



ON TARGET

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The price of Freedom is eternal vigilance —

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THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK: "A nation can survive its fools, and even the ambitious, but it cannot survive treason from within. An enemy at the gate is less formidable, for he is known and he carries his banners openly. But the traitor moves among those within the gate freely, his sly whispers rustling through all the alleys, heard in the very halls of government itself. For the traitor appears no traitor, he speaks in accents familiar to his victims, and he wears their face and their garments and he appeals to the baseness that lies deep in the hearts of all men. He rots the soul of a nation; he works secretly and unknown in the night to undermine the pillars of the city; he infects the body politic so that it can no longer resist. A murderer is less to be feared."

- Marcus Tullius Cicero, the famous Roman philosopher and statesman, 106-43 B.C.

THE HEWSON-KENNETT ELECTION LOSING FORMULA: What would have been regarded as unthinkable six months ago now threatens to become a reality: The Federal Opposition, led by Dr. John Hewson, is demonstrating how to lose an election which should have seen a crushing defeat of the man who imposed "the depression we had to have". We are not surprised to see that the polls now show that if an election were held now, Paul Keating might just survive. He must be delighted with the contribution of new Victorian Premier, Mr. Jeff Kennett, who within 14 days of being elected had confirmed the fears of those who believed that the Premier had still not "kicked" his bad habit of making irrational and unpredictable statements. The credibility of the Liberal-National Coalition has suffered badly. The first two weeks can only be described as a political shambles. Whatever the merits of Premier Kennett's proposals concerning the Victorian Public Service, the public were misled. Prior to the elections National Party Leader and Deputy Premier Mr. McNamara had promised that there would be an inquiry into alleged police misconduct. Mr. McNamara made this promise as Shadow Minister for Police, and indicated after taking the office that the promised inquiry would go ahead. But Premier

Kennett contradicted his deputy, stating that there would be no inquiry. The situation was further confused with a statement that there "may" be an inquiry if Cabinet agrees. Premier Kennett also caused a storm of opposition by his proposal, apparently his own initiative, that the Victorian Constitution be changed to make it possible to abolish by-elections.

All of this could be dismissed as of no great importance, merely the teething problems of a newly elected government, but the greatest blow to credibility came when Treasurer Stockdale, described by some as the "brains of the Liberal Party", announced that an increase in Victorian taxes might be necessary before Christmas, with the excuse that the State's deficit was likely to be greater than anticipated. The threat of increased taxation disputes pre-election assurances that the Coalition had no plans to increase taxation. Already the new Victorian Government is making it clear that it has no intention of fighting for State financial sovereignty against dictatorship from Canberra. After originally expressing some doubts about Dr. Hewson's tariff and G.S.T. policy, Jeff Kennett buckled under and is at present firmly locked into supporting the Federal Liberal Leader. This is at a time when some of Dr. Hewson's own backbench Members are becoming uneasy about his rigid stand on G.S.T. and tariffs.

Last week was not a good one for Dr. Hewson. His open conflict with the Tourist Industry, bluntly rejecting the findings of an inquiry which showed that the industry would be seriously affected by the G.S.T., findings originally supported by his own Shadow Minister Jull, was followed by his extraordinary attack on N.S.W. State Labor Leader Bob Carr. Addressing the N.S.W. Liberal Party Convention in Sydney, Dr. Hewson launched a fierce attack on representatives of the tourist industry and then criticised Carr for not having children and for not having a car, stating "When he's up against a full-blooded Australian like John Fahey he does not have a hope". This highly offensive criticism of Labor Leader Carr came from the man who has been moralising about the necessity for higher standards of behaviour by politicians.

If the Opposition Parties are to win the next Federal elections, they must poll well in both N.S.W. and Victoria. Even though he has apologised to Mr. Carr, who has probably increased his own standing by declining to comment, Dr. Hewson has not increased his electoral prospects in N.S.W., while in Victoria, Paul Keating can only be encouraged by the performance of the Kennett Government.

INITIATIVE AND REFERENDUM DUMPS FLUORIDATION IN NEW ZEALAND:

Ratepayers in the Tauranga District Council, on the Bay of Plenty in New Zealand's North Island, have successfully forced a referendum which resulted in fluoridation of their local water supply being rejected. This is not the first time that fluoridation of a water supply in New Zealand has been rejected (it was stopped in Tauranga in 1986), but this is the first time ratepayers have been able to force a referendum by petitioning Local Government.

