



ON TARGET

- NEWS HIGHLIGHTS
- BACKGROUND INFORMATION
- COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

The price of Freedom is eternal vigilance —

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THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK: "In its primary spiritual sense, liberty is the god in man, or, if you like the word, the artist. In its secondary political sense liberty is the living influence of the citizen of the State in the direction of moulding or deflecting it. Men are the only creatures that evidently possess it. On the one hand, the eagle has no liberty; he only has loneliness. On the other hand, ants, bees, and beavers exhibit the highest miracle of the State influencing the citizen, but no perceptible trace of the citizen influencing the State."

- G.K. Chesterton

RESURRECTING KEYNESIAN ECONOMICS by Eric D. Butler:

Just as Victorian Premier Kennett has in a few short weeks achieved the impossible, by elevating the controversial Marxist John Halfpenny to a hero status, the type of economic policies favoured by the Kennett Government, paralleled by those of Dr. John Hewson's Federal Opposition, have produced a resurgence internationally of support for Keynesian economics. "Free market" economics have failed disastrously in the U.S.A., which is why Mr. Bill Clinton is now the new President. It is open to debate whether President Reagan was responsible for the collapse of the Soviet Empire, or whether it was an irreversibly internal rot which Gorbachev tried to manipulate, but there can be no argument that the Reagan administration resorted to massive deficit financing, as did Bush. Unable to finance the Gulf War on its own, the U.S.A. found itself in the position where it had to ask other nations, including Japan, to make substantial contributions.

It is incontrovertible that "free market" economics in the U.S.A., where the power of the unions is relatively weak, have failed to avert the disastrous economic conditions which swept Clinton to office. Much has been made of improved industrial relations in New Zealand, but there is no evidence of an end to the depressed state of the economy. No longer is it possible for the free marketeers to point to the United Kingdom, where Margaret Thatcher went in for de-regulation

and privatisation in a big way, with the power of the unions dramatically reduced. John Major is presiding over a nation in which there is no sign of any relief from worsening recession conditions. The Japanese "miracle" has exploded and desperate efforts are being made to stimulate the economy with Keynesian-type financial deficit spending. Originally Treasurer Paul Keating was a devotee of de-regulation and "balanced budgets", along, of course, with a progressive lowering of all forms of protection so that Australia could become "internationally competitive". Now he is also supporting Keynes and letting Australian manufacturers and others know that he is softening his attitude on protection. Keating has heeded the message of the Wills by-election where pro-protection Independent Phil Cleary swamped both Labor and the Liberals. Dr. John Hewson does not appear to have heeded what is taking place, nor does Premier Jeff Kennett, who supports Federal Opposition policy.

No objective observer disagrees about the necessity for industrial reforms. But attempted imposition of such reforms can have no effect whatever on the basic finance-economic problem now driving every industrialised nation in the same direction of attempting to solve internal problems by organising into trade blocs and engaging in trade wars. The growing use of Keynesian deficit financing, adding to the current astronomical debt burdens, can only worsen an explosive international situation. Unfortunately, a resurrected John Halfpenny in Victoria will attempt to take every advantage of a situation which Jeff Kennett should never allowed to have arisen.

AN INSPIRING ATTITUDE: Mr. Trevor Cook, husband of Carey, his wife of only two years, reacted to her killing by a crazed gunman at the Mercy Hospital last week, with a moving message for all Australians as he attempted to come to grips with his grief. Trevor Cook stressed that his wife's killing was another tragic product of a society no longer reflecting the traditional value system. Trevor Cook said that both he and his wife were concerned about the level of violence in today's society and that it was something he and his wife had talked about "quite a bit". He said, "This sort of thing just can't keep going on. We have to take responsibility for each other's actions... We have to live and cope and love one another." Trevor Cook said it was no use passing more laws and that banning guns was not the answer to growing violence in society. How very true.

BRIEF COMMENTS: While we have no doubt that Prime Minister Paul Keating is concerned about his teenage children, we suspect that his sudden interest in television violence has more to do with his bid to retain political power. Mr. Keating and his advisers know that the women's vote could be crucial at the next elections. The polls reveal that if Paul Keating could obtain the same level of electoral support

from women as he does from men, he already has the next election "sewn up".

