

# GOOD GOVERNMENT

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## THE PROPER REVENUE OF A NATION IS THE SITE RENT OF ITS LAND

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143 Lawson Street,  
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Telephones: 74 8901, 69 7153

Editor E. B. Donohue

### CONTENTS

EDITORIAL	3-4
PSEUDO RIGHTS & RIGHTS	5
THOMAS COOPER: EARLY LIBERTARIAN	6
REFORMING PARLIAMENTARY DEMOCRACY	7-8
OFF THE BEATEN TRACK	8-9
ARE WE MARXIAN NOW?	10-13
DEVELOPMENT OF THE POOR THROUGH THE CIVILISING OF THE RICH	13-14
THE ROLE OF RULES	15-16
READERS' LETTERS	17-18

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GOOD GOVERNMENT

### WHO OWNS AUSTRALIA?

There is considerable clamour for some action to prevent the foreign takeover and to limit the extent of foreign holdings in Australian companies.

The news items are emotional and sensational. A little reflection on the matter indicates that the issues have not been clearly thought out.

Is such restrictive action necessary? Will it be effective? What do we hope to avoid?

Treating the last question first we are afraid probably that the foreign interests will drain off millions of dollars of Australian wealth for the benefit of shareholders in America or Britain or some other country and in so doing take something that rightly belongs in Australia to the Australian people. We know instinctively that such a situation is not right without a crystal clear understanding why.

Who owns Australia is largely a matter of rights. If anyone has any rights at all who has a right to what? Does everyone have equality of rights? All must agree that each individual has the right to live and that no one does not have that right. We must then consider what is necessary to life. Mother nature has provided an abundance of the materials and forces which adequately support life. The door to mother nature's storehouse is land. The equal right to live means equal right of access to the land. Without access to the necessary elements man cannot live. Equal rights do not prevail where *some* control the materials and forces from which *all* must live.

The earth is an entitled estate by a deed written into the constitution of nature, a deed which no human proceedings can alter. It is entitled upon all the generations of the children of men; an inheritance determined by a fixed and unalterable succession of heirs. Each succeeding generation has but a kenney for life. We may admit that a man may frisk away his own natural rights but not the rights of his successors.

Private ownership by some of that from which all must live is not equitable. It is not possible to divide the land equally to give each family or individual an equal share. It is *possible* to divide the rent of land equally or apply it to purposes of common benefit.

By right then the people who live here, the residents, own Australia and further, the fears about foreign ownership also apply valdly to local ownership. "For if the butter and eggs, the pigs and poultry must be taken from the Irish peasant and exported to pay for his landlord's wine and cigars, what difference does it make to him where the wine is drunk or the cigars are smoked?" (Henry George: The Land Question, chapter one). Foreign and local ownership constitute the same danger to the rights of the residents so legislation to limit the extent of foreign ownership only treats one part of the symptoms of the trouble without getting at the cause at all).

The major requirements to restore and preserve the equality of rights of the residents of Australia is that all land users must compensate annually the rest of the community for the advantages and benefits enjoyed in the occupation of each and every site except where the sites are marginal and there is no competition to occupy such sites. The application of this fund of compensation to purposes of common benefit will ensure equality of ownership of Australia by the rightful

owners the residents, regardless of who owns the business enterprise.

The state must collect on behalf of the community the compensation offered by the individual and corporate occupiers of all other than marginal sites and dispose of this fund according to the wishes of the community.

A. FERRISS

## HOW PR WOULD HAVE CHANGED ELECTION RESULT

By TONY MAIDEN

Despite the drop in total DLP vote at the general elections, the party would have got one member into the House of Representatives under proportional representation.

Also, the Liberal Party would have retained two Tasmanian members. Under the existing voting system, it has none.

And, based on figures available at the close of counting on election night, the ALP would have a majority of 10 with 66 seats, as against the Liberals' 46 and the Country Party's 10.

The society—which claims to have about 500 members and has been arguing the case for PR for over 40 years—issued the analysis yesterday.

It is based on a restructuring of existing electorates into 31 multi-member electorates, and the election of members upon quota, as used for the Senate and Tasmanian State elections.

Under this quota preferential method of PR (which distinguishes it, according to the society, from more dubious forms of PR such as the European list-system) the ALP would have returned 16 members in Victoria, 25 in NSW, two in Tasmania, 10 in Queensland, five in Western Australia and seven in South Australia.

The Country Party would have returned five members in NSW, three in Victoria and two in Queensland, while the Liberals' 46 would have come from 14 in Victoria, 15 in NSW, two in Tasmania, six in Queensland, four in WA, and five in SA.

The DLP's sole member would have come from Victoria and, more specifically, from the multi-member electorate comprising Labor, Gellibrand, Maribyrnong, Burke, Wills, Scullin and Melbourne.

This electorate would be entitled to seven members under the quota-preferential system—and would have returned four ALP members and two Liberals.

The society says that the DLP's combined vote in this "electorate" of 36,953 at the close of counting on election day would almost certainly have entitled it to the remaining seat.

The quota would have been 42,765 votes—which the DLP could reasonably be expected to meet following allocation of preferences.

Much would depend, of course, on the structure of the multi-member seats, the society admits.

On a national basis, the ALP earned only 63 seats under the method but won 66 in the society's analysis.

Similarly, the Liberals would be entitled to only 41 seats on a national basis, though the Country Party's representation would be unchanged at 10.

The DLP, on the other hand, "earned" sufficient votes nationally to have six seats, and the Australian Party "earned" three seats.

But as the society grouped the electorates, these entitlements were sufficiently strong in only the one Victorian region to meet the quota level.

The secretary of the society, the Proportional Representation Society of Victoria, Mr. A. Halkyard, said that the probable result by quota preferential counting was still "much fatter" both in overall representation and local representation than the probable result by majority-preferential counting.

(Reproduced from *Australian Financial Review*, Dec. 5).

## FIRST PAST THE POST IN NEW ZEALAND

Sir,

The alleged admiration of certain politicians for first-past-the-post might well if the figures of the results in the last general elections in New Zealand are studied. Here are the latest figures (possibly very slightly modified by final figures).

VOTES PERCENTAGE SEATS		SEATS	
(Thousands) OF VOTES ENTITLED		WON	
Labour	622	48.18	42.2
National	582	11.45	96.1
Social Credit	86	6.72	5.8
Others	28	3.55	2.9
	100.00	87	87

  

1969 ELECTIONS		
PERCENTAGE SEATS	SEATS	SEATS
OF VOTES ENTITLED	WON	WON
Labour	41	37
National	45	38
Social Credit	9	7
Others	2	2
	100	84

"EQUALITY" OF VOTES  
In the 1972 Election, the following votes were required to elect a member:

Labour	11118
National	17170
Social Credit	86171 elected nobody
Others	23652 elected nobody

### SWING

Labour gained 4.48 per cent of the votes, and a swing of 16 seats (over 18 per cent). Liberals lost 3.55 per cent of the votes, and a swing of 13 seats (15 per cent).

The inequity of this system is apparent, and the unbalanced unseating of experienced members is also apparent.

First-past-the-post in other places, such as Britain, and South Africa, and in the past in Australia, has often produced even worse results than in New Zealand.

It is not possible to have electoral justice in single-member electorates, although preferential voting reduces the degree of injustice. Proportional voting which changes the basis of election from a majority to a quota, will remove both these basically objectionable features.

W. A. DOWE,  
Lakemba.