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A Regretted Loss

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After A 10-year stint in Parliament, Scott Bacon, the Shadow Treasurer, has resigned. The announcement was sudden, and his resignation to the governor was via an email. Very odd! It's all quite strange, and his last act, to resign by email, goes some way to explaining Bacon's general disposition. It is indeed an odd way to say Goodbye.

He was an articulate advocate, a prodigious vote-getter, and his office was extremely busy in managing electoral issues. His departure will leave a gaping hole on Labor's lineup, and for them, and for the electorate he served, a regretted loss.

Labor will need to move swiftly to fill the position of Shadow spokesperson for Treasury matters, and be able to demonstrate to the wider community some competence in this area. Fortunately they have Shane Broad in their existing lineup, although he is also a competent advocate as a spokesperson for primary industry, resources, and infrastructure, important issues within his northern electorate.

More intriguing than Bacon's resignation is his likely replacement. If she seeks it, the front runner must be Madeleine Ogilvie. And herein lies a most serious matter, because Ogilvie has had a very public falling out with Labor, and is no longer a member. If re-elected she would be acting as an independent.

It may be tempting for Labor to want to woo her back into the fold in order to maintain their numbers on the floor of parliament. It is an argument being promoted by many of the old guard of Labor. However, I take a different view.

First, it assumes Ogilvie would want to rejoin the ranks. Ogilvie has very conservative social views, and that rankles with many party members. Ogilvie believes, wrongly, that Labor was out to "get her" at the last election, and that Labor put its weight behind another candidate. In fact, it was Ogilvie's lack of ability in building a support base within the party that was why she had so little internal support.

Second, if she did want to rejoin, on what basis would she be doing so? On principle? Hardly! It would be an act of convenience, and that would bode ill for future internal relations. More, it would lead to serious internal ructions. Ogilvie would be to Labor as Hickey has been for the Liberals. It would be a monumental mistake.

And yet, if Ogilvie decides to maintain her independence, and stay an independent, then maybe she should not stand at all, because to do so, would fly in the face of her standing for the election in the first place. People gave their preferences to her on the basis of her affiliation, which she is now disowning.

As is another candidate, Zelinda Sherlock. The same argument applies. If you no longer believe in the party that endorsed you, you have no moral right to now be in the countback. Not that morality matters that much in such an instance, but still, it is a principle, and that does go to the heart of why people stand for politics in the first place. As such, the electorate will make its judgement accordingly.

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