



A WEEKLY COMMENTARY

ON TARGET



- NEWS HIGHLIGHTS
- BACKGROUND INFORMATION
- COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

The price of Freedom is eternal vigilance -

Print Post Publication Number 381667 00258

Vol.45, No.20

May 29th, 2009

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK:

"In the case of money, we are dealing with something which is handled in our generation by methods that are extremely different from those in vogue a century or half century ago. When there was a multitude of private banks, the system by which credit was issued may have perhaps been appropriate, but with the amalgamation of the banks we have now reached a stage where something universally needed - namely money, or credit which does duty for money - has become in effect a monopoly. The private issue of new credit should be regarded in the modern world in just the same way in which the private minting of money was regarded in earlier times. The banks should be limited in their lending power to the amount deposited by their clients, while the issue of newer credit should be the function of public authority. This is not in any way to censure the banks or bankers. They have administered the system entrusted to them with singular uprightness and ability and public spirit. But the system has become anomalous, and, as so often happens when anomaly has persisted through a long period of time, the result is to make into the master what ought to be the servant."

— William Temple, Archbishop of Canterbury, 26 September 1942

"My contention is that it is not an accident that we have lost touch with the roots of one of the most important metaphors that have been used about the person and work of Christ. For by seeing our debt to God and Christ and repayment of that debt as spiritual truth (by which we easily mean, strangely for Christian believers, a truth that is not based in the material world) we are allowed to leave the financial world to look after itself and go its own way. We have made it possible for ourselves to worship God (religiously) and Mammon (economically) by simply allowing ourselves two separate kinds of language and not letting them interact in any way that would confront our dependence on the economy of credit."— Peter Selby, "Grace and Mortgage: The Language of Faith and the Debt of the World"

A PARLIAMENT OF SPIVS... David Flint in his *Opinion Column* article (below) headlines his commentary with the above heading. Professor Flint is referring to the scandalous behaviour of certain British MPs who got caught with their sticky fingers inside the national 'Bikky Tin'.

The Times, U.K., 16/5/09, reported: "David Chaytor has become the second Labour MP to admit claiming thousands of pounds of taxpayers' money for interest on a non-existent mortgage, it emerged last night. The MP for Bury North will pay back £13,000 claimed on expenses after telling *The Daily*

In this issue: • *Thought For The Week* • *A Parliament Of Spivs...* • *Chinese Takeaway - Bravo Senators Xenophon And Joyce* • *What If Dick Pratt Was An Anglo-Australian?*

"ON TARGET"

May 29th, 2009

Page 1 (77)

Telegraph that he had made an "unforgivable error" by continuing to submit monthly claims for £1,175 for months after the loan was paid off.

He is likely to receive the same treatment as Elliot Morley, a former minister, who has been suspended from the Parliamentary Labour Party after admitting claiming £16,000 for a non-existent mortgage. Lawyers have said that there is a good case for a criminal investigation. Mr. Chaytor is also alleged to have changed his designation of his second home four times since 2004, allowing him to claim expenses on five properties. He blamed "changing and complex family circumstances" for the multiple moves, and said that "family stress" had prevented him from paying attention to his financial affairs. Sir Gerald Kaufman, a former Labour minister, was reported to have charged £1,851 for an antique rug imported from New York. The MP for Manchester Gorton allegedly submitted a claim for £8,865 for a television, and was paid £15,329 of a £28,834 bill for improvements to a London flat after telling Commons authorities he was "living in a slum".

Tam Dalyell, who retired as an MP in 2005, submitted a claim for £18,000 for bookcases two months before retiring as an MP in 2005. He said last night that he was "extremely relaxed" about his claims. Gordon Brown required his Justice Minister to step down yesterday after an investigation of his expenses disclosed he may have breached the ministerial code. Shahid Malik became the latest casualty of the week-long revelations after it appeared that he had failed to declare that he was benefiting from a subsidised rent. Mr. Malik has moved aside from his post pending an inquiry by Sir Philip Mawer, the ministerial watchdog. Mr. Brown has asked Sir Philip, his official adviser on ministerial interests, to investigate the claims as quickly as possible.

David Cameron, the Conservative leader, said that MPs from all parties had made unjustifiable expenses claims and politicians must display leadership for Parliament to regain the trust of the people.

