

1998-1999-2000

THE PARLIAMENT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS

No. 112

TUESDAY, 30 MAY 2000



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 2.51 p.m. the Member for Swan (Mr Wilkie) 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 continuing—

Paper

Mr McMullan, in accordance with standing order 321, having called for documents quoted from by Mr Anthony (Minister for Community Services)—

Mr Anthony presented the following paper:

Family future—The case for national early assistance services for families—
Extract from the Lilley Community Homepage produced by Wayne Swan, MP,
printed 30 May 2000.

Questions without notice continued.

3 PAPER

Mr Reith (Minister for Employment, Workplace Relations and Small Business) during a personal explanation, presented the following paper:

Workers' entitlements legislation—Copy of letter from Jill Hall, MP, to Mr Reith, 28 January 2000.

4 AUDITOR-GENERAL'S REPORT

The Speaker presented the following paper:

Auditor-General—Audit report No. 44 of 1999-2000—Performance audit—Management of Job Network contracts: Department of Employment, Workplace Relations and Small Business.

Ordered to be printed.

5 PAPERS

The following papers were presented:

Australian Maritime College—Report for 1999.

Magnetic Resonance Imaging—Two letters, dated 18 October 1999 and 26 November 1999, relating to a statutory declaration tabled by Dr Wooldridge, Minister for Health and Aged Care, in the House of Representatives on 27 September 1999.

Migration Review Tribunal/Immigration Review Tribunal—Report for 1998-99.

Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs—National report on schooling in Australia 1998.

Regional Forest Agreements between Commonwealth of Australia and—State of New South Wales—North East NSW, March 2000.

State of Victoria—

Gippsland, March 2000.

West Victoria, March 2000.

6 PAPERS—MOTION TO TAKE NOTE OF PAPERS

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

Magnetic Resonance Imaging—Two letters, dated 18 October 1999 and 26 November 1999, relating to a statutory declaration tabled by Dr Wooldridge, Minister for Health and Aged Care, in the House of Representatives on 27 September 1999.

Regional Forest Agreements between Commonwealth of Australia and—State of New South Wales—North East NSW, March 2000.

State of Victoria—

Gippsland, March 2000.

West Victoria, March 2000.

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

7 DISCUSSION OF MATTER OF PUBLIC IMPORTANCE—INDIGENOUS AUSTRALIANS

The House was informed that Mr Beazley (Leader of the Opposition) had proposed that a definite matter of public importance be submitted to the House for discussion, namely, “The need for the Government to recognise the

requirement for, and the benefits of, a national apology to address the trauma and suffering experienced by Indigenous Australians due to past practices”.

The proposed discussion having received the necessary support—

Mr Beazley addressed the House.

Discussion ensued.

Discussion concluded.

8 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, 5 June 2000.

9 TRANSPORT LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2000

Mr Scott (Minister for Veterans’ Affairs), for Mr Anderson (Minister for Transport and Regional Services), pursuant to notice, presented a Bill for an Act to amend the law relating to transport, and for related purposes.

Bill read a first time.

Mr Scott moved—That the Bill be now read a second time.

Paper

Mr Scott presented an explanatory memorandum to the Bill.

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

10 APPROPRIATION BILL (NO. 1) 2000-2001—BUDGET DEBATE

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—*And on the amendment moved thereto by Mr Tanner, viz.*—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 for its:

- (1) failure to address the significant investment needs in the areas of education, health and the provision of social services in the 2000-2001 Budget;
- (2) wasteful and profligate spending on poor quality programs to buy Democrat support for its unfair GST;
- (3) misuse of over \$360 million of taxpayers’ money on its politically partisan GST advertising campaign;
- (4) reduction of a potential Budget cash surplus in 2000-2001 of \$11 billion, to a real Budget deficit of \$2.1 billion;
- (5) use of creative accounting techniques in an attempt to deceive the Australian public on the true state of the Budget;
- (6) mishandling of the move to accrual accounting by providing complex, confusing and uninformative budget documents;

- (7) failure to identify in the Budget papers the cost of GST collection and implementation; and
- (8) failure to put in place arrangements that deliver its guarantee that no Australian will be worse off as a result of the GST package”.