The ratepayers of Tauranga made history in New Zealand early this month when New Zealand's local body elections were held. In Tauranga ratepayers were entitled to cast two extra votes - for two referenda issues which were initiated by Tauranga residents by petitioning the Council. The Tauranga District Council has become the first region in New Zealand to formally adopt Citizens Initiated Referenda as policy. The issues upon which ratepayers voted were: 1) fluoridation of the water supply, and 2) whether the District Council should cease using chemical sprays in its area. The result of the chemical spraying question is as yet unknown, but 52.48 percent of ratepayers rejected fluoridation.

REFERENDUM RESULTS NOT BINDING: Although the Tauranga Council has voluntarily adopted C.I.R., it is not included in the New Zealand Local Government Act. This means, referenda results in Tauranga do not legally bind the Council. The Tauranga Council, however, has now begun a campaign to lobby the Minister of Local Government, Mr. Warren Cooper, to change the Act. The Council is almost certain to act without hesitation to cease fluoridating the local water, as this is within its authority.

Now that their first successful referendum is behind them, local groups in Tauranga are lobbying selected other Councils to adopt the Tauranga policy. There is great interest among local government officials, and the Mayor of New Plymouth, Claire Stewart, is a strong supporter of C.I.R.

NATIONAL GOVERNMENT UNDER PRESSURE: The Swiss concept of initiative and referenda is widely discussed in New Zealand, and relatively well understood. Almost every branch of the governing National Party has passed a remit urging the Government to adopt C.I.R. The Government has resisted so far, and sought to placate the referenda lobby by offering "indicative" referenda, which doesn't bind the Government. This has been almost universally rejected with contempt. The polls indicate that the Government is very unpopular, and Prime Minister Bolger is grossly unpopular.

The New Zealand strategy is obviously to shift the focus of attention from national to local government to achieve C.I.R., as taxpayers have few sanctions over their National Government between elections. Upon advice from Professor Geoffrey Walker, the pressure for C.I.R. at local government level has been strong.

TAURANGA SETS THE PACE: Fluoridation in Tauranga was temporarily stopped in 1986 after a referendum, but another vote on the controversial issue was forced in 1990. Highly emotional television programmes produced by the medical authorities swung the vote towards re-introduction of fluoridation. The No Added Fluoride Committee had no trouble gathering the necessary 5 percent of ratepayers' signatures to force the latest referendum. The issue cannot now be voted upon again in Tauranga for three years under Council policy.

In introducing initiative and referenda to the ratepayers, the Council

produced an excellent little 'newspaper', which was distributed to each household. It contained a concise and well-research history of C.I.R. and explained that the Tauranga Council has "returned the sovereignty of our country to the citizens where it rightly and legally belongs". The arguments for and against the referenda questions were also put. The Council, however, may have additional motives for its C.I.R. policy. The N.Z. Government has decided to 'privatise' the country's electric power boards, and some Councils are lobbying hard for ownership to be vested in local government instrumentalities instead of 'private' ownership. Tauranga argues that 'privatisation' can result in foreign ownership of what should be community assets. Perhaps the Council reasons that if ratepayers "control" the Council, they will support local government control of community assets like power boards.

For a full report of the Tauranga C.I.R. experience, see Intelligence Survey for October; \$20 annual subscription, or send \$2 for October issue.

BRIEF COMMENTS: Mr. Graeme Campbell, Federal Labor Member from Western Australia, has emerged as one of the few independently minded Members of the Federal Parliament. In two recent powerful addresses at Canberra he has strongly criticised Victorian Federal A.L.P. Member, Dr. Andrew Theophanous, Chairman of the Labor Caucus Immigration Committee, for being biased towards Greek immigration because this would enable Theophanous to increase his own power base. Campbell claims that the days of mass immigration should be over, but blames "opportunists, frauds and cowardly politicians" for distorting the migration programme. While Campbell is the only Labor M.P. to go public, one press report states that a "host of other Labor M.P.'s. are also privately appalled". One member of the Caucus Committee is quoted as saying that there was widespread concern that Dr. Theophanous was intent on diluting the British base of Australian society so that English was no longer the major language. The fruits of multiculturalism are proving increasingly bitter.

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Mr. Hugh Morgan, well known mining leader, has rendered a valuable public service with his examination of the far-reaching implications of the High Court's Mabo decision on "native title" rights. Not without significance, all the political party leaders have united to describe Morgan as a "racist". But the reality remains that the High Court decision has ignited a time bomb which could destroy the very foundations of Australia.

BASIC FUND MOVES FORWARD: Supporters contributed \$3,653 to the Basic Fund last week, taking the total to \$5,553. Can we now please increase the momentum of support? League forward planning continues on the assumption that the Basic Fund, set at \$60,000 for 1992-93 will be filled. A number of major pre-Federal Election projects have already been planned, and an allocation of funds made. All donations to Box 1052J, G.P.O., Melbourne, 3001.

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