



The Federal Redistribution 2006
QUEENSLAND



Objection Number 65

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4 pages

OBJECTION TO PROPOSED REDISTRIBUTION

The Redistribution Committee for Queensland
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Scope of the Objection:

With an interest in politics in the Rockhampton and central Queensland region dating back to the 1940's, it is my belief and concern that if the name "Wright" is maintained for the new federal division, that altogether too many electors of this division and local society generally, will believe the new seat is being named after a disgraced former member of federal parliament (and the Queensland Parliament), who was jailed for child sex offences. Particularly the citizens of Mount Morgan would be prone to such thinking because this former politician represented the town at both Commonwealth and State levels (Capricornia & Rockhampton South, respectively).

As an Australian with a love for our own literary traditions I admire and value the contribution made by our late poet, Judith Wright. However, it would be difficult to see any connection between Judith and this region. Anecdotally, it would be very hard to find anyone here that actually knows the name of one of her poems.

It would simply tarnish Judith Wright's great name if she were to be so publicly confused with a convicted pedophile. This would be a major embarrassment to us all, the Australian Electoral Commission included. I therefore submit the name "Theodore" as a worthy replacement, whom I can demonstrate had a far greater connection to the rural parts of the new seat.

Proposal of the name Theodore:

Theodore is the name of a township that is well within the new boundaries. Theodore is named after Edward Granville Theodore primarily because it was he who pioneered irrigated farming in Queensland.

E.G. Theodore was Premier of Queensland (1919-1925 and after that he served the nation as federal treasurer (1929-1931) as federal Treasurer.

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Quitting politics altogether in 1931, Theodore went on to an illustrious career in business, primarily in publishing and mining; he spear-headed the development of the gold industry in Fiji and was co-founder of the *Australian Women's Weekly*. He returned briefly to public service as director general (without salary) of the Allied Works Council (1942-1944). Theodore died in 1950 and since that time this important historical figure has been largely forgotten. The current redistribution provides us with an opportunity to remedy this situation.

According to historians Murphy, Joyce and Hughes, "Labor in Power", Theodore as Premier legislated to underpin the sustainability of primary industries in Queensland.

"Discussions were held with growers, and the Queensland cabinet, with Theodore now premier, decided to legislate to put (the wheat) industry on a sound footing and assist its development to the point where it was self-supporting."

Passage of the Wheat Pool Act, which established the State Wheat Board, was supported by a conference of farmers' representatives and it was the forerunner of so called "commodity boards" that sought to ensure good prices for "butter, sugar, cheese, maize, fruit" and other primary production. Under Theodore the Department of Agriculture would "develop and administer policies covering the whole range of state agriculture and most aspects of rural life, from fruit marketing to services to help control pests and diseases, and including the provision of advice on rural education".

In summary, Theodore is a name historically associated with government providing needed assistance to the rural component of the new, proposed federal division. This fact is underscored by the naming of the township Theodore, included within the new boundaries.

Without going into too much detail of Theodore's brief tenure as federal treasurer, it is fair to say that he was ahead of his time with his proposal for mildly inflating the Australian economy in its time of acute economic recession (late 1920's-1930's). Had Theodore's program been followed and not the "Premiers Plan", which prescribed a program of deflation, it is arguable that much of Australia would have been spared the pain and misery of the Great Depression. It is interesting to note that largely what Theodore

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was advocating for Australia 80 odd years ago is now being practiced in the global economy.

Theodore left politics forever when the Scullin Government fell and he lost his seat at the 1931 elections.

Irwin Young in his biography "Theodore his life & times" takes up the story of the remainder of Theodore's extraordinary life; his contributions to the publishing and gold mining industries and also to the Australian war effort.

According to Young: "Theodore and D. F. H. Packer (ancestor of today's James Packer and family) decided to publish a weekly journal for women – the *Australian Women's Weekly*. ...the lay-out of the paper was new to Sydney. With its articles, use of colour and large amount of fiction, it was several times the size of contemporary women's journals." Young goes on to describe the new publication an "instant success", which, as we know continues as a success to this day.

Around the same time Theodore pioneered the Fijian gold mining industry and, it must be said, he acted against the prevailing wisdom. Experts had concluded there were no gold deposits in the areas of Fiji that Theodore was interested in. Irwin tells us that he "mortgaged all his assets to invest in the enterprise" and that following preliminary operations "three mines of considerable richness and fame were located and developed ... E.G. Theodore was Managing Director of all three mines".

According to Irwin, by 1964 the total yield of the mines was "2,000,000 ounces, worth \$60,000,000".

A measure of Theodore's success in Fiji was that he was presented with the "order of Tabu (Whales tooth) and accorded the rank of Chieftain Ratu Edwardi, tui Tavua – Chief Edward, Lord of Tavau", a chieftain position in the local society that he took seriously.

Meanwhile, by the early 1940's and after numerous attempts to deal with vital civil construction projects during the early stages of World War 2, the politicians back in Australian were looking to E.G. Theodore to "establish and direct an Allied Works Council". According to Irwin:

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“Under Theodore’s direction men were called-up to form the Civil Construction Corps, thousands of whose members were assigned to work on vital strategic undertakings. In previously isolated areas townships, railways, roads and reservoirs were completed at an almost unbelievable rate.”

Something perhaps should be said of Theodore’s determination not to be stood-over by political interference. Irwin shows how after criticisms from a section of the Curtin government, in September 1942 Theodore tendered his resignation, offering the government his advice as to how the Director-General position should work without Ministerial interference.

“On November 18, 1942, Curtin informed him by telephone that the Director-General of Allied Works was free from political control, and that it was Theodore’s responsibility to ensure no other authority intervened.”

With the Allied victory in sight Theodore resigned his position in late 1944 and, as Irwin notes, a grateful Prime Minister Curtin wrote to him, saying:

“At the most critical stage of our country’s history you were good enough to accept the Government’s invitation to control the Allied Works Council and in doing so you accepted entirely without financial reward a responsibility of gigantic proportions.”

Enough said, except to say after that Theodore returned to the world of business. Irwin explains that one of Theodore’s last business decisions was to resign the chairmanship of Consolidated Press Ltd on January 25 1949. After a period of gradual decline in health Edward Granville Theodore passed away in early 1950.

In closing, it is my firm belief that Queensland’s newest federal electorate should be named after this great Australian, E.G.Theodore.

Yours sincerely



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