



# ON TARGET

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*The price of Freedom is eternal vigilance—*

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Thought for the Week: "If a man's nature and his relation to God are as Jesus taught them to be - then His prophecy of disaster is just as relevant now as it was then, for, after a period of at least partial Christianity, the world has reverted, only on a far larger scale, to the pre-Christian era. If the Christian European tradition had been carried forward into the industrial era so that man, increasingly liberated from the burden of work, became ever more free to develop spiritually, who knows what achievements might have emerged?"

- B.W.Monahan, in An Increment of Creativity

ON WITH THE BILL OF RIGHTS: "The Bill of Rights must be opposed before the Human Rights Commission is given draconian powers which will not only have the power to destroy Federalism, but have the potential for massive abuse of the rights of the individual, abuses which may be far greater than the rights the Bill is supposed to protect."

Mr. Neil Andrew (Lib. Member for Wakefield) in  
The Murray Pioneer, October 11th.

We are gratified to see that the Liberals appear to be firming in their intention to oppose the Bill of Rights, and the new Frankenstein to be its cutting edge, the Human Rights and Equal Opportunities Commission. All this new horrendous "social" law is now unleashed on Australians by virtue of the two 4-3 rulings of the High Court of Australia on both the Koowarta and Franklin Dam appeals. The High Court judges who voted against the States were Judges Mason, Stephen, and Murphy in the Koowarta ruling, and Judges Mason, Dean and Murphy in the Franklin Dam ruling. These rulings validated the right of the Commonwealth to override the States in instances where there was an international treaty with the Commonwealth of Australia as a signatory. The United Nations Charter is a Treaty! So, in fact, ONE MAN, is responsible for opening the way for the attack, via the United Nations, on our freedoms and sovereignty. One man!

Mr Neil Brown, the Deputy Opposition leader, has also bitterly attacked the Bill of Rights and the Human Rights Commission.

Supporters must now get right behind the Liberals like Mr. Neil Brown

and Mr. Neil Andrew to support them against this evil piece of legislation. The Australian Democrat Senators should also be urged to vote with the Opposition against the Human Rights Bill. We have been having a host of enquiries from the general public concerning the I.D. Card. There is much more behind this issue, we believe, than just the recouping of legitimate taxation. We hope to be in a position to give further information in the near future.

BANKING ON THE WAILES: Something akin to panic is setting in throughout rural areas as bank foreclosures take place. The rural debt has passed the \$6,000 million mark, with an interest bill, spread over Australia's 170,000 farmers, exceeding \$1,000 million. A mood of defiance, anger and frustration is discernable in all States.

The Weekly Times (Victoria, Oct. 9, 1985) carried a statement conveying the concern of the banks at the mood of the farmers:

"Major banks will not be foreclosing on any farmer clients whose liquidity problems related primarily to the recent hike in interest rates and the fall in commodity prices ... (If such a statement is to be believed, it lets all farmers off the banking hook! - Ed.) .... Farmers in trouble will get sympathetic treatment by banks through re-scheduling, repayment holidays, term extension and capitalisation of interest. These assurances were given last week to a joint National Farmers' Federation and NSW LGPA investigation into the potential for large-scale debt foreclosures on farms .... The bankers agreed that the incidence of farmers encountering severe difficulties was certain to increase beyond the pockets so far reported. Interest rates were likely to remain high for at least the next 12 months, the bankers forecast. They based this on the strong growth in private sector demands for funds, offsetting the fall in public sector borrowing; and the deliberate high interest rate policy by the Commonwealth, aimed at supporting the value of the Australian dollar. One bank forecast that the Government's interest rate policy was contributing round 2 to 2.5 percentage points to interest rates. All these factors would lead to a worsening of farm liquidity over the next 12 months...."

There is no doubt that interest rates could be drastically reduced immediately if Australia had a Government committed to doing so, or who cared more for farmers than for bankers.

Mr Maxwell Newton, writing in The Australian, September 4, 1985, predicted a rapid worsening of the world economy, and quoted one prominent U.S. business leader as follows: "... The coming liquidity squeeze will produce a depression that will embody the worst aspects of the last four depressions - the post-Civil War depression, the money panic of 1907, the commodity depression of 1920-21 and the Great Depression of the 1930s...."

