



# ON TARGET

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*The price of Freedom is eternal vigilance -*

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**THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK:** "What caused Australians, Canadians, New Zealanders, Rhodesians and white South Africans to flock to the colours in two world wars and fight at the side of Britain? ..... The main pull was racial and cultural. As Winston Churchill once put it, 'The mother country called and the race answered.' Today it is politically incorrect to say such a thing. But it is quite certain that the Anzac heroes of World War one and their sons who took on Rommel in World War Two would not have gone in any numbers to China to fight for the Chinese, or to the Indian sub-continent to fight for India."

– Doug Collins in 1995 League of Rights National Seminar address

## SENATE THE MAJOR HOPE FOR AUSTRALIA by Eric D. Butler:

At the time of writing no one is certain, probably not even Prime Minister Paul Keating, when the next Federal Election will be held. If, as suggested by a number of political and economic observers, Saturday, December 9th, is a highly probable date, the latest inflation rate figures, making the possibility of an interest rate reduction as an election "sweetener" highly improbable, might well prompt Paul Keating, the gambler, to elect for an election at an earlier rather than a later date. The election campaign is already taking shape with John Howard and his advisers determined to minimise the possibility of making any major mistakes by making no major election promises. The Howard strategy is to win by default. There have been several rash statements about "slashing" interest rates and dealing with the massive foreign debt problem. But the reality is that under current financial orthodoxy, John Howard and his colleagues cannot do anything constructive about these matters.

With every day that passes, it has become increasingly clear that there are no basic differences between the programmes of the three major political parties. It is highly significant that the professional pollsters are recording that there is a continuing trend of disillusionment with the major political parties. There is a growing protest vote currently favouring the Coalition parties, but no really strong support for these parties. It can be predicted with certainty that a Howard Government, elected by default and then continuing with broadly the same policies as those of the Keating Government, will result in one of the most explosive situations in Australian history. It would be impossible for a Howard Government to claim any legitimacy.

It is an appropriate time to remind Australians that the Australian Federation was only made possible when the sovereignty of the separate founding States was accepted with the creation of a Senate in which all States were equally represented, irrespective of size and numbers. Along with

the Crown, the Senate was seen as an essential part of a trinitarian form of government in which power could not be readily monopolised. Australians are extremely fortunate that they do not have to vote apathetically for any of the major political parties. In their great wisdom, their forbears left them with the priceless heritage of a constitutional system which they can use to their advantage.

Students of Australian political history are aware that over a long period of time electors vote slightly differently for Senate candidates than they do for House of Representatives candidates. Almost instinctively, a sizeable minority of electors have been saying, "While I am voting, perhaps reluctantly, for a certain party in the House of Representatives, I want some kind of a check on them and are therefore voting differently in the Senate."

Irrespective of whether they elect a Keating or a Howard Government, Australian electors can vote to provide themselves with a strong "safety net" by supporting Senate candidates other than those for the major parties. The system of electing the Senate ensures that sizeable minorities can have a worthwhile political input. It needs to be stressed as often as possible that the traditional British system of government was not based exclusively on numbers but on the effective representation of all interests, even when a minority. The establishment of the Australian Country Party, the forerunner to the National Party, was a reflection of the concept of a rural community, even if numerically a minority, being represented.

There is a large and growing section of the Australian community concerned about the current immigration programme, linked with "economic rationalism". That section can make its views felt by voting in the Senate only for those candidates pledged to oppose those programmes which are all supported by the major political parties. The coming elections provide Australians with the opportunity to regenerate their whole political and economic system. Spread the good news.

**HAYDEN BELTS P.M.'s. REPUBLIC** by David Thompson: Even the Governor-General suspects that some of the criticisms of the money spent by his office has been generated by resentment within the A.L.P. to his attacks on the republican model put forward by Mr. Keating. In addition to this, Mr. Hayden's admission a few months ago that he was no longer a devotee of "democratic socialism", upon which the A.L.P. claims to be based, has clearly ruffled the feathers of old political comrades. But the costs of Hayden's office are a legitimate issue, and the Governor-General's response is also legitimate. When interviewed upon the matter, Hayden said:

*"I couldn't see a president costing less. I could see a president costing more. With a person being elected, they could feel a degree of self-confidence and would want to express their individuality much more than is the case under the present arrangement . . ." Of the campaign being waged to demean the office of Governor-General because of the costs involved, Hayden said: "I hope the damn thing dies and I don't have to worry about it any more. But it has been very unpleasant, and I am experienced to know that it didn't create itself out of nothing. There was some sort of motive...."*

Mr. Hayden's warning concerning the proposed Keating presidency is quite legitimate. Hayden explained his position:

*". . . If you have a president elected by sixty percent, or two thirds in a joint sitting of the Houses then that person has a very strong constituency. Now to sack that person would require a two-*

*thirds vote of both Houses of Parliament. No government in the period in which I was in the Parliament, which was 27 years, had a two-thirds majority. They are even less likely of getting that these days because of the way Senate representation occurs.*

*"Imagine a president who had been elected who becomes an opportunistic popularist and who is able to cobble together sufficient support – after all he has only to get a little over 30 percent of the total vote of the two Houses – to avoid being thrown out, and yet have a majority of the Parliament opposed to his conduct, and he then sets upon a course of wilful behaviour which makes the proper process of government very difficult to sustain. You could have a difficult situation. I am not saying that is inevitably going to happen. But you have got to account for the uncertainties of human nature and the way in which certain positions, in particular, where there is status or power involved, can affect personalities . . ."*

**SACKING THE PRIME MINISTER:** Much of the A.L.P. motivation for a republic was Sir John Kerr's dismissal of Mr. Whitlam. If the monarchy could dismiss an elected Prime Minister, then the "undemocratic" monarchy would have to go. But if the proposed powers of the president still included the power to dismiss a Prime Minister, then Mr. Keating's model would, in fact, not protect him from dismissal as Prime Minister. In fact, Mr. Keating could be more easily dismissed by an elected president than by the Governor-General, if two-thirds of the Parliament were required to dismiss the president.

