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BALMORAL CASTLE

CONFIDENTIAL

2nd September, 1971.

Dear Governor General.

Thank you for your letter of 23rd August. The Queen was much interested to read this appendix to what you wrote on 13th August when you reported the dismissal of Mr. Gorton from the Government. All the more so because these matters have only been faintly reflected in the English newspapers.

It certainly appears that Mr. Gorton is a man who responds readily to provocation, but after reading your account of what took place last month, one is inclined to wonder whether, once he had ceased to be Prime Minister of Australia, he really had his heart in remaining a member of the Cabinet or whether he was looking for some way to remove himself with the hope of living to fight another day; if so, he seems to have chosen an unnecessarily painful way of doing it.

However it is the future that matters and it will be interesting to see what the present Parliament brings forth for the encouragement or discomfiture of the Liberal Party.

The Queen and her family are enjoying their time here before facing a fairly rigorous autumn of which the entertainment of the Emperor of Japan and a State Visit to Turkey are the two opening set pieces.

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Those of Her Majesty's subjects who fought in the Pacific and particularly those who were prisoners of war are less than enthusiastic about the first of these visits, but I have no doubt that it is right to do our best to forget our enemies of 1942 and to encourage our powerful and industrious friends of 1972. It is only unfortunate that the Emperor still happens to be the same.

*James Scrimgeour
Michael Adams.*

His Excellency
the Governor-General of Australia.



BUCKINGHAM PALACE

PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL

18th December, 1972.

Dear Governor General

Thank you very much for your letter of 7th December which The Queen has read with much interest. Her Majesty looks forward to hearing your further views on the situation after the second Whitlam Administration has been sworn in and you have had time and opportunity to evaluate the prospects for the future.

The Queen herself is very glad that she will be in Australia in October next year, not only for the opening of the Sydney Opera House, but also for the opportunity which this will give her to meet her new Prime Minister and his colleagues in the administration.

Twenty-three years is a long time for any Party to be in Opposition, and it will be very understandable if the first months of the new Administration are accompanied by some political fireworks, some of them aimed at the spectators. But if the desire for change was the main motive in the minds of electors, this may show their wisdom. It seems from what you write that change was precisely what was needed.

I hope you realize how much The Queen values your letters and the frankness and wisdom which you put into them.

Yours sincerely
Martin Charteris

His Excellency the Governor-General
of Australia.

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FROM: OFFICIAL SECRETARY

YOUR EXCELLENCY:

As I mentioned to you briefly on the telephone this morning Mr D.P. Aiers, Minister of the British High Commission, called by appointment at 12.15 p.m. to hand me the attached mutilated personal letter from Sir Martin Charteris. It was delivered to me as you receive it with profound apologies from the British High Commissioner and Mr Aiers.

The letter was received from Buckingham Palace at the British High Commission and mis-delivered by a British High Commission member to our Department of Foreign Affairs.

It was mutilated in that Department by someone unknown and then returned to Mr Aiers who immediately reported the event to Mr Birch of the Protocol Division.

High level investigations are being made in both the Department of Foreign Affairs and the British High Commission. The High Commission accepts responsibility as their man mis-delivered the letter with a number of others but he is out of Canberra at present and is not available for questioning.

Why our Department of Foreign Affairs returned the letter, even if mutilated, to the British High Commission, is beyond my comprehension.

29th December, 1972.

W.D.

BY BAG

His Excellency the Governor-General of Australia,

Government House,

CANBERRA.

Private Secretary to the Queen.

PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL

His Excellency the Governor-General of Australia

Private Secretary to the Queen.



BUCKINGHAM PALACE

PERSONAL AND
CONFIDENTIAL

15th February, 1973.

Dear Governor General

We read in the newspapers yesterday that the Oath of Allegiance to The Queen had been dropped when immigrants take the Oath to become Australian citizens.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

I thought I had better let you know of this as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely
Martin Charteris

His Excellency the Governor-General
of Australia.

Received 24/2/73
900

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Government House,
Canberra. 2600.

19th February, 1973.

The Prime Minister, Mr Whitlam, called on me last Saturday evening, prior to his departure for Papua New Guinea and Indonesia. In the course of our conversation he referred to the recent announcement by him of a change in the oath of allegiance to be administered at naturalisation ceremonies.

Mr Whitlam mentioned that you had yourself been in touch with our High Commissioner in London to make known to him the concern of Her Majesty and that Mr Armstrong had sought instructions. After further conversation, we agreed that Mr Whitlam should send his reply through Mr Armstrong, thus keeping the matter at the level at which it reached him. Doubtless, before you receive this letter Mr Armstrong will have conveyed to you Mr Whitlam's advice.

In passing, I might mention that as soon as I read the story in the newspapers I sought information about what precisely had been done. Unfortunately, in the succeeding days, both Mr Whitlam and I were travelling in different parts of Australia and could not meet until last Saturday.

In his conversation with me on Saturday evening, Mr Whitlam was most apologetic both towards Her Majesty and myself for having announced the change without prior reference to Her Majesty through the Governor-General. He took the blame wholly on himself. I accepted his apology.

The Prime Minister has adopted a practice of holding a press conference on the late afternoon of each Tuesday when Cabinet has its regular meeting and, to maintain the image of a Government that is active and decisive, he has also made a practice of reciting to the press conference most of the decisions that Cabinet has taken that day. There is also some use by the newly-appointed advisers of the Prime Minister of the catchcry "open government" to elevate the habit of talking too much into one of the cardinal virtues of a democratic ruler.

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On Tuesday of last week, under pressure of time, the Prime Minister apparently rushed out of Cabinet into the press conference to announce with éclat what bold things had been done. He neglected, as he himself ruefully confessed to me, to check with Sir John Bunting what were the procedures about a decision on the oath of allegiance. He deeply regrets that the announcement should have been made in this way.

In this connection I should add that, since he took office, I have found Mr Whitlam studiously correct and considerate in his relationship with the Governor-General. Indeed he makes a refreshing contrast to the manners of his immediate predecessor and restores something of the tradition of Menzies.

As for the substance of what has been done, my understanding is that Cabinet's decision applies only to the oath to be taken by applicants for citizenship by naturalisation. The arguments used in favour of the change are that only about a third of the post-war non-British immigrants have applied to be naturalised, although at least two-thirds are eligible to apply, and that the obstacle in many cases is an unwillingness to renounce all previous allegiance. Originally the ceremony of naturalisation required two separate public declarations by the applicant - one renouncing previous allegiance and the other swearing the new allegiance, - but an earlier Government cancelled the first of these and sought the same effect in a single oath of allegiance. As this change did not fully achieve its purpose the present Government modified the oath.

These arguments are also linked with some arguments, which I myself find to be scarcely relevant, about the different views of dual allegiance taken by persons brought up under systems of law other than our own.

Mr Whitlam also mentioned to me another difficulty which may be nearer the heart of the matter. He said that most non-British migrants could not see the sense of swearing allegiance to the "Queen of England" when Australia was an independent nation. I suggested to him that if anyone in Australia still regarded Her Majesty as being only "Queen of England" and not "Queen of Australia" that was a failure on the part of the Government to present the true state of affairs to its people. He admitted that might be so.

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In this connection, I believe that there is quite a lot of puzzlement among native-born Australians as well as among non-British migrants about the relationship between the Monarchy and Australia. The subject was on my mind when I prepared my customary Australia-Day message for television and radio this January. In case it may be of passing interest, I venture to enclose a copy of the radio script. The television presentation made free use of pictures where the radio script uses words.

There is a strong wave of national sentiment in Australia. It is "pro-Australian" not "anti-British". I think the Government is responding to this sentiment in a somewhat dashing way to complete the image of itself as energetic, up-to-date and unafraid of innovation.

As Her Majesty will be aware, the Government is promoting a competition to produce a "national song" to be sung on national occasions and some music without words - a sort of "national noise" - to be used at those functions when we wish to blow our own trumpet more formally. The intention is to retain the National Anthem, "God Save The Queen", for occasions when Her Majesty or Her personal representative is present.

There is also some discussion in public about designing a new flag but, in my judgment, the majority opinion is in favour of the present Australian flag.

Her Majesty will also be aware that studies are proceeding on the question of giving and receiving the credentials of Ambassadors.

While there may be some Ministers who would be eager for all these changes, my opinion is that the Prime Minister and the majority of his more senior and influential Ministers will approach the discussion with a proper regard for tradition and existing practice and with full respect for and loyalty to Her Majesty.

I am myself chiefly anxious that, out of the wish of some to be more strongly pro-Australian we do not have the sort of political gimmickery that will divide the country on the issue of who is loyal and who is disloyal and of what is patriotism and what is not patriotic. Politicians can become very silly over such disputes about their own status or the shortcoming of their opponents as patriots.

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Returning in conclusion to the oath of allegiance, my understanding is that the change made by Cabinet applies only to the naturalisation ceremonies. Mr Whitlam assured me that there was no intention to change the oath of allegiance to be administered to Australians when taking public office. Indeed, in the case of members of the Australian Parliament, the oath of allegiance is set out in the Constitution and could not be changed by executive decision but only by an amendment of the Constitution by the processes set out in the Constitution itself.

I am hopeful that Mr Whitlam may be induced to pay a brief visit to London in the winter recess of the Australian Parliament (June or July) but he is likely to be hard pressed for time. I am sure it would do good all around if he can find time for such a visit and it would be a helpful preparation for Her Majesty's visit to Australia in October.

Lieutenant-Colonel the Honourable Sir Martin Charteris,
K.C.B., K.C.V.O., O.B.E.,
Private Secretary to The Queen,
Buckingham Palace,
LONDON. SW1. ENGLAND.

CONFIDENTIAL

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Government House,
Canberra. 2600.

29th March, 1973.

I have delayed attempting any political appreciation of the Australian scene because I found that my impressions were changing so frequently that I might prove an uncertain source of information for Her Majesty.

The Whitlam Government has now been in office for over three months. It started with a terrific rush. The pace is still fast but the stride sometimes rather more uneven. Yet it continues to fly over the jumps in great heart, hesitating at nothing.

This has been an amazing period in government. After so long a period in opposition, the Labour Party took office with eagerness, and unrestrained by any of the cautiousness of age. None of them, not even the Prime Minister, had been in a Cabinet. They had never seen a single chicken come home to roost.

For totally new Ministers they have shown a high level of competence. They are mostly more diligent, more active and more intelligent than their predecessors. They are far more enterprising and they have fewer inhibitions. If they think that something ought to be done, they do not seem to worry about whether or not it has ever been tried before.

This lack of caution may land them in some trouble eventually. Already it is plain that their successive decisions have raised considerably the level of current and prospective public expenditure. The financing of their decisions will cause them new worries when the bills are all on the table; and the inflationary effect of their expenditures will add to the problems of economic policy. Already the Treasurer has done some of the arithmetic and told Cabinet what the new expenditures are in total. Cabinet's first quick answer was to suggest that they should cancel some of the decisions of the previous government and thus save money to pay for their own decisions. That seems to me somewhat ingenuous, as money promised is no more easily recoverable than money spent. In any case I doubt whether the cancellation of the old would be enough to balance the commitment for the new. They may have to face up to some awkward consequences of their own speed and generosity when they come to construct their Budget in July.

My own forecast is that the economic situation may present them with their first great trial in the middle of this calendar year. Apart from handling the problem of financing their own largesse for another year, with the possible addition of a few more of their favoured projects, they will have the consequences, at present not clearly foreseen, of their decisions on such matters as foreign investment and of more active Governmental intervention in industry (for example, stricter control of mineral exports and proposals for control of prices, largely to serve the interests of consumers rather than of producers).

When they come to argue about economic policy, with hard decisions to be taken, they will enter on a field where differences of viewpoint and doctrine between senior Ministers are acute. Although there have been two or three instances where differences between the Left and the Right of the party and between leading personalities have become noticeable, these have not yet been serious. On economic questions in the middle of the year such issues may be joined more sharply.

At present the impetus of the Government is sweeping away most dissent in a whirl of progress. Each Minister is pressing on so eagerly in his own cause that I doubt whether they are checking one another. Indeed I have been somewhat surprised and pleased at the smoothness with which the new Government is working.

Originally, presented with a Ministry of twenty-seven members, Mr Whitlam and his senior colleagues proposed to form an Inner Cabinet of about half the numbers. Their party room turned against them and voted that all Ministers should be in the Cabinet, so now they sit, shoulder to shoulder, in one great ellipse, and yet surprisingly, so I am told, they get through business quite expeditiously and without too much talking. They have eased the congestion by setting up a series of Cabinet Committees.

