

1996-97

THE PARLIAMENT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS

No. 73

MONDAY, 3 MARCH 1997

-
-
- 1 The House met, at 12.30 p.m., pursuant to adjournment. The Speaker (the Honourable Bob Halverson) took the Chair, and read Prayers.
- 2 **LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS—STANDING COMMITTEE—REPORT—STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS**
- Mr K. J. Andrews (Chair) presented the following papers:
- Legal and Constitutional Affairs—Standing Committee—Advisory report on the International Transfer of Prisoners Bill 1996.
Report, February 1997.
Evidence received by the committee.
Minutes of proceedings.
Ordered—That the report be printed.
- Mr K. J. Andrews and Mr K. J. Thomson made statements in connection with the report.
- 3 **AUSTRALIAN PARLIAMENTARY DELEGATION—REPORT—STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS**
- Mr E. H. Cameron presented the following paper:
- Australian Parliamentary Delegation to the South Pacific Conference in Saipan and bilateral visits to Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands and the Federated States of Micronesia, October-November 1996—Report.
- Mr E. H. Cameron and Mr R. C. Baldwin made statements in connection with the report.
- Mr E. H. Cameron and Mr R. C. Baldwin, by leave, again addressed the House.
- 4 **KOKODA CAMPAIGN COMMEMORATION**
- Mr Cobb, pursuant to notice, moved—That this House:
- (1) recognises the importance of the Kokoda Track campaign in World War II in stopping the overland Japanese advance to Port Moresby, which would have given the enemy a beachhead into Australia;

- (2) pays tribute to the contribution of the Koiari people known as “Fuzzy-Wuzzy Angels” in carrying items for Australian soldiers in the Kokoda campaign, including carriage of wounded to safety; and
- (3) in recognition of this contribution, urges the Government to:
 - (a) consider efforts to commemorate the significant battle sites and grave sites along the Track;
 - (b) issue an appropriate medal to the remaining “Fuzzy-Wuzzy Angels” or their surviving families;
 - (c) consider other appropriate initiatives, including making a small ex-gratia payment to each “Fuzzy-Wuzzy Angel” in recognition of their contribution over and above the call of duty; and
 - (d) examine funding for a “Fuzzy-Wuzzy Angel” Health and Education Foundation to upgrade the health and education status of the Koiari people in the isolated villages along the Track.

Debate ensued.

Mr Cobb, by leave, again addressed the House without closing the debate.

At 1.45 p.m., the time allotted for the debate having expired, the debate was interrupted in accordance with standing order 106A, and the resumption of the debate was made an order of the day for the next sitting.

5 MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Members' statements were made.

6 QUESTIONS

Questions without notice being asked—

Papers: Mr Fischer (Minister for Trade) presented the following papers:

Wik Case decision—Copies of—

Letters from—

Sir Gerard Brennan, Chief Justice of the High Court of Australia to Mr Fischer, 3 and 14 January 1997.

Mr Fischer to Sir Gerard Brennan, 13 January 1997.

Newspaper articles published in the—

Australian, 28 November 1996.

Sydney Morning Herald, 11 January 1997.

Questions without notice continued.

7 OCEANS POLICY—MINISTERIAL STATEMENT—MOTION TO TAKE NOTE OF PAPER

Mr Howard (Prime Minister), by leave, made a ministerial statement on the Government's oceans policy and presented the following paper:

Oceans policy—Ministerial statement, 3 March 1997.

Mr Reith (Leader of the House) moved—That the House take note of the paper.

Suspension of standing and sessional orders—Extended time for speech: Mr Reith, by leave, moved—That so much of the standing and sessional orders be suspended as would prevent Mr Beazley (Leader of the Opposition) speaking for a period not exceeding 18 minutes.

Question—put and passed.

Mr Beazley addressed the House.

Debate adjourned (Mrs Moylan—Minister for Family Services), and the resumption of the debate made an order of the day for the next sitting.

8 PETITIONS

The Clerk announced that the following Members had each lodged petitions for presentation, viz.:

Mrs Bailey, Mr Hawker, Mr Miles, Mr P. F. Morris, Mr Sawford and Mr W. L. Smith, from 5, 5, 9, 25, 32 and 5 petitioners, respectively, praying that action be taken to remove the exclusion of members of the Royal Australian Navy, who served in the Malaya campaign, from repatriation benefits under the Veterans' Entitlements Act.

Mrs E. J. Grace, from 23 petitioners, in similar terms.

Mr Bevis, from 232 petitioners, praying that certain action be taken to ensure the future provision of affordable, appropriate and quality public housing.

Mr E. H. Cameron, from 2617 petitioners, praying that action be taken to stop the practice in China of extracting bile from caged bears for medical purposes.

Mr Entsch, from 59 petitioners, praying that the weekly pension be increased by ten dollars above the Consumer Price Index.

