

1998

THE PARLIAMENT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS

No. 5

TUESDAY, 24 NOVEMBER 1998

1 The House met, at 2 p.m., pursuant to adjournment. The Speaker (the Honourable Neil Andrew) took the Chair, and read Prayers.

2 QUESTIONS

Questions without notice being asked—

Member ordered to withdraw

At 3.10 p.m. the Member for Denison (Mr Kerr) was ordered, under standing order 304A, to withdraw from the House for one hour for continuing to interject after a warning had been given from the Chair, and he accordingly withdrew from the Chamber.

Questions without notice continued.

3 AUDITOR-GENERAL'S REPORT

The Speaker presented the following paper:

Auditor-General Act—Auditor-General—Audit report No. 15 of 1998-99—Performance audit—Postal operations: Australian Customs Service.

Ordered to be printed.

4 PAPERS

The following papers were presented:

Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation Act—Nuclear Safety Bureau—Report—NSB.QRM 42, 1 January to 31 March 1998.

Australian Rail Track Corporation Limited—Statement of corporate intent, August 1998.

Commonwealth Authorities and Companies Act—

Australian Institute of Marine Science—Report for 1997-98.

Australian National Railways Commission (Australian National)—Report for 1997-98.

Australian Sports Commission—Report for 1997-98.

Bundanon Trust—Report for 1997-98.

Export Finance and Insurance Corporation—Report for 1997-98.
 Health Insurance Commission—Report for 1997-98.
 Medibank Private—Report for 1997-98.
 National Registration Authority for Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals—
 Report for 1997-98.
 Private Health Insurance Administration Council—Reports on the operations of
 the registered health benefits organisations for 1997-98.
 Crimes Act—Controlled operations—2nd report, for 1997-98.
 Finance—Advance to the Minister for Finance—
 Statements for—
 August 1998.
 September 1998.
 October 1998.
 Supporting applications of issues from the Advance during—
 August 1998.
 September 1998.
 October 1998.
 Genetic Manipulation Advisory Committee—Report for 1997-98.
 Governor-General Act—Office of the Official Secretary to the Governor-
 General—Report for 1997-98.
 Medibank Private—Statement of corporate intent—1998-99 to 2000-01.
 Productivity Commission Act—Productivity Commission—Report for 1997-98.
 Public Service Act—
 Department of Workplace Relations and Small Business—Report for 1997-
 98—Erratum.
 Royal Australian Mint—Report for 1997-98.
 Rural Adjustment Act—Rural Adjustment Scheme Advisory Council—Report,
 including a report on the Rural Adjustment Scheme, for 1997-98.
 Seafarers Rehabilitation and Compensation Act—Seafarers Safety,
 Rehabilitation and Compensation Authority—Report for 1997-98.
 Superannuation (Resolution of Complaints) Act—Superannuation Complaints
 Tribunal—Report for 1997-98.

5 PAPERS—MOTION TO TAKE NOTE OF PAPERS

Mr Reith (Leader of the House) moved—That the House take note of the
 following papers:

Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation Act—Nuclear Safety
 Bureau—Report—NSB.QRM 42, 1 January to 31 March 1998.

Commonwealth Authorities and Companies Act—

Australian Institute of Marine Science—Report for 1997-98.

Health Insurance Commission—Report for 1997-98.

Medibank Private—Report for 1997-98.

Private Health Insurance Administration Council—Reports on the operations of the registered health benefits organisations for 1997-98.

Crimes Act—Controlled operations—2nd report, for 1997-98.

Medibank Private—Statement of corporate intent—1998-99 to 2000-01.

Productivity Commission Act—Productivity Commission—Report for 1997-98.

Public Service Act—Royal Australian Mint—Report for 1997-98.

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

6 DISCUSSION OF MATTER OF PUBLIC IMPORTANCE—BANK SERVICE FEES

The House was informed that Mr Crean (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) had proposed that a definite matter of public importance be submitted to the House for discussion, namely, “The Government’s failure to adequately safeguard bank consumers against excessive service fee increases”.

The proposed discussion having received the necessary support—

Mr Crean addressed the House.

Discussion ensued.

Discussion concluded.

7 MAIN COMMITTEE—DAY OF NEXT MEETING

The Deputy Speaker reported that Wednesday, 25 November 1998, at 10 a.m., had been fixed for the next meeting of the Main Committee.

8 BILLS REFERRED TO MAIN COMMITTEE

Mr Ronaldson (Chief Government Whip), by leave, moved—That the following Bills be referred to the Main Committee for further consideration:

Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry Legislation Amendment (No. 1) 1998;

1998 Budget Measures Legislation Amendment (Social Security and Veterans’ Entitlements) 1998;

Telecommunications Amendment (No. 2) 1998;

Data-matching Program (Assistance and Tax) Amendment 1998;

Telstra (Transition to Full Private Ownership) 1998;

Telecommunications Legislation Amendment 1998;

Telecommunications (Universal Service Levy) Amendment 1998;

Telecommunications (Consumer Protection and Service Standards) 1998; and
NRS Levy Imposition Amendment 1998.

