



DAVE'S DAIRY

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Cripes, trouble is looming — Clarkson came rushing over to tell me that he has been promoted to the job of Deputy Government Whip. This, I understand from Clarkson, is a position only slightly less important than that of Prime Minister.

Clarkson is so excited that you would think he has been made a Minister, like Dr Forbes — or something like that.

So I did a bit of research and found that Deputy Government Whip is a very menial kind of job — really all he does are the jobs that the really important Government Whip doesn't want to be bothered with.

I gather the position is little better than a glorified kind of messenger boy.

Of course Clarkson doesn't know that I know this and he is deluding himself (and he thinks me) into believing that the whole fabric of the Australian system of Government has been radically changed by his momentous appointment.

Anyhow, the whole business has an air of unreality to me.

Who ever heard of anybody being Deputy Whip and a grandfather at the same time?

I told him that the whole picture seemed rather incongruous, but of course Clarkson would never see any picture, in which he himself featured, in that light.

I suppose the whole idea of making him Deputy Whip is to stop him talking about tariffs — kind of muzzling him.

I have always slung off about the little brief case he carries about with him, which I think mainly contains papers which he doesn't read but which he thinks make him look important.

Anyhow, the other day I said to him that I thought he ought to get a bigger brief case now to carry his muzzle in.

I think this rather hurt him because he is feeling a bit guilty at what he is going to do about his old tariffs now that he has some kind of official position.

Anyhow, that is his worry, not mine.

How he conducts himself is his affair.

All I want to know is, and this I want him to know very clearly indeed, that if he stops fighting for a more realistic approach to tariffs just because he has some menial little job, then I will give him up permanently, and what's more, I will stand against him in the next election.

I just want him to know that.

The other thing that he is all excited about is the Budget.

I tried to get angry about this when I heard the Treasurer talking about it on the wireless, but as I have given up smoking, I must admit I am getting a kind of unholy glee about the increase in the excise on tobacco.

It makes my sacrifice seem much more worthwhile now that tobacco has become even dearer.

And more than that, when people come grizzling to me about the increase, it gives me an opportunity to give them a little lecture about having a bit of will power and that it is not fair to their wife and family and to their bank manager and almost everyone else for them to continue this unpleasant and expensive habit.

I don't suppose this is going to make many friends for me, but it is going to make me feel better and that is really what I am interested in at the moment, because between you and me I've still got a bit of a hankering for my old evil ways.

But taking it by and large, the only criticism I would have about the Budget is that it wasn't tough enough.

I know that sounds silly but I am beginning to understand a bit more about Government finance than I used to, and it seems pretty clear that if we are going to stop inflation, then some kind of unpleasant action is essential.

So the only complaint I have about the Budget is that perhaps there is not enough unpleasant medicine.

It's not that I like taking medicine, but sometimes it is necessary and I think that time is just about now.

Of course, I suppose I would be feeling a lot crosser if I had been buying a new car.

Then the increase in sales tax of 2.5 p.c. would have made me absolutely furious.

But I wasn't about to get a new car and the reason is that the banker would not hear of it.

So in this case, as well as the case of the increase in the excise on tobacco, I am able to adopt a lofty national outlook.