

SPEAKING NOTES

**THE ORDER OF AUSTRALIA
THE VERY EARLY YEARS
BACKGROUND & ANECDOTES
(Phil Morrall AM, CSC)**

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References:

**Presentation by Sir David Smith KCVO,
AO to ACT Branch October 2004.**

**Personal recollections Canberra 1971 /
1978.**

Research via ‘Net’.

THE GENESIS

- **THE ORDER OF CANADA**
 - **1967 CENTENARY OF CANADIAN CONFEDERATION.**
 - **LESTER PEARSON (PM), JOHN MATHESON (Politician / Judge), JOHN HALSTEAD (Diplomat / Academic).**
 - **1966 SUGGESTED A SINGULAR CANADIAN HONOUR TO COINCIDE WITH CENTENARY.**
 - **TO BE CALLED **THE ORDER OF CANADA.****
 - **2nd ONLY TO IMPERIAL ORDER OF MERIT.**
 - **OM - PERSONAL GIFT OF SOVEREIGN.**
 - **OM - ONLY 24 LIVING RECIPIENTS.**
 - **FOR OUTSTANDING MERIT / DISTINGUISHED SERVICE.**
 - **ANY CANADIAN COULD NOMINATE.**
 - **ADVISORY COUNCIL TO CONSIDER NOMINASTIONS.**
 - **DETACHED FROM POLITICS.**
 - **APPROVED BY GOVERNOR-GENERAL**
 - **CORNERSTONE FOR THE CANADIAN HONOURS SYSTEM.**
 - **INSTITUTED IN 1967 AS SOCIETY OF HONOUR COMPANIONS, OFFICERS & MEMBERS.**

- **SERVING POLITICIAN & PUBLIC SERVANT INELIGIBLE FOR NOMINATION.**

- **GOUGH WHITLAM.**

- **1967 ELECTED LEADER OF ALP.**
- **THUS, LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION.**
- **ASKED QUESTIONS IN THE HOUSE.**
- **ADDED THE AUSTRALIAN HONOURS SYSTEM TO HIS 'ITS TIME – TO DO LIST.**
- **ALP VIEWED THE IMPERIAL HONOURS SYSTEM AS A CONSERVATIVE CLOSED CLUB.**
 - **POLITICAL PATRONAGE INFLUENCE OF ELITES**
 - **GG, STATE GOVERNORS.**
 - **PM, STATE PREMIERS.**
 - **SENIOR BUREAUCRATS AT ALL LEVELS.**
 - **MINIMAL INVOLVEMENT BY ORDINARY AUSTRALIANS.**
 - **A VIEW FROM A POLITICAL PARTY OUT OF GOVERNMENT FOR OVER 20 YEARS!!**
 - **BUT SO MUCH OF THIS WAS TRUE!!**

- **1972 – IT'S TIME. 2 DECEMBER 1972**

- **THE ELECTION OF THE ALP TO GOVERNMENT.**
- **A TIME OF GOVERNMENT AND POLITICAL REVOLUTION.**
- **A TIME OF BUREAUCRATIC & ADMINISTRATIVE UPHEAVAL.**

- **THE DAWN OF A NEW AUSTRALIA OR THE END OF CIVILISATION AS WE KNOW IT!!**
- **WHITLAM & BARNARD SWORN INTO MULTIPLE MINISTRIES, UNTIL 19 DECEMBER.**

- **THE BIG TO-DO LIST**

- **END CONSCRIPTION.**
 - **MILITARY INVOLVEMENT IN VIETNAM, ENDED IN 1971/72, BY COALITION.**
- **RECOGNISE COMMUNIST CHINA / PNG INDEPENDENCE.**
 - **WHITLAM PM & FOREIGN MINISTER.**
- **FREE TERTIARY EDUCATION.**
- **UNIVERSAL HEALTH CARE (MEDIBANK)**
- **LAW REFORM – FAMILY COURT, NO FAULT DIVORCE / HUMAN RIGHTS / ANTI-DISCRIMINATION LEGISLATION.**
- **REORGANISATION OF DEFENCE STRUCTURES.**
- **APS REFORMS**
 - **MARRIED WOMEN CAN SERVE IN APS.**
 - **PAY & LEAVE CHANGES.**
- **ON THE TO-DO LIST AS A PERSONAL PM PROJECT – THE ORDER OF AUSTRALIA & AUSTRALIAN HONOURS SYSTEM.**
- ***BIG CHANGES* – IMPACTING MOST AREAS OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION & GOVERNMENT.**

