

**ADDRESS-IN-REPLY**

*Motion*

Resumed from 19 June.

**HON J.A. SCOTT** (South Metropolitan) [4.35 pm]: In supporting this motion, like other members before me, I congratulate all those newly elected members of this House. Once again, I congratulate you, Mr President, for being elected President of this House, although somewhat reluctantly. Unlike Caesar, there were not three refusals first. However, it is good to see you in the Chair. That is not to say that Hon George Cash did not do a very good job during his term as President. I was very impressed with his fairness and the way in which he was prepared to look at new ideas for making the operation of this Chamber more efficient for the sake of all members. I congratulate him on his election as Chairman of Committees in this House.

I also congratulate the Government on the opening ceremony. Its symbolism was better than we have had in the past. In offering my congratulations, I should also add that I have been very impressed with the new Governor who attended and addressed Parliament. I have met him and his wife when he was carrying out his duties around the State. They are doing an excellent job. However, I am a very firm republican and look forward to the day when the position of Governor is changed to either a president or some other position which represents this State in a more direct way. I have never understood the symbolism of the Governor, as the Queen's representative - albeit the Queen of Australia - opening this Parliament when the Queen lives in another nation and is the Queen of another nation and only doubles up as the Queen of Australia - her part-time job.

Our Governors are nearly always from the military. I wonder at the symbolism of that. Does having a head of state of another country opening our Parliament mean that we are unable to let go of the mother country's apron strings? Does it mean that our Parliament is dependent on force rather than on wisdom when putting its views to the community and we therefore must have a military person as Governor? Does it also mean that in retaining the Queen's representative to open Parliament we are a society that wants to keep class differences rather than to have equality and egalitarianism? I cannot understand the position of One Nation in being for Queen and country as I think that concept is against what that party stands for. I was brought up to believe that everybody was equal - it may be due to my Irish Catholic background. My life experiences have shown me that it is the right way to go. It is hard to say how one arrives at certain positions. I find it hard to understand that our society tries to obtain equality, yet we retain a symbol of class difference - that some people are born to rule. I find the situation extraordinary. On many occasions we live through our puzzlement as to the reasons for the differences and get on with our lives.

Rather than project a defensive image to the world it would be better for us to look to another person to represent us as our head of state. An academic or a teacher could project the importance of scholarship. An environmentalist could show our concern for the environment. A nurse or doctor could show that we want to have a healthy population. There are many people in the community who do noble things for the community and who could portray a different symbolism from our current head of state. I am not saying that the current Governor is not doing a good job.

I grew up during the Cold War and I remember clearly when President Kennedy was about to bomb Cuba. Even in Doodlakine, as a naive country lad, I grasped that the world was in a dangerous situation. I have to say that I thought I would be safe in Doodlakine, even from a nuclear holocaust. Doodlakine was once considered as a capital for Australia; it was proposed by the State. I never believed that Doodlakine would be the recipient of a nuclear weapon from Russia. I felt safe. I later met people from Europe who had been on the frontline during the Cold War. They had lived in Germany and England, where people had been traumatised by the possibility that, at any day, their lives and countries could face nuclear obliteration.

Hon Peter Foss: I lived there and I did not feel traumatised.

Hon J.A. SCOTT: Hon Peter Foss must have been very brave while he was there.

Maybe he was unaware of the fear that dominated many people's lives in Europe at that time, and which caused them to march in the streets and so on. The wonderful thing about people on the conservative side of the politics is that they have quite an ability to remove themselves from the realities of ordinary life. I therefore understand how Hon Peter Foss might not have noticed the possible obliteration of Europe and a large part of the northern hemisphere. In that period a number of philosophies and movements emerged, quite a few of which were nihilistic movements, but some were about achieving peace and goodwill on the planet. Hon Dee Margetts has passed me a note saying that when she was at university in Norwich, they had regular nuclear alert drills in the middle of the night with sirens blaring, etc. Hon Peter Foss must have been a very sound sleeper when he was living in Europe.

The peace and anti-nuclear movement formed at that time helped us to move to a period of tolerance and nuclear disarmament. For a short period in our history people did not feel as though a threat was hanging over their heads, at least those in this part of the world and in a few other places did not feel that, despite the regional conflicts at that time. Those regional conflicts have never been seen as the first step towards a greater world war.

However, we are now experiencing change and we are living in a very dangerous period. Having emerged from the Cold War and the threat of nuclear obliteration, we are now in the Bush era. There is a chilling irony, in that the toxic Texan who has signed many a death warrant has now moved onto the world stage. President Bush has moved from Texas and his focus is now on international hillbilly feudalism, which he wants to move to the rest of the world. I was surprised about the extent to which this minority president has moved to put us on the brink of a nuclear Armageddon. I am also surprised at the way in which our federal Government, Mr Downer and Prime Minister Howard have rushed to back him on setting up this nuclear Armageddon. As usual, they are tugging their forelocks and stamping around and doing their bidding.

Hon G.T. Giffard: Does it surprise you that they are doing things as usual?

