



## DAVE'S DAIRY

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Travelling around with Clarkson as I do, particularly on the New Guinea trip, it is inevitable that I sometimes stop thinking about my farm, and the banker and his cranky ways, and think more about the problems of government and things like that.

I don't suppose my thoughts on these things are of great interest to readers of the *Stock Journal* because I am not an important person like Clarkson thinks he is.

But all the same, I am an elector, and a grandfather, so I think I ought to sometimes write down what I think about the problems of government and things like that.

I often get furious with Clarkson because he is always trying to be popular with people.

But I suppose he can't help it really.

For a person to be elected to Parliament, he has to be popular.

Once he gets there, he has to be popular to stay there.

Sometimes Members of Parliament want to stay there because the pay is good.

But sometimes they want to stop there because they think that what they are trying to get done is important, so the chief motivation for their seeking popularity may be that they can stop in Parliament to get these things done.

I think Clarkson is in the latter group.

I know he can manage quite comfortably without his Parliamentary salary, and I know the poor old coot went into Parliament because he thought he could get something done about tariffs.

So to stop in Parliament to be able to do these things, he has to behave like a Member of Parliament, and try to be well known and well liked, so that he can be re-elected.

This is a great pity, because it makes him such an awful bore, and (much more importantly) it tends to make him do things which are wrong, but popular.

It's not his fault really, so much as the fault of the democratic system.

Where he goes wrong is that he doesn't know what makes him popular.

He labours under the delusion that making long wordy speeches about almost everything makes him loved.

But it doesn't; it does the opposite.

He clings to the belief that all MP's talk a lot, so if he doesn't talk a lot people will think he's not a good MP.

In actual fact, I think if Members of Parliament talked half as much, they would be twice as well regarded, especially by me.

It is not for nothing that Members of Parliament are called "Big Mouth" in New Guinea.

If he doesn't know something, I wish he would say so.

We don't really expect him to know everything, but he thinks we think he ought to.

So when he doesn't know, he pretends he does and covers up his ignorance with a whole lot of eloquence.

We would all like him better if he were to say he didn't know but would find out and let us know later.

What makes me really cross with him is his tendency not to disagree with people when he knows, or thinks, they are wrong.

Of course, he is not like that with me, but we have been neighbours all our lives so he thinks he can ignore me, particularly now his daughter is married to my son.

But with other people, particularly his electors, he is inclined to go along with them when they are wrong.

He does this because he thinks to disagree with them would make him unpopular.

I think he is quite wrong about this.

I know I always respect people if they tell me what they think, not what they think I want to hear.

It is true that I may get cross with them, and sometimes even dislike them. But I respect them.

I think that where Clarkson goes wrong is to muddle up "like" with "respect."

So far I have been talking about Clarkson as a Member of Parliament.

But he is not only a Member of Parliament, he is now a Minister, and this has made him rather worse, and certainly even duller than he was.

Now, when he gets up to speak, you know that he is not going to say anything worthwhile, and that he is going to say that everything the Government does is wonderful.

Before, if you listened carefully, you could find in among the chaff of eloquence a few grains of good hard commonsense criticism, sometimes about tariffs, sometimes about "cost of production" or some other aspect of government that was worrying the old boy.

But now there's nothing, only a lot of words about how marvellous the Government is and (by implication) how marvellous Clarkson is to be a Minister in the Government.

The trouble is he is surrounded by so much pomp and ceremony and has his staff around him to agree with him that he is getting delusions of grandeur.

Even the chauffeur of his big black car agrees with him.

So it is inevitable that he is getting even worse than he was.

The only real hope for him is that someone may show him a copy of this diary.

This would do him a lot of good, but it won't help me at all.

It will mean I won't be asked to go anywhere with him again, to carry his bags.

Still, it will be worthwhile if it really helps him, because the silly old coot means well, even if he doesn't always do well.