- **THE POLITICAL REALITY 1972 / 1975.**
 - **BACKGROUND TO THIS ERA.**
 - **HOSTILE SENATE.**
 - **PARLIAMENTARY WARFARE. STALLED LEGISLATION.**
 - **DOUBLE DISSOLUTION 18 MAY 1974.**
 - **ALP SMALLER MAJORITY IN REPs BUT 3 EXTRA SENATORS.**
 - **NEW GG – SIR JOHN KERR. 11 JULY 1974.**
 - **JOINT SITTING. 6 AUGUST 1974.**
 - **LEGISLATION PASSED.**
 - **CONTINUED PARLIAMENTARY WARFARE.**
 - **KHEMLANI AFFAIR.**
 - **MINISTERIAL RESIGNATIONS.**
 - **BLOCKING OF SUPPLY.**
 - **DISMISSAL. 11NOV75.**
 - **IMAGE ON STEPS OPH.**
 - **THE CREATION OF THE ORDER OF AUSTRALIA WAS CONDUCTED INSIDE THIS POLITICAL, LEGISLATIVE AND ADMINISTRATIVE WHIRLPOOL.**

- **1972 / 1975 – CREATION OF THE ORDER.**
 - **DECEMBER 1972 - PM INSTRUCTIONS.**
 - **INTENDED TO DISCUSS WITH THE QUEEN, 1973. (ACTUALLY DECEMBER 1974.)**
 - **THE ORDER OF CANADA WAS THE DECLARED REFERENCE MODEL.**
 - **BUT THE ORDER OF AUSTRALIA WAS TO BE CLEARLY ‘ AUSTRALIAN’.**
 - **THE PM’S NON-NEGOTIABLE FACTORS.**
 - **DIVORCED FROM POLITICAL PATRONAGE.**
 - **DIVORCED FROM INFLUENCE OF ELITES.**
 - **EGALITARIAN NOMINATION PROCESS.**
 - **MANAGEMENT OUTSIDE NORMAL BUREAUCRATIC STRUCTURES.**
 - **ADVISORY COUNCIL.**
 - **GOVERNOR-GENERAL APPROVES HONOURS.**
- **THE ‘CLUB’ IS NOT AMUSED.**
 - **WHILE OF COURSE THE ‘NEW’ MINISTERS AND PERMANENT HEADS FULLY SUPPORTED THE PM’S INITIATIVE.**
 - **MANY POWERFUL PEOPLE & OFFICES DID NOT LOOK KINDLY ON THEIR POSSIBLE DIMINISHED POWER & INFLUENCE.**

- THE ORDER OF AUSTRALIA CONCEPT BECAME FOR SOME A TOTEM OF POLITICAL & SOCIAL DISSENT TO THE WHOLE ALP AGENDA.
- THE IMPERIAL HONOURS CONTINUED AT STATE LEVEL.
- *MORE ON THIS LATER.*
- **ADMINISTRATIVE REALITY 1974 / 75.**
 - THE GG HAD NO STAFF, NO OFFICE SPACE & NO PROCEDURES OR PROCESSES TO ADMINISTER THIS NEW HONOURS SYSTEM.
 - SIR DAVID LIAISED WITH CANADIAN AUTHORITIES, OVER 1974, AS INTERIM MEASURE, FOR 1975 LAUNCH.
 - EVENTUALLY IN EARLY 1975 HE WAS DESPATCHED TO CANADA AND THE UK TO ACQUIRE MORE BACKGROUND AND IDEAS.
 - **BILL HESELTINE (SIR WILLIAM) – WORTH RESEARCHING**
 - WEST AUSTRALIAN. PM DEPARTMENT. SECRETARY TO MENZIES, ACTING OFFICIAL SECRETARY TO GG.
 - PRESS OFFICER ROYAL HOUSEHOLD 1960's
 - ASSISTANT PRIVATE SECRETARY (EVENTUALLY PRIVATE SECRETARY) TO QUEEN.
 - **'BACK HOME - KIND OFFER FROM 'SIR HUMPHREY.'**
 - **'HUMPHREY' IN INTERESTS OF PRIVACY!!**

