



A WEEKLY COMMENTARY

ON TARGET

- NEWS HIGHLIGHTS
- BACKGROUND INFORMATION
- COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS



The price of Freedom is eternal vigilance –

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THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK: *"The test of a natural law is that it is automatic and inexorable, and the proof of the contention which is advanced in this book, that as soon as Society ceases to serve the interests of the individual, then the individual will break up Society, is proved by the course of events at this time: and those persons who wish to preserve Society can do no worse service to their cause, than to depict their idol as an unchangeable organisation whose claims are to be regarded as superior to those of the human spirit..."*
– C.H. Douglas, "Social Credit", 1924

HOWARD AND THE TEMPTATIONS OF POWER by Jeremy Lee:

If ever example was needed that power is an aphrodisiac it lies in the behaviour of Prime Minister Howard in recent times. He started his period as Prime Minister with enough statements on the value and integrity of the parliamentary system to indicate he understood the principles involved.

But since his ventures onto the world stage those principles have gone out of the window. He has blurred the separation of powers. He has reduced the value of the monarchical system by furthering the notion that the Governor-General is no more than a ceremonial appointee without any teeth. He has taken Australia to war without the expressed consent of parliament. He has elevated his own position from that of first among Her Majesty's ministers in the Executive to that of the first person in the land. He has played the role that was rightfully that of the Governor-General on almost every occasion. As Commander-in-Chief of Australia's armed forces the Governor-General has been almost invisible. It should have been the Governor-General who visited our forces overseas, and welcomed them home. Howard, in fact, has adopted the role of President in everything but name.

It should be remembered that all executive powers in Australia are in the hands of the Governor-General, who is to act with the advice of an Executive Council – or even alone if necessary, as Sir John Kerr did in 1975. The decisions of Parliament – of which the Crown is a member – are passed to the Governor-General for action. All members of the Executive – which includes the Prime Minister – are appointed by the Governor-General, **not the other way about.**

IN THIS ISSUE: • *Thought for the Week* • *Howard And The Temptations Of Power* • *Remember The Poor* • *The Governor-General And The Australian Constitution*

In this regard, the Australian Constitution contains a number of specific reserve powers which do not exist in Britain. By a number of 'conventions' – which are no more than that – the whole process has been reversed.

Nowhere does it say that the Prime Minister, acting alone, shall decide who will be Governor-General. In Australia's early days our Governors-General were appointed from other Commonwealth countries and, although it would not now be accepted, there is much to recommend the idea. Whenever a test match is held in Australia, we have no qualms in accepting an umpire or referee from another country, as a guarantee of impartiality..

The idea of former politicians being appointed to the highest office is an aberration which debases the Governor-General's role of impartial umpire.

"I alone will decide if and when Australia goes to war!" John Howard was quoted as saying prior to the Iraqi affair.

"I alone will decide who becomes Australia's next Governor-General!" he is now quoted as saying after Peter Hollingworth's resignation.

These are the claims of a party politician intoxicated with power. If anything was more guaranteed to lend some weight to the republican cause – which is desperate for some credibility – it is this sort of claim. It relegates any future Head of State in Australia to a lackey's role – to be seen, occasionally, but definitely not heard.

Inevitably, there will be an increased debate on the method of selecting the Governor-General. A Governor-General voted into office by any group is a giant step towards republicanism. Yet some improvement on the present situation is necessary. Politicians should be kept well out of it. A "peoples' choice" in a national vote would be even worse. The least dangerous, it would seem to me, is for a Council comprising former Governors-General, together with existing State Governors, consulting and acting together, to nominate a selection of three or four eligible candidates to Her Majesty for her ultimate decision. The same process could be extended to the selection of State Governors. Such a move would re-establish a safe divide between politicians and the executive.

It would be a shame indeed if monarchists dogmatically refused to concede the need for correction and blindly defended a crippled system which has almost become a republic with a monarchist label attached.

Again, we need some other sort of body, with some judicial expertise but outside parliamentary control, to whom appeals for advice, and no more than that, can be made where legislation appears in breach of the Constitution. The current situation, where the Constitution is regularly set aside or compromised because the cost of legal challenge is prohibitive, needs to be addressed.

It has been said more than once that the Westminster system and the old idea of Common Law provided so many safeguards for individual freedom that such measures as Citizens' Referendums – as in Switzerland – were unnecessary. That is no longer the case. Almost every check on the abuse of Parliament has been rendered meaningless. The regaining of a true constitutional system, with realistic checks and balances, is now an urgent necessity.

