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IN THE  
HERALD

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### Earl Grey bagged

A Herald editorial exulted in the downfall of Earl Grey, the Secretary of State for the Colonial Department: "He has done more than any minister before him to tamper with our loyalties. Earl Grey ... has left us in a state of general bitterness and exacerbation, which, had he remained in office, might have ripened into downright disaffection for the Crown."

### Barbarous acts

In the criminal court, R.A. Newman and W.G. Martin were convicted of killing a Chinaman on board the ship Ganges. The former was sentenced to three months' jail, and the latter a week. Elsewhere, news emerged of the murder of an old man named Harrington, a shepherd, at Kings Plains, in the Bathurst district. No apparent cause for the "barbarous act" had come to light.

### Public notices

"Absconded from my service, Lo Chai, a native of China. All persons found harbouring or employing the said Lo Chai will be prosecuted. [He is about] five feet, six inches high, stoutly built, wore a pair of check tweed trousers, a drab alpaca jacket, a regatta shirt, a light grey scotch cap, and white half-boots ... he had cut off his back hair previously to absconding. James Cooper, Engehurst."

## Frank Baldwin 1931-2013

# Aviation chief cut industry's costs

While representing New Zealand in basketball during the 1950s, Frank Baldwin adopted a maxim from visiting US coach John Wooden: "There was a man. The more he gave, the more he had." In the corporate world, Baldwin continued giving his energy for decades, in a career marked by innovation and a certain amount of controversy.

It would eventually lead him across the Tasman, as chief executive of the Civil Aviation Authority - turning the CAA from an unwieldy, bureaucratic body to a lean, efficient enterprise. Naturally, he was dramatically ousted.

John Frank Sephton Baldwin was born in Nelson, New Zealand, on December 30, 1931, the son of transport operator Percy Baldwin and his wife, Dorothy (nee Ikin). At first, Frank's most obvious talents were in the sporting field, where he excelled in Nelson College, going on to represent Nelson in rugby, cricket, athletics and basketball, through which he met his wife-to-be, Erica, a member of the Wellington women's team.

In 1966, Baldwin and Barry Brown started Baldwin and Brown, which became the most successful estate agency in the Nelson-Tasman region. Baldwin served on Nelson City Council briefly, but was barred in 1971 after a minor conviction for a conflict of interest. In 1978, he became general manager of the Nelson Harbour Board, which wanted a fresh perspective.

Not everyone there was appreciative of his aggressive change management style, though the late Ron Fletcher, chairman of the board,



Modernised air traffic control systems: Frank Baldwin was known for his almost ruthless efficiency.

later admitted that he "put a buzz into the place". He took on the same role for the Wellington Harbour Board in 1984, winning a reputation for customer focus and almost ruthless efficiency.

His ability to turn a government office into a corporation made him a logical choice in 1987 to become chief executive of the new Airways Corporation, previously part of the New Zealand Ministry of Transport. Probably his greatest

achievement there was to modernise New Zealand's air traffic control system.

"The bureaucrats wanted to spend \$300 million upgrading air traffic control systems," said former civil aviation minister Richard Prebble in 1993.

"Baldwin came in and saw through it straight away. He got an off-the-shelf system and put out a tender for a turnkey operation. It was unique in the world. No one

had ever installed a whole new system in one move before."

It certainly impressed Dick Smith, chairman of Australia's Civil Aviation Authority. When Baldwin left the Airways Corporation in 1990, Smith approached him to take over as the CAA managing director. Once again, he was a logical choice.

When Baldwin moved to the Canberra headquarters, the CAA had 7300 staff, 23 unions, 12 levels

of management and outmoded management practices. A downturn in tourism, a national recession and a damaging pilots' strike the previous year had put pressure on the industry to make savings.

As expected, the CAA was restructured under Baldwin. Staff was reduced to 5100, with further cuts planned, in what one staff member called "the mother of all purges". The CAA passed these savings directly to airlines, representing a cut of about 1.5 per cent of the industry's total costs.

Working with another New Zealander, Dr Rob Edwards, Baldwin sought to install an off-the-shelf air traffic control system on a turnkey contract. The contract was won by Thomson-CSF, the ire of US company Hughes Aircraft, an unsuccessful bidder. By now, Baldwin had made enemies within the unions and the CAA hierarchy, so it was perhaps no surprise when a report to the Australian Parliament accused Baldwin and Edwards of "machievellian deception" in the tendering process.

Despite support from the CAA board, they were stood down in 1993, in what Smith described as "a tragic farce". After an inquiry and re-tendering process, Thomson-CSF won the contract again, delivering it successfully. By then, however, Baldwin had resigned, returning to New Zealand, still bitter about his Australian experience.

After this, Baldwin took up several other executive positions. He retired after being diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease in 2000.

Frank Baldwin is survived by Erica, two daughters, two sons, six grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

Mark Juddery

## Tom Sharpe 1928-2013

# No topic was too risqué for this master of social satire



Riotous: Tom Sharpe.

Tom Sharpe, the comic novelist, combined a rich, ribald imagination and farcical plotting to portray a view of late 20th-century Britain that could swing from scorn to nostalgia.

He was an admirer of PG Wodehouse and Evelyn Waugh and inherited the latter's instinct for angry satire: strident women, corrupt policemen, progressive academics, publishers, misuse of the English language, dogs and Americans were among the butts of his ire. He eschewed the gentle ironies of the English comic novel, in favour of shameless vulgarity, and so won a wide readership.

But those who met him were often surprised to discover a donnish,

well-spoken man who was keen on roses and collected antique typewriters. Thomas Ridley Sharpe was born on March 30, 1928 in London. His father, the Reverend George Coverdale Sharpe, was a Unitarian minister whose world view was broad by ecclesiastical standards: he was an admirer of Adolf Hitler and a friend of William Joyce, "Lord Haw-Haw". The family frequently moved house at short notice to flee the threat of internment.

Sharpe went to Lancing and on to Pembroke College, Cambridge, where he studied archaeology and anthropology. His final long essay, however, argued "violently" against social anthropology as a science and he graduated with a Third.

In 1951, after National Service, Sharpe left for South Africa, where he did social work for the non-European affairs department and taught in Natal. By 1957 he was established as a professional photographer in Pietermaritzburg. However, he was appalled by the apartheid system and was deported in 1961 after the staging of his play *The South African*. In Britain he accepted a post as a history lecturer.

In 1971, he left work to become a full-time novelist. His curriculum vitae provided him with his first targets. *Riotous Assembly* (1971) and *Indecent Exposure* (1978) attacked the policy of racial segregation. They were banned in South Africa. His third novel, *Porterhouse Blue* (1975),

was an anarchic sexual farce set in a Cambridge college.

Sharpe summoned up his past as a lecturer to create the character Wilt, a polytechnic lecturer in liberal studies, and afflicted him with increasingly random disasters over five books. Gradually, however, there were signs that his apparently boundless creativity was abating. *The Groves* (2009), his first departure from the Wilt series, came after a long period of enforced inactivity due to ill health. In the last years of his life he had also been working on an autobiography.

In 1969, Tom Sharpe married Nancy Anne Looper, with whom he had two daughters.

Telegraph, London

HER6511 A043