Another difficulty, also swept away by their impetus, was caused by several instances in which a Minister declared publicly what he was going to do without having the endorsement of Cabinet or in which a Minister made pronouncements on matters in the province of one of his colleagues. Although such incidents revealed possible conflict of opinion inside Cabinet they do not yet seem to have done much lasting harm. Perhaps the most serious of them were those which disclosed basic differences of outlook on economic policy between the Minister for Trade (Dr Cairns) and the Treasurer (Mr Crean). Another difficult field was in defence, where the Defence Minister and Deputy Prime Minister (Mr Barnard) came under criticism from the Left-Wing, with Dr Cairns again with the minority, over the extent to which he wished to maintain the secrecy surrounding some installations made under agreement with Australia by the United States of America.

The Prime Minister showed growing strength and skill in handling these differences. He has shown masterliness, without forcing any real crisis, in his leadership of Cabinet. I do not think, however, that the real trial of strength between Left and Right inside the Government has yet been made.

As I have said, most Ministers are working hard and doing well at their jobs. They have been prepared to use their public servants and other advisers to a greater degree than I had anticipated. In Executive Council, where I meet most of them in turn, I have been impressed by the fact that they do their homework thoroughly and are mastering detail. They accept readily and appreciatively any hints or guidance I can give them about procedures and methods. In knowledge and efficiency they are improving rapidly. From my own point of view at Government House, they are much better to work with than their predecessors. I gather, too, that senior public servants are happier than under the McMahon regime, although troubled a little by the importation of a few top men without public administrative experience.

In the country, I think the Government probably has enhanced its reputation since the election, although I would qualify this by saying that it has also caused alarm and dismay to some individuals and groups. It is not uncommon, at certain public functions, to overhear remarks by prominent citizens, one to another, about "those madmen up in Canberra". I also receive personally occasional letters from dear sweet persons who are wondering what is happening to Australia and who are doubting Mr Whitlam's loyalty because of his search for a national song, or his recognition of the People's Republic of China, or some remark he was reported to have made. Less frequently I have a letter from an angry and often anonymous person who wants me to dismiss him from office and put him on trial for treason. One can gather that the Government is not going unnoticed. It provides news and almost every day announces something done. With the majority of the people, not directly affected by any single action taken, I think it gains marks for being active and decisive and for giving such prompt effect to so many of the promises made in the election campaign. Its members are moving all over the continent in the new-found joys of Ministerial travel and, whether they praise, rebuff, condemn or promise, they attract notice. Australian government has not been so exciting for years past.

In all this, they have the added advantage of an Opposition in disarray. The Liberal Party, in my judgment, made a poor decision in electing Mr Snedden as their leader and thus as Leader of the Opposition. I have never rated him highly either for character or ability, but, whatever his talents may be, I cannot imagine that his election will give his party either effective or undisputed leadership.

There must surely be at least four or five other men with good reason to think that they are better than he is. The Country Party, which contains more talent at the top than the Liberal Party, is unhappy in its relations with its partner in the Opposition and Mr Snedden seems to be handling the Country Party Leader, Mr Anthony, rather clumsily. The Opposition is miles behind the Government.

A more serious possibility of discomfort for the Government is that the press, having left the early period of enchantment behind, is now becoming less friendly to it and may not fairly present its record.

As I suggested at the beginning of this despatch the ground is becoming rougher and the Government's stride a bit uneven. Nevertheless I see no present reason for any concern about its stability. It certainly is still fully confident of itself.

There has been some public discussion of the possibility of a double dissolution later in the year. The Government has introduced a Bill for electoral changes. At present, in providing the method of drawing the boundaries of electorates, the law allows a variation of twenty per cent in numbers of voters either up or down from the standard size of an electorate. This favours the rural electorates, which need not be as large in numbers as urban electorates, and means, in the final outcome, more country seats and fewer city seats than an even distribution would give. The Government proposes to reduce the variation to ten per cent. It is confidently expected that this, together with the lowering of the voting age to 18 years, would improve the chances of the Labour Party and reduce the chances of the Country Party. The Bill may be rejected by the Senate. If so, the Government may challenge the Senate by reintroducing the Bill in the next period of sitting, (somewhere about August and September) and, if a deadlock occurs, seek a double dissolution. The prospect may be tempting to some Ministers but on the other hand others may not think it wise to put at risk so soon the office they have gained after twenty-three years in the wilderness. I think it would be foolish to speculate at this stage about this possibility but mention it only because, if such a political crisis did come, it might come about the time of Her Majesty's visit in October.

In a separate despatch I will venture to write something about the Prime Minister himself in the hope that this may be of some service to Her Majesty when she receives Mr and Mrs Whitlam at Windsor.

Lieutenant-Colonel the Honourable Sir Martin Charteris,
K.C.B., K.C.V.O., O.B.E.,
Private Secretary to The Queen,
Buckingham Palace,
LONDON. SW1 ENGLAND.

CONFIDENTIAL

Government House,
Canberra. 2600.

4th April, 1973.

The Prime Minister, Mr Whitlam, called on me at my request last Monday afternoon and we had over an hour's conversation on his forthcoming visit to London. I have the honour to report to Her Majesty the principal matters which were raised.

I expressed to Mr Whitlam my personal pleasure that he was making the visit to London and he acknowledged that he had been influenced a good deal by what I had said to him two months ago about making such a visit early in his term. Our High Commissioner in London, Mr Armstrong, had also advised strongly in favour of the visit.

My own persuasions had been, firstly, that an early visit was a courtesy due to Her Majesty; secondly, that he would gain personally a good deal from the visit and lay the foundation for fuller understanding of his own points of view; and, thirdly, that the visit would be of political advantage to him in Australia.

On the third point we agreed that there was a growing sense of Australian nationalism, especially in the younger generation, but the big majority of the people had a strong devotion to the Queen and valued the British link and these people had been shaken by press stories on his supposed views about the Australian flag, the national anthem and the oath of allegiance. If he were to visit other countries such as the United States of America, India, Japan and China before he visited Britain he would suffer disadvantage.

Mr Whitlam is now looking forward keenly to his visit to Britain and to the prospective talks with Her Majesty, Mr Heath and Sir Alec Douglas-Home. He warmly appreciates the kindness of each of them in changing programmes to facilitate his calls on them. He will be eager to present himself well and to find rapport. He himself is making a special effort to fit in the visit and, as the result of some strenuous travel, is likely to arrive in London rather tired, on the morning of Good Friday after an overnight flight.

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When he is received by Her Majesty Mr Whitlam has it in mind to mention, should the opportunity arise, such subjects as the Royal Style and Titles, the issuing of credentials to Australian Ambassadors, the receiving of credentials from Foreign Ambassadors in Australia and recommendations for honours. He would also hope to give some account of the work of his Government and perhaps to speak of the future of the Commonwealth of Nations and the meeting of Prime Ministers in August. Her Majesty's visit to Australia in October will also be much in his thoughts.

On the Royal Style and Titles Mr Whitlam may wish to suggest that the Australian Royal Style and Titles Act (No 32 of 1953) be amended so that prior reference to the United Kingdom in the title and the words "Defender of the Faith" be dropped making the Royal Style and Title in Australia: "Elizabeth the Second, by the Grace of God, Queen of Australia and of Her Other Realms and Territories and Head of the Commonwealth".

He likes a touch of the dramatic and, if changes in this or any related matter were to be agreed upon, he would probably suggest that any legislation be passed by the Australian Parliament at a time when the Bill could be presented for assent by the Queen Herself when She is in Australia next October.

Mr Whitlam's views on these and related subjects, including the oath of allegiance for immigrants at the naturalisation ceremonies, do not seem to me to arise from any lack of loyalty to or respect for the Crown but rather to a keen sense of Australian nationalism and his ambition to keep abreast of "advanced thinking" in Australia. He wants the nation to stand in the eyes of other countries and of our own people as being unmistakeably the Australian nation. He has dropped the adjective "Commonwealth" from many phrases in which it was formerly used to distinguish the Federal Government from the State Governments and has replaced the heading "Commonwealth of Australia" on formal documents by the single word "Australia". He discards as outdated all words such as "Imperial".

In this I think he has shown a flair for recognising a trend of opinion. In my own observation we are becoming, in a proud and individualist way, more Australian than we used to be. We want to "do our own thing" in much the same sense in which so many of the younger folk today are "wanting to do their own thing" without being quite sure what it really is that they want to do or to become. Mr Whitlam, at the age of 56, is keen to present the image of bold and determined youth, not tied up in old prejudices, but free and forward-looking in contrast to cautious and hidebound conservatives. In a great number of its actions in government the Labour Party is trying to show that it is ready to do new things and that its opponents are only concerned with doing the same old things as before.

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Lest these remarks should give a wrong impression, I should hasten to assure Her Majesty that She will find Mr Whitlam a courteous and well-mannered man who pays scrupulous regard to all the proprieties. He is much more correct in behaviour and much more clearly aware of the conventions than any of his three immediate predecessors (Messrs Holt, Gorton and McMahon). He more nearly resembles Menzies in his attention to correct procedure than any of them did. Here at Government House, we are experiencing a most pleasant change in the courtesy, punctuality and regularity of our relationships with Mr Whitlam as compared with the oddities and unpredictability of Mr McMahon. This is in part due to the fact that, being educated in the same tradition as Menzies, Mr Whitlam has a fuller understanding of the established relationships in a constitutional monarchy than Gorton or McMahon had. It is also due to his family background and upbringing.

His parents, whom I knew personally (although the young Whitlam was away at college during the period of my close acquaintanceship) were deeply respected in Canberra as devout Church people and leaders in many community activities. His father was Solicitor-General of the Commonwealth. The family grew up happy and uncomplicated. Young Whitlam was the bright boy in an admiring family and always "did well" at school and University and was confident of continuing to do well and to deserve success. His was a shiny and open young manhood. This background still reveals itself occasionally in his somewhat self-conscious attempts to live up to the reputation of being the "bright boy" and to show how smart he is. When Whitlam first entered Parliament he was very prone to score off other people, especially those less well-educated than himself, and to cap their remarks or show up their mistakes. He would show off his knowledge in unnecessary little remarks. He also had a regrettable tendency to make remarks with an intention of stinging an opponent. All this contributed to an early unpopularity in Parliament. He is growing out of it, and indeed may have grown out of it completely by now, although in Parliament the other day, when Mr McMahon complained plaintively that the Speaker was failing to recognise him at question time, Mr Whitlam interjected: "Will someone please help him up!"

Mr Whitlam was also handicapped during his early days in Parliament by what looked like his political opportunism. It seemed to some on both sides of politics that he could have been either a Labour or a Liberal candidate with equal conviction and that he became a socialist because the Labour Party showed the clearer path to the top. Now that he has arrived at the top any charge of opportunism loses some of its relevance, but the old suspicion may still be worth noting to support a judgment that he is likely to be flexible on doctrine and has none of the obstinacy of a man like Chifley. He will not be rigid on dogma. When he nails his colours to the mast, he may still be persuaded to change the position of the mast.

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He is a proud and convinced Australian. He is bold in making changes. It is a popular thing today to be a convinced Australian unafraid of change.

This flair for the forefront helped Mr Whitlam to lead his party to electoral victory and is keeping his party popular in spite of some dismay at some of its actions. The Labour Party owes a lot to him for winning the election. Voters forgot some of their doubts about the Labour Party when they saw that its potential Prime Minister was an upstanding man who was "going somewhere".

Since he became Prime Minister he has grown in political stature. Although his style is quite different from that of Menzies he behaves and looks much more like a Prime Minister than anyone we have had since Menzies. He also presents a refreshing vigour both in appearance and manner.

Mr Whitlam seems to be managing his team well. He has a small group of senior dependable Ministers on whom he relies a good deal for maintaining strength - Senator Willesee, Mr Barnard, Mr Crean, Mr Daly. Several of the less experienced men have turned out to be surprisingly good at their jobs. All are working hard. As I forecast in an earlier letter, the trials of strength between Left and Right and between three or four difficult or antipathetic personalities are not likely to come to a crisis until later in the year. Mr Whitlam's own leadership would seem to be secure by reason of his superior gifts in Cabinet as well as his good political standing in the country.