REMEMBER THE POOR: When Sir Robert Menzies stitched together the original Liberal Party at the end of World War II, he picked up a theme that served his Coalition well – the plight of Australian battlers – small farmers, workers and their families on the basic wage, those trying to get into their own homes, struggling small businesses, etc. With a surge of support from this hitherto unheard Queensland before Joh sells it!" was never heard in the early stages of his premiership.

Howard, too, played the "battlers" theme before gaining office, but never did anything about it. The result is a top-heavy, high-taxing, foreign-dominated economy where the growing number of poor don't figure in the 'growth' figures.

The following, from *News Weekly*, 31/5/03, tells the sad story.

"John Howard's Government was originally elected on his appeal to 'Aussie Battlers'. However, the cumulative effect of two decades of deregulated policies – begun by Labor and continued by the Coalition – has seen

- the hollowing out of the middle class;
- the formation of a huge, welfare – dependent underclass;
- the growth of welfare payments to this group; and
- the remaining middle class carrying the welfare cost of this underclass.

The middle class has been hollowed out as the number employed in agriculture declines, as manufacturing industries either shut down or move off-shore, and as imports have flooded in.

Consequently, at the 1997 Census, 32 per cent of men aged 25-44 years – in their prime income and family formation years – were not in full time work and living on less than \$21,000 p.a.. Indeed, 20 per cent were living on less than \$16,000 p.a. and showing disastrous marriage and divorce statistics. There are 850,000 children living in 435,000 no-income families.

According to Professor Bob Gregory, of those Australians who are potentially full-time workers, only one-in-twenty received welfare in 1970. Today, one in four are welfare recipients.....

The result is the unravelling of the middle class as politicians pursue the free-market policies of deregulation and privatization, which are part of the economic ideology of globalism

As a first step, the immediate challenge is for strong campaigns to put a halt to further deregulation and to start the rebuilding of industry. In the rural sector, key campaigns are needed to stop the deregulation of industries like sugar and wheat, to protect farmers' property and water rights, and to stop any erosion of Australia's quarantine standards

A new government-backed development bank is needed to develop small businesses, farmers and new manufacturing industries.

Then the huge issue of our burgeoning foreign debt must be addressed....."

These issues are well known and understood by tens of thousands of Australians in all states. Opinion

polls regularly show antipathy to globalism and foreign ownership. Yet no party in the federal sphere has picked it up and offered a clear, vote-winning alternative.

The Labor Party is now in crisis, under a leadership which offers no alternative to Howard's disastrous policies. The issues on which it attacks the government are peripheral, and it is singing its own swan-song.

Where, then, does Australia look for an alternative? Clearly, not from any existing party. They have either sold out or are compromised beyond belief.

The same scene exists in Britain. Blair's Labour and the Conservative Party are both surfing the wave of globalism and internationalism. Whether or not to accept someone else's money system is the all-consuming debate among Britain's politicians, and whether they should throw away their own unique constitutional arrangements for the "European Constitution" which is touted for finality in 2004.

Will the battlers of Britain be asked? Not if the politicians can help it!

Thus, like the Gadarene swine, the ancient constitutional parliamentary systems of the West - once the model for other nations to follow - stampede towards their own oblivion.

THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL AND THE AUSTRALIAN CONSTITUTION from Philip Benwell
MBE, Australian Monarchist League:

"Recent events surrounding the accusations levelled against the Governor-General, although disquieting, have proven beyond doubt that our system of Constitutional Monarchy has, as always, worked and worked well.

Amidst the controversy, the machinery of Government proceeded smoothly and without interruption despite the standing aside and now the resignation of the Governor-General.

It was the Labor Prime Minister James Scullin who, quite rightly, insisted in 1930 that the decision of the Australian Cabinet on the nomination of the Governor-General was paramount. However, it somehow became convention that responsibility for later nominations fell into the sole prerogative of the Prime Minister.

The reasoning of those Labor leaders who are now asserting that the process is flawed and that that flaw is somehow related to our Constitutional Monarchy is not only totally unsound but fails to take into account that there have been five Labor Prime Ministers since Scullin, all of whom jealously guarded their prerogative rather than opening the nomination process to consultation.

There is no constitutional impediment to prohibit any Prime Minister from consulting with his or her Cabinet or with the Leader of the Opposition prior to submitting a nomination to The Queen."