THE HON. MEMBER FOR WANNON - MALCOLM FRASER

For the last two and a half years, the present Government has been endeavouring to turn Australians into a nation of bureaucrats.

Steadily, through the twin weapons of high taxation and political centralisation, the Whitlam government has been working to bring about a new social order.

The political scene has been stewn with slogans about multi-national corporations and buying back the farm.

The present Deputy Prime Minister, Mr. Crean, when he was Treasurer caused a run on building societies.

He advised Australians to invest in the Stock Exchange, and then set about the destruction of private enterprise through an ineptly handled credit squeeze.

The Minister for Minerals and Energy, Mr. Connor, attacked the men who built Australia's mining industry as hillbillies.

The Labor Caucus chose the wrong men for the ministry and the Prime Minister chose the wrong men for specific portfolios.

As a result, we have had two reshuffles in less than three years and three Treasurers.

The nation is afflicted with record levels of unemployment, of inflation, of interest rates and of industrial unrest.

Over the last year productivity has declined. Throughout the country economic creativity has been assaulted and destroyed.

It may be years before the building industry recovers. The textile and clothing industries, the rural industries, are all reeling under the impact of the Government's policies.

There have been no new major development projects begun since the Government took office. The search for oil has effectively halted.

The total of these and many other factors is a most serious crisis in the economy.

The approach of the Government to consequences of its own extravagance and incompetence points to a crisis in individual freedom.

As private industry is run down, so the public service grows. Employment last year in private industry was down by 140,000, while employment in the public sector was up by 80,000.
As a result of Government policy, the time of the public service, down through State to Local Government level, is increasingly taken up with red tape.

It is not enough for the Government to provide funds through its R.E.D. Scheme for unemployment relief. It must also require local Councils to take up time and money justifying to Canberra how these funds are spent. Federal Ministers are involved in decisions on kerbing and guttering rural footpaths.

The Government in Canberra has reduced the status of State and Local Governments and made the average person more and more subject to remote decisions.

It has destroyed his job security through wide sections of the community, giving him the alternative of seeking a place in the public service, which is massive, hierarchical and not to everyone's liking.

Through the tax system it has progressively robbed him of the power to decide how his own income is to be spent. When the Opposition Parties return to Government it will be their task to restore the emphasis to true individualism which emphasises the value of each person.

Social change is inevitable and desirable, but the path to be followed must be one that contributes towards the self esteem of individuals and the respect with which they hold each other.

Australian citizens must have maximum possible participation in the decisions which affect them, and maximum control over the incomes they earn.

Free enterprise means a choice of jobs and of goods in the market place, and in this way control by the citizen over what is produced.

It means economic productivity for the business community, which is the source of national prosperity.

A significant aspect of the Opposition approach is being unveiled this week.

The new policy on industrial relations is designed to produce a system in which mutual respect will operate to stabilise the present chaotic system.

The policy is in many ways more enlightened than anything that has come from the Labor Party.

There has been speculation about the nature of the consequences which this legislation provides for breaches of industrial law.
In any rational society there are rules for every area of activity, and the industrial arena is too important for it to be made an exception.

So naturally there will be consequences when agreed industrial rules are breached.

But these consequences will be determined by means of a judicial process. There will be no return to the circumstances of the 1960's in which once a bans clause was placed in an award, if the Union then went on strike there would be an automatic fine even if a strike was provoked by employers.

The new policy is far sighted. It is also the first of a series of revised policy statements which have begun to flow as part of the continuing process of policy review.

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