Contrary to Paul Keating's predictions of "recovery", the evidence supports Newton's assessment. Must Australia face such a Depression

before daring to tackle the bankers? Have we one Labor leader who would dare to say what Labor leaders were saying in the last Depression? On October 15, 1937, the A.L.P. advertised its policy, which included:

"We will develop and protect Australian industries to ensure our capacity to resist aggression and to enable us to be a self-reliant people; ... We will make the Commonwealth Bank a Bank for the people...."

In November 1939, Labor leader John Curtin made the following remarks in the Sydney Town Hall: "Everything must be paid for, not by reducing wage standards, but by the use of the National Credit. Because the Labor Government is in the Federal Parliament, there is a Commonwealth Bank. It was created as a means of releasing national credit. But because Labor lost office the National Bank has been transformed by our opponents into a mere puppet of the private banks.... The cost of war can be met without piling up huge debts, and without interest payments sucking our national life blood...."

Prime Minister Hawke has often claimed John Curtin as his personal hero, and recently gave the John Curtin Memorial lecture. Would he dare to speak out as Curtin did?

Or will he leave it to Ian Sinclair and John Howard?

#### AUSTRALIA'S FOREIGN DEBT BILL

A recent report from the Victorian Employers' Federation says the interest bill on Australia's foreign debt will reach \$11,000 million this year, and is the second highest item of government expenditure behind social security and welfare...."

Interest payments on the foreign debt, together with capital repayments, are now costing Australia approximately \$100 million a day, or \$6 per head of population per day. That's \$24 for every four Australians (mother, father and 2 children) each 24 hours,

#### FARMERS THREATEN STRIKE ACTION (by David Thompson)

Hard-pressed farmers pursued by the threat of financial disaster have responded with cynicism to the promise by five of Australia's major banks not to foreclose on bankrupt farmers. Even after the promise has been made, some farmers report that their mortgagee sales will still go ahead. In some cases, it is not the trading banks that are forcing the sales, but holders of second and third mortgages, like building societies and other financial institutions.

Before the undertaking by the banks, the NSW State Bank had sent out final demand notices to a number of Mallee and Riverina farmers. To add insult to injury, the bank is also charging mortgagees \$176 each for the cost of preparing and serving the final notice!

SHARP WARNING TO BANKS: One proposal designed to bring home the plight of the rural producer has been developed by West Australian grain farmers, and is receiving solid support in at least four states. Farmers are proposing a strike - but a strike with a difference. The strike is on the repayment of debts to banks and finance houses, and banks will be told that further forced sales will simply not be tolerated. If necessary, farmers are prepared to revert to the "penny auctions" of the 1930s, which are now taking place in Canada. Farmers taking part in the scheme would open new accounts with stock firms or other organisations, and income from the sale of produce would be paid into these accounts rather than bank accounts.

Farmers considering this scheme are not prepared to wait for their producer organisations or the National Farmers Federation, in case the farm organisations "bureaucracy" slows down progress, or dilutes the demands of farmers. All governments and political parties have been swept aside because their promises have not been kept, and constructive action has not been taken. Ultimately, the farmers who have proposed the idea hope that the government, through the Reserve Bank, will be forced to act. So critical is the financial position in rural Australia, that a debt moratorium for all primary producers and for merchants serving primary producers should be urgently considered, as an emergency measure until long-term policy solutions can be devised. This has been done this year in the Western Canadian Provinces of Manitoba and Saskatchewan. It was done in Australia during the Great Depression, and there is no technical reason why it cannot be done again. It is merely a matter of political will, and farmers are now prepared to produce that will.

BASIC FUND: Witchcraft and Murder in Zimbabwe: by Henry A. Clark.

Chapters include "Prelude to Witchcraft"; "A Glimpse of Black Magic"; "Farewell Rhodesia".

The author, Henry A. Clark, is a former Chief Superintendent of the British South Africa Police. He knows the South Africa - Rhodesia scene from A to Z. Price: \$8.50 from League bookshops.

BASIC FUND: Supporters by now should have the Basic Fund Appeal Letter from the National Director, in which he mentioned that a few supporters had already donated \$8000.

Since this time 21 supporters have donated \$4,652 to take the progressive total donated to \$12,652 which is an encouraging beginning to the attainment of our target of \$50,000. Time, however, is the key factor now. We are pleased to see the numbers of \$20s, \$40s and \$50s coming in: payments of journal subscriptions with a "keep the change" message attached. These soon add up to thousands. Progress reports will be given from now on.

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