

I STAND BY WHITE AUSTRALIA

By

The Hon. ARTHUR A. CALWELL,
Minister for Immigration

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On October 17, Professor W. Macmahon Ball, Professor of Political Science, University of Melbourne, was the writer of an article which appeared in the Melbourne "Argus".

Although in the main it was temperate, reasonable, and favourable to the Australian selective immigration policy, the article was entitled "Case for a Quota of Asian Migrants", and rather uncertainly and illogically suggested what the title implied.

I felt that the views expressed by the Professor contained fallacies which needed correction, despite the excellence of much of his article, so I wrote a reply which the "Argus" published on October 24.

My article, which appeared under the title "I Stand By White Australia—Appeasement Never Pays", was as follows, and is reprinted in this pamphlet for circulation among people who do not read the newspaper in which it originally appeared, as an expression of a faith which I believe I share with all true Australians.

ARTHUR A. CALWELL.

I Stand By White Australia

APPEASEMENT NEVER PAYS

By the

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Professor Macmahon Ball, in an article in *The Argus* of October 17, expresses the belief that the introduction of a quota for Asian migrants to Australia would be a wise step.

It is a step, the wisdom of which I would strongly challenge; and I am confident that I would have the overwhelming majority of Australians behind me in that challenge.

Introduction of a quota would simply be a form of appeasement—and appeasement has never solved any problem. There can be no half-measures in a matter such as the maintenance of the White Australia policy, on which Australians hold such emphatic views.

The ideal that this country, which was settled and developed by Europeans, should remain predominantly European was sponsored by our forefathers, and has had the unwavering support of all good Australians ever since. *Establishment of a quota system for Asians would be an undermining of that Australian ideal which, I am sure, Australians would not tolerate.*

"Token Quota"

But, apart from its impact on an ideal, let us consider just what a quota would mean in materialistic terms. On Professor Macmahon Ball's own admission, "abandonment of the White Australia policy would not provide any significant relief to the population pressure of East Asia." If "abandonment" of the policy would mean so little, how much less significant would be the effect merely of modifying the policy to the extent of permitting a token quota?

Establishment of a quota would be an empty gesture which could well be interpreted as an insult to our Asian neighbours. Such a system would create discrimination and, in all likelihood, would actually have the effect of restricting the number of people from certain Asiatic countries—Chinese, for example—who otherwise would come to Australia as tourists, as traders, or as students.

In amplifying that statement I would point out that at present any Asian may come to Australia and live here under permit as a trader, provided he can show that he has a turnover—a turnover as distinct from a profit—of only £10 a week. This turnover must be from overseas trade, imports from, and exports to, say, Malaya, and not from such occupations as market gardening.

An Asian, once established here as a trader, may bring in his wife, and when the value of his overseas trade is boosted to £20 a week he may bring in an Asian assistant. For every additional £500 a year of overseas trade he can have an additional assistant, provided the assistant is engaged solely in that trade and provided the Department of Immigration is satisfied his services in Australia are warranted.

Need Have No Fear

Permits of residence are renewed periodically as the years go by, provided the conditions of entry are observed. Asian traders need have no fear that for some unpredictable reason they will find themselves under orders to leave. Any children born in Australia to these traders and their wives become Australian citizens, whether they are Malay, Chinese, Indian, or any other Asian race. *There is no migration law under which Asian Australians could be deported.*

Those, then, are the regulations governing the entry of Asians into Australia. They are fair, have never been officially challenged by the government of any country in Asia, and I think they have more real meaning to our Asian neighbours than a quota would have.

As Sir Frederic Eggleston, former Australian Minister to China and the United States, stated in a recent article in a Sydney newspaper, "Notwithstanding the trifling quota given to Orientals by the United States, Australia has always been, and still is, more lenient in her policy than America."