Mr L. D. T. Ferguson, from 45 electors of the Division of Reid, praying that Medicare offices not be closed.

Mr Hawker, from 9 petitioners, praying that better mobile phone services be installed in Western Victoria.

Mr Holding, from 49 residents of Victoria, praying that funding cuts to the ABC be reversed.

Mr Holding, from 21 residents of Victoria, praying that full funding to Ausmusic be reinstated.

Mr McClelland, from 443 residents of New South Wales, praying that telephone towers not be constructed in the vicinity of homes and schools.

Mr McClelland, from 218 residents of New South Wales, praying that registered clubs not be taxed retrospectively on commissions received from Club TAB and Club Keno operations.

Mr McClelland, from 101 residents of New South Wales, praying that education programs be initiated to promote the benefits of Australia's immigration policy.

Mr Mossfield, from 71 residents of New South Wales, praying that certain action be taken to retain sufficient funding for the ABC.

Mr Mossfield, from 47 residents of New South Wales, praying that action be taken to ensure consistent petrol prices.

Mr Mossfield, from 45 residents of New South Wales, praying that concession cards be granted to all recipients of widows allowance.

Mr Mossfield, from 44 residents of New South Wales, praying that nursing homes receive adequate funding to provide additional beds.

Dr Southcott, from 466 parents, families and community members of Mitcham Preschool Community, SA, praying that the installation of a mobile phone tower at Mitcham Community Court be halted.

Dr Southcott, from 297 residents of South Australia, praying that the construction of a Telstra telecommunications tower at Sheoak Road, Belair, SA, cease.

Petitions received.

9 MESSAGE FROM THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL—ASSENT TO BILLS

A message from His Excellency the Governor-General was announced informing the House that His Excellency, in the name of Her Majesty, had assented to the following Bills:

28 February 1997—Message No. 103—

Customs Amendment (No. 1) 1997.

Customs Depot Licensing Charges 1997.

10 AUTOMOBILE INDUSTRY

Dr Theophanous, pursuant to notice, moved—That this House:

- (1) acknowledges the progress made by local car and component manufacturers and their labour force in achieving increased productivity, improved export performance and quality production to the benefit of Australian consumers;
- (2) expresses its concerns at the majority recommendations of the Industry Commission interim report on the automobile industry and especially the recommendation to reduce tariffs below 15%;
- (3) expresses its concerns that the Chairman of the Commission has chosen to publicly advocate this recommendation, while at the same time pretending that he will produce an objective final report;
- (4) expresses its firm belief that when all factors are taken into account (including Australia's obligations under the World Trade Organisation) the overwhelming national interest is for motor car tariffs to remain at 15% after the year 2000; and
- (5) is of the view that the reductions which have taken place in the tariffs to this point have not significantly cut the prices of motor cars for consumers and that to reduce tariffs below 15% will be tantamount to devastating the Australian automobile industry and destroying thousands of skilled jobs in regional Australia.

Debate ensued.

The time allotted for the debate having expired, the debate was interrupted and the resumption of the debate made an order of the day for the next sitting.

11 ABC CHARTER

Mr Broadbent, for Mr Lieberman, pursuant to notice, moved—That this House:

- (1) notes in the recommendations by Mr Bob Mansfield on the role and functions of the ABC, that a revised ABC Charter should emphasise the importance of providing services to regional Australia and the need for ABC services generally to reflect Australian regional and cultural diversity;
- (2) strongly endorses the recommendation; and
- (3) calls on the Government to adopt the recommendation and to expand urgently the Charter accordingly.

Debate ensued.

The time allotted for the debate having expired, the debate was interrupted and the resumption of the debate made an order of the day for the next sitting.

12 GRIEVANCE DEBATE

Pursuant to the provisions of standing order 106, the order of the day having been read—

Question proposed—That grievances be noted.

Debate ensued.

Question—That grievances be noted—put and passed.

13 AUDITOR-GENERAL BILL 1996

The order of the day having been read for the resumption of the debate on the question—That the Bill be now read a second time—

Debate resumed by Mr G. J. Evans (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) who moved, as an amendment—That all words after “That” be omitted with a view to substituting the following words: “whilst not declining to give the Bill a second reading, the House condemns the Government:

- (1) for its profound indifference to good financial management by delaying the consideration of these vital financial reforms until more than one year after its election; and
- (2) for its hypocrisy in amending in a number of aspects Labor’s legislative package in the Senate when in Opposition and then retreating from these positions after the election”.

Debate continued.

Amendment negatived.

Question—That the Bill be now read a second time—put and passed—Bill read a second time.

Message from the Governor-General: Message No. 105, dated 20 December 1996, from His Excellency the Governor-General was announced recommending an appropriation for the purposes of the Bill.

Leave granted for third reading to be moved forthwith.

