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EDITORIAL

THIS number completes the fourth year of publication of "Review" and at this point a stock-taking is appropriate.

Has the enterprise been worth while? Has "Review" established itself as a significant part—even though a small part—of the machinery by which public opinion in Australia is shaped? Are growing numbers of people looking to "Review" to give them a special kind of guidance on national problems, a kind they cannot obtain elsewhere? Is "Review" contributing in a really substantial way to the declared objectives of the I.P.A. of promoting free enterprise, improving labour relations, and of sane economic thinking in the community? In short, are concrete results being achieved?

It is, of course, not easy to give a definitive answer to these questions. Naturally we have our critics, although, paradoxically, these come in the main from those who provide us with financial sustenance. Their criticisms are not directed at the quality of "Review" or at the views and policies which it advances. These critics doubt our effectiveness because of the apparently small circulation of "Review" (now 18,000 copies per issue), which they contrast with an electorate of some 4½ millions, and because of their belief that this circulation is concentrated on those people who, like themselves, already believe in the objectives which the Institute is trying to achieve.

We have endeavoured to answer this criticism before. But just when we think we have finally disposed of it, up it pops again. We now hope, perhaps optimistically, that this is the last time we will have to reply to it.

There are two answers.

First, the influence of a journal in the community is not necessarily measured by the size of its circulation. It would, for instance, be generally agreed that in the field of economic policy and international relations the influence of the British journal, "The Economist," is supreme in the English-speaking world. Yet its total world circulation numbers only 44,000 (in 1943 it was 10,000). From where, then, does this pre-eminence derive? "The Economist" commands the close attention of top-level figures—political, business, financial and other—in the United Kingdom and in countries abroad. And, as the Editor of "The Economist" itself has pointed out: "The opinions formed in these circles are many times more influential than their numbers would warrant, and any attempt to pursue a cause which ignores 'informed opinion' is likely to be futile." If you impress a Prime Minister you stand a chance of changing the policy of the nation, or the opinions of tens of thousands. If you impress the dustman, your influence is likely to extend no further than his associates at the bar of the local pub. This is not to say that to influence the dustman is of no importance; only that it is of an infinitely lower order of importance than influencing a Prime Minister.

The circulation of the 18,000 copies of "Review" has been specially designed to reach those people and those places where it can exert the maximum effect on opinion. "Review" goes to leaders (and potential leaders) in every aspect of community affairs—politicians, businessmen, trade union officials, public administrators, educationalists, university lecturers and students, clergymen, newspaper editors, professional men and so on. These people not only have power to shape policy in their respective avocations, but also, because of their position, they exert a unique influence on the thought of the many people with whom their work brings them into contact. Even if the reading public of "Review" extended no further than these key people, its publication would be amply justified—provided, of course, there are substance and quality in the opinions it expresses.

But, in fact, the criticism of those who say that "Review" does not reach down to the ordinary man in the street is without foundation. Summarised versions of the articles in "Review" appear in daily papers and periodicals in capital cities and country centres throughout the Commonwealth with their circulations reaching to hundreds of thousands. Indeed, the impressive growth in the amount of space allotted in the Australian press to the material in "Review" is one of the most gratifying aspects of our work. The following figures show rapid development in this field:—

1947—	750	single-column	inches.
1948—	1100	"	"
1949—	2050	"	"
1950—	2300	"	" (For 11 months).

These figures indicate a steady growth in the prestige and authority of "Review." They also suggest that "Review" is making a contribution to public affairs which is distinctive and is not provided elsewhere. For in this field the daily press, as those who have close contact with it know well, will publish nothing that cannot claim some measure of constructive originality.

Australia is conspicuously lacking in journals which aim at giving a well-weighed, expert appraisal of economic, political and social affairs. In the United States and Great Britain journals of this kind abound and comprise an essential source of information and advice for politicians, businessmen, the daily press, and the thinking public. In Australia it is not easy to think of one periodical that even remotely parallels such journals as "The Economist," "Scope," "The New Statesman," or "Fortune." If, therefore, "Review" is helping to fill only a small part of this serious gap in our national machinery of ideas, it is serving an undeniably useful purpose.

A question that no doubt often arises in the minds of many of our readers is: How far can the reasoning and conclusions in "Review" be accepted as impartial and unbiased? To this we would reply that no publication which proceeds upon a definite policy and a strongly held set of beliefs can claim complete impartiality or objectivity. We strive for the greatest degree possible, but, naturally, we cannot avoid some measure of personal inclination, some element of subjective predisposition, in our material. But there is a world of difference between a case conscientiously and scientifically reasoned and sustained; and a case argued by methods that exhibit a reckless disregard for the truth and for the accuracy of supporting data. It is the difference between the educator and the propagandist. The educator would be more than human if he were able to prevent his personal prejudices or predilections from influencing his teaching in some slight measure; he will, nevertheless, treat with a wholesome scorn those weapons which comprise the armoury of the modern propagandist. Journalism that has no cause to promote, or journalism in which the subjective factor has been ruthlessly suppressed, is almost certain to be passionless, devoid of colour, and without real life; and its influence is likely to be negligible. We hold opinions, we hold them strongly; and for this we tender no apologies. But we will not stoop to dubious tricks to put our views across. Where we make errors of fact or of logic, they are made in good faith.

"Review" has shown that it is as ready to criticise what it believes to be the short-comings or mistakes of employers as the faults and errors of trade unionists and workers. Proof of this statement could be obtained by anyone who cares to peruse the back numbers of the publication. One of the finest tributes we have ever received, and incidentally the one we value most, came from a labour leader who wrote of one of our articles: "These far-reaching declarations breathe the spirit that is needed to solve Australia's production problems. It is the spirit that is reciprocated by Labour . . . If the approach to the problem set forth in the "Review" is genuine; as I believe it is . . . there is ground for strong hope that the reign of peace and co-operation in industry is not far off."

Finally, then, how far has "Review" been successful in contributing towards its objectives of advancing free enterprise, improving relations between capital and labour, and of promoting sensible economic thought? Has it made, or is it making, any noticeable impact on the mind of the community in regard to these supremely important matters?

These are not questions we can answer without constituting ourselves as judges in our own case. All we can fairly say is that our information, obtained from correspondence and by word of mouth, suggests that the influence of "Review" is becoming increasingly important. Letters, in which we take some justifiable pride, have been received from many and varied sources.

To those who demand miraculous overnight conversions of opinion, or breath-taking results, our work no doubt is, and must always be, disappointing. But these people, if they will reflect a little, will soon see that they are demanding the virtually unattainable. Rare indeed is the big idea, the masterly conception, which, like a vivid flash of lightning, illumines and transforms the economic or political landscape. By and large the printed or spoken word only achieves its effect by a slow, laborious process like that of water dripping on a stone. Moreover, there can be no "once and for all" in the field of shaping national opinion. The fight for sanity in economic thinking and understanding, for better relations between man and man and section and section, for decency and tolerance in human affairs, the fight for individual freedom in its deepest sense, is one which must go on unceasingly. It is part of the great struggle between good and evil, a struggle to which there can be no final conclusive victory. It will persist so long as humanity persists.

There can be no great accomplishment, no great action, by a nation without high thinking and lofty vision. The limits of practical national achievement are set by the tone of the national thought. If "Review" can, from time to time, contribute something, if only a little, to the elevation of national thinking; something, if only a little, to the broadening and deepening of our economic and social understanding; something, if only a little, to the promotion of community health and vigour; something, if only a little, to policies which will help the individual Australian to a life of broader horizons, then it will more than justify its publication.

G. H. Grimwade

Chairman: Editorial Committee.

