



## **A MODEST MEMBER**

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### **We're quick to get sick of socialism**

Many of my socialist friends are puzzled as to why socialist governments get so unpopular so quickly.

“We mean so well, we have such splendid ideas, such magnificent ideals,” they complain.

“Why do people get so sick of us so soon? It’s not fair.”

They are quite right — it isn’t fair and it isn’t their fault. It’s the fault of people like Mavis, Fred and me and even Eccles.

In other words, it is human nature that lets the socialist down.

One of the fundamental defects in people like us is that once we find out that we don’t have to pay for services that are given to us by the Government, we over-use them.

Eccles has a long-winded word to describe what happens. He says there is no “disincentive.”

This is the rock on which the Government’s medical scheme will founder in the end. If people get free medical treatment they will over-use it as they did in Britain.

You will find people calling on their doctor because they are feeling lonely or misunderstood at home, or something.

The British doctors soon became sick of treating a great number of patients who didn’t really need treatment so a great number of them left, many to come to Australia.

If the Government’s free medical scheme is adopted we will suffer the same doctor drain as did Britain when it started its medical scheme.

But that’s only part of the reason for Government unpopularity. People will kid themselves for a while that medical treatment is supplied by the Government for nothing, so no one will care.

Then simple people like Fred will find out that they are slogging away in the factory or field to find the tax money to pay doctors to treat patients who don’t really need treatment anyway.

When this happens, Fred and his ilk will dislike the Government.

On September 19 some Australian daily papers carried the story of a young married school teacher couple who had “opted out” of teaching after both had been trained at great expense by the taxpayer.

They now sit around living in a kind of commune, receiving an unemployment cheque of \$42 a week.

The husband admitted that he began registering as a labourer but found that this might one day entail work, so he altered his status to media researcher — the chances of him getting employed seemed more remote.

When questioned as to whether he thought that it was quite ethical that he, who didn't believe in material things, be supplied with the material things of life by more simple people, he admitted that even he found the situation a little embarrassing — but he continued to line up for his money just the same.

The population of metropolitan Brisbane is about 10 times as large as in Cairns and the Atherton Tableland, yet in June these areas contained 255 more registered unemployed than in Brisbane.

Some of these were registered as glass blowers or wood carvers, an occupation not greatly in demand there.

It is clear that a considerable number of these unemployed were “dropouts,” and were attracted to the balmy northern winter.

Fred says he doesn't mind them dropping out but he objects to having to keep them while they are doing it. And the decent, hard working, responsible unionist no doubt feels the same way.

Then Fred found that the good people in Canberra were to be supplied with free bus transport as a social experiment.

Fred had just heard that he would have to pay 5c a gallon extra for the petrol to put in his car which he has to use for the simple reason that there isn't any public transport in his neck of the woods.

He just can't see why he should, in addition to his own needs, be supplying free bus transport for the Canberra people who he thinks have almost everything handed to them on a silver salver, anyway.

These are three examples which illustrate why socialist governments become unpopular. Eccles says that the things you get for nothing you appreciate as such.

But it is only when you find you are paying dearly for things for other people who don't appreciate them that you really begin to hate the Government