On the motion of Mr Fahey (Minister for Finance), the Bill was read a third time.

14 FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY BILL 1996

The order of the day having been read for the resumption of the debate on the question—That the Bill be now read a second time—

Question—put and passed—Bill read a second time.

Message from the Governor-General: Message No. 106, dated 20 December 1996, from His Excellency the Governor-General was announced recommending an appropriation for the purposes of the Bill.

Leave granted for third reading to be moved forthwith.

On the motion of Mr Fahey (Minister for Finance), the Bill was read a third time.

15 COMMONWEALTH AUTHORITIES AND COMPANIES BILL 1996

The order of the day having been read for the resumption of the debate on the question—That the Bill be now read a second time—

Question—put and passed—Bill read a second time.

Leave granted for third reading to be moved forthwith.

On the motion of Mr Fahey (Minister for Finance), the Bill was read a third time.

16 AUDIT (TRANSITIONAL AND MISCELLANEOUS) AMENDMENT BILL 1996

The order of the day having been read for the resumption of the debate on the question—That the Bill be now read a second time—

Question—put and passed—Bill read a second time.

Message from the Governor-General: Message No. 107, dated 16 December 1996, from His Excellency the Governor-General was announced recommending an appropriation for the purposes of the Bill.

Consideration in detail

Bill, by leave, taken as a whole.

Mr Fahey (Minister for Finance), by leave, moved the following amendments together:

Clause 2, page 2 (lines 24 to 27), omit paragraph (3)(f).

Schedule 2, page 160 (after line 10), after item 1056, insert:

1056A Section 30

Omit “The”, substitute “Subject to subsection (2), the”.

1056B Before paragraph 30(a)

Insert:

- (aa) such amount as the Treasurer, after consultation with the Board, determines is to be set aside for contingencies; and

1056C At the end of section 30

Add:

- (2) If the net profit of the Bank for a year is calculated on a basis that requires the inclusion of unrealised gains on assets during the year, the amount to which subsection (1) applies is to be worked out as follows:
 - (a) deduct from the net profit an amount equal to the total of all amounts of unrealised gains included in the net profit; and
 - (b) if an asset in respect of which unrealised gains were included in the net profit for a previous year or years is realised during the year—add to the amount remaining after applying paragraph (a) the total amount of those unrealised gains.

Paper: Mr Fahey presented a supplementary explanatory memorandum to the Bill.

Amendments agreed to.

Bill, as amended, agreed to.

Consideration in detail concluded.

On the motion of Mr Fahey, by leave, the Bill was read a third time.

17 ADJOURNMENT

It being 10.30 p.m.—The question was proposed—That the House do now adjourn.

Debate ensued.

Papers: Mr Randall, by leave, presented the following papers:

Culunga Community School Aboriginal Corporation—Copies of letters from—Richard N. Boughton, Principal Solicitor, Common Law, Australian Government Solicitor to Estelle Blewett, Deacons, Graham and James, 3 July 1996.

Tracey Gosling, Principal, Culunga Community School, to Nauredine Bouhaf's, Registrar of Aboriginal Corporations, 26 April 1996.

Debate continued.

The House continuing to sit until 11 p.m.—The Speaker adjourned the House until tomorrow at 2 p.m.



PAPERS

The following papers were deemed to have been presented on 3 March 1997:

Civil Aviation Act—Civil Aviation Regulations—Exemptions 1997 Nos. 13/FRS/1997, 14/FRS/1997.

Migration Act—Statements under section—

48B (2).

351 (2).

417 (22).

Public Service Act—Determinations 1997 Nos. 4, 5, 7, 8.

**ATTENDANCE**

All Members attended (at some time during the sitting) except Mr Dondas, Mrs Draper, Mr Katter, Mr Lieberman, Mr McClelland and Mr Wakelin.



L. M. BARLIN

Clerk of the House of Representatives

1996-97

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
SUPPLEMENT TO VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS

No. 73

MAIN COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

MONDAY, 3 MARCH 1997

1 The Main Committee met at 8 p.m.

Suspension of sitting: At 8 p.m., the Deputy Speaker left the Chair due to the lack of a quorum.

Resumption of sitting: At 8.05 p.m., the Deputy Speaker resumed the Chair, and a quorum being present—

2 RETIREMENT SAVINGS ACCOUNTS BILL 1996

The order of the day having been read for the resumption of the debate on the question—That the Bill be now read a second time—

Debate resumed.

Debate adjourned (Mr Sawford), and the resumption of the debate made an order of the day for the next sitting.

3 ADJOURNMENT

On the motion of Mr Cobb, the Main Committee adjourned at 10.13 p.m.

The Deputy Speaker fixed tomorrow at 8 p.m. for the next meeting of the Main Committee.

I. C. HARRIS
Clerk of the Main Committee