

NZ Republic faces mounting opposition

STALWART supporters of the monarchy have been capitalising on popular interest in the Queen Mother's 100th birthday and the Queen's 50th Jubilee celebrations.

Former Speaker Sir Peter Tapsell and former MP Ian Revell have agreed to be patrons of the Monarchist League of New Zealand as it seeks to raise its profile.

And in a sudden decision to clearly state its loyalty to the British monarchy, the New Zealand Returned Services Association has successfully applied for a Royal Patent, so it is now entitled to call itself the Royal New Zealand Returned Services Association.

Republican Movement president Dave Guerin said the apparently solidifying support for the monarchy — not confirmed by polling as yet — was a timely warning to those who argued that a New Zealand republic was inevitable.

"Our political system, based around the British monarch, thrives on our complacency and apathy," he said. "In order to run a real indigenous democracy, a republic, New Zealanders will need to be enthused and willing to get involved in politics at a community and national level.

"And in order to achieve a republic in the first place, the same enthusiasm and involvement is needed. Rachel Hunter said 'it won't happen overnight, but it will happen'. I would suggest that it won't happen at all if we don't all pitch in and make sure of it."

It's my party...

THE QUEEN has told British Prime Minister Tony Blair that he must go to the polls early to avoid a clash with her Golden Jubilee party.

"The Queen clearly thinks Blair is going to walk it," a Buckingham Palace source told *Republic UK*, "and if there's any popular public mood to be milked, she wants it for herself."

The palace's official stance is that the move is to enhance unity and to avoid divisions along political lines while her anniversary events are in progress in 2002.

She has also asked Archbishop of Canterbury George Carey to delay his retirement long enough to preside over the 50th jubilee celebrations.

Blair is to call the election for June next year, 12 months before his four-year term ends. — *Republic UK*

Republic pressure grows in Canada

CANADIAN cultural cringe about forming a republic — a result of sharing a border with the United States — is giving way to an increasing realisation of the importance of a democratically-elected head of state.

The fledgling organisation is modelling itself on the New Zealand and Australian movements. The British organisation is also growing in leaps and bounds.

The new push for a Canadian republican movement was in part prompted by a proposal in Ontario for students to swear allegiance to the Queen each morning.

The republicans hope to organise a major conference next year.

But Canadian monarchists are also organising, preparing a petition for the retention of Queen Elizabeth II and her successors as head of state.

spoken

"Some politicians, forgetting the history and principles upon which New Zealand is based, have wished to repudiate the Monarchy, in their attempt to produce a new-style New Zealand. Their attacks on the symbols and substance of the Crown produced a spontaneous public reaction in its defence. Out of this The Monarchist League of New Zealand, Inc. was born."

— *Monarchist League of NZ, Inc*

"As New Zealand develops a new economic relationship with Asia, it is vital that we strengthen our Monarchy and other institutions to preserve and enhance our identity."

— *Monarchist League again*

"I guess it isn't the first time that Queen Elizabeth II has had a run-in with the Japanese navy."

— *American coastguard spokesman after QEII liner hit Japanese warship*

"For republicans to cry 'a resident for president' requires no more ingenuity than it does to be a member of the royal family. One simply has to be born in a certain place. To be a republican is much harder."

— *Australian author Mark McKenna*

"We cannot change our antique, unaccountable and secretive system of government whilst an hereditary monarch sits astride its apex."

— *Republic UK chair Stephen Haseler*

"As history turns the page on the second millennium the British monarchy, it will be notated disquietly, clung pathologically to its Ruritanian niceties."

— *Republic UK editor Mike Richards*

The Republican Movement of Aotearoa New Zealand

newsletter

july 2000

Republican Movement annual report (summary)

by Dave Guerin, president

THE Republican Movement was at a crossroads at the last AGM and there were two options on the table — wind it up or rejuvenate the organisation. The AGM took the latter option, while leaving the winding up option available.

Since then the organisation has established a high-quality web site, developed a well-respected monthly newsletter, gained media coverage on a number of issues and helped to encourage public figures to take positions on the republican issue.

