



# ON TARGET

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*The price of Freedom is eternal vigilance –*

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**THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK:** "..... It may be noted that governments stand to financial institutions in the same way as do families to hire-purchase organisations. Much government financing is by way of loan funds, the bulk of which come from financial institutions; in consequence, an increasing proportion of taxation is to meet 'hire-purchase' charges, and this is the real explanation of ever-growing taxation."

– B.W. Monahan, in *Grass-Roots Economics* (1968)

## "FARM-HAND" AND THE RURAL CRISIS:

The devastating series of television current affairs programmes on the rural crisis screened last week by Channel 9's "A Current Affair" has at last brought the Australian rural crisis to the attention of metropolitan Australia. While African horror stories, like the Rwandan slaughter, have now been invading our lounge-rooms for months on current affairs programmes, the plight of our own primary producers has gone largely unnoticed.

While the Rwandan disaster has been generated almost solely by political and racial conflict, not drought and famine, the Australian rural crisis has been generated by drought and a combination of deliberate financial policy and sheer neglect. Due to the high efficiency of Australian farmers and advanced technology agriculture, Australian farmers can largely survive droughts except in extreme circumstances. What is defeating our farmers is a lethal combination of extreme circumstances and a financial policy that discriminates against the primary producer.

During the early 1970s, all major political parties adopted realistic policies designed to ensure the long-term survival of family farmers. The National (Country) Party in Queensland was proposing long-term loans with maximum interest rates of **three percent**. This policy, however, was bludgeoned out of the National Party by a combination of factors. On the one hand, a vigorous grassroots campaign centred on the Darling Downs, initiated by the League of Rights, was placing pressure on the Party. On the other hand, the new Labor Shadow Mini-ster for Agriculture, Mr. Rex Patterson, had just produced a fresh, new A.L.P. Rural Policy.

**THE A.L.P. RURAL POLICY IN 1972:** The Patterson proposals for rural Australia began with the acknowledgement that primary producers were in unique circumstances, and had unique needs. Both production and income was **seasonal**. Compared with other commercial undertakings, return on massive capital investment of both property and machinery was extremely low. Isolation generated increased communications and transport costs for both raw materials and produce. Such unique needs, argued Patterson, required a unique financial policy. Patterson proposed the re-scheduling of present crippling rural debt in 1972, at least for "viable" producers, and the introduction of **long-term, low-interest finance** as a matter of general principle.

Stung by the A.L.P. proposals, at a time (1971) when the Coalition Government was in deep political trouble, the Queensland National (Country) Party took out full-page advertisements in *The Queensland Country Life* matching the A.L.P. policy. However, the Liberal-Country Party Coalition Government was swept away by Mr. Whitlam's A.L.P., to usher in a revolutionary period in Australian politics.

From the perspective of rural Australia, the election of the A.L.P. was devastating, mainly because Mr. Rex Patterson, the author of the new rural policy and formerly Shadow Minister for Agriculture, **was not offered the Primary Industries portfolio**. This was taken up by little known Tasmanian Senator Ken Reidt, and again the interests of rural Australia were ignored.

**WHERE IS THE N.F.F.?** In the Channel 9 television coverage of the rural crisis, rural producer organisations were almost conspicuous by their absence. At a time of the greatest crisis since the Great Depression, the National Farmers Federation appears to take little interest. The massive Fighting Fund raised in 1984 and 1985 is still available to the N.F.F. for an action programme that could force any political party to take them seriously. Only a fraction of the millions of dollars available to it is required to put the rural case for a financial policy that could keep farming families on their properties, and assist them to become viable again when the season breaks.

There is **no physical reason** why Australia should not maintain a healthy rural sector. it is a matter of political policy. Do we want a rural community or not? The truth is that for a stable, decentralised and healthy nation, Australia needs **more** families living in rural areas, not less.

While the Channel 9 "Farm Hand" campaign to raise funds for relief for farming families who cannot even put food on their tables is a reflection of the genuine goodwill of city people, in financial terms it is little more than a "band-aid" on a cancer that is destroying rural Australia. It can have an immediate and positive impact by raising the morale of country people, which

is vital. However, unless this goodwill can also generate a change in **financial policy** for rural Australia, it will cease to exist in its traditional form. The slogan "No Farmers – No Food" is deceptive. If the family farm – the backbone of rural Australia – is completely destroyed, it can still be replaced by industrial farming by huge conglomerates. The quality of food will drop, and the environmental degradation will rise. It is the family farm that gives rural Australia the quality that needs to be preserved. If the National Party proposes to survive politically, this is the challenge before it.