**QUEEN HOAXED BY TELEPHONE CALL:** A 29-year-old Montreal radio talkback host, Pierre Brossard, was able to avoid security arrangements, and hold a 14-minute telephone call with the Queen, who believed she was speaking to the Canadian Prime Minister, Mr. Chretien. The subject of the discussion was the coming Canadian referendum on the future of Quebec as a part of Canada. The fact that a radio announcer and seven researchers were able to deceive the Palace and the Queen should be remembered in the context of the Australian republican debate.

At the time of Mr. Whitlam's dismissal by Governor-General Sir John Kerr in 1975, it was argued that Kerr was in a delicate position regarding the Prime Minister. If Sir John had warned Mr. Whitlam that he should seek an election or risk being dismissed, then perhaps Mr. Whitlam, by telephoning the Queen, could have Kerr dismissed instead. But would a telephone call suffice?

In a letter to *The Australian* (30/10/95) a correspondent draws attention to a previous conflict in Canada. When the Canadian Government in Ottawa was confronted with behaviour by the Governor-General it regarded as unsatisfactory, the Canadian Prime Minister had to travel to London to put the case for the Governor-General's dismissal directly to the Sovereign. Did Mr. Whitlam really believe he could have achieved the same objective with a simple phone call? Did Sir John believe this? It appears as though he did, since he dismissed Whitlam, rather than warned him of possible dismissal. It appears that Mr. Fraser also believes that "a phone call is sufficient", according to his feature article in *The Australian* (25/10/95).

The fact is that in practice it would probably prove much more difficult to dismiss a Governor-General than to simply put a phone call in to the Queen. Certainly since last week, when the Queen was hoaxed by a radio announcer, any call from a person claiming to be Prime Minister Paul Keating, who wanted his old mate Hayden dumped immediately as Governor-General, would be scrutinised at some length by Buckingham Palace.

**WORDS OF WARNING ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT:** Councillor Bevan O'Regan, who has been campaigning against the amalgamation of local government, has issued another warning concerning the Commonwealth's intentions. He draws attention to the second National General Assembly of Local Government to be held in Canberra in November. Of the first National General Assembly last year, O'Regan writes:

*"I believed it so dangerous to the future of true local government, our constitution and the federation that I made a video documenting the history. It received wide attention, purchased by one third of the councils in Australia, and numerous private citizens. This was the first time, I believe, that Councillors were given the evidence of long-term strategy to destroy local government's traditional role.*

*"The most dangerous motion at last year's Assembly was significantly **withdrawn**, it read as follows: **'Restructuring of Australian government system: Introduction, as part of the Constitutional changes and creation of a republic, of a two-tiered system of Federal and regional local government.'**"*

Councillor O'Regan warns that **the programme has not been abandoned**. The Second General Assembly takes place from November 12th-15th, 1995, and those attending will be asked to approve an Accord. The Agenda states:

*"Negotiations are under way between ALGA and the Commonwealth Government on a National Accord. This would represent an historic agreement on shared goals, principles and directions for change. ALGA expects that the Accord will be completed in time for presentation to delegates and signing at the General Assembly."*

O'Regan asks a few (not entirely unreasonable) questions. Who is the ALGA (Australian Local Government Association) representing when this so-called Accord is being negotiated? Has each State Local Government Association been consulted? Have the Councils represented by the State LGAs been consulted for their views?

Councillor O'Regan also points out that any type of direct agreement between the Commonwealth and local government would require a referendum to change the Constitution, in which there is no authority whatever for the Commonwealth to interfere in local government matters. Or do we just ignore the Constitution?

And just who will be voting at the Second General Assembly in a week or so? O'Regan notes that many of the Victorian Councils are run by Commissars (no, Commissioners) appointed by the State Government. They will be attending the Assembly in Canberra, with little thought of expense, and voting on the resolutions put forward. Whom will they represent. Mr. Kennett, or Victorian ratepayers, who **have not even had the chance to vote for (or against) them**.

**IMMEDIATE ACTION REQUIRED:** With such concerns in mind, O'Regan's Narrabri Council passed a motion last month: *"That, at the opening session of the General Assembly in Canberra on the 13th November, this Council nominate a motion: **That only democratically elected Councillors be permitted to vote at the General Assembly.**"* We suggest that supporters raise such concerns with their own Councils. Since little time is to be wasted, whatever efforts are made should be made immediately. As Councillor O'Regan points out, ordinary voters are the guardians of the Constitution. Section 128 says it cannot be changed without our consent. State Members of Parliament should also be asked to act immediately. They are paid to represent us, and have failed to do so on many matters. **This one is vital!** Immediate action is required.

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