



A MODEST FARMER

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Mavis kicks the bucket under govt milch cow

When Mavis realised that Mongolia is sandwiched between Russia and China who are not very friendly at the moment, her urgent interest in getting me appointed ambassador there in order to provide proper employment for my striped pants, suddenly evaporated.

So she has been lying fallow for a while, trying to think up another scheme.

She has spent so many years plotting to have me made a minister that I think she gets bored if she does not have a worthwhile outlet for her plotting powers. She hates them to be lying idle.

So when the sordid story broke that Don Dunstan was claiming compensation for the physical harm he had suffered while he was a Member of Parliament, Mavis fairly pounced on the opportunity.

I pointed out that Mr Dunstan had, with exquisite footwork, managed to milk the South Australian exchequer for a capital sum of around \$180,000 together with an indexed pension of \$15,000 a year, so even he could not expect any more.

But Mavis would have none of it.

“If it is good enough for him to get another bucket under the government cow after all the other milk he has got out of her, then it is good enough for you also.

“We won’t use your halo with which to grab for money as Mr Dunstan did, we will behave in a more inhibited manner, but we will do it all the same.

“If it is good enough for him to be in it up to the elbows, I don’t see why you shouldn’t tickle the till with your fingers.”

Mavis was only a little mollified when she heard later that Mr Corcoran, the new South Australian Premier, had persuaded Mr Dunstan to withdraw his outrageous claim.

Whether this was hard to do we will never know but certainly making the claim demonstrated yet again that the Dunstan image had feet of clay.

And, even more seriously, for Mr Corcoran, the claim was exposing the Labor Party to derision and contempt.

So when it was withdrawn everyone except Mavis gave a sigh of relief.

However, the withdrawal of the claim only seemed to add to Mavis’ determination to get in for my cut.

“It’s the principle of the thing,” she cooed as she sharpened her nails, “you know it is not the money I am after, all I want is proper recognition for all your devoted service to your constituents and compensation for all the physical damage you have suffered.

“Look at your poor back, dear, you cannot deny that it is bent like that because of the load of responsibility you have carried for your constituents.”

I was rather sceptical to hear Mavis claim that it was the principle of the thing and not the money she was after, but long experience has taught me to keep my mouth shut at such times.

So I went away and did a long day on the tractor, trying to figure out how I could divert Mavis away from the subject and hoping in a hopeless way that she would forget all about it.

I should have known better. After tea that night Mavis brought out this list of damages I had suffered in the course of my parliamentary duties and for which she is going to sue for compensation.

- Damage to back, caused by carrying heavy load of responsibility for constituents.
- Damage to eyesight caused by looking through rose coloured spectacles at election time.
- Flat feet caused by excessive footwork necessary to escape from awkward political situations.
- One leg longer than the other caused by people pulling it.
- One ear longer than the other caused by Fred twisting it.
- Purchase of frequent sets of false teeth absolutely essential so as to always be able to smile brightly at constituents.
- Tendency to deafness, necessary to avoid listening to the futile speeches of other politicians.
- Strained marital relations caused by having to dance too long and enthusiastically with the belles of balls.
- Protruding stomach caused by drinking too much alcohol in the course of duty.
- Shortness of breath caused by continually blowing by own trumpet.

Then Mavis said that these had just come off the top of her head as it were and she was sure that she could think of a lot more, given time.

I couldn’t help muttering as I went out that she wouldn’t be the only person given time if she went ahead with this nonsense.

When I showed the list to Fred he said that he had only one addition to make to the list and that was:

- Haggard facial expression caused by being married to Mavis.