

EDITOR'S EXTRACTION

Thanks goes to Peter MacLeod, New South Wales President and Newsletter producer (as well as being National Coordinator) for his very informative and well presented News. Now that is said, I am lifting some of his text for my own purpose and our wisdom.

As a **Post Script** to the series of articles last year on the topic "**Scotland:- A Search for Identity**" the following paragraphs lead us into the modern era with an acerbic view that joins the politics of the past and present eras. Unfortunately there is a hint that some things haven't changed and there is a 'Merry-Go-Round' familiarity about the comments.

SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT 10 YEARS OLD

In 1999 Scotland received anew a measure of independence she had not enjoyed for nearly 300 years (when Union with England was accepted with political inducements and promises of economic and social benefits). This Parliament has powers to legislate for :

Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries.

Law & home affairs.

Local Govt. Social Work & Housing

Transport& Economic development

Education, Health, Environment, Sport & Arts.

All other administration is done by Govt. of United Kingdom.

George MacDonald Fraser (GMF) in his autobiography *The Light's on at Signpost* offers some provocative thoughts on Scottish attitudes.

Born on the English borders of Scottish parents, he finished at Glasgow Academy, wrote the *Flashman* novels and movie scripts, served in India and was editor at The Glasgow Herald.

On the Scottish attitude to England, he starts with the view that the Scottish-English partnership formed the greatest and most beneficial association of its kind in human history, and it gave us the modern world. Scotland had a great part but was the junior partner (*I presume he meant as a people and their cultural assets, for there was no official state or Commonwealth of Scotland*). Without England, Scotland could not have achieved the influence, (*reputation*) and wealth that it did.

He sees the anti-English feeling, which is increasingly a feature of Scottish nationalism, as shameful, a symptom - not of Scottish pride; but lack of it. "There is something wrong with a country whose nationalism seems to be based, to some extent, if not entirely, on dislike for another country."

Once, he was an opponent of devolution(*Scottish home rule*); but sees that it now may be justifiable. There is no Empire. Union with England now does not enhance Scotland's influence and prestige, and Scots need the cost of an extra layer of Government like the flu. He sees those pushing the devolution, dream of perks of office with little regard for the needs of the nation. If devolution is achieved, what is to stop newfound independence once more being traded away, this time for a ride on the Brussels gravy train (*to the European Community*).

Based on their performance at Westminster, he has formed a very dim view of Scottish politicians . " I know my fellow countryman and the ghastly change that can come over him if he is elevated to political office. Giving him a parliament of his own is too terrible to contemplate." He expressed in 2001 that Scotland's Parliamentary building would be an architectural atrocity, and a monument to its occupiers' self importance.

Peter concludes with summary of some Parliament deliberations (available on its website), and the view that there is general approval and satisfaction that policies are made by Scots and not done remotely in Westminster. It is unlikely many would want to back to the former system.

Whether Scots continue to think forward to independence is another matter. That discussion and momentum faltered when Chief Minister, Alex Salmond's high talk of joining Norway, Ireland, Iceland in the "Arc of Prosperity", became the "Arc of Insolvency", and the big Scottish banks failed.