### THE HOMOSEXUAL REVOLUTION:

Those familiar with the works of Edith Hamilton, or the commentary of Malcolm Muggeridge on the decline and fall of the Roman Empire, will recall that one of the symptoms of decay was a breakdown in moral values. The women's movement became dominant. A youth revolt and the open acceptance of homosexual behaviour accompanied massive social and political corruption. While these were symptoms of terminal decay, correct policies to challenge the cause of decay, centralisation of financial and political power, could have been reversed.

The new legislation designed to over-ride the Tasmanian homosexual legislation is not simply a humane answer to a demand for homosexuals to be immune to prosecution for private activities. It is another milestone "in the hard-line homosexual political campaign" for political power. In much the same way as groups who regarded themselves as having been exploited on the basis of their race now demand "affirmative action" to redress grievances, so do the homosexuals.

Already homosexuals have been allowed paid time off work to care for their partners and children under new "enterprise agreements" reached with public service bodies like the Tax Office. Senator Cheryl Kernot is pushing hard for the Industrial Relations Commission to accept this principle, and apply it generally to the work-force. But the homosexuals want much more.

The homosexual lobby demands complete legal equality in all "family" matters, including child custody laws and property rights. In the end, it wants more than just the legal "rights" of the biological family – it wants **complete public acceptance** of homosexual and lesbian relationships.

THE FEMINIST INFLUENCE: While male homosexual activities are a major threat to the community in moral and health terms, it may be the lesbian influence that is achieving the homosexual political demands. Mr. Bill Muehlernberg, the National Secretary of the Australian Family Association, draws attention to the role of the National Council on the International Year of the Family. He notes that the Council is loaded with representatives from the aggressive,

strident feminist lobby. "The question is, how much of the feminist agenda is embracing lesbian issues, and we believe there is an overlap," says Muehlernberg.

This issue is one of the most damaging issues for the Coalition. The Catholic commentator, Mr. B.A. Santamaria, in his weekly column (*The Weekend Australian*, 20/8/94) points out that Alexander Downer's failure to take any stand on the homosexual issue will be applauded by the "liberal intelligentsia" and the press, but will only meet with the disgust of traditional Coalition supporters. The "liberal intelligentsia" will not be voting for the Coalition anyway, and perhaps traditional supporters won't either.

We agree with Santamaria's assessment that unless the Keating Government self-destructs, which it shows only few signs of doing, "there is only a remote prospect that the Coalition can defeat the Keating Government.....".

### RACIAL VILIFICATION LEGISLATION "INCREASES HATRED":

The Parliamentary Research Service circulates background material to Members of Parliament on legislative proposals, in order to brief them. Recently, a brief was distributed on the international experience with racial vilification legislation, by Ann Twomey, which was leaked to us. Ms. Twomey's research is most revealing. The British experience, for example, is that the legislation actually led to **more racial unrest**. Why is this? Because the legislation has virtually blown up in the faces of those proposing it. Instead of being used to "protect minorities" it has been used to prosecute them. In 1967, four members of the universal Coloured People's Association were convicted of stirring up racial hatred against white people, while the following year, members of the Racial Preservation Society were acquitted. Ms. Twomey: "The fact that black leaders were being imprisoned, and white people such as Enoch Powell and the leaders of the National Front were either not charged or were acquitted of racist speeches, led to even more racial unrest .....

"The record of success for such laws in reducing or preventing racial hatred is far from impressive. One of the first countries to implement a law against the promotion of racial hatred, in response to the requirements of the **International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights**, was the former Yugoslavia, which is not currently well known for an absence of racial hatred. Since the United Kingdom introduced such laws in the 1970s, racial hatred has only increased. Laws against the incitement to religious hatred in Northern Ireland do not appear to have had **any constructive effect** in reducing religious hostility....."

How will Australia's legislators respond to this advice? Will the new legislation be intelligently and logically debated, or will it simply be ruthlessly rammed through the Parliament under the influence of some of the potent ethnic lobbies, like the Jewish lobby?