We have been greatly assisted by the Australian referendum, the *Building the Constitution* conference and Helen Clark, in gaining media coverage and public interest.

The National Council elected at the 1999 AGM was Dave Guerin (president), Paul Williams and Evan Roberts (secretary). Since the last AGM, Evan Roberts has resigned to study history at the University of Minnesota with a Fulbright Scholarship.

The support provided by Jonathan Milne in producing communications, commenting on plans and giving advice on the web site has been crucial to the Republican Movement. George Hills and Evan Roberts also provided a lot of help around the time of the Republican Movement launch on November 5. Dave Guerin did the bulk of the work on the web site, coordinating activities, dealing with the media and carrying out the administration.

An ongoing problem is that there are too few people who are committed to putting time into the Republican Movement. We need more people who can provide 5-15 hours per month.

The movement and debate have had strong media coverage, with the highlights being as follows:

➤ Deborah Morris's September *Evening Post* column about the stirring of republicanism encouraged a lively debate in the newspaper. An NBR poll showed slightly growing support at 31% but opposition at 53%.

➤ The launch on November 5, 1999 was covered by *Breakfast TV*, *Holmes*, *One Network News*, *Newstalk ZB* in Christchurch and Wellington, the *Dominion*, *Evening Post*, *Press*, Australian radio and *BBC* amongst others.

➤ Helen Clark's Waitangi Day support for republicanism stirred up things.

➤ Helen Clark's Gallipoli competition for secondary school students stoked up the fires of national myths.

➤ Auckland City Council removed the royal portraits from the Council Chamber — most places had removed them years earlier.

➤ Helen Clark's abolished knighthoods and damehoods, in a quick and contentious decision made before the Queen's Birthday honours.

➤ The Queen Mother's presence on our stamps in a special issue for her 100th birthday prompted an unsuccessful push from Australian monarchists for a similar issue.

➤ Attorney-General Margaret Wilson's moved towards the abolition of the Privy Council.

➤ The *Building the Constitution* conference stirred up a great deal of media coverage, with the themes being alleged elitism, Maori radicalism, conservatism and republicanism (in no particular order).

➤ Even the *NZ Woman's Weekly* got in on the act in early May, with a two-page spread on changing our head of state.

One of the greatest benefits of all of this media activity is that it has exposed many republicans around New Zealand, and we now have the opportunity to start linking them up.

The newsletter did not resume until March 2000, but an email update list was established to distribute media releases, advise of web site updates and distribute membership information. The newsletter is distributed to over 200 people, including members, the media and prominent New Zealanders.

The development of a web site has

been one of our greatest developments over the last year. It provides the best place to learn about the republican debate in New Zealand. Designer Jake Despotovich's work on our site gave us a fresh and professional image, and was done at less than market rates.

We have personally contacted a number of politicians to discuss their views on republicanism. Various prominent New Zealanders have contacted us and offered us their advice and support, and we appreciate their support and hope to involve them more in the future.

At the time of the last report little policy had been developed or research carried out by the Republican Movement, which had proved a weakness in internal organisation and external publicity. Since then the following work has been done:

➤ relevant legislation, regulation and major reports and has been collected;

➤ reviews of books and articles have been prepared for the web site;

➤ a policy paper on the 'road to a republic' was developed for the *Building the Constitution* conference that outlines our key arguments and provides a process by which we could become a republic — the paper provides an excellent base to build upon;

We are currently aiming to have 200-300 members by the end of the year. This number of members will cover our basic costs, provide contacts around the country and give us a reasonable base.

The Republican Movement's administration systems have been well maintained. The Republican Movement has benefited greatly from the help of members, both individually and through their businesses, in securing resources.

● *The full annual report will be sent to members. The AGM will be held in the next 6-8 weeks after some brainstorming has occurred. Members will be sent information shortly about this process.*

Patron — Keri Hulme President — Dave Guerin

Address: PO Box 24-194, Wellington

Email: info@republic.org.nz

Web: www.republic.org.nz

Tel: 04 801 8199

Fax: 04 801 8199