Mr. Brown's spokesman emphasised that Mr. Malik was expected to return to office if he was cleared and said that no replacement was being appointed. There is no suggestion that Mr. Malik broke parliamentary rules on expenses but it is his conduct as a minister that is under scrutiny. He was alleged to have claimed the maximum amount allowable – £66,827 over three years – on his second home in London but obtained a discounted rent of £100 a week on his main family home in his Dewsbury constituency, which he paid out of his own pocket.

Mr. Malik has described the claim about his rent as a "fabrication". But Mr. Brown's spokesman said that it had to be investigated because, if true, it would represent a "potential financial benefit" that had not been part of Mr. Malik's ministerial declaration and "this could represent a breach of the ministerial code". The allegation comes amid a rising tide of public anger at MPs from all parties, with the former police chief Ray Mallon, now the Independent Mayor of Middlesbrough, making a formal complaint to the Metropolitan Police...

DAVID FLINT in the *Opinion Column* wrote: "In the middle of what we are told is the biggest global financial crisis since the depression, the Federal Parliament has agreed to increase the politicians' electoral allowance by 17%. (The MP is under no obligation to return any surplus to the Treasury.) A fortune is being spent in Africa to acquire votes for a temporary Security Council seat, and massive funds spent on overseas travel, with some say the ultimate aim of making our leader the U.N. Secretary General. (Andrew Bolt, *Herald Sun*, 15/5/2009)

By releasing the ministers' record travel bill just for last winter while the Treasurer was delivering the budget, the government hoped to escape scrutiny. (This tactic proved far too clever; it ensured the story appeared on the front page of the nation's highest circulating newspaper, the *Sunday Telegraph* (17/5/2009).)

In addition the vast sums extracted from the taxpayers to pay for campaigns to secure the re-election of our politicians have been increased.

And although the Treasurer has decreed that our children will now have to work until they are 67, our politicians remain eligible for their generous, mainly taxpayer funded pensions even before middle age. Notwithstanding this, the heading "Parliament of spivs; prince of good sense" is not about our Federal Parliament.

However it is about our Prince. He is the Prince, readers may recall, whose succession our republican politicians now believe will be the silver bullet which will finally deliver into their grasping hands a politicians' republic.

Contempt for politicians unrivalled in living memory.... This heading is in fact from two consecutive editorials in *The Spectator* (16/5/2009). They are not about our trusty and well beloved Federal Parliament. They are about her dear mother, the mother of all parliaments, who sadly in old age has sunk into the depths of depravity.

As *The Spectator* says, the expenses scandal means that the British nation now beholds Parliament with a collective contempt unrivalled in living memory. Harsh words indeed, but entirely appropriate. We need, says the editor, a modern-day Trollope to do justice to this wave of revulsion, triggered by the remarkable revelations in the London *Daily Telegraph*. "Gilbert Burnet, the great ecclesiastical and political historian of his time, wrote of the corrupt MPs elected in 1710 that "this is the worst Parliament I ever saw."

It was not always like this. Thirty years ago, Lady Thatcher decided she did not like the colour of the walls at 10 Downing Street, and ordered it redecorated. But as Fraser Nelson says, she paid for this herself.

How different it is now. As the editor rightly observes, the Palace of Westminster is home not to an ancient institution but to a disgraced rabble of second-rate spivs who have dishonoured the public trust as flagrantly as they have raided the public purse.

This has extended even to the once venerable House of Lords, an institution so debauched by Mr. Blair in his alleged constitutional reforms and by some of the appointments he made. How wise our Founding Fathers were when they removed the ultimate control of the Australian constitution from the politicians and vested it in the people.

Not every part of our constitution is faltering... But says *The Spectator*, at a moment of such alarming disconnection between the political class and the electorate, "it is cheering to be reminded that not every part of our constitution is faltering, or at odds with the grain of public opinion."

The editorial refers to a recent visit by the Prince of Wales to the Royal Institute of British Architects. This was 25 years after his famous description of the proposed National Gallery extension as a "monstrous carbuncle on the face of a much-loved and elegant friend."

As *The Spectator* observes: The Prince was mocked as a fogley and a reactionary. Some unethical journalists have long tried to reinforce this caricature. "But his cry from the heart against the vandalism wrought by modern architecture proved to be the act of a popular tribune – not least because it reflected common sense as opposed to Corbusian delusion," says the editor.

