



ON TARGET

- NEWS HIGHLIGHTS
- BACKGROUND INFORMATION
- COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

The price of Freedom is eternal vigilance —

Print Post Publication Number 381667 00258

Vol.30, No.4

February 11th, 1994

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK: "It is a supreme irony that the Prime Minister, Mr. Keating, claims that becoming a republic is the key to increasing our national independence and self-respect. Our national sovereignty has been declining, not increasing in recent years. Our national sovereignty, that is to say our ability as a people to influence the destiny of our country, is being compromised with each passing year. Whether or not we become a republic will make very little difference to this process,.... The most obvious way in which our sovereignty has been eroded has been through Australia's massive and increasing foreign debt." - Graeme Campbell, Federal Labor MHR, at 1993 League of Rights National Seminar.

BRONWYN BISHOP AND THE LIBERAL DEATH WISH by Eric D. Butler:

A study of Bronwyn Bishop's numerous statements help to provide some understanding of why she is popular with many rank and file Liberal supporters. She provides the type of "style" which is lacking in Liberal leader Dr. John Hewson. There is a directness which contrasts sharply with the inability of John Hewson to create an impression of decisiveness and conviction. But far more than a change of style in the Liberal leadership is essential if Australia's basic problems are to be overcome. Late last year Senator Bronwyn Bishop's office produced a collection of the Senator's major speeches. One of these was "The Politics of the Heart", delivered at a Queensland Liberal Party Dinner on May 3rd, 1993. But a careful study of these speeches reveals that while designed to assist a Liberal politician to become Liberal Party leader, they lack substance in the policy field.

Bronwyn Bishop is an intelligent, capable and ambitious woman. But there are aspects of her campaign which indicate she is taking advice from those who are experts in manipulating the mass media. It would be instructive to know what is the role of Harry Miller, New Zealand born Jewish entrepreneur who was skilful enough to carry on his business activities from prison. It must be admitted that Senator Bishop

has enjoyed a dream run with much of a media which is pro-Keating. A recent incident may help in a realistic assessment of Bronwyn Bishop. A long-time League of Rights supporter entered into a brief conversation with Senator Bishop following an address at a Liberal Party meeting. Senator Bishop was initially amiable until in the course of conversation she indicated some admiration for Labor MHR Graeme Campbell. But there was a dramatic change of attitude when told that Campbell had addressed the Annual National Seminar of the League of Rights, while an offer to present a copy of Campbell's address in The Intelligence Survey was rejected as if it was some type of a plague!

There are deep and growing tensions inside the Liberal Party and the Liberal-National Party Coalition. Public opinion polls indicate that Paul Keating's political stocks are rising. If the polls continue to favour Keating, there will be growing tension inside the Liberal-National Party Coalition. Keating and his media friends are going to continue to exploit those tensions. At the moment John Hewson has a secured majority, but that majority could be eroded if the polls show diminishing public support for Hewson. Senator Bishop is not only advised by Harry Miller, but she has influential friends like former Victorian President Michael Kroger and influential figures in banking and finance.

The reality is that the disease rotting the Liberal Party is too deeply seated to be overcome by a mere change of leadership, not unless that leadership can unite the Liberal Party around fundamental philosophical principles. Regretfully, the writer sees little prospect of this type of leadership being provided by Bronwyn Bishop and those promoting her. The West Australian Liberal Party, led by Richard Court, is, beyond doubt, the only section of the Liberal Party which is currently making a stand on basic issues. For this reason it deserves the support of all those Australians concerned about the erosion of the Federal Constitution. If there is to be any regeneration of the Liberal Party, it may start in Western Australia. But the Federal Liberals are at present in the grip of a death wish.

PARTY HACKS MEDDLE WITH AUSTRALIAN MONARCHY by David Thompson:

The revelation that Australia was denied the opportunity to have the Prince of Wales for Governor-General could have a significant long-term effect on the entire republican issue. In his interview with the editor of The Australian, Paul Kelly, published last Monday, Prince Charles revealed that he had been approached by Sir Ninian Stephen, while he was Governor-General, to consider the possibility of succeeding him by 1988, the bi-centennial year. Prince Charles'

answer was that he could only consider such an appointment if there was bi-partisan political support.