Her Majesty will find Mr Whitlam a pleasant and open person, quick to perceive a point and ready in response. Mrs Whitlam is equally pleasant. She also comes from a legal family, her father having been Mr Justice Dovey of the New South Wales Supreme Court. She attended Church schools and the Sydney University and trained as a social worker. As a young woman she had some success as a swimmer and was in the Australian team at the 1938 Empire Games. She has made her own mark as the Prime Minister wife, talking good sense on television on current topics and conducting a weekly column in a women's magazine. She is a pleasant person to meet and a congenial conversationalist with views of her own but also with appreciation of the views of others.

Both husband and wife are cheerfully gigantic, each over six feet tall, and they have a happy family of three immense sons and a daughter. By pleasant coincidence, during the April visit, they will be able to have a family reunion in London, the first for ten years, with all three of their grown-up sons, one of whom is a lawyer in New York, another with the banking firm of Morgan Guaranty in London and the third a newly-joined member of the Australian diplomatic service stationed in

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Geneva. I understand their daughter will travel to London with them.

I have great hopes that this visit to London, though brief, will have a good effect on Mr Whitlam and hence on the Australian Government. If I may venture to say so, with due humility and respect, the wisdom and experience of Her Majesty will find here an opportunity to help make a promising Prime Minister into a better one and I believe he will prove responsive to Her counsel and guidance.

Lieutenant-Colonel the Honourable
Sir Martin Charteris, K.C.B., K.C.V.O., O.B.E.,
Private Secretary to The Queen,
Buckingham Palace,
LONDON. SW1. ENGLAND.



BUCKINGHAM PALACE

PERSONAL AND
CONFIDENTIAL

14th December, 1972.

Dear Governor-General

Thank you very much for your letter of 7th December dealing with your conversations with Mr. Whitlam about Honours. Events have proved how wise you were not to allow any soundings to have been made on the basis of Mr. McMahon's list of recommendations.

It is good news that Mr. Whitlam may ultimately allow recommendations for awards for acts of gallantry to be forwarded.

Should Mr. Whitlam come to suggest the founding of a purely Australian award or system of Honours, this is something to which I am sure The Queen would give her approval as, indeed, she has done for Canada.

I have, of course, shown your letter to The Queen and Her Majesty has told me to thank you for sending this interesting and informative account of the background of Mr. Whitlam's thinking.

Since you wrote there have, of course, been developments in this business, in that the Government of New South Wales have asked the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary to put forward the Chief Justice for a R.B.E., and the Government of Victoria, those Victorians whose names appeared on the withdrawn Commonwealth list. I understand that you are aware of these matters as Bill Heseltine has spoken on the telephone to Murray Tyrrell about them.

The Queen's interest here is, of course, to ensure that the constitutional proprieties are observed. My understanding is that the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary is likely to submit these recommendations to The Queen but before doing so has instructed the British High Commissioner in Canberra to make sure that Mr. Whitlam is aware of the situation.

Yours sincerely
Maria Anton

His Excellency the Governor-General
of Australia.

PERSONAL AND
CONFIDENTIAL

GOVERNMENT HOUSE,
CANBERRA. 2600

13 December 1971.

The year nears its end with Australian politics still in a state of uncertainty. Her Majesty The Queen may have had a recent opportunity of hearing from the Prime Minister himself some account of the situation as he sees it, but it may be helpful and interesting to Her Majesty if I were to add a few observations of my own on the Australian scene.

The Commonwealth Parliament adjourned at the end of last week and the present plan is to reassemble on February 22 and continue in session until the end of May.

There is frequent guessing by newspaper columnists whether the Prime Minister will seek an election in March. I have myself seen and heard nothing to support that guess. On present political chances, I can see no advantage to the Government in going to the polls so early, but Mr. McMahon may fancy that there is some value in keeping both his own supporters and the Opposition guessing about the possibility.

In any case, the date of Easter in 1972 (Good Friday falls on March 31) and some other possible commitments that are in prospect would make it difficult to find a date for polling day any earlier than May. It is expected that he will meet the State Premiers as usual in February to discuss the economic outlook and State financial problems; and some commentators speculate that he would make that the occasion to announce vote-winning largesse. Even if he did that I doubt whether he could find room for a campaign and a polling day by March 25 (the last Saturday before Easter).

In my despatch of August 23 last, after discussing the troubled political situation I said that I would prefer to wait for the end of the parliamentary sittings before venturing to discuss the Government's prospects. Since then I have seen no evidence that Mr. McMahon has succeeded in establishing himself more favourably in the minds of the Australian populace as a Prime Minister. The outlook for him is still doubtful. Looking at affairs from Government House, I have formed my own opinion that Australia is poorly governed but, although one occasionally over-hears remarks from persons close to public affairs that politics is at the lowest ebb for years, I do not think that my judgment, which, of course, I keep strictly private, would yet be held generally. It seems to me that at present public opinion is unconvinced that Mr. McMahon is a good Prime Minister rather than of the opinion that he is governing badly.

The failure of Mr. McMahon to win ground in public estimation - and the public opinion polls support my own observations - is more marked because he has tried so hard to promote himself. With only an occasional exception, the daily newspapers and commercial television stations have been exceptionally kind to him. I wonder myself whether it may have become apparent to the man in the street that he is working much harder at public relations than at policy. In his assiduous efforts he and his advisers may also be making the wrong points. They have spent a lot of time trying to show that this ageing man is really a giant of physical fitness; that he has a pleasant young wife who wears fashionable clothes; that he is father to two adorable youngsters; and that although his close friends are rich and socially prominent, he is really never happier than when talking to aborigines, putting his arms around old age pensioners and kissing spastic children. My remarks may seem somewhat mean, but my view is that a great part of those Australians who do not already admire Mr. McMahon are highly cynical people and their reaction to this sort of frequent publicity will be that he is trying to prove something that really needs a good deal of proof. What his public relations efforts have not yet succeeded in doing is establishing in the minds of the doubters that he has the size of a Prime Minister and that he is clear about what he wants to do for Australia.

Hence he has made no ground in popular favour. The most optimistic assessment would be that his public reputation is stationary. The opinion polls suggest that it is slipping.

My judgment on the period of parliamentary sittings that has just ended would be similar. Neither the Government nor the Opposition scored any major points.

During the recess it is probable that the things the Government omitted to do will become more and more noticeable. The Australian community is, I believe, in a state of great uncertainty, if not anxiety. There is economic uncertainty, but the sittings ended without any convincing answers to criticisms of the economic strategy in the Budget and without any clear and firm statement about economic prospects. There is uncertainty about foreign policy and defence following the admission of the People's Republic of China to the United Nations, the withdrawal of troops from Vietnam and the outbreak of fighting in India, but the sittings ended without the expected statement on defence and with only a broad survey of the world situation early in the sittings. There is considerable uncertainty over industrial stoppages in Australia, but, although the Government took some action, its expected major statement on overall industrial policy was deferred and it seems rather uncertain how determinedly the Government will apply such policy as it has announced. Towards the end of the sittings the Government provided some money to meet the troubles of the wool industry, to relieve the growing unemployment in rural areas and to increase expenditure on education in both State and private schools but these actions appeared as detached responses to

awkward pressures rather than part of a comprehensive policy.

One journalist, who is reputed to work in with Mr. McMahon, commented in his weekly column that the major statements on defence, the economy and industrial strife had been purposely deferred so as to be kept in reserve for a favourable impact just before an election in March. If this were the reason, I doubt whether it is a good one. If, in the next two months, as appears probable, unemployment rises with further retrenchment in industrial plants, if strikes continue to cause inconvenience to the public, if the world situation becomes confusing, if the criticism and fears about the state of the economy grow, and if various sections of Australian commerce and industry become more worried about their own sectional problems, then I expect that people will start finding fault with the Government for what it did not do when Parliament was last sitting rather than giving it credit for what it may be expected to promise when Parliament is next sitting.

During the period of the McMahon Government I have been pleased to see the administration settling down into a quieter routine, with less scampering about, than it had under Mr. Gorton. The course of administration has fewer surprises, alarms and excursions today than six months ago and the Commonwealth Public Service, which is basically a competent service rooted in a good tradition, has been able to benefit quietly from its own restorative processes. The Ministry, which is rather short in talent, has kept something like a humdrum harmony without any conspicuous soloists for the last few months. Unlike the Gorton regime, the McMahon Ministry has few explosions on big subjects but it sometimes gets very excited about the trivialities instead of keeping its eyes on the big issues. The Prime Minister seems to manage his Cabinet reasonably well, but I have observed that he is still impeded by an old characteristic of thinking too much about his own "escape route". He stultifies some of his Ministers and senior advisers because they know that if anything goes wrong the blame will be shifted from him to them. He still has the practice of looking the public straight in the eye and giving his earnest and personal assurance that either a criticism is unfounded or an awkward allegation is totally untrue. He has already had a few difficult passages in giving further earnest personal assurances that his earlier assurances did not mean what they seemed to mean.

Although there is a public movement under the slogan "Bring Back Gorton" and although there are still some dissidents in the Liberal Party, I doubt whether Mr. McMahon is in any immediate danger from inside his own party. The Country Party will also maintain the coalition but possibly become tougher in their terms. The fear of losing the next general election continues to be the strongest unifying element on the Government side.

The same fear is also clearly bringing steadier support from those sections of the media and of commerce and industry who dread a change of government. It is apparent that many of the supporters of the Government are

becoming concerned at the risk of defeat. In the past it has proved to be not wholly a bad thing to have a team that is scared of defeat for it makes them work harder than if they were complacent about winning.

At present there are two reasons why, in spite of the fact that the McMahon Government is not gaining ground, I would not yet predict its defeat at the next general election. One is that this fear of defeat is beginning to rouse its supporters and improve its finances. The other is that Mr. Whitlam still does not seem to have commended himself fully as an alternative Prime Minister, although he seems to have a slight edge in popular favour over Mr. McMahon, and the Labor Party has not yet created an image of itself as a united, capable, responsible and respectable party. In my opinion the "swinging voters" in Australia include a high proportion of people to whom "respectability" (decent and moderate public conduct) and dependability count for much. If this section of voters were to lose their doubts about how Mr. Whitlam and the Labor Party would behave in office, I think a change of government at the next election would be certain.

Before closing this despatch I have pleasure in referring to two happier events. At the end of October and early in November, my wife and I had the pleasure of receiving Their Excellencies the Governor-General of New Zealand and Lady Porritt on a State visit to Australia. This visit was in return for the one which, with the gracious permission of Her Majesty, my wife and I paid to New Zealand earlier in the year. Sir Arthur and Lady Porritt stayed with us at Yarralumla for three days and then visited Hobart, Melbourne and Sydney. We saw them again at the Melbourne Cup and had the pleasure, by arrangement with the Chairman of the Victorian Racing Club, Mr. Creswick, of inviting Sir Arthur to present the Cup to the winning owner, a New Zealander. It was quite novel to have the Governor-General of our sister nation to present the Cup but almost customary that the race was won by a New Zealand horse, Silver Knight.

In October, on the advice of my Ministers and with the gracious permission of Her Majesty, my wife and I accepted the invitation of His Imperial Majesty the Shah to attend the celebration of the 2,500th anniversary of the foundation of the Persian Empire. We had the pleasure there of meeting again His Royal Highness The Prince Philip and Her Royal Highness Princess Anne. During the celebrations, both the Governor-General of Canada and I were accorded recognition similar to that of heads of state and representatives of heads of state. The occasion was one for enjoying the food and the fireworks rather than for discussing the refinements of constitutional theory. Although such an occasion is likely to be rare if not unique, it did reveal again the fact that the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Australia provides only for a Governor-General to be representative of Her Majesty in the Commonwealth yet,

in modern times, occasions may arise when he will be asked to travel and to fill a representative role outside Australian territory. It is sufficient for me to say how deeply sensible I am of the honour of representing Her Majesty in any duty and on any occasion to which it may please Her to command my services.

Lieutenant-Colonel the Right Honourable
Sir Michael Adeane, G.C.B., G.C.V.O.,
Private Secretary to The Queen,
Buckingham Palace,
LONDON. England.



In Confidence

BUCKINGHAM PALACE

20th December, 1971.

Dear Governor General.

Thank you very much for your letter of 13th December. It has been laid before The Queen who was, as always, interested to read your account of political events in Australia and your forecast of the timing and possible course of the next General Election.

