



ECONOMICS MADE EASY

Introduction

A brief sketch of my background may be interesting for readers of *Economics Made Easy*. My great grandfather came to South Australia from the Isle of Man in 1838. My grandfather, Robert Kelly, was for a short while a Member of the State Parliament, then he was appointed chairman of the Land Board. My father, Stan Kelly, after serving in the First World War, was a member of the State Advisory Board of Agriculture and then was appointed to the Commonwealth Tariff Board on which he served until he went to Britain in 1940 to help with the war effort in various ways. He returned to South Australia in 1942 to enable me to go into the R.A.A.F. However, my father was then asked to advise Professor Copland on rural matters when Copland was Prices Commissioner.

I was appointed to the State Advisory Board of Agriculture and to the State Soil Conservation Committee and then won the first Nuffield Farming Scholarship to enable me to study farming in the U.K. In 1958, I won the safe Liberal seat of Wakefield in the Commonwealth Parliament. Almost immediately I was appointed a member of the Forster Committee whose task it was to draw up a blue-print for the agricultural development of the Northern Territory. Then I was invited to talk to the Oxford Farming Conference in 1961; to enable me to do this I was awarded a Commonwealth Relations grant. On the way back I was asked to go to Nepal to advise our government about setting up a sheep raising project there under the Colombo Plan.

When I returned to Australia, I became caught up in a lonely and sometimes bitter, but always interesting, battle about our tariff policy. I became Deputy Government Whip, then Minister for Works in 1967 and Minister for the Navy in 1968 and 1969. When I was dropped from the Ministry at the end of 1969, I began writing the Modest Member articles which were printed by the *Australian Financial Review* and the *Stock Journal* in South Australia. At present they appear in the *Bulletin*, *Stock Journal*, and the *Victorian Stock and Land*.

The characters in the column are purely imaginary. I am glad to say that my wife Lorna is utterly unlike Mavis. A lot of people have been blamed for being Eccles but they are guiltless. Of course, the bush bulges with Freds. When I ceased to be a Member of Parliament at the end of 1977, I continued writing the column under the name of a Modest Farmer.

No attempt has been made, when arranging this anthology, to bring up to date the facts and figures used in the articles. To have done so would have destroyed the sense of the message that the essay set out to teach. So the reader must pay attention to the date when each essay was written.