- **PERHAPS THE FEDERAL BUREAUCRACY COULD ASSIST BY LOCATING THE NEW HONOURS SECRETARIAT IN VARIOUS GOVERNMENT OFFICES?**
- **PERHAPS EVEN FINDING SOME TEMPORARY STAFF AND A SOUND SENIOR APS OFFICER TO LEAD THE HONOURS SECRETARIAT?**
- **GG - THANKS, BUT NO THANKS.**
 - **REFERS TO PM'S FOUNDING DIRECTIONS & DOCUMENTATION.**
 - **HIS OFFICIAL SECRETARY WILL BE SECRETARY OF THE ORDER.**
- **OLD COTTAGES AND STORE ROOMS WERE CLEANED OUT.**
- **DESKS, CHAIRS ETC AND STAFF WERE BEGGED, BORROWED AND ACQUIRED!**
- **THESE OFFERS OF 'ASSISTANCE' WERE REPEATED THROUGHOUT THE EARLY YEARS WELL INTO 1982 / 1984.**
- **VARIOUS GG's DECLINED GRACEFULLY!!**
 - **REFERS TO PM'S FOUNDING DIRECTIONS & DOCUMENTATION.**

○ **FORMAL APPROVAL FEBRUARY 1975.**

- **PM WHITLAM MET QUEEN DECEMBER 1974 – THE LETTERS PATENT FORMALLY APPROVED ON 14 FEBRUARY 1975.**
- **LEADING TO A FIRST LIST – QUEEN'S BIRTHDAY 1975.**

- **NOTE: AUSTRALIAN BRAVERY DECORATIONS WERE ALSO APPROVED.**

- **INVESTITURES 1975 / 1977.**

- **FIRST LIST OF 106 - QB 1975.**
 - **COMPANIONS - SIX**
 - **OFFICERS - EIGHT**
 - **MEMBERS – NINETY - TWO**
 - **BUT NO MEDALS (ADDED IN 1976 WITH KNIGHTS / DAMES).**
- **THE QUEEN WISHED TO CONDUCT THE FIRST INVESTITURE, DURING HER FORTHCOMING VISIT (PERHAPS LATE 1975 / EARLY 1976).**
- **BUT CERTAIN POLITICAL EVENTS INTERVENED!!**
- **IN THE EVENT IT WAS 1977 BEFORE THIS INVESTITURE WAS CONDUCTED.**
- **106 RECIPIENTS PLUS GUESTS WERE ASSEMBLED IN CANBERRA AND HER MAJESTY CONDUCTED A VERY SOLID ONE HOUR CEREMONY.**
 - **NEVER AGAIN. COST / LOGISTICS.**
- **BUT OF COURSE BY THAT TIME THERE WERE 4 MORE LISTS, INCLUDING QB 77, AWAITING INVESTITURES.**
- **THE GG GOES ON THE ROAD!!**
 - **GOVERNMENT HOUSES IN EACH STATE, THEN DARWIN, KATHERINE & ALICE SPRINGS.**
 - **NEVER AGAIN!!**

- FROM AUSTRALIA DAY 1978 THE STATE GOVERNORS TOOK OVER SHARING THE WORKLOAD.
- **1982 – NEW GOVERNMENT HOUSE & LODGE?**
 - SIR HUMPHREY RETURNS.
 - MOVE HONOURS SECRETARIAT.
 - LOWER REFURB COSTS.
 - GG SAYS NO – REFERS TO FOUNDATION PRINCIPLES OF 1972.
- **1983 / 1984 NEW ALP GOVERNMENT.**
 - PM HAWKE ANNOUNCED INTENDED COMPLETION OF THE AUSTRALIAN HONOURS SYSTEM
 - CONSPICUOUS, GALLENTRY, MERITORIOUS & APS AWARDS.
 - AS ORIGINALLY INTENDED BY PM WHITLAM IN 1972.
 - **A THWARTED BUREAUCRATIC ‘COUP’.**
 - CABINET DECISION RE REVERTING TO NOMINATIONS VIA PM, PREMIERS (75%) AND ONLY 25% THROUGH THE COUNCIL.
 - NO CONSULTATION WITH GG. SIR NINIAN STEPHEN, AFTER CONSULTING THE CHIEF JUSTICE, RAISED THE MATTER WITH THE THEN PM, MINISTER(S) IN HIS CAPACITY AS CHANCELLOR.
 - **REFERS TO PM’S FOUNDING DIRECTIONS & DOCUMENTATION.**