Her Majesty was glad to have the opportunity of seeing the Prime Minister and Mrs. McMahon when they were here; as you probably know, they came to luncheon at Buckingham Palace and as there were no other guests it was possible for The Queen and the Prime Minister to have some private conversation on public events. Mr. and Mrs. McMahon both had a good press while they were in England and I know that Ministers here were very glad of the opportunity afforded by this visit to meet and talk with the Prime Minister of Australia.

Here we are going through what I hope are the final stages of the discussion and legislation on the Civil List, comments on which may well have appeared in the Australian press. In case it is of any interest to you, I send you a copy of the Report of the Select Committee. *Handwritten mark:* ✓ This reflects a great number of meetings and discussions of much detail - some may think too much. It has now been debated in the House of Commons and the motion was passed by 300 to 27 votes. Most of the Opposition abstained; the 27 voters who opposed, represent those who do not like Monarchies for one reason or another. The closing speeches on both sides were amicable and, in fact, disclosed considerable agreement between Government and Opposition Front Benches. The unpleasant and discourteous remarks made by one or two members may well have hit the headlines but certainly were not typical of the general tone of the debate on either side of the House.

In the course of the debate, the Opposition proposed an amendment favouring the creation of a "Department of The Crown." This was also rejected but by a much smaller majority because most of the Opposition supported it. Although it had some superficial attractions to those who like simplification at all costs, it had some objectionable features, the chief one being that in effect - and no doubt after some years - it would have reduced The Crown to being an organ of the United Kingdom Government. This very unconstitutional suggestion would, if it had been adopted, have had obvious and unfortunate reactions on The Queen's relations with other Commonwealth countries; this point was well made in the debate.

The Bill reaches its second reading before Christmas and will, I hope, pass into law in January.

This letter brings every good wish for Christmas and the New Year to Lady Hasluck and yourself.

James Scobie
Michael Adame

His Excellency the Governor-General
of Australia.

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GOVERNMENT HOUSE,
CANBERRA. 2600

1st September, 1972.

My dear Private Secretary,

Since my return to duty in Australia, I have allowed myself a period of three weeks to observe the political scene before venturing to write for the information of Her Majesty on the present situation and outlook.

During this period of three weeks I have not been able to see the Prime Minister. Sir Rohan Delacombe, who was Administrator of the Commonwealth Government while I was on leave, tells me that during the six weeks he held the post he never saw the Prime Minister once, two appointments which he had made being cancelled by the Prime Minister at brief notice. I do not have, therefore, the advantage of any recent discussion with the Prime Minister.

Mr. McMahon, judging from what I hear, is in a very jumpy state, and he is a cause of some worry to the senior public service, whose members find him unpredictable and unreliable. This is an old characteristic. Sir Arthur Fadden, Treasurer in several Menzies Ministries, who had the habit of attaching nicknames to most of his colleagues, used to call him "Willie the Flea" and I gather that this flea-like jumpiness has become more marked under the strain of office. Judging from television he is also showing his age and tries to be chirpy in a rather unconvincing way.

The relevance of these observations is firstly that I doubt whether the Prime Minister will give the Government parties effective and convincing leadership in the coming election campaign, and secondly I doubt whether, after the election, whatever the result may be, he will continue to be leader of the Liberal Party for very long. Nevertheless, it should be kept in mind that he has a great record of getting and staying where he wants to go and stay.

As I forecast earlier in the year, there has been no direct challenge to his leadership, although there has been discontent and lack of trust. A change of leaders before the election would have ruined whatever chances the

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Government parties have of retaining office; and any challenger would be foolish to step forward at this stage and incur the blame for any subsequent electoral reverse. I feel sure there will be challengers after the election, although I can myself see no obvious successor at this stage, nor, indeed, anyone except possibly Mr. Gorton, who might be an improvement on Mr. McMahon.

Looking back over the period of eighteen months during which the McMahon Government has been in office, I can form no other opinion than that Australia has been poorly governed. The Ministerial team, with only four or five exceptions, has been low in talent. Mr. McMahon has probably had the weakest Ministry of post-war years, especially at the Cabinet level. He himself has confused his Ministry by the way he sometimes tries to do the work of a Minister and then sometimes leaves him on his own. As one Minister observed ruefully to me: "He is like a grandfather. He will borrow your children to be photographed with them but then you find that you are left carrying the baby as soon as it gets wet." There seems to me to have been a lack of decisiveness in policy. The Prime Minister seems more interested in the appearance than in the substance. His public statements have increasingly taken the form of giving the people his personal assurance about something or saying that in his long years in politics he cannot remember having seen anything so remarkable as something new being done; but he is not always precise about what the "something" is. He worries public servants with his chopping and changing and does not get as much out of them as he might. There is lessening respect for him and a diminishing trust among those who are most closely associated with him either as colleagues or advisers. Public opinion polls report a very marked decline in his popularity in the electorate.

Normally, so clear a view of the failure of Mr. McMahon as a Prime Minister would lead to a firm prediction that he and his Government will lose office at the election. I am cautious about making such a prediction at this stage for several reasons. The major one is my doubt whether the Labour Party and its leader, Mr. Whitlam, have fully commended themselves to the mass of swinging voters. There may be discontent with the Government but I see few signs of rising enthusiasm for the Opposition.

The residual doubt whether the Opposition can provide a good and safe government - in my view the present mood of the country is not to vote for an "adventurous" government but only for a safe one - is being played on very much by the Government parties. My guess is that the election may turn out to be one in which people will be asked to express their fears rather than their hopes. It is evident that newspapers and sections of business which had been critical of the McMahon Government

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are now in a state of fear about what might happen under a Whitlam Government. There is an increase in the volume of talk about the risks, if Labour is returned, of socialism, of violence, weakness in maintaining law and order, a weakening of defence, a foreign policy that offends our allies, industrial strife and surrender to militant trade unions. The fear of what a change of government might mean seems to be more clearly in the mind of Government supporters and apologists than faith in the good that the present Government might do.

The Labour Party itself helps these fears to grow by its own behaviour. At a time when all it needs to do to win office is to reassure doubtful voters that it is respectable and responsible, some of its members continue to provide their opponents with quotable statements to the contrary. Possibly, too, industrial troubles and strikes which cause inconvenience to the public tend to damage the Labour Party, although the Government may also incur some criticism over the handling of the stoppages. While Mr. Whitlam has been gaining some ground in his personal appeal I doubt whether he has yet awakened full confidence among the swinging voters.

While it seems to me that the Government's chief hope of retaining office is the fear about the Labour Party, I should also report that many of the Government's own members are placing great hopes on the Budget brought down on August 15. It was a Budget in which many benefits and bonuses were distributed. My personal criticism would be that the electoral purpose of these benefits is much more obvious than any economic theory or fiscal policy on which they are based. I am also somewhat cynical about a hand-out as a vote winner. I doubt whether electors cast votes out of gratitude. They take what they receive as being no more than their due and, at the most, a kindly Budget dampens their criticism of the government rather than gaining their support.

Some of the Ministers were reported to have been in favour of a snap election within a few weeks of the introduction of the Budget in order to get full advantage of their own generosity. After discussion in Cabinet, it was decided to proceed with the session to pass the legislation necessary to give effect to the Budget proposals. The Prime Minister has publicly claimed that this was his own decision and that he took it so that the benefits of the Budget would become effective as early as possible. In my view this decision was correct and possibly politically wise. Nevertheless it is possible that before polling day (whenever it may be) some of the immediate happiness brought by the Budget will have faded and the evaluation of it by the public and by commentators will be more deliberate and less favourable. In my view, the voter will then be influenced less by whether he got a benefit than by the economic effects of Government policy as measured by the employment figures and the inflationary trend. Bad employment

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figures in September and October could cancel any advantage that the Government hoped to gain from a generous Budget. Yet some members of the Government still express optimism about the effects of the Budget.

At the moment I can only make guesses about the date of an election. At the earliest, I doubt whether it will come before October 21 and I am still inclined to think it may not be until November 25.

At present the indications, as I read them, are that the Labour Party will win but I would not yet predict that confidently for, in an election which I think will largely be on a campaign of fear of what Labour will do, one cannot be sure of how the balance will swing. My reading of the situation at present is that a majority are dissatisfied with the McMahon Government but it is not certain that a majority are ready to take a Labour Government.

Having put the situation in that way, I should perhaps add that Her Majesty need not feel undue apprehension about the consequences of any change. The Opposition, as I see it today, can provide a Ministry of quality, although none of its members, not even Mr. Whitlam, would have had any experience of high office, as their party has been in opposition for over twenty years. Mr. Whitlam as Prime Minister would behave correctly and with strict propriety and would have the advantage of being much more clearly aware of the constitutional background and the conventions surrounding a constitutional monarchy and a parliamentary democracy than any of his predecessors since Sir Robert Menzies. The doubtful elements would be in his political skill and strength in managing a very difficult and a very contentious body of members inside Parliament and party officials outside it.

Following this broad introductory summary of the situation as I see it at the moment, I hope to be able to write with greater clarity and confidence for the information of Her Majesty within the next few weeks.

Lieutenant-Colonel the Honourable Sir Martin Charteris,
K.C.V.O., K.C.B., O.B.E.,
Private Secretary to Her Majesty The Queen,
Buckingham Palace,
LONDON.

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GOVERNMENT HOUSE,
CANBERRA. 2600

1st September, 1972.

My dear Private Secretary,

For some time I have become increasingly concerned at certain tendencies that seem to have developed under the Holt, Gorton and McMahon Governments in respect of recommendations for honours and I venture to express this concern, so that in the Palace you may be aware of some of the background in Australia.

In presenting my humble duty to Her Majesty, I write to assure Her that, within the limits of my opportunities, I have tried at all times to maintain the special character of Honours bestowed by Her Majesty and to uphold Her dignity and the high respect in which both Her person and the Crown are held by most Australians.

It is of course not unknown for honours to be used for political purposes, to reward political services or to facilitate political changes, but I was sorry to see that some recent lists of recommendations did contain names, especially among the "K's", of persons whose slender claims to recognition for any outstanding service to the community could be expected to lessen the respect of ordinary citizens for the Honours List. The obverse of this situation is that a number of Her Majesty's subjects who might well have merited Her notice have not been noticed.

What causes me more concern is the apparent unfamiliarity or disregard of the present Prime Minister of the conventions surrounding the recommendations for honours. He seems to pay little regard to the understandings reached in the past regarding the numbers of honours available in various categories and seems to have an idea that he can get as many as he wants whenever he wants them. His own staff and Government House staff have had to wrestle manfully over some of the problems before the submission of recent recommendations and you yourself, as Private Secretary, will be aware of some of the difficulties.

It has also become apparent to me that the Prime Minister discusses his intentions to recommend rather too freely with some of the proposed recipients. With surprising naivete, when I had a talk with him about the way in which

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recent proposals exceeded the allotment, he said of one name: "But I've already promised it to him." When my Official Secretary was sounding out another intended recipient to ask if he would accept the honour he received the reply: "Yes, that's what I arranged with the Prime Minister."

My own endeavours are necessarily limited to trying to get the Prime Minister to work within the rules. He does not afford much opportunity for discussion with him and, as you will be aware, on a recent occasion when seeking to obtain a "K" for one of his Ministers who had been disappointed at not receiving another appointment, he chose not to use Government House but to ask our High Commissioner in London to make "soundings" at the Palace.

There is one other matter of which I should inform you as part of the background. Some time ago it came to my knowledge that the former Premier of Victoria, Sir Henry Bolte, coveted a peerage. An opportunity arose for me to discuss this with our Prime Minister and we had a frank exchange during which I expressed my views to Mr. McMahon and he appeared to be receptive to them, although he still said rather plaintively that Sir Henry kept on pressing him to do something. Among other things I said that the House of Lords was part of the legislature of the United Kingdom and reminded him that the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom had a part in recommending the creation of life peers. At that time this did not seem to have occurred to him. I also said that, while in the past the House of Lords might have been regarded as a place where matters directly affecting other parts of the British Empire and, more recently, the British Commonwealth, were decided, the great changes in the Commonwealth of Nations had necessarily meant that the Lords had taken on more markedly the character of one of the two Chambers of the British Parliament. I discounted the idea that Australians were needed in the House of Lords to present an Australian point of view. The British legislature was making laws for Britain, not for the Commonwealth. I also expressed the view that, although the elevation of an Australian to the peerage in the past may have given some pleasure and pride to some Australians, I thought that present-day Australian opinion was changing and would probably only be in accord with such an honour if it were given to an Australian whose services had been in some sphere wider than service to the Australian people and Government. The sentiment was clearly against anything resembling an "Australian peerage" and there would have to be good reason for elevating an Australian to the peerage of another country.

