



A WEEKLY COMMENTARY

ON TARGET

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The price of Freedom is eternal vigilance —

Registered By Australia Post — Publication No. VBH 0999

Vol.29, No.15

April 23rd, 1993

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK: "The mind of man, in love with a simplicity which it finds nowhere in nature, cannot be convinced that the duality of power is of its essence. Ever since the divine dreamings of Plato, themselves stemming from earlier Utopias, the search has gone on for an entirely virtuous government and one which lives only for the interests and the wishes of the governed. For thinkers this illusion has done no more than thwart the creation of a political science worthy of the name; but, reaching the multitude, the disposer of Power, it has become the fruitful cause of the great disturbances which desolate our age and threaten the very existence."

- "Power - The Natural History Of Its Growth",
by Bertrand Le Jouvenel

THE REALITIES OF THE WOOL CRISIS by Eric D. Butler:

The worst drought in recorded history has, along with a major slump in wool prices, produced a human disaster of horrendous proportions for a big section of rural Australia. The size of the disaster is so great that it strikes at the very soul of Australia. It is a far greater disaster than Cyclone Tracy, the Newcastle earthquake, or any other similar natural disaster. These disasters rightfully resulted in immediate action programmes backed by Governments. Tens of millions of dollars were readily made available. To a great extent, the abstraction known as finance was subordinated to human needs and physical realities. The wool crisis requires the same approach, one which would have the support of the whole nation.

Rural Australia, particularly the wool industry, is even in today's urbanised Australia, deeply embedded in the Australian ethos. The first and most important question to be asked about the Australian wool industry is: Is it in the national interest, including defence, that the wool industry be preserved? That question was posed dramatically with the outbreak of the Second World War. That strange breed known as "the economic rationalists" could argue that all forms of economic activities should be determined by "market forces", and

that as the overseas markets for wool had almost completely collapsed, the wool industry should go out of existence. But, fortunately, the Australian and British Governments did not take this view. Their view was that the wool industry must be preserved and treated as a most valuable national investment for the future. Legislation was quickly passed bringing the Joint Organisation (JO) for the purchasing and storing of the Australian wool clip. Australian woolgrowers were paid what was estimated to be a reasonable profitable price for the wool, eventually building a stockpile much greater than the current one. Today's big stockpile is described sometimes as some type of a national disaster, with some suggesting that the stock be destroyed. The attitude during the Second World War was that the stockpile was a national asset, as, of course, it was. It was sold progressively after the war.

The first step necessary for the preservation of the wool industry and the infrastructure which supports it, is emergency relief for all those suffering. Magnificent efforts are being made to provide private charity, the generous support for which indicates that large numbers of Australians believe in helping their fellow Australians when they are engulfed in the type of tragedy now destroying much of rural Australia. But much more than this is required: the Federal Government should decide that adequate national credit should be made to ensure that a national asset, and a national heritage, is not lost.

The virtues of wool need so extolling. But what an incredible situation when large numbers of Australians, living in the biggest wool producing country in the world, cannot afford to buy all the woollen products they would if it were not for financial considerations. Large numbers of Australian women say that it is no longer worthwhile attempting to knit woollen garments. A National Government genuinely concerned about the future of the wool industry could take steps to ensure that woollen products reached the consumer at lower prices. Those who ask how could such a policy be implemented are ignorant of their own national history. During the Second World War a programme of consumer discounts, applying to clothing, was introduced, as a type of national investment designed to prevent inflation. The policy was so successful that the Fabian Socialists pressed for its removal after the war.

Under the pressure "gingered" by the Bank Watch movement and similar organisations, those operating the banking system have found that it is possible to write off tens of millions of debts without loss to anyone. Only a few years ago anyone suggesting that tens of millions of dollars of debt could be written off would have been regarded as financial heretics. The wool crisis provides the opportunity for an extension of the programme of writing off debts. If the leaders of

the Australian wool industry would demonstrate a little of the initiative and resourcefulness they have shown in developing the wool industry, they would come out boldly in favour of a financial policy which would not only save their industry, their homes, their families and their local communities, but they would be striking a major blow for the defence of the whole of Australia.

