



## **A MODEST FARMER**

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### **Soft hearted foolish people blinded by their tears**

Fred has never pretended to be a full bottle on conservation of soil, plants and animals, though I think he knows more about these matters than many of the academics who lecture him constantly.

At least, Fred has to live with his mistakes, which is a great incentive for learning.

He admits that his point of view may be a bit biased because he has to keep one bound ahead of the banker so there is always a certain pressure for him to over-stress his country and for that reason he is always glad to listen to sensible people who really know what they are talking about, people like Harry Butler.

But he gets very cross when the fair cause of conservation is prostituted by soft-hearted, foolish people, those who cannot see clearly because of the tears in their eyes.

The nonsense that people talk about the likelihood of kangaroos becoming extinct makes Fred mad.

He has a suspicion that it is the pretty faces, and wide open, innocent eyes of young kangaroos, as they keep out of their mummy's pouch that make the sentimentalists go soft in the head.

But Fred knows that kangaroos are now building up to pest proportions in many parts of Australia and that the State conservation services are now allowing them to be harvested under controlled conditions.

He also knows that we probably have more kangaroos in Australia than when Captain Phillip landed because we have supplied them with water in arid areas where there was no water before.

Yet the foolish sentimentalists try to stop the export of kangaroo meat and skins by pretending that they are an endangered species.

Although killing kangaroos is allowed when they become of pest proportions, exporting them alive under carefully controlled conditions is very difficult indeed. There are some queer people around.

We do the same with cockatoos, galahs and budgies.

We are allowed to shoot them when they become pests but we are not allowed to export them alive.

By so doing we encourage the illicit traffic in these birds with all the cruelty and suffering associated with smuggling drugged birds in suitcases and similar behaviour.

Yet the sentimentalists who try to stop the export of these birds preen themselves on their fondness for animals.

They should try asking a talking galah which he would prefer: being shot by Fred or being exported under properly controlled conditions.

In Canada sentimental conservations try to prevent altogether the killing of seals, especially baby seals.

I know that baby seals look very appealing as they look into the TV camera with their wide open, innocent eyes. Yet if the seal population is not controlled by people it will eventually be controlled by eating out the fish, which hardly seems fair on the fish and is also hard on the fishermen.

And seals are not the only young animals who have wide, innocent eyes.

One day the wife of our parson saw our crossbred lambs gambolling up and over a log in their paddock, looking so sweet and adorable as they do when they are young and thriving.

She watched them fascinated for a while and then said: "Aren't they dear, sweet little things. They are almost Christlike."

Yet these lambs went off to the abattoirs three weeks later and no one carried placards for them.

Public opinion has forced the closure of our last whaling station at Albany so that we will from now on not have such an effective voice in the policing of whaling, by the International Whaling Commission, which does its best to see that any threatened species are not overkilled.

Certainly, neither Fred nor I would want to see any species so endangered so we think whaling ought to be strictly controlled.

But the sentimentalists want to see whaling prohibited altogether and the main reason for this is that the death throes of harpooned whales are shown on television.

But if it is wrong to shoot an explosive charge into a whale and kill it instantly, how do we regard trucking cattle across the continent and then killing them in blood soaked abattoirs?

Yet if the controlled killing of cattle, sheep and pigs were shown on TV and if the bleating of the lambs, and the squeals of the pigs were recorded, then the sentimentalists would prohibit the killing of these animals also.

Or is it different killing animals in a shed where it does not appear on the screen?

Fred says that anyone who objects to whales being killed because it is cruel, and is not a vegetarian, is either a hypocrite or a foolish sentimentalist.

Fred and I are thinking of starting a "Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Krill." We fear that whales will so increase in numbers and will go round chomping up great mouthfulls of poor innocent krill. Or are the krill supposed to like it?