That is still the view I would express to any Australian Prime Minister and I would still ask him to consider very carefully the whole situation before promoting recommendations for the creation of peers. As I said, Mr. McMahon seemed to accept these views. Nevertheless I subsequently became aware that our Prime Minister has taken steps to try to interest

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Mr. Heath in doing something not only about Sir Henry Bolte but also about another Australian who also covets a peerage and has sought to advance his claims to one.

When in London recently I took advantage of a private conversation with Mr. Heath to let him know the views I had expressed to my own Prime Minister.

I have recounted these matters as background and in the belief that any move to elevate to the peerage an Australian as recognition of his service to Australia should be approached with the greatest care. If there should be a change of government at the next election there may well be a change in policy in respect of recommendations for honours and, so that we may not lose what is good in the system of Honours bestowed by The Queen, I think we have to be very careful in Australia not to give any undue opportunity to those sections of our community who would deride them.

Lieutenant-Colonel the Honourable Sir Martin Charteris,
K.C.V.O., K.C.B., O.B.E.,
Private Secretary to Her Majesty The Queen,
Buckingham Palace,
LONDON.



BALMORAL CASTLE

CONFIDENTIAL

14th September, 1972.

Dear Governor General

Thank you very much for your letter of 1st September which The Queen has read with much interest.

It is certainly a great pity that the Prime Minister does not come to see you more often, not only because it seems to me proper that he should, but also because I have no doubt he would gain balance and stability if he did.

The picture you paint of Australian politics at the present time is not an encouraging one, but I suppose these rises and falls in the general level of political life are inevitable and one must hope that the present decline will be followed before too long by a compensating revival. This rise and fall is, I believe, a law of nature, but whether it normally applies to politics I cannot say !

Should the Labour Party be elected, the situation will not be dissimilar to that which obtained here when Mr. Wilson's first Government took power. I think he was the only member of his team who had ever held office.

I need hardly say that The Queen looks forward to your further reports on the situation.

Her Majesty sends her best wishes to you and to Lady Hasluck.

Yours sincerely
Marlin Charter

His Excellency the
Governor-General of Australia.



BALMORAL CASTLE

CONFIDENTIAL

25th September, 1972.

Dear Governor General

I am writing to thank you for your letter of 1st September about the attitude of recent Australian Governments in respect of recommendations for Honours.

Your letter was of the greatest interest, and not a little concern, to The Queen, who, I need hardly say, is very grateful to you for what you are trying to do to keep those concerned with making recommendations, walking along the straight and narrow path. This path has many seductive roads leading off it, and, as you say, it is not unknown for some who should know better to follow them.

The lack of understanding of how the system is meant to work is, indeed, a matter for concern, and I think this is particularly the case where Life Peerages are involved. The House of Lords is, as you say, first and foremost part of the United Kingdom Legislature and appointments to Peerages are made by The Queen on the advice of the British Prime Minister. I do not believe that the Prime Minister of Australia, or of any other Commonwealth Country of which Her Majesty is Queen, has any standing to recommend Life Peerages in the United Kingdom, though of course no British Prime Minister would recommend a citizen of a Commonwealth Country without the knowledge and approval of the Prime Minister of that Country.

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It is extremely valuable to have this background information from you.

To turn to a more cheerful subject, it is excellent that the opening of the Sydney Opera House by The Queen has been announced, and we can begin to look forward, even at this long distance in time, to what I am sure will be a most splendid and historic occasion.

Yours sincerely

Malcolm Chantem

His Excellency the Governor-General of Australia.

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GOVERNMENT HOUSE,
CANBERRA. 2600

3rd November, 1972.

I have the honour to report to Her Majesty that on November 2 I dissolved the Twenty-Seventh Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia and, on the same day, issued writs for an election for the House of Representatives.

Polling day will be on December 2. Nominations for the election will close on November 10. The Prime Minister will deliver his policy speech on November 14.

Although campaigning has already begun, the full intensity of the contest may be expected in the period of three weeks commencing in the week of the policy speech.

At the moment, it would be difficult to say with certainty what the central issues of the election will be. There are indications that both the main parties are rather shy about pitting one leader against another. A journalist wrote recently that Mr. McMahon had failed to get the people to trust him and Mr. Whitlam had been unable to get the people to stop distrusting him. I doubt whether either leader fully commends himself to all his supporters or to a majority of the voters as a Prime Minister. Public opinion polls suggest that Mr. Whitlam may still rate a little higher than Mr. McMahon in public favour.

In spite of this tendency among the party publicists not to use the personal appeal, I do not believe myself that at a general election, voters can dismiss from their minds the simple question of which man will make the better Prime Minister for Australia. One weakness on the Liberal side is that if they do not advance Mr. McMahon with enthusiasm as a great Prime Minister, they may seem to be saying: "Vote for the Liberals, but don't expect that, if we win, we will keep Mr. McMahon as our leader".

At a general election, too, unless there are one or two dominant issues for the people to decide, the final test for the thoughtful voter is: "Who shall have the government?" In spite of my belief that Mr. Whitlam stands a little higher in favour than Mr. McMahon, I think that the Liberal-Country coalition still has some slight advantage over the Labour Party

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in commending itself as a government, for, even if there is little enthusiasm for the government there is a good deal of uncertainty about the Opposition. As I reported in my last despatch Government supporters are active in promoting fear of what Labour will do. I still believe that creating fear of a Labour government will play a significant part in the campaign.

Defence and foreign affairs seem to be fading as issues and interest is rising in domestic questions such as the state of the economy, health, industrial relations and the state of the rural industries. There are numerous other questions which, while they may not be nation-wide issues, may affect the vote in particular electorates. These include pollution, control of pornography, abortion law reform, State aid for denominational schools, immigration, maintenance of law and order, the drug traffic and treatment of aborigines. Opinion on these questions often cuts across party lines and may have odd and unpredictable results. Our system of preferential voting means that the views of minorities, even small minorities, count in a close contest.

Since I last wrote to you, it appears to me that the Government has gained some ground. Employment has improved a little; wool prices are better; some of the Budget bounties continue to have a popular effect; and, in the closing weeks of Parliament, with a great show of bustle and decisiveness, the Government either took or announced various measures which reduced some of the earlier criticisms about its weakness and uncertainty in administration. The Opposition has not scored much in recent debates and, rather cleverly, the Government has turned some of its criticism of the Prime Minister by alleging that there is a "smear campaign" against Mr. McMahon personally and invoking the strong Australian sense of "a fair go". In all, the Government will go into the election campaign with a better reputation than I previously thought it would have and better than I think it deserves.

There are clear signs, too, that over the past four or five weeks influential sections of the press and other media are being more generous to the Government; and some leading newspapers are giving less than a fair coverage to the Labour Party in their reporting of the news.

The Prime Minister, himself, when he called on me to offer advice on the dissolution of Parliament, talked with great confidence about the outcome. He was buoyantly optimistic and said that he would gain an increased majority. Other Ministers with whom I have had opportunity for discussion talk of the possibility of winning seats such as Forrest, in Western Australia; Sturt in South Australia; Riverina and Eden-Monaro in New South Wales; and Maribyrnong and Bendigo in Victoria. On paper, assuming there is no swing against the Government, these predictions have historical justification. But the same Ministers admit the possibility of losing four or even five marginal seats in the metropolitan area of Sydney. Thus the

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Government would come back with a majority much the same as the present one. One possibility which I did not discuss with the Prime Minister at this stage, is that if this view of the prospects is justified, the losses are likely to be Liberal Party losses and a number of the gains may be Country Party gains, thus changing the basis for the negotiation of the terms of a coalition between the Liberal and Country Parties.

Persons not directly engaged in politics are extremely cautious in their predictions and talk of an "even go" and "anybody's guess" when they try to foresee the results.

I have scant means myself of forming a personal judgment on the mood of the electorate but am still inclined to think personally that the facts favour the Opposition. I can see more clearly the possibility of the loss of Government seats in and around Sydney than I can see the possibility of Government gains elsewhere.

Unless the result of the poll is very close, I would expect the outcome to become clear not later than December 5 or 6. If the Government wins, the present plan of the Prime Minister is to hold party meetings in Canberra on December 14 and to keep December 18 as the prospective date for the swearing-in of a new Ministry. Because of the retirement of Sir Alan Hulme (Postmaster General) and Sir Reginald Swartz (Minister for National Development) and the ill-health of Senator Anderson (Minister for Health and Leader in the Senate) there will be three senior vacancies and for this and other reasons one would anticipate a considerable reconstruction of the Ministry.

If Labour wins, I would expect that the timetable would be similar.

Consequently, in either case, unless there are considerable ructions inside the victorious parties or party after the election, I would confidently expect that the new Government would be able to take office in good order before we adjourn for Christmas and that Parliament would not be summoned until February, 1973.

If occasion should arise during the campaign, I shall do myself the honour of informing Her Majesty of any changes of importance. Otherwise I shall write again shortly after polling day.

Lieutenant-Colonel the Honourable Sir Martin Charteris,
K.C.B., K.C.V.O., O.B.E.,
Private Secretary to Her Majesty The Queen,
Buckingham Palace,
LONDON. SW IE 6JZ

CONFIDENTIAL

GOVERNMENT HOUSE,
CANBERRA. 2600

3rd November, 1972.

My dear Private Secretary,

Within a few days my Official Secretary will be sending to London the recommendations received from the Australian States for the New Year Honours List. Up to date we have not received from the Prime Minister, Mr. McMahon, his recommendations for civilian honours, but we know through the liaison between Government House and the Prime Minister's Department that lists of names are under consideration and that the Prime Minister intends to recommend.

You will be aware that the Australian Labour Party has certain views against recommendations for honours and, although there is some variation in the way in which the party policy on honours is interpreted, the Labour Governments in South Australia, Western Australia and Tasmania either do not recommend at all or recommend only for honours which do not carry titles with them.

You will also be aware that there will be a Federal election on December 2 and that there is a possibility that a Labour Government may succeed the McMahon Government.

At this stage, I thought I should let you know frankly the way in which I would propose to face the problem that would present itself if, in fact, the Government should change on December 2.

First let me say that I see no likelihood that Mr. McMahon would go to Mr. Whitlam before the elections, tell him that he is recommending for honours and seek an understanding that, if the Government changes, the recommendations will stand. Mr. McMahon does not admit the possibility that he may lose the election and certainly would not confess any doubt to his rival.

When the recommendations are received from Mr. McMahon, we will forward them to London. If approval of the recommendations is received before December 2 - and the later it is received the better it would suit me - I will instruct the Official Secretary not to make any soundings of the intended recipients before polling day.

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If the results of polling show a victory for the Government we will immediately commence sounding the recipients.

If the vote gave victory to the Labour Party I would let the retiring Prime Minister know that I intended to talk to Mr. Whitlam. I would tell Mr. Whitlam that recommendations had been made, without disclosing names to him, and ask whether he had any objection to my giving effect to the previous government's recommendations, it being made clear publicly that these were the honours recommended by the previous government and neither supported nor concurred in by the incoming government. I would hope that Mr. Whitlam would make no objection and, in that case, we would commence sounding recipients.

If Mr. Whitlam objected I would require him, after having been sworn in as Prime Minister, to give formal written advice to me that the recommendations of the previous government should be withdrawn and he would have to take the public responsibility for the cancellation of the proposed honours list.

My chief concern is that we should not reach a stage where intended recipients, having been sounded for their willingness to accept an honour, should then have to be informed that no honour would be given.

If you see any objections to the course I have in mind I should be glad to hear your views.

Lieutenant-Colonel the Honourable Sir Martin Charteris,
K.C.B., K.C.V.O., O.B.E.,
Private Secretary to Her Majesty The Queen,
Buckingham Palace,
LONDON. SW 1E 6JZ

CONFIDENTIAL

32
GOVERNMENT HOUSE,
CANBERRA. 2600

8th November, 1972.

It may be of interest to you to have advance knowledge of the fact that the question of having an Australian National Anthem other than "God Save The Queen" is again under discussion here.

