



A MODEST FARMER

The Bulletin, 4 November 1980

The Modest Farmer joins us

Australia's most popular commentator on rural economics, Bert Kelly, is joining *The Bulletin*.

Kelly served for 19 years as Liberal MHR for the South Australian seat of Wakefield, rising to become Minister for Works in 1966 and Minister for the Navy in 1968. For all his parliamentary experience, Kelly is probably more widely known for his weekly column on farming and economics, which appeared for years in *The Australian Financial Review* under the pseudonym of The Modest Member.

Kelly has been a consistently trenchant critic of tariff policy in his columns, while putting the rural viewpoint in a wryly humorous style.

The Modest Farmer will begin in *The Bulletin* next week. It's a must for country readers and can teach city slickers a lot, too.

The Bulletin, 11 November 1980

How The Modest Member came to be

This week *The Bulletin* introduces a new feature — The Modest Farmer, by former Liberal MHR Charles Robert ("Bert") Kelly.

Kelly, who has had a distinguished career as a farmer, parliamentarian and author, writes with humour and understanding on farming, politics and economics.

Farming is in the Kelly blood. Bert Kelly is a son of W. S. Kelly, OBE, who was a chairman of the Advisory Board of Agriculture and later a member of the Tariff Board. He is also a grandson of Robert Kelly, a South Australian MP and member of the Pastoral and Land Board.

Kelly himself was chosen as a Nuffield Scholar in 1951 to study farming in Britain and has been a member of the Advisory Committee for Soil Preservation for 19 years and of the SA Advisory Board of Agriculture for 17 years.

From 1958 to 1977, he was MHR for the South Australian seat of Wakefield, rising to become a Minister for Works in 1966 and Minister for the Navy in 1968.

During his period in Canberra he began writing a column as The Modest Member when he left parliament in 1977.

The people you will meet in his column are first, Eccles, a know-all economist, full of deep forebodings, always pointing out the straight and narrow path of economic rectitude.

Then there is Fred the Farmer, the author's neighbour, who knows far too much about him for comfort and has tried, in a tired kind of way, to make the author less eloquent and more active.

There is Mavis, the wife of the author; whose main ambition was to have had him made a minister so that he could have a State funeral when he died and she would have something to look forward to.

Then there is the poor author, picked on by all. His only claim to fame is that Sir John McEwen, the fearsome former Minister for Trade, once said of him: "I know of no one who has more to be modest about."