



A WEEKLY COMMENTARY

ON TARGET

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The price of Freedom is eternal vigilance –

Print Post Publication Number 381667 00258

Vol.36, No.48

December 15th, 2000

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK: *"The promise that cloning will be a boon to conservation is a complete cop-out. Conservation is a precarious affair, because its failure is finite. It has, quite literally, a deadline. Cloning endangered species is a classic case of science no longer being used for prevention, but for apparent cure. It is a lazy science."*

– Malcolm Tait, *"The Ecologist"*, December-January, 2000

VOTING MANIPULATION by Jeremy Lee:

Nothing could be more hypocritical than the "holier-than-thou" response of the Coalition parties to Labor's woes over vote-rigging in Queensland. With Labor front-benchman Wayne Swan's descent from Beazley's Federal front-bench over his claim that he passed \$1,400 in \$50 bills to his Democrat "opponent" there must be a lot of politicians of all major parties shifting uncomfortably in their seats.

The truth is that in almost every seat, both State and Federal, there has been "wheeling-and-dealing" over preferences for a very long time. This is especially so in marginal seats. Were it not so, no party would bother allocating preferences, leaving it up to voters to make their own choice. The danger of perversion has become even greater with the recent introduction – as a result of the One Nation phenomenon – of compulsory preferential voting.

Dennis Shanahan (*Weekend Australian*, 2-3/12/2000) made these points:

"All of Australia's political parties are buying and selling votes and the practice must either be stopped or made fully accountable and transparent. There should be a Royal Commission into Federal electoral practices, a judicial inquiry to clean up outstanding allegations and a legal test case on cash-for-preferences to clarify the law – or at the very least an investigative arm established for the Australian Electoral Commission

"The simple fact is that it is illegal to buy or attempt to buy somebody's democratic vote, as it should be. Vote buying is the basest political corruption at the heart of abuses of power and human rights.

"The Commonwealth Electoral Act, section 326, states that it is an offence to 'give, confer, or promise or offer to give or confer, any property or benefit of any kind' to anyone 'in order to influence or affect ... any support of a group of candidates of a political party'.

"In other words, you can't buy votes. If you do, you risk going to jail and ending any political career you may have had.

"Yet that is what is effectively happening behind closed doors as political power-brokers negotiate

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together – it may not be too harsh to say collude or conspire – to formally work out alliances and deals for the allocation of preferences"

As in every aspect of life, the introduction of big money into the election process has upped the stakes and vastly increased the corruption. Not only does the novice backbencher gain an immediate salary of nearly \$2,000 a week, plus a whole raft of travel and away-from-home perks, plus postage and telephone benefits and perks for spouse and family, but if he or she can endure for eight years, an indexed pension for life, plus superannuation that non-politicians cannot match.

And the party itself makes millions since the introduction of tax-payments for votes-gained, which means the investment of a few thousand dollars to get compulsory preferences from another party or candidate is a small one indeed.

This is the day of power-movement politics as opposed to genuine democracy. The voter who wants some choice has long-since been sidelined. In the absence of alternatives, the final resort of "Power Voting" – where you put the incumbent member last on the voting slip, allocating the rest as you see fit – is catching on fast. At least it means that new members won't get their pension unless they really stick their necks out in their first term.

BANKERS' AID: Finally, the Federal Government has offered some money to help drought-stricken farmers in New South Wales and southern Queensland – enough to 'subsidise' interest payments and give them enough fuel and seed to plant again.