From Australia you would think The Royal Institute has more reason than its Australian counterpart to change its name, or to engage in the uncomfortable and indeed impossible practice of trying to walk on both sides of the street as the Australian one does so badly. ("The Royal Australian Institute of Architects has a bet each way", 30 August 2008)

But it has not. The Royal Institute of British Architects it is and The Royal Institute of British Architects it will remain.

The constitutional monarchy in good health... And as *The Spectator* says, the Prince came to The Royal Institute in the spirit of friendship rather than to gloat, but – quite rightly – stood his ground. (A video of his speech is embedded on the ACM site.)

He remains implacably opposed to the "brutal destruction" of so many British townscapes and the way in which "much of the urban realm [became] ...de-personalised and defaced."

This was a spirited and sensible intervention by the Prince, observed *The Spectator*.

"With Parliament effectively AWOL as it sorts out its affairs, it is good to know that our constitutional monarchy is still in such good health."

This is an opinion with which the great majority of rank and file Australians will heartily concur. The republicans who think his succession will deliver them their politicians' republic have yet another moment of truth to endure."

Further reading: "The People's Prince" with a foreword by Sir Walter Crocker. It is a compilation of a number of Prince Charles' major speeches. Price \$12.00 plus postage. Would make a delightful gift for that young person who wants to further understand our future king.

CHINESE TAKEAWAY – BRAVO SENATORS XENOPHON AND JOYCE! According to *The Sunday Mail*, 10/5/09, Senator Nick Xenophon and Nationals' Senator Barnaby Joyce have joined forces to mount a campaign to block Chinese investment in the mining giant Rio Tinto. Go to it folk and get behind our patriotic and loyal Australian Senators! View the Senators' campaign video on: <http://www.news.com.au/adelaidenow/story/0,,25454059-5006301,00.html>

WHAT IF DICK PRATT WAS AN ANGLO-AUSTRALIAN? by Betty Luks: Australian Jewish businessman/billionaire Dick Pratt is no longer with us. Pratt's long-term mistress was granted one hour to say goodbye to him before he 'checked out of the great hotel of life' (*The Advertiser*, 30/4/09, p.7). What, only one mistress? For a billionaire, one would not have been surprised to find a dozen! And then there was the funeral, attended by a glum looking Bob Hawke and John Howard. Howard looked the part in his Jewish skullcap. Yes, John Howard supported the move to have the billionaire renominated to Australia's highest honour – The Order of Australia. Howard said: 'There was never a good reason for him to have lost it in the first place'. (*The Advertiser*, 1/5/09, p.1)

Now let me see if I follow this. Pratt handed back the AO last year, because he feared that he would have been stripped of it after criminal charges were made against him for giving false and misleading evidence to the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC). These charges were never answered but were withdrawn a day before Pratt's death. According to the eulogy by Sam Lipski (*The Australian*, 1/5/09, p.12), "Richard was cast in a play that should never have been produced". The legal drama was "unjustly conceived". So, does this mean that Pratt was utterly innocent of price fixing? Why then did the ACCC press ahead with the criminal proceedings, stopping only when death claimed Pratt?

The answer seems to be, according to the papers, that Pratt and the ACCC's Graeme Samuel had a personal dispute (*The Australian*, 30/4/09, p.6). But so what? Public prosecutions are controlled by the Commonwealth Director of Public Prosecutions, not the ACCC, and they are not pressed lightly, without at least a *prima facie* case. Although four key documents tendered as evidence by the ACCC were not allowed by the Federal Court, the prosecution withdrew charges against Pratt for ill health, rather than evidential reasons. We do not know what other evidence they had against Pratt. Pratt had already been fined a small \$36 million in the civil price-fixing case.

Dick Pratt should not be given another Order of Australia. The civil price-fixing case alone indicates that he is not worthy of posthumously holding this award. He should be treated just like any other rich Australian who blotted his copy-book. Otherwise... that would be discrimination – *wouldn't it?*

"ON TARGET" is printed and published by The Australian League of Rights, 145 Russell St., Melbourne.
Postal Address: GPO Box 1052, Melbourne, 3001. Telephone: (03) 9650 9749, Fax: (03) 9650 9368.
Subscription \$45.00 p.a.