Hon J.A. SCOTT: I thought perhaps they might have moved on from the extent of kowtowing that had previously existed. To be honest, I am not altogether comfortable with the Leader of the Opposition, Mr Beazley, having the nickname of bomber-Beazley and being somebody who could reverse that particular decision. However, I understand the Labor Party has said it would not enter into any sort of partnership with President Bush and his new Star Wars initiative. President Bush has spoken to Ronald Reagan and has been able to elicit from him, despite his medical problems, some meaning from the old Star Wars program. He will now renew his push to make the United States the bullyboy of the world.

The world's greatest concern was nuclear proliferation and nuclear war. That was resolved, and greenhouse gases and natural environment collapse became the biggest threats to survival on this planet. However, George Bush has managed to make both big issues. George is not an ordinary President. He is not satisfied with nuclear Armageddon; now he has decided that he will not have a bar of dealing with the greenhouse issue. He has done that to ensure that the United States stays on top financially. He does not want to reduce the number of coal and oil companies, with which he is associated. They pay for his election campaigns and he does not want them to suffer any losses in the quest to ensure that the planet survives. I do not know how far out his thinking goes. It seems a short-sighted way of thinking.

I heard Hon Peter Foss say the other day that the Kyoto agreement was ineffective. He does not understand that the Greens (WA) know that it will not cure everything. The agreement was never tight enough to solve the problem of greenhouse gas emissions. The reason for that is simply that the United States, assisted by the Howard Government, undermined the possibility of a proper treaty. Those two countries did their best to water down the arrangements to the point that they now say they are no good and that they do not want to have a bar of them. The US and the Howard support group gave the Kyoto agreement a real white-ant treatment.

Hon Peter Foss: How come you don't criticise communist China?

Hon J.A. SCOTT: I will speak about that when I reply to the motion on greenhouse gas emissions. I do not want to get into it now. However, I have already spoken on that issue to some degree. The member should look it up.

If George Bush does not get us through nuclear Armageddon, he will make sure, through the destruction of the world's climate, that he causes the deaths of millions of people on this planet. It is ironic that he crows about the amount of murderers he has had executed in Texas when he will outdo them many times over. He will make the criminals in Texas look like gentle people.

Hon M.J. Criddle: What's the underlying reason for that?

Hon J.A. SCOTT: The underlying reason is greed and power. Mr Bush wants to continue to get support. It costs a lot of money to be an American President and to have that power. To get that money, one must look after the big interests. It is well known in the United States that one cannot become a President unless one has buckets full of monetary support. Mr Bush has been aligned with oil companies all his life, and he clearly looks to them for that support. It worries me that somebody who seems to be so lacking in forethought and intelligence has managed to get to the top of the United States political system. If ever there were a candidate to beat Timothy McVeigh for the number one death spot in the hall of infamy, it would be George W. Bush.

I also want to discuss the attacks on our system of democracy, particularly on our local and state institutions, through the adherence of our political leaders to -

Hon B.K. Donaldson: Are you talking about the Labor Party?

Hon J.A. SCOTT: To be honest, we are waiting to see how far the Labor Party will go with this. I have grave concerns about a number of areas, including some of the ways in which the public service is being looked at. I have not seen the final plan yet, so it is a bit early for me to do or say anything, and the Government may surprise me and do something good! Who knows. In recent years we have seen a real attack on the rights of citizens in their own countries. An interesting set of discussions has gone on among people via books, the Internet, etc on the disempowerment of communities, and individuals within communities, through globalisation. Hon Norman Moore recently spoke of this when he interjected during a speech by Hon Giz Watson. In recent times there have been quite a few examples of this diminution of our rights. A good example is genetically modified foods. I spoke recently in this House about the Canadian gentleman who was in Australia representing a large Canadian canola seed company that was finding it hard to export canola into Europe because the EC prefers to buy Australian canola that is not genetically modified. This gentleman has been travelling around our State telling our farmers that if they joined with Canada and grew GM canola, Canada and Australia would be in a really good position because the EC would have no choice except to buy GM canola, because we are the two major exporters of canola. It is one thing for a Canadian with a vested interest trying to hold on to his market by convincing Australian farmers about GM food; it is another when the Prime Minister of Australia seems hell-bent on forcing not only farmers but Australian consumers to have GM products either in their fields or in their mouths.

I will quote an email media release from Guy Hatchard of the Natural Food Commission dated 2 May 2001. It is an alert about Australian Government moves to bypass the New Zealand royal commission's finding to outlaw GM food labelling through the World Trade Organisation. It reads -

The Australian government has moved to unilaterally bypass consumer preferences for clear labelling of genetically modified food in New Zealand by calling, along with South Africa, for severe curbs on GM-Free and non-GM labels at the current meeting of the World Trade Organisation's CODEX Committee on 1st-4th May. If passed, these proposals will effectively prevent manufacturers from informing the public that specific products are free from GM ingredients and also prejudice the future recommendations of the New Zealand Royal Commission on Genetic Modification which is due to report in June. The full text of the Australian proposal follows this press release.

The Natural Food Commission believes that by introducing this motion at the WTO the Australian government is helping to implement a three-fold international strategy being used by the biotech industry to break consumer opposition to GM foods. Their aim is to abolish unambiguous or informative GM food labeling.

Members will recall that the Prime Minister did his best to prevent Australia from having that labelling. When the state health ministers met with him and said they wanted to have comprehensive labelling of genetically modified foods, he said that could not be done and insisted they allow a percentage of genetic modification in food.

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