At the end of November Deputy Prime Minister John Anderson and others met with representatives of the banks to urge them to make some contribution. With breath-taking generosity this is what the banks offered (*Country Leader*, NSW, 27/11/2000):

ANZ: *Suspend repayments on all loans for three months;*

- *wave fees associated with restructuring business loans considered necessary due to flood impacts;*
- *wave early withdrawal costs for term deposits, and*
- *consider temporary adjustments to customer lending limits to assist them coping financially with unexpected costs arising from flooding.*

COMMONWEALTH: *Loan restructuring for business customers with existing loans, without incurring the usual bank establishment fees.*

- *additional loans or changes to repayment arrangements for Commonwealth Bank home loan customers who are experiencing difficulties because of the flooding.*
- *Review and postponement of credit card instalments for customers of good standing and/or consideration of requests for emergency credit limit increases;*
- *The bank will waive pre-payment charges over the next month for affected customers wishing to access their term deposits ahead of the maturity date.*

NATIONAL: *Loan repayments deferred or restructured for farming customers and businesses affected by the flood, and*

- *home loan repayments deferred under hardship provisions as per the Uniform Consumer Credit Code.*

WESTPAC: *Affected customers with home loans may apply to suspend repayments for up to three months;*

- *affected farmers and other businesses with existing loans can request loan restructuring without incurring the usual bank establishment fees;*
- *affected credit card customers may ask to defer their next credit card payment – customers can also request an emergency credit increase;*
- *wave early withdrawal penalties for affected customers wishing to withdraw term deposits and Farm Management deposits;*
- *provide "carry on finance" to viable farming operations to keep businesses running and to enable crops to be sown and livestock programmes recommence;*
- *freeze risk margins for primary producers who receive interest rate subsidies through government assistance schemes, and*
- *support for farmers wishing to leave the industry to facilitate the best possible realisation of assets.*

Frankly, the banks should be ashamed to see such a miserly list in print! While we recognise that the programme for successful banking is to get as many people as deeply into debt as possible and to keep them there, surely when great natural disasters happen the banks should be asked to share some of the risk? In all the points outlined by the banks, there is not such a thing as debt-relief. The most that has been offered is a slight relaxation of the rate at which the pound of flesh is taken! It's not as though the money they lend is the result of their own earning efforts. It is cost-free credit, created at the blip of a computer.

But then again, they only made a net profit of \$8.4 billion between them this year.

ELECTION LOOMING: The Liberals in Western Australia face an election this coming year, as does Queensland. The prospects for both State governments are not bright. Richard Court, WA Premier, has run into a wall in the conflict between loggers and environmentalists. But he makes sense in some areas.

Writing in *The Australian* (3/11/2000) Court said:

"....This country is incredibly rich in natural gas, most of it from the north-west coast of Western Australia and the Northern Territory.

"Instead of seeing the present oil situation as a negative, surely we can plan as a nation to utilise the abundance of natural gas as an alternative for example, to petrol.

"That's why in Western Australia we have provided a \$500 incentive for people to convert or purchase a gas car....."

That's a start. In fact, the Federal Government could easily provide a subsidy for the wholesale conversion of cars to natural gas. It could further drop the tax on gas to offer commuters an added incentive to change to a less-polluting fuel.

In addition, the Government should assemble a team of practical engineers to evaluate any pollution-free form of power. The Linear motor, currently driven off compressed air, offers a means of electricity production more efficient than solar energy, with possible developments that may take it further. Many such possibilities are dying for lack of venture capital and government help.

The December issue of our *New Times Survey* carries an article on the use of vegetable oils and ethanol being used to replace diesel in Brazil. It is something already working. Taxis in Mexico City are being changed to a pollution-free motor run on the compressed air principle.

Senator Hill would be far better searching out and fostering genuine alternatives to fossil fuels than wriggling and squirming at such non-productive gatherings as the Kyoto Protocols Conference in the Hague. Bureaucrats at central international conferences have solved few problems and will solve fewer in the dangerous years now on us. By unhooking itself off the tax-revenue nipple, and unleashing the abounding local initiative in Australia, the government could enable some genuine improvements.

But perhaps the oil companies wouldn't like it.