Debate resumed.

Ms Worth (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Education, Training and Youth Affairs) was granted leave to continue her speech when the debate is resumed.

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

11 POSTPONEMENT OF ORDERS OF THE DAY

Ordered—That orders of the day Nos 2 and 3, government business, be postponed until a later hour this day.

12 MESSAGES FROM THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL—ASSENT TO BILLS

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

30 May 2000—Message—

No. 196—Jurisdiction of Courts Legislation Amendment 2000.

No. 197—

A New Tax System (Fringe Benefits) 2000.

A New Tax System (Medicare Levy Surcharge—Fringe Benefits) Amendment 2000.

Medicare Levy Amendment (CPI Indexation) 2000.

Customs Tariff Amendment (No. 2) 2000.

Therapeutic Goods Amendment (No. 2) 2000.

13 PETROLEUM EXCISE AMENDMENT (MEASURES TO ADDRESS EVASION) BILL 2000

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 K. J. Thomson 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:

- (1) condemns the Government for its inaction on the dangerous practice of fuel substitution and in particular, for allowing the Australian Taxation Office to cease random testing of fuel;
- (2) notes that fuel substitution is a dangerous practice that reduces engine performance, leads to total breakdown of engines, defrauds the Commonwealth of millions of dollars in revenue and harms the environment;

- (3) notes that the Commonwealth Parliament has a responsibility for ensuring that fuel substitution does not occur, including the testing of retail fuel; and
- (4) calls on the Government to ensure that the activity of fuel substitution is really brought to an end”.

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

14 MAIN COMMITTEE—DAY OF NEXT MEETING

The Deputy Speaker reported that Wednesday, 31 May 2000, at 9.40 a.m., had been fixed for the next meeting of the Main Committee.

15 MATTERS REFERRED TO MAIN COMMITTEE

Mr Ronaldson (Chief Government Whip), by leave, moved—That:

- (1) the following Bill be referred to the Main Committee for further consideration:
Petroleum Excise Amendment (Measures to Address Evasion) 2000; and
- (2) the following order of the day, government business, be referred to the Main Committee for debate:
Road and rail—Government responses to reports—Motion to take note of paper: Resumption of debate.

Question—put and passed.

16 LOCAL GOVERNMENT (FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE) AMENDMENT BILL 2000

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 Tanner 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 expresses its concern that the Government:

- (1) has cut Financial Assistance Grants (FAGs) to local government in real terms since coming to office;
- (2) attempted to terminate the 25 year Commonwealth local government funding partnership by trying to transfer responsibility for local government FAGs funding to the states;
- (3) promised to exempt local government services from the GST before the 1998 election only to renege on this commitment within months of regaining office;
- (4) through the GST, has imposed a regressive and unfair tax on essential services provided by local government to communities in regional Australia; and
- (5) has hit councils with major GST compliance costs with inadequate compensation or assistance”.

Debate continued.

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

17 BILL REFERRED TO MAIN COMMITTEE

Mr Ronaldson (Chief Government Whip), by leave, moved—That the Local Government (Financial Assistance) Amendment Bill 2000 be referred to the Main Committee for further consideration.

Question—put and passed.

18 ADJOURNMENT

Mr Anthony (Minister for Community Services) moved—That the House do now adjourn.

Debate ensued.

Question—put and passed.

And then the House, at 10.59 p.m., adjourned until tomorrow at 9.30 a.m.



ATTENDANCE

All Members attended (at some time during the sitting) except Ms J. I. Bishop, Mr Fitzgibbon, Ms Kernot, Mr I. E. Macfarlane, Mr Schultz, Dr Theophanous and Mr Wilton.



I. C. HARRIS

Clerk of the House of Representatives