- **POSSIBLE CONFLICT WITH LETTERS PATENT?**
- **OBTAINING SOVERIEGN VIEWS?**
- **PRESENTATION OF A FAIT-ACCOMPLI!!**
 - **THE CABINET SWIFTLY MET AND CANCELLED ITS DECISION!!**
 - **THE ADDITIONAL COMPONENTS OF THE HONOURS & AWARDS WERE INSTITUTED IN 1989.**
- **1990 NEW YEARS LIST THE END OF IMPERIAL HONOURS FOR AUSTRALIA.**
 - **NO AUSTRALIAN NOMINATIONS.**
 - **LETTER FROM SIR WILLAM HESELTINE CONVEYING HER MAJESTY'S BELIEF THAT NOW WAS THE TIME TO HONOUR AUSTRALIANS EXCLUSIVELY IN OUR AUSTRALIAN SYSTEM.**
 - **PM WHITLAM'S GOAL ACHIEVED.**
- **1996 ONWARDS.**
 - **SIR HUMPHREY IS BACK – AGAIN!!**
 - **INDEED, ABOUT EVERY 7 YEARS OR SO, ON ANY EXCUSE!!**
 - **GENERALLY REPULSED BY REFERENCE TO PM'S FOUNDING DIRECTIONS.**

REWINDING TO 1972.

- **1972 DECISIONS RE MEMBERSHIP OF ADF.**
 - **SIR ARTHUR TANGE SECRETARY OF DEFENCE. WORTH RESEARCHING.**
 - **GOVT DECISION - HENCEFORTH ONLY AUSTRALIAN CITIZENS COULD BE IN ARMED FORCES.**
 - **ORDER OF AUSTRALIA POLICIES, PROCESSES & CHECKLISTS, BEING DEVELOPED 1973 / 1974.**
 - **CIVIL (GENERAL) DIVISION – CHECK 1 - AUST CITIZENSHIP?**
 - **MILITARY DIVISION – NOT THERE!!**
 - **BECAUSE ONLY AUSTRALIAN CITIZENS COULD BE IN ARMED FORCES.**
 - **MY LITTLE SAGA!!**
 - **1987 QB – APPOINTED MEMBER MILITARY DIVISION.**
 - **BUT NOT AN AUSTRALIAN!!**
 - **A LESSON LEARNED AND RE-LEARNED OVER 40 YEARS AS AN ADMINISTRATOR.**
 - **THE IMPORTANCE OF AN HISTORICAL UNDERSTANDING OF THE SYSTEMS ONE ADMINISTERED.**

CONCLUSION

THE FUTURE

**FIFTY YEARS FOR THE ORDER OF AUSTRALIA.
AN EMBARRASMENT OF RICHES (NOMINATIONS).**

DELAY IN RESULTS.

PREDICTABLE CONTROVERSY

WOULD A FURTHER REVIEW BE APPROPRIATE?

**SIR HUMPHREY'S PERPETUAL OFFERS OF
ASSISTANCE NOTWITHSTANDING!!**

**CHARACTERISTICS OF THE ORDER OF
AUSTRALIA**

FOUNDING PM'S NON-NEGOTIABLE FACTORS.

DIVORCED FROM POLITICAL PATRONAGE.

DIVORCED FROM THE INFLUENCE OF ELITES.

EGALITARIAN NOMINATION PROCESS.

ADVISORY COUNCIL.

**MANAGEMENT OUTSIDE THE NORMAL
BUREAUCRATIC STRUCTURES.**

GOVERNOR-GENERAL APPROVED HONOURS.

**CHARACTERISTICS ARE NOT BY ACCIDENT OR
HAPPENSTANCE.**

**BUT THE RESULT OF EXPLICIT DESIGN IN THE
FOUNDATION DOCUMENTATION.**

**WE JUST NEED TO REMEMBER THIS BACKGROUND
AND IF NEEDS BE REMIND OTHERS, PERHAPS
EVEN:**

**THEIR EXCELLENCIES,
OFFICIAL SECRETARIES
COUNCIL MEMBERS AND
POLITICIANS OF ALL COLOURS.**

**BECAUSE SIR HUMPHREY REMEMBERS AND STILL
DOES NOT APPROVE!!**

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