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Registered for posting as a Publication —
Category "B"

The price of Freedom is eternal vigilance —

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Vol. 14 No. 44

November 21st, 1980

Thought for the Week: "Sad it is that the people in Western society who now will be more vocal about... increased risks of conflict - (whether these be marginal or not) will be the very ones who through their false visions helped bring about the present disadvantage of the non-communist world, thus further encouraging the Soviet leadership in their oft-stated conviction that 'history' is on their side.

"The same history may yet show that for all the lamentable excesses in the misconduct of the Vietnam war, the greater crime against humanity was committed not on the battlefield but in the escapist citadels of Western liberal thought."

- Michael Barnard in "The Age", Melbourne, November 15th.

AUSTRALIA'S NEW POLITICAL BALL-GAME: As we predicted, the Australian Senate has been moved to the front of the political stage as a result of the Federal Elections. There are now new constructive possibilities, but there are also dangers. The major danger is that the question of how to improve the Senate as a House of Review, is being widened into an orchestrated campaign for "constitutional reform". Already ALP leader, Mr. Bill Hayden, has taken the first initiative with a call last week for talks with The Australian Democrats to consider sponsoring legislation in the Senate in support of far-reaching changes. Senator Don Chipp has responded enthusiastically. Both the ALP and Senator Chipp have already indicated that their major interest is in electoral changes which will enable them to increase their political strength. There are suggestions that Australia should adopt the British system of "first past the post" voting or extend the system of proportional representation used for the election of the Senate. Mr. Hayden has also expressed concern about the "donkey" vote. There is little doubt that this vote was responsible for the defeat of Labor in a significant number of electorates.

If the ALP and the Democrats, assisted perhaps by Tasmanian Independent, Mr. Brian Harridine, are genuine in their professed desire to improve the status of the Senate, they would find support amongst Liberal and National Party Senators for a change in Senate rules to make it impossible for any Senator to be a Cabinet Minister. This is the first major step necessary for a greatly improved Commonwealth Parliament. Abolition of compulsory voting would go a long way towards reducing the "donkey vote", which could be further minimised by House of Representative candidates being drawn from a hat in ballot positions, as are Senate candidates. Preferential voting should be retained, but made optional, thus making it possible for the responsible electors to vote in good conscience for a thoroughly approved of candidate without being compelled to allocate a preference for candidates whose views are anathema. We also think that there is considerable merit in the proposal that there should be a square on the ballot paper for those who wish to vote, but who find that all candidates are unacceptable, and who wish to indicate this in a more positive manner than merely staying at home (if voting were voluntary). The proposed square could be for what are called "conscience voters", voters who refused to accept the proposal that a responsible, particularly a Christian, elector can vote "for the lesser of the evils" offering. A change in the Electoral Act should specify that the "conscience" vote be counted and published like all other votes.

And, finally, any constitutional changes should include the principle of the initiative referendum and recall. This would enable electors to initiate policy proposals and, if sufficient support could be obtained by a percentage of the electors petitioning, ensure that electors had the opportunity to vote on them. The electors of California were only able to launch their tax revolt because they could constitutionally force a vote on the tax reduction issue. Introduction of the recall principle would mean, as is the case in Switzerland, that if a certain percentage of electors petitioned that their political representative was unsatisfactory and they wished him to resign his seat, he must do so and, if he so desires, recontest the seat.

The proposals we have outlined would provide electors with adequate opportunities to make the Federal system of Government work to serve them. But no constitutional system can of itself prevent the imposition of totalitarianism. Electors must be prepared to act constructively in their own defence at all times. The price of liberty has always been eternal vigilance. Australian electors have had the good sense to produce a political situation in which the division of power enables them to make some major initiatives at a moment of rapidly deepening national crisis. Mr. Fraser has been

severely censured by the electorate and knows that he is fighting for political survival. Mr. Andrew Peacock has correctly assessed the situation and has made his first move towards Liberal Party leadership. Backbench Members are much more sensitive to the changed political situation. With the new Senate situation after July of next year, and no prospects of any real improvement in the finance-economic situation, electors now have an opportunity to make their influence felt as never before. A new political ball-game is starting.