RACIAL AND RELIGIOUS VILIFICATION LEGISLATION: "Victorians could be prosecuted for making offensive statements, gestures and sounds in their homes under racial and religious vilification laws," says the *Herald Sun's* Felicity Dargan (7/12/2000). The Premier Steve Bracks, also the Minister for Multicultural Affairs, announced he will "launch the Racial and Religious Tolerance Discussion Paper and Model Bill next Thursday," she informed her readers.

BIG BROTHER IS HERE! The following report is from Geoff Muirden:

The announcement in Melbourne's *Herald-Sun*, 7/12/2000, that the Victorian Premier, Steve Bracks, who is also Minister for Multicultural Affairs, is considering totalitarian Communist style legislation

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that would make it an illegal "offense" under racial and religious vilification laws for anyone to make any politically incorrect statements, wear any politically incorrect uniforms, or make any politically incorrect gestures in the "privacy" of their own homes is cause for immediate concern and should be a priority consideration for all readers of *On Target*.

It is nothing less than a "1984" totalitarian Thought Police suggestion which vindicates George Orwell completely and shows that Big Brother is alive and well and living here in Oz.

Under the present form of the legislation, according to the *Herald-Sun*, "Defences might NOT be available to people accused of vilification."

This is the same mentality that motivates the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, which enables people to lay complaints if they are "offended", but does not allow as a defence any factual information, no matter how well documented, proving that the statements were based on factual or "hard evidence".

That rule has been applied to suppress free speech on the topic of the Holocaust, but can just as easily be applied to any other politically correct subject. If "truth is no defence", then lies must flourish.

Victorian Premier Bracks is to release the so-called "Racial and Religious Tolerance Discussion Paper and Model Bill" on Thursday 14th December, 2000, and calls for "community submissions." The very name of the bill itself is a lie, as it is an attempt to impose racial and religious INTOLERANCE and is a slap in the face to the Western tradition of free speech. I hope that readers of this message will indeed make a submission to show that this evil legislation intended to put us in the shackles of a Communist dictatorship, will be thrown out, as it deserves to be. This matter deserves top priority. Bills of this kind cannot be allowed to go unchallenged. "The price of liberty is eternal vigilance" is an eternal verity and deserves as much vigilance now as ever.

The recommendation, at least in the initial draft of the bill, that people accused might not be allowed any defence, flies in the face of natural justice. It is only natural justice to ensure that truth IS a defence, that those complaining must establish that comments or actions are based on false or defamatory foundations. As Orwell stated, the right of free speech must include the right to say what other people do not want to hear. Unless free speech is an absolute right it is a sham. It is an attempt to enforce only "politically correct" speech.

Comments on history, race, politics, religion, science, or any other subject, or concerning any person or group, should be defensible if it can be shown that they are factual comments and not based on malice or lies. It is obvious that anyone who is caught out in a lie will be "offended" at the truth. It means that there will be no protection for the "whistleblower" who exposes fraud and corruption which is destructive of society and human rights.

It is disgraceful that such draconian bills can even be considered as they are blatantly intended as shackles that will manacle us in irons, where there can be no safety or privacy even in one's own home. It will create a paradise for informers. The next stage may be to have an electronic "eye" compulsorily installed in your TV and computer, checking every program watched to see if it passed by faceless censors who will become corrupted as they assume dictatorial Thought Police powers. The Bible says that a man's enemies will be those of his own household, and this may come to pass, as anyone may be condemned and denounced by wife, husband, brother, sister, son, daughter, other relative, "friend" or visitor. A next door neighbour may even listen in and even invent malicious rumours and if "truth is no defence" will not be required to prove what he is saying. The intent is to create a muzzle of fear suppressing free discussion of ideas. It is a slap in the face to Western and Christian traditions of free speech.

I hope that readers will give priority to opposing this bill and those who suggested it. It is another step towards a slave state.

"ON TARGET" is printed and published by The Australian League of Rights, 145 Russell St., Melbourne.
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Subscription \$40.00 p.a.