COCKY REPUBLICANS RIDING FOR A FALL? by David Thompson:

Although the more gung-ho republicans congratulate themselves on a type of opinion-poll-driven republican walkover, it becomes daily more clear that some of the chickens they are gleefully counting may yet be hatched as loyalists. Writers like Phillip Adams crow that it is really all over but the shouting, and all that remains to be decided is just how the republic will work.

Adams writes: "What has to be decided is what model or marque we want. Do we want to use the opportunity to re-jig the system? To go for a unicameral federal parliament and, eliminating State governments, boost the power of municipalities? Or will we opt for the minimal model, wherein we simply take the Union Jack from the flag and start calling the Governor-General the President? If we take this approach, the constitutional changes can be achieved with a bit of white-out.."

However, this is precisely where the wheels begin to fall off the great republican wagon. Just what do they propose? Flippant comments by those such as Adams provide great comfort for the Royalists. Any suggestion that major constitutional change should take place, like the elimination of the States, and the abolition of the Senate, is ideal for frightening the pants off sensible Australians. The only way that Constitutional change can take place is by a majority of people in a majority of States agreeing at referendum. In 42 attempts only eight referendums have passed. As Dr. Hewson found out with the GST at the last election, when we are in doubt, fearful, or just plain distrustful, we always vote no! The republicans are setting themselves up for an almighty fall - if the loyalists 'get their act together'.

Any suggestion that the flag should be changed by ripping out the Union Jack is also a major republican strategic blunder. This simply introduces a further divisive factor. And, of course, there is the "fear factor". Some republicans argue for the "minimalist approach". That is, simply scratch out "Queen" and "Governor-General" and pencil in "President" in the constitution. But as Sir James Killen points out in his long letter to The Weekend Australian (3/4/93), this actually requires changing 21 sections of the Constitution in which 36 references to the monarch appear, and a further 36 sections with

54 references to the Governor-General. That is, the minimalist approach requires 90 changes!

As the last election proved, political gurus and opinion polls can, and often are, radically wrong. Monarchists should not lose heart at what the figures "prove"; all they prove is that the loyalists do not have access to unlimited media adulation, and are slow to get into top gear. The decisive factor will be that the loyalists really do get into top gear. Nothing is inevitable. This is a Marxist tenet, and look what happened to them.

DOES BRAZIL HAVE A ROYAL FUTURE? While Australians embrace a kind of constitutional masochism with the republican debate, it is ironic that in some countries the debate is running the other way. This week Brazil will have a referendum on whether to restore the monarchy. It was abolished in 1889 after a military coup, with monarchist activity banned for a century. But the idea did not go away. To the chagrin of Brazil's political elite, it appears that monarchist support is growing strongly. According to the inevitable 'polls', support for the Crown is strongest among the 16-25 year age group.

Why the move back to monarchy? A social anthropologist Roberto Da Matta, says the massive corruption and incompetence that dogs Brazilian government drives the people to look to a king for the stability that they desperately want. Say the monarchists: "Look what the republic has to celebrate: two presidential resignations, one presidential suicide, three presidents deposed, three blocked from taking office, seven different constitutions, two long dictatorial periods"

Just as well it can't happen here!

THE BASIC FUND: After a hard struggle, supporters have pushed the Basic Fund to the stage where we are confident that next week, right on the deadline, we will be able to announce that the fund target of \$60,000 has been reached. But, we do urge that last minute "push" by all those who have not yet contributed. Any surplus will be devoted to the League's emerging heritage defence programme, including defence of the constitutional Monarchy.

"ON TARGET" is printed and published by The Australian League of Rights, 145 Russell Street, Melbourne. Subscription \$30 p.a.

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