During the recent Parliamentary session, in answer to a question in the House, the Prime Minister, Mr. McMahon, said that he would be glad to examine the matter. Subsequently he asked the Secretary of his Department, Sir John Bunting, to draft a letter from the Prime Minister to Dr. H.C. Coombs, Chairman of the Australian Council for the Arts, about "getting a national song". Apparently the thought is to keep "God Save The Queen" as a royal anthem and to find something else to be designated either a national anthem or a national song.

Sir John Bunting hopes to have a further discussion with the Prime Minister before the letter is signed, and, with the Prime Minister's permission, he asked for some guidance from me.

I expressed to Sir John Bunting the view that, although there was some opinion in favour of having a distinctive anthem (or song) for Australia, the Prime Minister should not assume too readily that this was the popular view. I also expressed doubt whether the approach to Dr. Coombs would be the wisest procedure, as it would be in keeping with past experience for Dr. Coombs to conceive it to be his role to promote publicly a quest for a national song and eventually present the Prime Minister with a recommendation for the adoption of a chosen piece. Unless the Prime Minister was clearly of the opinion that Australia ought to have her own national song he might consider some other procedure and perhaps, with the aid of his own officers, clear his mind on the basic question whether he favoured a change. I feared Coombs might feel the temptation of becoming the historical figure who gave Australia her national anthem and I also feared that even if the new tune started off as a "national song" its adoption would eventually lead to the replacing of "God Save The Queen" as the national anthem.

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I asked Sir John Bunting to express these views, on my behalf, to the Prime Minister if he found an opportunity of so doing during the present strenuous election campaign.

Lieutenant-Colonel the Honourable Sir Martin Charteris,
K.C.B., K.C.V.O., O.B.E.,
Private Secretary to Her Majesty The Queen,
Buckingham Palace,
LONDON. SW 1E 6JZ



BUCKINGHAM PALACE

CONFIDENTIAL

16th November, 1972.

Dear Governor General

Thank you very much for your letter of 8th November about the question of having an Australian National Anthem other than "God Save The Queen."

I have informed The Queen of this development.

I was particularly interested in the first piece of advice given by you to Sir John Bunting and it would certainly seem to me regrettable to start something going about an alternative National Anthem unless this was something clearly desired by the majority of Australians, and I assume, from what you said, that this is not evident at the moment.

If it was evident that most Australians wanted a change, I do not believe that it would cause Her Majesty concern.

Choosing National Anthems, unless they choose themselves, is, I should imagine, an extremely tricky business !

Yours sincerely
Martin Charteris

His Excellency the Governor-General
of Australia.



BUCKINGHAM PALACE

CONFIDENTIAL

27th November, 1972.

Dear Governor General

Thank you for your letter of 3rd November.

I think the problem with which you may be faced in regard to recommendations from Australian States for the New Year Honours List, should there be a change of Government after the General Election on 2nd December, is quite a difficult one, and I am not sure that the course of action you propose entirely meets the case.

In so far as The Queen is concerned, the constitutional position is that Her Majesty can only approve the awards on the advice of a Minister. In the case of Civil Honours from Australian States for the Honours List, the actual submission comes to Her Majesty over the signature of the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary.

I understand the process is that the recommendations are forwarded by your office to the Permanent Under Secretary of State at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office with a third person note to say that your Prime Minister has recommended these honours. On receipt of this information the formal submission is forwarded to us for The Queen's signature.

I wonder, therefore, whether it would be practicable for the recommendations to be forwarded without the Prime Minister (if there is a change) actually having seen the recommendations? He could still make it clear that they were the outgoing

Government's recommendations, and that no more would be made whilst he was in office. But it seems to me that if he sends them forward with a recommendation that The Queen should approve them, he cannot say that he does not support them. Unless this is done, I cannot see how the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary can make a submission to The Queen.

I, of course, fully concur in the action you propose to take if Mr. Whitlam objected to any recommendations being made.

Yours sincerely
Martin Charteris

His Excellency the Governor-General
of Australia.



BUCKINGHAM PALACE

CONFIDENTIAL

27th November, 1972.

Dear Governor General

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I, of course, fully concur in the action you propose to take if Mr. Whitlam objected to any recommendations being made.

Yours sincerely
Martin Lantieri

His Excellency the Governor-General
of Australia.

PERSONAL AND
CONFIDENTIAL

GOVERNMENT HOUSE,
CANBERRA. 2600

7th December, 1972.

I have the honour to inform Her Majesty The Queen that, following on elections for the House of Representatives on Saturday, December 2, I accepted the resignation of Mr. William McMahon as Prime Minister on Tuesday, December 5, and on the same day commissioned Mr. E.G. Whitlam to form a Ministry.

When he called on me, Mr. Whitlam gave reasons why he recommended the immediate swearing-in of an interim Government of limited membership instead of asking the McMahon Ministry to carry on as a caretaker Government until such time as the names of a full Labour Ministry could be submitted to me.

Under the Australian system of preferential voting, the final results in doubtful seats are not known until preferences have been distributed and the counting of preferences does not start until all voting papers have been accounted for or until ten days after polling day. Hence it will be December 12 or later before the full and final results of the elections are known. If, in any close contest, a recount is sought there may be further delay.

The practice of the Labour Party is that the Caucus, formed of all parliamentary members of the party, elects Ministers and, as several of the closely-contested seats may be won by Labour candidates, the party meeting for that purpose cannot be held until after the count is concluded and it is known definitely who is entitled to form the Caucus. Mr. Whitlam estimates that the earliest date at which his party meeting can be held to elect a Ministry will be December 15. It may be as late as December 18.

He told me that, in the meantime, he wished to give prompt effect to certain undertakings he had given during the election campaign and to apply his party's declared policy on other contentious matters. It would be both ungracious to his opponents and unacceptable to his supporters to ask Ministers in a caretaker Government to announce actions to which they were opposed. Hence he recommended the formation of an interim

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Government consisting only of himself and the Deputy Leader of the Party, Mr. Lance Barnard. The 27 portfolios would be divided between them.

After receiving written advice from the Secretary of the Attorney-General's Department that there was no legal or constitutional obstacle to such a course, and having also received the assurance of Mr. Whitlam that this interim Government would be replaced as soon as possible, and probably within a fortnight, by a full Ministry, I accepted his proposal and administered the necessary oaths to him and to Mr. Barnard on Tuesday afternoon. I have not the least doubt that this two-man Ministry will resign as soon as possible because the whole pressure of his own party will be on Mr. Whitlam to submit the names of the full Ministry as soon as Caucus elects them.

I therefore expect that about December 18, 19 or 20 the First Whitlam Ministry will resign and that I will swear-in the Second Whitlam Ministry with a full membership.

Among the matters which Mr. Whitlam mentioned to me as those on which he wished to act immediately and on which he felt a caretaker Government could not be asked to act were the remitting of the penalties imposed on "draft resisters"; the dismantling of the national service scheme; relations with the People's Republic of China; certain industrial questions before the Arbitration Commission; and the reference to the Tariff Board of an inquiry concerning colour television. These are certainly questions on which the views of the new Government are directly opposite to those of the outgoing Government.

Since Mr. Whitlam's Ministry was sworn in, the two Ministers have gone ahead with great despatch and decisiveness. They may have alarmed some citizens while gaining a good reputation for promptness and firmness with others. In press announcements Mr. Whitlam has made it clear that his two-man Ministry has been in close consultation with those senior members of the Labour Party who were in the "Shadow Cabinet" while in Opposition and who might reasonably be expected to be given a place in the Ministry by the vote of Caucus.

In their relations with me, Mr. Whitlam and Mr. Barnard have behaved with decorum and full respect for my office and I have at present an expectation of having a close and satisfactory working relationship with them and possibly a more dependable one than I was able to enjoy with Mr. McMahon.

The result of the election, showing a marked swing in favour of Labour, did not surprise me. As the campaign progressed it was clear that doubts about the Liberal Party grew and doubts about the Labour Party lessened. Mr. McMahon showed up poorly in the campaign and Mr. Whitlam showed up well. The Opposition campaign was more effective than that of the Government.

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Naturally the Labour Party interprets the result as an endorsement of all its policies and uses the customary phrases about having received a "mandate" from the people to apply all the policies it has declared as well as to make good the particular promises of the campaign. I would myself doubt whether the majority of electors voted on policy issues and, indeed, it seemed to me that no clearly-defined central issues of policy dominated the election campaign. Rather there was a confused hotch-potch of issues ranging through education, social services, protection of the environment, abortion law reform, health, and control of foreign investment to broader questions of the state of the economy and foreign policy and defence. My guess is that the swinging vote was cast against Mr. McMahon as Prime Minister rather than being a vote to endorse in full the Labour Party's programme.

One newspaper usually favourable to the Liberal Party said that Mr. McMahon as Prime Minister has been a "disaster". That is fair comment. Having been a Cabinet colleague of his, I had originally no respect for his character and a poor opinion of his qualities as a politician, but throughout his term as Prime Minister I was increasingly dismayed by the effect of his shortcomings on the standards and procedures of Australian government. His term weakened the Cabinet system, undermined the public service, made public relations exercises even shoddier than usual, lowered respect for the Prime Ministership, and eroded trust. This deterioration in political practice does not seem to me to have been redressed by the few achievements in the national interest.

As the Liberal Party and Country Party go into opposition they will probably face a difficult period of self-examination and possibly of reconstruction, re-thinking policy and reforming their organisation. I shall leave this question for discussion in a subsequent despatch.

The Labour Party comes to government, after 23 years in opposition, without any experience of office but with much confidence and enthusiasm. A great deal will depend on the way in which Mr. Whitlam and two or three of his colleagues mature when in office and the control Mr. Whitlam manages to exert over Cabinet. There may be difficulty with three or four of the senior members of the party of whose wisdom and balance I have some doubts and of whose peremptory approach to power I have some fears. Lower down, however, I see a solid core of potential Ministers with practical ability and political moderation who offer the prospect of a good hard-working team.

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In general, although there may be a first fine burst of careless rapture, I believe that Her Majesty may expect that Her new Australian Government will act with responsibility as well as energy and, while it may be rather more assertively Australian than its predecessor, it will maintain those standards of good government and care of the public interest which She would wish to see upheld in Her realm.

In due course, I shall write again after the Second Whitlam Ministry has been sworn to give some fuller account of the plans and prospects of the Australian Government. It seems to me that we are entering on a new phase of Australian political history and I would wish to evaluate the change with some care.

Lieutenant-Colonel the Honourable Sir Martin Charteris,
K.C.B., K.C.V.O., O.B.E.,
Private Secretary to Her Majesty The Queen,
Buckingham Palace,
LONDON. SW 1E 6JZ

PERSONAL AND
CONFIDENTIAL

GOVERNMENT HOUSE,
CANBERRA. 2600

7th December, 1972.

As you will be aware from my cable message of December 7, the new Prime Minister, Mr. E.G. Whitlam, advised me that the New Year Honours list recommended by Mr. McMahon should be withdrawn.

Two days earlier, when Mr. Whitlam accepted the commission to form a Government, I drew his attention to the fact that a list had been recommended by Mr. McMahon but that, on my direction, no soundings had been made. Accepting the wise observations made in your own letter of 27th November, I did not present him with the possibility of allowing the recommendations to stand without his own support but simply asked him for his advice as Prime Minister. Today he handed to me personally a letter advising against any awards.

In discussion he made it plain that his advice was based on the declared policy of the Australian Labour Party. With the Secretary of his Department, Sir John Bunting, he had looked at the possibility of allowing some of the military honours to stand, but had found that it was not practicable to do so. For example, while he might have favoured the award of a D.F.C. to one member of the Royal Australian Air Force, it was pointed out to him that an equally deserving or more deserving officer recommended for an O.B.E. would be treated unfairly if his honour were not also granted.

The conversation showed that Mr. Whitlam's interpretation of his party's policy allows for the recognition of acts of bravery or outstanding service either by civilians or by members of the uniformed services, including police, and it is possible that, after further examination of the lists, some recommendations for the recognition of such persons may be made in a special list early next year.

Mr. Whitlam also revealed a personal view against any titles that are linked with what he regards as non-Australian institutions. For example, he objects to the whole Order of the British Empire because, so far as Australia is concerned, the British Empire has ceased to

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have meaning. He thinks that, when Australia became a fully independent nation, it should have ceased to use the Order in the same way as India ceased to accept the Order of the Star of India. In a similar way he regards the Imperial Service Medal as unacceptable because of the word "Imperial" even although he thinks the kind of service for which it is given is worthy of being recognised.

