

Off with her head, New Zealand cries

MOST New Zealanders want the Queen's portrait removed from their money, according to a Reserve Bank poll.

The bank polled 220 retailers and members of the public, and found that 52 per cent would prefer that there be no portrait of the Queen on New Zealand banknotes, while only 17 per cent preferred to see it remain. The remainder was undecided.

The Queen's portrait is printed on the \$20 note, and features as a watermark on all denominations of notes. Her face is also on all coins.

Reserve Bank currency spokesman Brian Lang told *The Dominion* there were no immediate plans to erase the Queen from banknotes, largely because no significant design changes were in the pipeline.

"We're not looking to change the design of our currency so the Queen's in no danger of disappearing."

He said that if changes were made in the future, wide-ranging public consultation similar to that undertaken in 1992 before the present designs were introduced would be held.

Republican Movement president Dave Guerin criticised the bank for disregarding its own research. "It's all very well for them to concern themselves with interest rates, but they must also consider the interests of the New Zealand public."

Royal bigotry challenged in court

RELIGIOUS discrimination in the selection of queens and kings is being challenged in a ground-breaking human rights case before the European Court.

The case, being taken by *The Guardian* newspaper and Australian lawyer Geoffrey Robertson, calls into question the lawfulness of the monarchy, under newly-introduced European human rights legislation.

Australia's monarchist Prime Minister John Howard and New South Wales Premier Bob Carr are expected to be called to give evidence, as political leaders of states headed by the Queen, and New Zealand Prime Minister Helen Clark could also be called in.

Mr Robertson will argue that the monarchy is unlawful because it discriminates against women, Catholics, Jews, Muslims, other non-Protestants and people born out of wedlock.

Miss Clark, with other political leaders, could be asked to put New Zealand's position on whether it would agree to removing the clause, in the English Act of Settlement of 1701, which set in place the discrimination. The Act of Settlement ruled that only Protestant heirs of Princess Sophia, grand-daughter of English monarch James I, could sit on the throne.

A *Guardian*/ICM poll shows that 63 per cent of the British public agree it is time to end the discrimination, and 60 per cent prefer to see themselves as citizens, not subjects.

A spokesman for Miss Clark said she had not yet received any indication that she would be called on to testify, but it was early days yet.

spoken

"I think most New Zealanders would not see it as all that relevant to celebrate 50 years on the throne or anything to do with the monarchy ... I have always been a republican, not because I don't like the Queen, but I think that as the country moves on it becomes less attached to what goes on in Britain. It's inevitable that we will be a republic one day."

— Cabinet minister Steve Maharey

"The huge majority of New Zealanders will welcome this news, especially on the eve of the Queen's Golden Jubilee year."

— Opposition leader Jenny Shipley on announcement of Queen's visit

"A visit by the Queen is a significant event which attracts enormous international publicity to the host country. It is an opportunity for New Zealand to present itself as the dynamic 21st century society it is today."

— Prime Minister Helen Clark

"The next prime minister will be a republican, whether it is Peter Costello or Kim Beazley. [So] it's realistic to say Australians will have an Australian head of state by 2010."

— ARM chairman Greg Barns

"We're doing exactly what was said in the confederation of independence constitution. Maori has the right to its own autonomous government and military. If there's civil unrest, there will be no members of the public hurt, just those in the Beehive."

— Confederation of Chiefs spokesman Dan Davis on Maori Republican Army threats to Miss Clark



Republic: yes says Turia, no says Myers

ASSOCIATE Maori Affairs Minister Tariana Turia and Lion Nathan chairman Doug Myers are at odds over a republic.

Both opinion leaders, but in two very different spheres, they went public with their views in high-profile speeches.

Mrs Turia told Maori nurse educators that the Treaty of Waitangi needed to play a bigger part in New Zealand's constitution.

"The constitution in 2000 is essentially British, a legacy of Empire and British colonisation.

"It reflects British values, most notably the rule of law, the principle of one-person-one-vote, and a unitary Parliament and government.

"Unfortunately, the majority of people in this country see the Treaty of Waitangi as a document that is only relevant to Maori and do not understand its significance to all New Zealanders regardless of when they arrived."

Mr Myers took a very different view in speeches to invited guests at Wellington and Christchurch functions hosted by the Business Roundtable, which he previously chaired.

He criticised the increasing position of the Treaty in social legislation, and described republicanism as a "constitutional experiment".

He criticised Attorney-General Margaret Wilson's calls for a republic.

"There seems to be a fear among some 'progressive' politicians of being seen as 'anachronistic'. So the right of appeal to the Privy Council is under challenge, and some are urging that we become a republic.

"I doubt if many of the rest of us are too worried about such 'anachronisms' or even being considered anachronistic.

"The majority are more likely to be guided by sentimental attachments and loyalties, which *are* important to human affairs, by the need to make a living, and by whether or not current arrangements actually work and promote a cohesive and fulfilling society."

the way forward

by Dave Guerin

Most New Zealanders oppose discrimination but often don't notice what 'has always been done that way'.

The monarchy is an institution that most people accept as part of the wallpaper of society, without thinking about its sordid human rights past or its unsavoury present.

Would we accept our MPs being chosen on the basis of religion and gender? Of course we wouldn't, but our head of state is still selected that way.

That's why the European case challenging monarchy succession laws is so important.

It challenges both the inherent flaws in the monarchy and the conservative support base that opposes change. If the challenge is ignored, our system of Government loses further international credibility.

Australian republicans welcome Labor proposal

AUSTRALIAN opposition leader Kim Beazley is proposing a three-stage referendum on becoming a republic, similar to that proposed by the Republican Movement of Aotearoa New Zealand.

Speaking at an Australian Association of Constitutional Law seminar in Perth recently, Mr Beazley outlined his plan for a plebiscite on whether Australia should become a republic, followed by one to select a preferred model, and finally the big referendum: yes or no.

The Australian Republican Movement has welcomed the proposal.

"Mr Beazley's proposal was a workable and sound proposal that will allow Australians to engage in the issues and make an informed decision that meets their aspirations and improve the Australian system of government," said James Terrie, the ARM national director.

He said the only monarchist objections to the proposal seemed to be about the cost: "If their only objection to democracy is cost then perhaps they might to recommend where else they would like to make some cuts?"

The Republican Movement of Aotearoa New Zealand has tentatively proposed a two-stage referendum like that used in adopting the MMP electoral system.

The first referendum would ask the same questions as those asked in Mr Beazley's first two plebiscites: do you want a republic, and which model? The second would be binding, putting the existing constitution up against the preferred model.

British MPs vote in favour of some swearing

BRITISH MPs will continue swearing allegiance to the Queen — called an "affront to parliamentary democracy" — after narrowly defeating a bill to dump the oath. The private members bill failed by 148 votes to 129, opponents calling it an attempt to admit "fifth columnists and traitors" to the Commons.