THE BATTLE FOR QUEENSLAND: A writer described as a specialist on subversion, writing in a State election issue of "Queensland First", published by The Queensland First Movement, makes a vital point concerning the attack on the Queensland Premier, observing that Premier Joh Bjelke-Petersen "has emerged as the focal point for a population which has, despite the promotion of a permissive philosophy and an unrelenting anti-Petersen campaign, retained a belief in those common values which are anathema to the subversive revolutionary. Destroy Joh Bjelke-Petersen and make certain he is not replaced by a similar type of leader, and the way is clear to move essentially conservative Queenslanders in a different direction." It was C.H. Douglas who commented that the basic cleavage in society is cultural. This is being demonstrated in the Queensland State Elections, now attracting so much media attention right around Australia. Old-time Liberals like former Senator Ian Wood, the man who stood up to Malcolm Fraser during his 1977 referendum campaign, are openly criticising the Queensland Liberal Party, now following in the footsteps of the Hamer Liberal Party Government in Victoria, currently moving towards adopting a more "modern" and "enlightened" approach to sex "education" and homosexuality.

Prominent Queenslanders who do not belong to any party, including Mr. Harry Wright, one of Australia's most decorated war aces, and who make it clear that they do not agree with Joh Bjelke-Petersen on every thing, are aware of what is at stake and are therefore urging that the Premier be returned. The cultural cleavage cuts right across party labels, as witnessed by the indirect support being given to Mr. Bjelke-Petersen by "old-guard" former President of the Queensland ALP, Sir John Egerton. Sir John was the man who said some time back that one of the reasons for Queenslanders "being different", was that a bigger percentage of the population was Anglo-Saxon than in any other State. Sir John is lucky that Mr. Al Grassby did not get after him!

We notice that "Queensland First" is advocating that electors should vote for "old-guard" Labor candidates ahead of trendy Liberals. ALP leader Casey, and Mr. Keith Wright, Labor Shadow Treasurer, would be much closer basically to Premier J. Bjelke-Petersen than the "new look" Liberals headed by Dr. Lou Edwards. Former Liberal Federal Minister, Mr. Eric Robinson, is one of the most vociferous of the

J. Bjllke-Petersen critics, but some people are confused because he is also criticising the Fraser Government. It is not so long ago that Mr. Robinson was a Minister in the Fraser Government supporting that Government's financial policies. His criticism of taxation is only on the theme that the emphasis of taxation should be shifted from direct to indirect taxation. He does not support the Florence Bjelke-Petersen stand that total taxation is too high and should be reduced.

We are convinced that there is much more behind the open Queensland Liberal Party attack on Joh Bjelke-Petersen than merely a desire for greater power. That desire is being exploited by those who fear that with Florence Bjelke-Petersen in the Senate, and the Joh Bjelke-Petersen Queensland Government firmly re-elected, the stage could be set for developments in Queensland openly challenging the direction in which Australia is moving.

BRIEF COMMENTS: The narrow defeat of Senator Glen Sheil for the fifth Queensland Senator position, won by the Australian Democrats, must be attributed primarily to the hatred of the conservatism of Glen Sheil by the trendy Queensland Liberals. There was a massive "leakage" of 18 per cent Liberal Party votes away from Senator Sheil.

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A report from England reads: "The Thatcher monetary policy is being savagely attacked from all sides, but even the harshest critics have had to admit that inflation is steadily being reigned in - in much the same style as Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser used after grabbing office in 1975". Mrs. Thatcher's policies have certainly reduced inflation. But it still remains high, and unemployment is escalating upwards. Business organisations are being bankrupted in growing numbers. And now comes the chilling news that crimes of violence are also growing as the crisis deepens. If Mrs. Thatcher and her Ayn Rand fanatics continue, they will either produce revolution in the United Kingdom, or the election of an extreme Socialist Government. The end result would be the same.

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