Question—put and passed.

9 CUSTOMS TARIFF PROPOSALS

Mr Slipper (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Finance and Administration) moved Customs Tariff Proposals Nos. 6 to 10 (1998).

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

10 SELECTION COMMITTEE—REPORT—GENERAL PRINCIPLES—PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Mr Nehl (Chair) presented the following report from the Selection Committee:

General principles relating to the selection of private Members' business, 23 November 1998.

The report is as follows:

REPORT

The Selection Committee submits its report to the House on the proposed general principles relating to the selection of private Members' business, and recommends its adoption.

In accordance with standing order 28D(b) the Selection Committee has resolved that the general principles be as follows:

Proposed general principles relating to the selection of private Members' business

1. In formulating the priority to be given to items of private Members' business the Selection Committee shall have regard to:
 - (a) the importance of the subject;
 - (b) the current level of interest in the subject;
 - (c) the extent of the current discussion on the subject both in the Parliament and elsewhere;
 - (d) the extent to which the subject comes within the responsibility of the Commonwealth Parliament;
 - (e) the probability of the subject being brought before the House by other means within a reasonable time; and
 - (f) whether the subject is the same, or substantially the same, as another item of business which has been debated or on which the House has already made a decision in the same period of sittings and, if so, whether new circumstances exist.
2. The Committee shall accord priority to private Members' business:
 - (a) with regard to the numbers of Members affiliated with each party in the House;
 - (b) in a way which ensures that a particular Member or the Members who comprise the Opposition Executive do not predominate as the movers of the items selected; and
 - (c) in a way which seeks to ensure balance is achieved over each period of sittings.
3. When a private Member has the responsibility for the carriage of a Bill transmitted from the Senate for concurrence, the Bill shall be accorded priority following the question for the second reading being put to the

House in the same way as a private Member's Bill originating in the House is accorded priority by sessional order 104A.

4. Priority shall not be accorded to any item of private Members' business if the matter should be dealt with by the House in another, more appropriate, form of proceeding.
5. The general principles set out above shall be observed by the Selection Committee but nothing in the general principles shall be taken to prevent the Selection Committee departing from those general principles in order to meet circumstances, which, in its opinion, are unusual or special.

GARRY NEHL

Chair

23 November 1998

Mrs Sullivan (Parliamentary Secretary (Foreign Affairs)), by leave, moved—That the proposed general principles relating to the selection of private Members' business reported to the House by the Selection Committee this day be adopted.

Question—put and passed.

11 SELECTION COMMITTEE—REPORT

Mr Nehl (Chair) presented the following paper:

Selection Committee—Report relating to the consideration of committee and delegation reports and private Members' business on Monday, 30 November 1998.

12 SELECTION COMMITTEE

Mrs Sullivan (Parliamentary Secretary (Foreign Affairs)), by leave, moved—That Mr K. J. Andrews be discharged from attendance on the Selection Committee, and that, in his place, Mrs Gash be appointed a member of the Committee.

Question—put and passed.

13 ADDRESS IN REPLY TO THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL'S SPEECH

The order of the day having been read for the resumption of the debate on the question—That the following Address in Reply to the speech of His Excellency the Governor-General be agreed to:

May it please Your Excellency:

We, the House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Australia, in Parliament assembled, desire to express our loyalty to our Most Gracious Sovereign, and to thank Your Excellency for the speech which you have been pleased to address to Parliament—

Debate resumed.

Debate adjourned (Mrs Gash), and the resumption of the debate made an order of the day for a later hour this day.

14 PRIVATE HEALTH INSURANCE INCENTIVES BILL 1998

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 Ms Macklin who moved, as an amendment—That all words after “That” be omitted with a view to substituting the following words: “the Bill be withdrawn and redrafted to provide for:

- (1) increased funding for the public hospital system;
- (2) measures to promote efficiency in private hospitals and control costs; and
- (3) measures to make health insurance more attractive by providing private patients a single hospital bill and insurance to cover the cost of hospital and medical services so that patients don’t face large out-of-pocket costs”.

Debate continued.

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

15 ADJOURNMENT

Mrs Stone (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for the Environment and Heritage) moved—That the House do now adjourn.

Debate ensued.

The House continuing to sit until 11 p.m.—The Speaker adjourned the House until tomorrow at 9.30 a.m.

PAPERS

The following papers were deemed to have been presented on 24 November 1998:

Bounty (Books) Act—Return for 1997-98.

Bounty (Computers) Act—Return for 1997-98.

Bounty (Machine Tools and Robots) Act—Return for 1997-98.

Bounty (Ships) Act—Return for 1997-98.

ATTENDANCE

All Members attended (at some time during the sitting) except Mr Brereton, Mr Fischer and Mr Sciacca.

I. C. HARRIS

Clerk of the House of Representatives