrat candidate in the Victorian by-election of Greensborough, followed by an even more impressive vote in the Queensland State Elections, at the expense of the Liberal Party, could not be ignored. Then came the Chipp policy of abolishing Pay Roll Tax and credit expansion for the sagging building industry. This has been followed with a call for lower interest rates.

It is no secret that businessmen had been pressing the Fraser Govt. for the abolition of Pay Roll tax. The matter was discussed at length with Mr. Fraser only recently, and he agreed that it was an iniquitous tax which should be abolished. But in what might prove a successful election gamble, Mr. Whitlam and his advisers seized the initiative on the tax front. They also promised credit expansion via an increase in the national deficit, to stimulate economic activity and in conjunction with the abolition of Pay Roll Tax, reduce unemployment. There is no argument that the Whitlam policy would achieve some of what

is promised, but the price would be continuing high inflation.

The strength of the Democrat vote, with a majority of its preferences going to Labor, followed by the Labor initiative on the Pay Roll Tax, and the damaging Lynch affair, left Mr. Fraser with no alternative but to depart from the original concept of insisting that the Government had proved "responsible", had made the "difficult" but necessary decisions, and that electors must reject a return to the "wild spending" of the Whitlam Government. Over the two years in office the Fraser Government has displayed a type of obsession about reducing the national deficit. But under the threat of possible electoral defeat, Mr. Fraser has forgotten about the deficit. He feels that he must start to match the promises being made by his opponents. We recall Mr. Fraser's strong opposition to Premier Bjelke-Petersen's proposal to abolish death duties in Queensland. Mr. Fraser said his Government was not able financially to do this. But Mr. Fraser has suddenly discovered that the Marxist-type death tax can be abolished! For which we should be thankful. But electors should still take the precaution of asking all Government candidates to give a written undertaking that they will throw the death tax out. Mr. Fraser has said that sometimes it proves impossible to implement pre-election promises. After all, Mr. Fraser did make some promises in 1975, including a reduction in taxation and no more Australian aid for terrorist movements!

Mr. Fraser's discovery that he can, after all, reduce the price of petrol to the rural community without increasing city prices, proves that the threat of electoral defeat forces politicians to apply the subsidy principle, even if it is financed out of taxation. Let us be thankful for small mercies, but always bearing in mind that even short-term relief is only possible when enough electoral "steam" is being generated. Other Fraser promises, including bigger grants to Local Government - an old Whitlam Socialist policy - are designed to match the Whitlam policy of increased Government expenditure.

But none of the Parties promises a reduction in total taxation. Only such a reduction, including a substantial drop in interest charges, can start Australia on the road towards abolishing inflation. However, with the election contest, phony as it is in so many areas, more intense than it appeared likely a few weeks ago, electors should seize the opportunity of pressing all candidates for signed agreements on the policy points listed in the League of Rights election brochure. Irrespective of whether Fraser or Whitlam is Prime Minister after December 10, the election competition has - if all promises are kept - already assured electors of short term benefit. Short-term only because they do not touch the

basic problem of debt-finance, rising overall taxation and continuing inflation. But the very fact that they have been offered proves that electors still possess potential power over their elected representatives. They must learn how to use that power effectively.

D.L.P. LEADER CLEARLY STATES POLICY ON RHODESIA INFORMATION CENTRE:

In a letter to the League, Mr. J.D. Brosnan, State Secretary (Vic.) of the Democratic Labor Party, and a candidate for the Senate at the December 10th elections, has this to say on the above:

"When Frank McManus was in the Senate, he spoke and voted to keep open the Rhodesia Information Centre. I can assure you that I will campaign to maintain this service.

"The D.L.P. has always supported freedom of information and this is the least we can do for a country beleaguered due to the so-called 'human rights' foreign policies of Mr. Carter and ourselves."

Candidates with sound views are far more influential in the Senate than the House of Representatives. Mr. W.C. Wentworth is standing for the Senate in N.S.W. Mr. Jim Brosnan, as indicated above, is standing as a Senate candidate for Victoria.

AUSTRALIAN ELECTORATE A WAKE-UP TO FRASER: "Suddenly the strong smell of panic surrounding the Government's election campaign is overpowering.

- Alan Ramsey, Sunday Press (Melbourne) November 27th.

Mr. Alan Ramsey, Canberra correspondent, bluntly observes the souring of Malcolm Fraser's (unwanted) election campaign. Mr. Fraser, of course, wanted the election this year before the school leavers flooded on to the (un) employment market next year: but let Mr. Ramsey say it: "No longer is Mr. Fraser moving comfortably towards the victory that he and almost everyone else - had thought would be a foregone conclusion." True enough; above twenty back-benchers would go, but they are expendable "division fodder" only, and none of the "big boys" in the Parliamentary Party would be in any danger. If the "sacrificial lambs" started to rock the boat they could be certain of non-endorsement for any electorate at a future election. That would take care of them! After referring to the quite ridiculous, and dishonest "inflation balloons - 19% and 9%" which have been appearing on full-page advertisements in the metropolitan dailies, Mr. Ramsey observes: "What this sort of arrogant misrepresentation emphasises is that this is an election that should not be taking place."

"The Government has had to manufacture a case for the sole reason that Mr. Fraser cannot stand up and say honestly - 'We are having this election because I thought it suited my political interests to do so'.

"The hard truth is that Mr. Fraser seriously misjudged the temper of the electorate".

Mr. Fraser's political hypocrisy and political cynicism deserve their reward; defeat - if this does come, as now

appears on the cards. He can expect no mercy from those of his colleagues who warned him of the dangers of going to the country so early: he may lose his political head.

BRIEF COMMENTS: Mr. Gough Whitlam is moralising about the Liberal Party advertisement which claims that the Fraser Government has reduced inflation from 19% to 9% per annum. Mr. Whitlam is the last man to criticise what he correctly describes as false advertising. Before the 1974 Federal Elections Mr. Whitlam's Party inserted large advertisements in the press claiming that the inflation rate was going down. In fact it was, as subsequently proved, going up. The responsible elector must treat with the greatest suspicion all statements and promises made by politicians before elections.

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In an address to the North Eastern Jewish Centre, Doncaster, Vic. on July 17th of this year, Foreign Minister Andrew Peacock made the following most significant statement: "It is a well-established truism of politics that a conservative government is often the best instrument to introduce far-reaching changes, because it will make those changes more acceptable to those who are most suspicious of them." It was Mr. Robert Menzies who said back in the Second World War that he was a "practical Socialist" and that people would accept Socialist measures from him more readily than they would from the declared Socialists. Mr. Peacock and his colleagues feel that they have more chance of closing the Rhodesian Information Centre than the Labor Party did. Mr. Peacock has a safe Liberal electorate, but traditional Liberal voters might teach Mr. Peacock a much-needed lesson by substantially reducing his big majority.

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We note with interest that Dr. Ann Glew, of Brisbane is standing as a Queensland First candidate for the Senate. The Queensland First candidates embrace the traditional values of God, Queen and Country; stand for the lowering of taxation, and the promotion of the Senate as a States House, and they are pro-Rhodesian. They are non-party political. Queensland supporters may consider contacting Dr. Glew. Her address appears in the Brisbane telephone directory.

BASIC FUND: Since last notice 10 supporters have pledged/donated \$1,451. The progressive total is now \$14,884.

ALL ELECTION COMMENT AUTHORISED BY E.D. BUTLER, 273 LITTLE COLLINS ST. MELBOURNE, VICTORIA.

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