It is this very leniency that has created the cases which are avidly seized on by maudlin sentimentalists and the sensation-mongering section of the Australian Press,

Majority Went

We take no unction unto ourselves for granting during the war sanctuary to thousands of people who normally would have been refused admission to Australia. It is only what any country with any compassion at all would have done. But we have a right to expect these people to honour their undertaking to return to their own countries at the conclusion of hostilities. It is to the credit of the great majority that they did not demur when called upon to return, and accepted repatriation without hesitation.

A minority, however, consistently ignored all warnings given them. These people were given extension after extension—and then had the audacity to assert that the extended time granted them gave them the right to permanent residence. Australia played fair with them; they did not play fair with Australia.

Eventually, to get rid of these people, it was necessary to bring down special legislation; legislation which was unchallenged in Parliament.

Some newspapers have played up, in spectacular fashion, the stories of deportees. Almost invariably they have seized on cases deserving least sympathy to support their charge against the Government of harsh and intolerant administration of the law. One after another their "sob stories" have been exploded by official denials based on facts contained in the files of the Immigration Department.

On the subject of deportations, a comparison of Australian and American figures is illuminating. During the years 1946 and 1947, which provide the latest figures available, the United States deported 33,038 persons, or approximately one deportation for each 4,200 head of population. During the same period Australia deported 143 persons, or approximately one deportation for each 48,000 head of our population.

Grave Damage

To quote again Sir Frederic Eggleston:—

"America's exclusion of Orientals was always ruthless before the establishment of the quota system, and now, outside the quotas, it is still ruthless for all migrants. Few exceptions

are made, and deportation follows any violation of temporary permits.

“The difference between Australia and America is that American action is taken as a matter of course by the people of that country, and is not ventilated in the Press, whereas, in Australia, criticism has a political basis, and is made without a knowledge of the circumstances of each case, in ignorance of Australian policy, and in ignorance of the policy of other countries. In addition, the liaison between Australian Associated Press and Reuter’s is used to ventilate cases in Asiatic countries in order to get an additional stick to beat the political tom-tom. The result is that grave damage is done to Australian interests without any real cause whatever.”

When Professor Macmahon Ball says “It is foolish and provocative to be shrill and strident in telling the world that our immigration policy is rigid and immutable,” he should address his remarks not to the Government, as I assume he is doing, but to those sections of the Australian Press to which I have referred.

The Government has all along shown patience and dignity in dealing with a recalcitrant minority of Asians. Certain sections of the Press, inspired by political malice and, in the case of Sydney newspapers, a desire to exploit anything in the circulation war going on in that city, have exhibited the shrillness and stridency the professor talks about.

Some newspapers in Australia are so irresponsible that to attain their ends they do not mind damaging their nation, and it is they who put out highly coloured and grossly distorted stories in the hope that they might inflame some sections of Asiatic people.

No Affront

If the desired effect is obtained, the position they themselves have created is quoted in an attempt to blackmail or intimidate the Government into abandoning the nation’s cherished principles. Such fifth-column activity, like the policy of appeasement, does grave harm to Australia, but only temporarily.

The conditions I have outlined as those under which we welcome Asians to our country surely constitute no affront to what

the professor terms "a new sensitiveness (on the part of Asian nations) to any display of racial discrimination."

If it is necessary to repeat it again—and I would have thought everybody knew it by now—I will repeat: Underlying the White Australia policy is no suggestion of racial superiority. It began as a positive aspiration, and from it has resulted a positive achievement.

This achievement is a united race of freedom-loving Australians who can inter-marry and associate without the disadvantages that inevitably result from the fusion of dissimilar races; a united people who share the same loyalties, the same outlook, and the same traditions.

Evils Elsewhere

We will avoid the evils that plague America, that distress South Africa, that embitter Malaya, and that worry Fiji.

Ingredients of an explosive character are inherent in the conditions existing in all those countries, and when the explosion occurs, as it did in Durban recently, there is civil war. The evils of miscegenation always result in rioting and bloodshed. We have avoided them in this country, thanks to the foresight of our forebears and our own innate common sense.

We will continue to avoid them, if we are wise—and if we have the affection that parents ought to have for their children and their children's children. We are heirs of a glorious past. *We are also trustees for what can be an even more glorious future.*