My conversation leads me to expect that, in his wish to recognise certain acts and certain kinds of service, he may come to suggest the founding of a purely Australian award made by Her Majesty as Queen of Australia. In saying this, however, I am interpreting rather than reporting his remarks.

Another indication of the turn of his mind is that he expressed doubt whether he would seek the Privy Councillorship which has customarily been accorded to Australian Prime Ministers. He sees the Privy Council as being, in large part, the Executive Council of the British Government, but what troubles him most is that it seems improper for the head of one government to submit to a recommendation for his appointment being made by the head of another government, namely by the British Prime Minister.

Although there is this strong pro-Australian sentiment, however, it would be wrong to think that it means a lack of loyalty or devotion to Her Majesty as the Head of State of Australia.

I have written this letter to give something of the background to the withdrawal of the New Year Honours list and to indicate broadly the thinking of the new Prime Minister in case, during the coming months, there should be any sequel to today's decision.

Lieutenant-Colonel the Honourable Sir Martin Charteris,
K.C.B., K.C.V.O., O.B.E.,
Private Secretary to Her Majesty The Queen,
Buckingham Palace,
LONDON. SW 1E 6JZ

CONFIDENTIAL



WINDSOR CASTLE

9th April, 1973

Dear Governor General

Many thanks for your letter of 29th March which The Queen has read with much interest. Her Majesty has been looking forward to receiving a report from you on the Whitlam Government and on the whole finds it encouraging.

As you say, there will certainly be difficulties ahead, but the atmosphere of energy and decision which is being shown must be refreshing.

If there is to be a political crisis over electoral reform, we must hope that it does not come at the time of The Queen's visit in October. It would, I think, be very difficult for Her Majesty to be carrying out public engagements in Australia in the midst of a general election, and I hope that it may at least be possible to avoid this awkward coincidence of timings.

The Queen is much looking forward to the Prime Minister's and Mrs. Whitlam's visit to Windsor on Friday 20th April, and anything you can send me in the way of information about Mr. Whitlam and the points he is likely to raise with Her Majesty will be most useful.

I have been informed by Australia House that these points are likely to include the following:

Received on 17/4/73

Letters of Credence
Royal Style and Titles Act
Agrément
Oath of Allegiance
Parliamentary Oath
National Anthem

I shall be particularly grateful for any information you can let me have about the Parliamentary Oath.

I shall, of course, let you know what transpires during the Whitlams' visit.

Yours sincerely
Martin Charteris

His Excellency
the Governor-General of Australia.



WINDSOR CASTLE

CONFIDENTIAL

16th April, 1973.

Dear Governor General

Your interesting and valuable letter of 4th April arrived most opportunely and The Queen has had the time to study it in detail before the arrival next Friday of her most welcome guests.

It seems to everybody here excellent news that the Prime Minister and Mrs. Whitlam are to visit London and that they are coming to spend the night at Windsor. You say that had he visited the United States of America, India, Japan, and China, before visiting Britain, this would have created a bad impression in Australia: it would also, I am sure, have created a bad impression in Britain.

We recognize with appreciation that Mr. Whitlam has adjusted his own plans to meet The Queen's convenience and that as a result he is subjecting himself to some pretty tough travelling. I hope he and Mrs. Whitlam will not be too exhausted when they arrive.

I am sure that The Queen will be entirely sympathetic to the Prime Minister's wish to encourage and foster Australia's sense of nationalism. The proposed alteration in Her Majesty's Style and Title is a move in this direction and it is interesting to note that it was something advocated by King George VI as long ago as 1949. There is in existence a minute in his own hand saying that mention of the United Kingdom ought to be dropped from his Style and Title in all countries except Britain and that "Defender of the Faith" should be optional.

The idea that The Queen should personally approve the legislation amending her Style and Title when she is in Canberra in October seems to be quite excellent, and I hope it comes off.

I shall, of course, give you an account of what happened at Windsor during the visit, and will write about this at the beginning of next week.

Yours sincerely
Martin Charteris

His Excellency the Governor-General
of Australia.

Government House,
Canberra. 2600.

17th April, 1973.

As I have been travelling away from Canberra your letter of 9th April did not reach me until this morning.

Some of the matters you mentioned as likely to be discussed during Mr Whitlam's visit to Windsor were touched upon in the second of my recent letters, but you specially asked for any information I could let you have about the parliamentary oath.

This was not specifically mentioned by Mr Whitlam during his recent conversation with me in Canberra but we had discussed it at the time when he called upon me to apologise for his precipitate announcement of a change in the oath of allegiance at the ceremony of naturalisation of immigrants.

The form of this oath cannot be changed without an amendment of the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Australia. Section 42 of the Constitution requires every senator and member of the House of Representatives to take an oath or affirmation of allegiance in a form set out in the schedule of the Constitution. The oath in this schedule reads as follows:-

"I, (name), do swear that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Victoria, Her heirs and successors, according to law. So help me God!"

The practice has been to substitute the name of the reigning Sovereign for that of Queen Victoria and the latest form in which the oath was administered referred to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Second. So far as I am aware it would not be possible to embellish the reference to the Monarch by adding any new form of Royal Styles and Titles, but it may be that Mr Whitlam has in mind the possibility of finding some form of words, which includes the word "Australia", in replacement of "Her Majesty Queen Victoria" without this being considered an amendment of the Constitution.

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The only indication of his views I had during our conversation about the oath of allegiance was that he recognised that the parliamentary oath of allegiance could not be altered without an amendment of the Constitution.

PAUL H. H. H. H.

Lieutenant-Colonel the Honourable
Sir Martin Charteris, K.C.B., K.C.V.O., O.B.E.,
Private Secretary to The Queen,
Buckingham Palace,
LONDON. SW1. ENGLAND.



WINDSOR CASTLE

CONFIDENTIAL

23rd April, 1973.

Dear Governor General

Thank you very much for your letter about the Parliamentary Oath which I was able to show The Queen before Mr. Whitlam's arrival.

It seemed to me that the visit to Windsor of the Prime Minister and Mrs. Whitlam went extremely well and was, I believe, much enjoyed by everybody.

They arrived at 6 p.m. on Friday, showing no noticeable signs of fatigue in spite of their arduous journey from the Pacific. Mr. Whitlam was received by The Queen at about 6.45 p.m. and I was able to have half an hour's conversation with him beforehand in which I assured him that it would be proper for him to speak to Her Majesty with complete freedom and without inhibitions.

This I believe he did from 6.45 p.m. to 7.30 p.m. and I think the results of the conversation were in every way satisfactory.

I know that Mr. Whitlam will tell you what was decided when he returns so I shall confine myself now to saying that I believe that an excellent relationship was established between The Queen and her Australian Prime Minister which I am sure augurs well for the future.

After dinner Mr. Whitlam gave The Queen his birthday present - a magnificent sheepskin rug, which was much admired and enjoyed by all. The Queen then showed the Whitlams the pictures in the Long Corridor and a number of works by Australian Artists in the rooms above.

Next morning they were taken on a tour of the State Rooms and the Library by the Librarian and left at noon. The talks with United Kingdom Ministers begin tomorrow.

In your letter written before Mr. Whitlam's visit you said that you were glad he was coming and that you believed he would find his meeting with The Queen a valuable experience. I do not think you were wrong in this belief.

May I finish by saying that Mr. Whitlam told me how much he enjoyed and valued his meetings with you in Canberra.

Yours sincerely

Marina Cartier

His Excellency the Governor-General
of Australia



WINDSOR CASTLE

26th April, 1973.

Dear Governor General

You will be surprised to learn that your extremely interesting letter of 19th February arrived on my desk at Windsor Castle yesterday, 25th April. The reason for the delay in its arrival is that it came by surface mail rather than by air mail.

I was particularly glad to receive it as I felt sure that you would write about the change in the Oath of Allegiance and was mystified not to have had any word from you about it.

It was, of course, a pity that your letter did not arrive in time for The Queen to see it before Mr. Whitlam's visit, but in the event I do not think this mattered. Mr. Whitlam explained the circumstances in which the decision had been announced and reiterated the apologies which he made to you.

I had, of course, also received a message about the Oath of Allegiance from Mr. Armstrong shortly after The Queen instructed me to speak to him.

The more I think about it in retrospect the more delighted I am that the Prime Minister was able to come to England and to spend the night here at Windsor, as I am sure that any misunderstandings which may have been created were satisfactorily resolved.

The Queen was most interested to see your letter and is grateful to you for sending the text of your Australian Day Address which she has read with admiration.

Yours sincerely

Martin Charteris

His Excellency the Governor-General
of Australia.

CONFIDENTIAL

Government House,
Canberra. 2600.

17th May, 1973.

May I bring under the notice of Her Majesty a conversation I had today with the Prime Minister on the subject of honours.

Her Majesty will recall that, earlier in his term, Mr Whitlam expressed certain views on honours and he did not recommend either for the New Year or the Queen's Birthday lists. His views are still against honours carrying titles, honours within the Order of the British Empire or honours carrying the word "Imperial", but he is not opposed to the recognition of deeds of gallantry or outstanding merit in the uniformed services. He is not adamant on any of these points.

Early this week, however, the Acting Official Secretary at Government House informed me that he had been asked by Sir John Bunting, Secretary of the Prime Minister's Department, if he would telephone to London to see if there were time to include some new honours in the forthcoming Birthday List, the names having been "recommended" by the Chief Minister of Papua New Guinea. I found this somewhat odd and instructed the Acting Official Secretary that he was not to take any action until I had a talk with the Prime Minister. In any case, I thought a matter of this kind should come to me in a letter from the Prime Minister.

A little later Sir John Bunting told me personally that he had prepared for submission to the Prime Minister a letter saying that he "supported" a list put forward by the Chief Minister of Papua New Guinea. I said that the Prime Minister had the responsibility to recommend for honours and I could not accept any other sort of advice.

This morning I had the opportunity for a friendly talk with the Prime Minister himself. Mr Whitlam explained, as background to the suggestions for honours, that, when he was at Apia for the South Pacific Conference early in April, Mr Michael Somare, the Chief Minister of Papua New Guinea, discussed with him several questions related to the promised transition to self-government at the end of this calendar year. One was the death penalty. The Australian Government was abolishing it; Papua New Guinea would probably wish to retain it. Another was Honours. The Prime Minister was opposed but the Chief Minister wanted certain people in

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his country to receive honours. Mr Whitlam assured Mr Somare that he would help him to obtain whatever Papua New Guinea thought best for it even if it were not what was being done in Australia. Apparently he must have raised Mr Somare's expectations too freely for last week a list of "recommendations for honours, including so I am given to understand, at least one Knighthood, arrived in Canberra from Mr Somare.

Diligent departmental officers started to work on the list on the assumption that Mr Whitlam had promised to give effect to it, and that was the occasion of the initial approach to my staff.

Today, when I talked to Mr Whitlam, he readily accepted the point I made that at present Mr Somare had no standing so far as the Governor-General was concerned. On the affairs of Papua New Guinea my only advisers were the Prime Minister and the Australian Minister for External Territories. He also accepted the point that he, as Prime Minister, had the responsibility to recommend for honours and not simply to forward a list recommended by the holder of an office created by an Ordinance of an Australian dependent territory. He agreed that if the honours were awarded they would have to be published as the Australian Commonwealth List and be seen publicly as the recommendation of the Prime Minister and he admitted to some embarrassment, first, at having to go back on his statement that he would not recommend for honours, and, second, to the fact that Mr Somare's "list" contained the names of some Australians, as well as Papuans, and that some of those Australians would not have made the same grade if recommended on an Australian "list". After a friendly discussion he agreed that it would be better not to proceed with any attempt to forward the names to the Palace for the forthcoming Queen's Birthday List but to give some further consideration to the whole subject. Mr Somare will be told that time did not permit the forwarding of his list for the June announcement.

I then made certain comments to Mr Whitlam on possible constitutional questions that would arise with the granting of self-government to Papua New Guinea and Mr Whitlam, confessing that he had not thought of them before, said that he would ask his officers to examine them.

Apparently it is in mind that when Papua New Guinea achieves self-government, the present Administrator (who does not hold a vice-regal office but is the representative of the Australian Government) will be asked to stay on by the Papuans and to occupy a position which will resemble in some ways the position of a Governor in one of the former self-governing British Colonies. At present Mr Whitlam does not know what this officer will be called, although "High Commissioner" and "Governor" have both been canvassed.