The fact that there was not bi-partisan support for the proposal reflects badly on whichever political party refused to support it. If the proposal was floated in 1986, this would place it about three years into Labor's hold on government, under the leadership of Mr. Hawke, at the peak of his powers. Why would the ALP oppose such an appointment, which would certainly have enjoyed almost universal popularity? Mainly because, under the malevolent eye of former Prime Minister Whitlam, the ALP supporters were supposed to be still maintaining their rage about the dismissal of Whitlam by Sir John Kerr. Revenge would have played a big part in the rejection of Prince Charles.

If, indeed, it is true that the ALP is responsible for denying Australia a Royal Governor-General in 1988, then it has much for which to answer. The republican cause is damaged by a close association with Prime Minister Keating, but is further undermined by the revelation that the ALP as a whole harbours republican sentiments largely motivated by revenge. This most grubby form of self-interest amounts to a moral corruption that acts as a corrosive force in public affairs. If such moral corruption found expression by rejecting Prince Charles in 1986, perhaps the ALP involvement in the drive towards a republic carries the same stench of moral corruption? The only mitigating factor that operates in the ALP's favour is the lingering doubts that it may not have been ALP opposition that made it impossible for Charles to become Governor-General, but perhaps even Liberal Party opposition!

"HIDDEN ADVANTAGES" OF THE MONARCHY: In his only two press interviews in Australia, the Prince of Wales made it clear that Australians should use the constitutional debate to acquaint themselves with the undeniable advantages of monarchy. While graciously conceding that republicanism held both advantages and disadvantages, the Prince also took a swipe at the Australian press for being biased towards republicanism.

In his interview with Channel Nine's Ray Martin last Monday, Prince Charles appealed for the constitutional debate to highlight the strengths of monarchy. He said: "All I think is that this debate - if it's allowed to take place in a right way and isn't just put across in a biased way, like in certain sections of the media, some people might actually find a lot of hidden advantages and hidden aspects of the existing system which are taken for granted and not realised." (Our emphasis)

In his interview with Paul Kelly, published in The Australian on Monday, the Prince went further, demonstrating that he is indeed a deep and thoughtful person, by alluding to the spiritual qualities of constitutional monarchy. He said: "In the end, there's got to be a debate, I suspect, to help reveal - and perhaps this will help to reveal - some of the hidden advantages and strengths of the current way of doing things. Every so often a lot of these things are taken for granted. A lot of things are unseen, under the surface. They're not things you could necessarily show on a balance sheet at the end of the day and present to the treasurer, and say, 'Look, you know, this is a damn good thing because it's actually producing a return'. It's producing a spiritual return, if you know what I mean, which is an unseen thing....." (Our emphasis)

This demonstrates that the Prince of Wales understands what many of the republicans deny - that constitutional change is not a matter of legalism, but includes deep philosophical, cultural and spiritual considerations. A King with such a grasp is worth far more than a succession of presidents who simply qualify by fighting their way to the top of the political heap.

In his press interviews, Prince Charles also took the opportunity to reject Keating's claim that he had given "a wink and a nod" to go on with the republican debate, saying "I don't think so"... "You know perfectly well people interpret things the way they want to.."

COWAN EMERGES AS A MONARCHIST: Former Governor-General Sir Zelman Cowan has clarified his position on the Crown, which may indicate a change in his position on the issue. In an address to Australians for Constitutional Monarchy, he attacked republican proposals as "divisive and problematical". In defending the reserve powers of the Crown, Sir Zelman pointed out that in a similar situation to Sir John Kerr in 1975, a president would need similar powers to solve the deadlock. He described Tom Keneally as an "innocent minimalist", and stressed that as an independent country, Australia was well served by the present constitution. Sir Zelman Cowan also rejected suggestions that the Prince of Wales had offered tacit approval for republicanism. He effectively dispelled any suspicions that he may have some sympathy with the republican movement.