

May 13 1999

2 Ross Street
Plympton Park SA 5038

The Secretary

House of Representatives Standing Committee on
Employment, Education and Workplace Relations

RI, 116

Parliament House

Canberra ACT 2600

* ANNE MONTEN

Dear Sirs / Madam

I hereby wish to add to my submission* put
in letters dated April 19, 26, 27, 28 1999.

These letters are, I submit, far from comprehensive;
they scratch the surface, and I also contend that
the ad hoc approach is a feature of how
unemployment has been tackled (with particular
the adversarial nature of politics mitigating
against the co-operative, non-partisan
attitude I submit could be one major way
to do better in tackling what is an
extremely complex area.

I have (reference to my submission to the
1995 Senate inquiry, [see April 19 letter], could
be useful) long considered that under-
employment, the big shift to casual
employment along with the rise in
unemployment itself (with its roots in the
mid to late 70s) as undenied, and both
as someone experiencing being out of work
(with for me consequence of poverty) in
the 70s, 80s and 90s, I have had
the chance to assess it all in effect on the ground,

3 And it is both from the personal perspective and a more objective one that I have come to be a - possibly lone - activist, making what I would argue are submissions that I would like to be able to present to the Committee, which, if I had the resources, I would have copied - the files of some current ministers, shadows, plus files of some over his decade are where the pleadings have gone, and I think a major flaw of all inquiries could be the lack of consultation with those people who are in his older group - aged 45 or so + - who in many cases are equally as well qualified, experienced to do a range of jobs, etc.

I could go on. I think the psychological effects of change in the work patterns, the psychology of work itself is not considered enough, is not maybe even thought about - the whole area is dominated by quantitative analyses, by numbers, be it about job creation, who gets jobs, or intentions of employers, and I am (confessedly convolutedly) asking you to inject considering all aspects of work, change, qualitatively, in human terms, as about life, and work as a central part of our economic but also personal well-being, individual and collective development etc: Isn't the value essentially life itself, and not the price of everything, etc... we don't live... do we, by bread alone,

3 but when it becomes need (as it is for the poor) to acquire means to live, money, and there are no longer jobs enough to provide that money (living wage), well, we have work as an issue where for some of us it is the only way - a job that pays at living wage level - to be other than on a subsistence level, nor participating in any of the benefits of the much-lauded healthy new economy, because this new economy has been shaped with new technologies and in effect it doesn't take nearly as much human labour to make what are now mega-profits, etc... This is a whole change in the capitalist ethos, and yet the discourse (such as it is, there is no cohesive debate etc) here is as if we live in the 70s, the 70s expectations still set the standards, the expectations are the heritage of different (not necessarily better etc) times, and it is the absence of much recognition that we all need to adjust and consider changes that is the source for me of frustration -

I enclose an article, The Australian 13/4/99, and it is another one where all is predicated on quantity, and the references to qualitative aspects are very, very vague, eg "changes in the sorts of jobs on offer" tells you what? ... a phrase like "frustrated part-time workers" tells you what? ... There is so little asking of why . why people want more work is not all to do with money, why I want to

4 have work is now a lot to do with to
get more than the pension, because
I could then have a cushion against
the (it grows, to be old and poor is
the unknown to me, to many of us, and
it's nonetheless real, poor = unable to
afford basics, anticipation of to neglect
health, etc, especially dental health. . .)
poverty I'm in, etc.

Education for life" has been - so far
superficially - raised, but it takes
fees to pay for courses, and although I
could probably probably (in terms
of a meaningful life, but problematically
re getting jobs not pay) do useful courses,
and so on, I cannot afford it* -
naïve age education was, I see with
hindsight, an idea born in times
of more widespread affluence, and
I was a pioneer (see C.V. submitted), so
I can speak from experience, and
the getting of the education I value is
in the current climate devalued, under-valued,
because there is ultimately not much
value on to study the arts, on a liberal
education . . . paradoxically, to have
a degree, and especially to have
majored in French and won a prize is
a barrier, handicap even . . . tall poppy
type envy is rampant, and there is
truth in the attached letter to ediker, about
over 455 too (many come across
prospective employers who could be
breathed in his words.)

* this NUS reduces scope to
take up options or to have
narrow options, narrow
life

5. I believe policy should consider education as an option, for older unemployed people, perhaps co-deckships with the corporate sector, to tap the experience at a level where there is no resistance because of being over-qualified, and many older people are over-qualified for the range of jobs at the bottom of the pile, (or quasi-jobs really) that do not offer even the economic security that is going to be for the poor unemployed (not all unemployed people are assets/cash poor, so the need for jobs is not a simple thing, based on wanting to work etc, is it?) a greater and greater ~~the~~ problem... There is not universally the capacity for people over 45 (or even over 40) to save (via superannuation) for retirement, there will not be the traditional retirement as it was for the early post-war young (like my father), that now divides the society, and it is affected by quite radical social shifts, where there is no longer strongly central the nuclear family household (a product of post-war affluence too, only sustainable with an income way above the poverty line)

I hope the Committee will recommend an independent inquiry into the wealth distribution, into work (in conjunction with changes in industrial relations, it is all inter-related, opposition

6 to change ought to be explored with care,
by all concerned, which includes
those looking for work)

We need, I'd submit, to re-assess the
welfare system, and to do it
dispassionately, in terms of need for
change, but to make sure we do not
lose sight of the civilised society that
is also under strain. Great... poverty
needs to be at the centre, the changes
are creating poverty for some,
are impoverishing... if (as is so)
unemployment is to be at the levels now
a norm, logically some of us will
not be working, in traditional jobs -
what is not so far examined is
other ways, the way, for instance, where
many women (pre-feminist revolution)
did not work, in the public sphere, but
did what is now more and more
social work, the mothers of probably
most over-45s did not work beyond
marriage, and for women - widows,
single women - end of marriage often meant
poverty, if not for family support - here's
the work I do in care for my parents (for a
frail father in particular) which once was
a norm - family care for aged parents,
relatives, sick children, or people
sick at work age... the baby-boomer
wealth is not all-encompassing, and
here's an unknown (scantily debated)
bit ahead, about care for the old, about

7 what will be a more divided old aged population, some mega-rich, and some reliant on solely whatever pension is there, or on the streets... there are not strong neighbourhoods any more, I know the changes; there are in Adelaide I think nearly half of households with incomes of \$20,000 per annum or less... work (under-employment, the opportunities of sustained work) cannot be looked at in isolation, and individualistically, nor 'just quantitatively' I would submit, but that is the state of affairs now: the family I'm in is in micro I think a picture, my two siblings (younger) are in secure work, but my sister (48) came close - very - at 45, to the level of work, to what is happening, out of change - she struck in effect gold, in a permanent Commonwealth position, but in our society siblings do not necessarily offer support (in money terms) to each other, and the expectation has been that a mature adult can (barring illness etc) earn a living - this is no longer deliverable to all adults, and at entry level now, for the young, it's a matter of win/lose, careers (with advancement potential) are top shelf, here's the insecure middle, insufficient to grow, and here's the below poverty line (no growth possible, decline possible) life on benefits etc... pensions assumed having secured a house, etc, some additional means too - this is the extent of it... a job now is not

8 necessarily satisfying means (dollar)
To live, let alone any meaning in the
lives — morale of many in full-time,
income secure work is poor too, those people
also apply for other jobs — So, please,
isn't a full-scale inquiry into
employment, education and the workplace
now an imperative, to have a basis
to work out how best to have alleviation
of poverty, and the consequent
negatives it is now bringing?

Thank you,

Yours faithfully

~~Cine Mont~~

ANNE MONTEN