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His advisers have not yet thought through the question of what precisely will be his relationship to the Australian Government as well as to the Papua New Guinea Government. They have not considered fully what function, if any, the Governor-General of Australia will have in respect of Papua New Guinea after self-government and, if he has any function, whether he will continue to be advised solely by Australian Ministers. I suggested that some attention would also need to be given in the constitutional planning for self-government to the position of the Queen of Australia. After Papua New Guinea became independent and was admitted as a member of the Commonwealth of Nations presumably a decision would be made whether Her Majesty was to be head of state of the independent nation and Queen of Papua New Guinea as well as of Her other realms and territories, but until independence Her status as Queen of Australia would presumably still extend to Papua New Guinea. If, then, Mr Somare, occupying a position comparable to that of the Premier of a self-governing State, wished to recommend for Honours would he pass his recommendations to the Governor-General on a separate Papua New Guinea list or, as part of the Australian list? Would he make his recommendations direct to London through someone holding a vice-regal position in Port Moresby resembling that of the Governor of a British Colony. I stressed that these questions illustrated the need to consider more carefully the place of the Crown in the future constitution of Papua New Guinea. Her Majesty had a clear interest in what was being done and at an appropriate stage there should be consultation. The vice-regal function in a self-governing Papua New Guinea, whether performed by the Governor-General of Australia or in some newly-created office, would call for an appointment by Her Majesty.

I have mentioned these suggestions at some length because they may arise in official advice later in the year and they will certainly have a bearing on the arrangements for the visit to Papua New Guinea by Her Majesty next year, when, on the present programme, self-government will have been inaugurated. I shall continue to keep myself informed of the progress of planning and have the duty of reporting through you to Her Majesty.

Lieutenant-Colonel the Honourable
Sir Martin Charteris, K.C.B., K.C.V.O., O.B.E.,
Private Secretary to The Queen,
Buckingham Palace,
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BUCKINGHAM PALACE

CONFIDENTIAL

30th May, 1973.

Dear Governor general

Thank you very much for your letter of 17th May which The Queen has read with great interest.

The business over the wish of the Chief Minister of Papua and New Guinea to put forward a list of honours is a real demonstration of the difficulties and pitfalls which surround the whole terrain of honours. Your comments to the Prime Minister were, if I may say so with respect, a perfect statement of the constitutional doctrine of Ministerial responsibility by which this matter, and others, should be governed.

I was most interested to read what you had to say about the ideas which exist for the future relationship between The Queen of Australia and Papua and New Guinea. As you said to Mr. Whitlam, this matter needs very careful thought.

I have no doubt you have been reading of the scandals and rumours which have been plaguing the Government here. Provided there are no further "disclosures" I do not think the

Government will have suffered any lasting harm.

At least, all this sorry business has been swept off the front pages today by the good news of Princess Anne's and Lieutenant Mark Phillips's engagement.

Yours sincerely
Martin Luther King

His Excellency the Governor-General of Australia.

CONFIDENTIAL

Government House,
Canberra. 2600.

12th July, 1973.

May I bring under the notice of Her Majesty The Queen some further observations on the present state and prospects of Her Australian Government.

Seven months have passed since the Whitlam Government took office. Public assessment of its work is beginning. Recently one of the weeklies had an article in which it listed Mr Whitlam's election promises and totted up the score as follows:- Done, 22; Partly Done, 14; Not Done, 30. Criticism of particular measures is becoming more frequent, but I doubt whether these separate criticisms have yet fused into a general dissatisfaction with the Government.

In the period of parliamentary sittings which ended in early June over a hundred bills were passed and the Government certainly made a much better appearance than the Opposition. Every week still sees announcements of new decisions, new appointments and new intentions. Ministers are moving everywhere and speaking on almost everything. They are making news on trips overseas as well as at home. Even to travel unnecessarily appears as an achievement, while to announce big expenditures is in itself an act of statesmanship. The Government's reputation for "getting on with the job" still seems to outweigh any doubts about the rightness of what it is doing. In recent public opinion polls it would appear that a majority still give the Government good marks for being "active" and "constructive".

My own impression is that the Government has also caught the popular mood with its assertion of Australian nationalism. At the same time it has scared or dismayed a number of Australians who are opposed to any change in the national anthem, the flag, or the traditional ways of expressing our patriotism.

There are also signs that the assertion of nationalism has had the opposite effect in other quarters by encouraging some of the less pleasant aspects of an assertive "Australianism". The minority who sneer at patriotism are finding they are in fashion when they are rude about the old ways without the need to be proud about any new way. Being clumsy among the best china is hailed as a sign that one is progressive. Thus, I am worried a little lest the Government may be unintentionally causing a division among the Australian people by talking too loosely about "an Australian outlook" without being clear

enough on what it is and how it can best be expressed in action. It has started the talk about a new sort of Australia in a way that has made some people fearful and others foolish. One unaccepted challenge of the times is for the leaders of thought in the community to give a clearer light on what the new sort of Australia is to be. For the lack of that light there are risks that it will only be an anti-foreign, isolationist, and self-assertive Australia, developing a nationalism that gives more attention to what we stop doing than to what we should start doing.

I may have overdrawn this picture but would respectfully suggest that Her Majesty, on Her forthcoming visit, may encounter some signs of confusion in our patriotism. One theme that may help to cut through any such confusion is the simple one of a common loyalty to a common ideal. What is it that we all want to achieve for Australia? Can we see that ideal so clearly that all of us can pledge our loyalty to it and find a common symbol of loyalty, even while we continue to argue about methods and priorities.

Up to date the Government, in applying its policies has also put a good deal of emphasis on ending the old ways, and has not yet fully established what the new way should be. In relation to investment for development, the ownership of enterprises and the marketing of minerals, the policy has been anti-foreign without being definite on how development is to be financed in the future and how markets are to be negotiated without close co-operation with foreign interests. On defence and foreign policy the Government has said more about what it will not do in the future than about what it will do. In matters of social welfare, housing, health and urban and regional development it has talked more about what it will not allow other instrumentalities or private interests to do than about what it will do itself.

In fairness to the Government it might be argued that it needs to clear the ground before it builds the road but I find its method somewhat disappointing inasmuch as it encourages the sad tendency in this country to think that Australian patriotism is satisfied by not doing some of the things we used to do rather than in making up our minds about the good things we ought to do in future.

The Government will need to demonstrate that it has a better and more positive method of bringing good results for Australia and its people if it is to overcome the criticism and the opposition of those sections it has offended. At present it has offended the States, the medical profession, large sections of private property owners, investors and industrialists, some of the rural interests, some of the housing and building industry and, in some matters, the private trading banks. Even in its much-vaunted measures for encouragement of cultural activities it has offended some writers, artists, actors and producers and commercial television stations. In its measures for the aborigines, almost profligate in the liberality of financial aid, it has dismayed some who have worked for years in this field.

The Government's only way of keeping a high reputation is to be more successful in producing good results by its method than were produced by the methods it has discarded. This proof is not yet visible. Its critics will expect to see such proof before the end of the year.

In the meantime, there is some doubt and uncertainty in commerce and industry about what is going to happen. This may harm the economy. There is also growing inflationary pressure, of which the Government itself has given warning. The movement of other currencies also needs close watching. About the time when the Government will be expected to produce proof of the success of its methods it will probably also be facing basic economic problems. It is going to have a difficult Budget.

In the meantime growing industrial trouble, causing inconvenience to the public, loss of income to wage earners and shortfalls in production, are adding both to the economic problems and to the political disenchantment. The internal politics of the Australian Labour Party is keeping before the non-partisan elector the fact of the contest between the Left and the Right wings of Labour with some indication that the Left is making ground. As I have said in earlier letters, part of the task of the Labour Party is to reassure the doubtful voter that it is responsible and safe and can be trusted. Yet the party often behaves in the way most likely to scare the middle-of-the-road elector.

My assessment is that at present Labour still gives a better appearance and a better promise of effective government than does the Opposition. It is now entering a critical stage where it is likely to meet more solid criticism and where it will have to tackle more difficult problems than it has done up to date. It will have to prove its capacity for building as well as for pulling down. Above all it has to start fixing its own priorities and taking account of its resources and its capacity to make its decisions lead to a successful outcome. Up to date Cabinet has approved nearly every bright idea put up to it by its Ministers, without much apparent attempt to decide what should be done first.

Some Ministers realise this; others apparently do not but are still in the euphoric state of those to whom power is novel. I discussed recently with one Minister the need for the Government to decide what were the big jobs and do them instead of going off in all directions. He told me that in their own Cabinet discussions he had used the phrase "a patchwork quilt" for what they were doing. Every eager Minister was producing a coloured patch, every patch was given the same importance as every other patch, and they were showing the public a brightly coloured quilt that did not make sense. I thought his analogy was very apt. They are a Cabinet of many enthusiasms and no common policy. Some of the Ministers are guided more by their own enthusiasm than by any sense of Cabinet unity.

Another manifestation of this lack of focus and neglect to fix priorities, after measuring their resources and capacity, is to be found in the way in which the Government is creating new instrumentalities. It has a fondness for committees of inquiry and planning authorities. In new departments of the public service it has established many positions at high salaries, and is creating an impressive paper structure. In all capital cities it is renting or purchasing enormous areas of office space. All this is going on to an extent that causes me concern. These fat administrative and advisory services have a bloated and unhealthy look. In my opinion some of the persons already appointed either to committees or to public service positions do not have the qualifications or experience required and I would also predict that there will be difficulty in finding qualified and experienced officers to fill some of the high-salaried posts that are still being advertised. All this is going on with little apparent regard for cost. They appointed a Committee to Inquire into Poverty in Australia and had a very good press for their announcement. What has not yet been seen by the public is that, in staff and office space, the inquiry into poverty is already moving into an annual expenditure which would finance the miracle of the loaves and fishes for the five thousand every Saturday night. There is a tendency, too, for the newly-appointed staffs, in the elation of their self-importance, to try to brush aside the more sober counsels of senior public servants.

In the short term, the Government gained the appearance of prompt action when it set up inquiries into this and that. Any seasoned politician could have warned them that nothing is more embarrassing, hanging around the neck of a government, than the report of a committee containing recommendations that cannot be put into effect. Their inquiries are going to produce a host of recommendations and then, unless they put them all into effect at once, they will incur the criticism of hesitation, delay and uncertainty.

The Government's worries are ahead. It is still brimming with confidence. It still has great resolution. It still holds the attention of the people as an Australian Government trying to build the Australia of the future and not simply to preserve the Australia of the past. Mr Whitlam still has a livelier and bigger image than any other party political leader. I can myself see no prospect anywhere of finding a better government than the present one. I see no likelihood of any serious challenge to the Government by the Opposition.

Nevertheless my own judgment would be that the Government would be politically unwise to face the test of a general election by seeking a double dissolution on the grounds that its legislation has been blocked by the Senate. They have to pass a few more hard tests before they can be confident that their achievements and their reputation for being active will outweigh the criticisms they are awakening in many sections of the populace.

There will be an opportunity to test the market at a by-election in Parramatta within the next two months or so. Mr Nigel Bowen, who was successively Attorney-General, Minister for Education and Science, and Foreign Minister in the Gorton and McMahon Governments has announced his intention to retire to accept an appointment to the Bench of the New South Wales Appeal Court. Bowen's talents, integrity and political calmness will be a great loss to the Liberal Party. He won Parramatta by only a handful of votes at the last election and, on paper, the Whitlam Government should have a good chance of gaining it at a by-election. It is an outer-suburban seat in the Sydney region and the voters are widely representative of many sections of the urban community so the by-election should be much better than the usual public opinion poll as a test of the Government's standing.

PAUL HASLUCK

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BUCKINGHAM PALACE

CONFIDENTIAL

18th July, 1973.

Dear Governor General

Thank you for your letter of 12th July with your further observations on the present state and prospects of The Queen's Australian Government. The Queen has read this with the greatest interest.

As I hope you realize, your informed and perspicacious reports are of the greatest value to Her Majesty, particularly at this time when her first visit to Australia, since Mr. Whitlam became Prime Minister, is rapidly approaching.

It will be most interesting to see what happens in the by-election in Parramatta.

We are all beginning to look forward to the October visit and planning for this seems to be going along very satisfactorily.

Yours sincerely
Martin Charteris

His Excellency the Governor-General
of Australia.