Dr. John Hewson and his advisers are also keenly aware of the woman factor, with the result that the Opposition leader lost no time in stating that he, like the Prime Minister, was also concerned about the content of many television programmes. While we are also concerned about much of what appears on television, we would like to point out to parents that every television set bought has a switch for turning it on and off. Parents concerned about what their children might be watching have the power to use the switch! Violence and pornography will disappear from the television screen when enough viewers simply switch off and also let the sponsors of the offending programmes know.

W.A. INC. AND THE ABUSE OF POLITICAL POWER:

The second part of the Report of the Western Australian Royal Commission into corruption in politics recommends significant changes to the State Government. We have yet to see a deeper analysis of the Report, but according to press reports, the role of the upper house, the Legislative Council, is to be reviewed. A special Commission will also be suggested, to investigate corrupt and improper political conduct.

This Report suggests that the W.A. Legislative Council become a true house of review, saying: "If the council is to be constituted as a true house of review, elected on the basis of proportional representation which allows for significant minority interest representation, it would be quite inappropriate that it retain the power to block supply. In such circumstances, that power should be denied in the Constitution."

We could not disagree more. The very fact that the Council has the power to block supply indicates that it is already a house of review. The Constitution of W.A. is older than the Australian Constitution, and included the implied power to block supply for very good reasons, as was demonstrated in the Commonwealth Parliament in 1975, to Mr. Whitlam's rage. And the council already represents the minority interests of rural W.A. by weighting the value of the rural vote in much the same way as the "gerrymandered" Queensland House of Assembly once did.

THE CORRUPTION PROBLEM: W.A. and Queensland are not the only States to suffer from political or even bureaucratic corruption. If properly investigated, the corruption in N.S.W., and probably Victoria, would equal anything revealed by the W.A. Royal Commission. The Commission's suggestion that Members of Legislative Council not be eligible to serve in the Executive is a good one. Political corruption should be a prime target of the Council, which could be better staffed, and have increased powers to deal with it.

Far more dangerous than corruption is the abuse of political power.

The increasing dominance of the Executive (Cabinet) over Parliament needs urgent attention. The Parliament, the elected body, should be pre-eminent, but the growth of the rigid control of the party has corrupted the whole process. Only a few weeks ago, Sir Max Bingham, the retiring chairman of Queensland's Criminal Justice Commission, called for an upper house in Queensland to restrain what he called "naked executive power". Queensland's upper house was abolished in 1922 by a Labor Government, who stacked it with Labor appointees, who voted to destroy it. The price? Their salaries for life.

INITIATIVE AND REFERENDA: Perhaps the best remedy for the abuse of power by the Executive is to both strengthen the upper house of review and introduce a more direct veto from the electorate. The Swiss system of the voters veto, coupled with the opportunity for the voters to initiate legislation, could force a dramatic change in attitude of politicians - and of electors.

THE TELEVISION DEBATE: The Prime Minister's sudden concern about the level of violence on television is clearly calculated to appeal to the women's vote. What about the violent/sexually explicit videos that are just as freely available? If it is acceptable to ban fire-arms, then surely it is acceptable to limit the distribution of such material.

Keating suggests that movies with adult classifications be screened later at night. The networks disagree (people will go to bed instead). Neither are suggesting the ultimate sanction: turn the TV off. The high-rating host of the ABC's Sunday Morning programme, Ian McNamara, made an excellent point in this manner. The parents are responsible. We have a whole generation of children committing American crimes on Australian streets, he says. The poisonous influence of the American movie, and its effect on our culture can be countered: turn it off.

BASIC FUND: The chain is dragging again. Last week League supporters donated \$1,150 to the Fund, making the progressive total now \$16,318. However, we see a trend that augurs well for the completion of the Fund: viz. very many supporters are adding extra dollars to their cheques for subscriptions and books, tapes, etc. Often the cheque for the annual On Target subscription is made out for \$50 ("\$30 for On Target, and \$20 for the Basic Fund").

If more and more supporters (subscribers) do this, then the Basic Fund will have a fillip (much needed).