

THE PARLIAMENT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS

No. 85

TUESDAY, 20 MARCH 1979

1 The House met, at 2.15 p.m., pursuant to adjournment. Mr Speaker (the Right Honourable Sir Billy Snedden) took the Chair, and read Prayers.

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

Mr Anthony, Mr Bowen, Mr Cadman, Mr Fife, Mr Howe, Mr Hunt, Mr L. R. Johnson, Mr Johnston, Mr Jull, Mr Killen, Mr Lusher, Mr J. L. McMahon, Mr Martin, Mr Millar, Mr Scholes and Mr West—from certain citizens praying that pension payments be restored to twice-yearly adjustments and that pensions and unemployment benefits be raised to 30% of average weekly earnings.

Mr Armitage, Mr Baume, Mr Burns, Mr Cadman, Mr Dobie, Dr Edwards, Mr Howard, Mr Hunt, Mr Jull, Mr MacKellar, Mr Martin, Mr O'Keefe and Mr Staley—from certain citizens praying that the medical benefits schedule be amended to preclude payment of benefits for abortions.

Mr Braithwaite, Mr Hodges, Mr Killen, Mr Millar, Mr Moore and Mr Thomson—from certain citizens praying that legislation be introduced to prevent payment of medical benefits for unnecessary abortions.

Mr N. A. Brown, Mr Hunt, Mr MacKellar, Mr J. L. McMahon and Mr Uren—from certain citizens praying that the House reject the motion of the honourable Member for Hume concerning medical benefits for abortion and support abortion as a claimable item under all health benefits.

Mr FitzPatrick, Mr L. R. Johnson, Dr Klugman, Mr J. L. McMahon and Mr Morris—from certain electors of New South Wales praying that compensation benefits paid to injured Commonwealth Government employees be increased and then adjusted automatically.

Mr Morris—from certain electors of the Australian Capital Territory in the same terms as the last preceding petition.

Mr Dobie and Mr Martyr—from certain citizens praying for the prohibition of pornographic material involving children.

Mr Aldred—from certain citizens praying that action be taken through the Australian and West German Governments to ensure that former West German pension contributors, now Australian citizens, receive their pensions.

Mr Aldred—from certain citizens praying that the taxation law be amended to permit registered tax agents to trade for a full year and lodge income tax returns at the close of the respective tax year.

Mr N. A. Brown—from certain citizens praying that funds be provided to local authorities to improve the drainage systems in the Bilby Street and Thompsons Road area, Lower Templestowe, Vic.

Dr Cass—from certain citizens praying for the appointment of an independent inquiry into the Australian Broadcasting Commission to investigate the qualifications of commissioners and certain other matters.

Dr Cass—from certain citizens praying that Parliament debate the Report of the Royal Commission on Human Relationships, facilitate public debate and take certain other action in connection with the Report.

Mr Dobie—from certain citizens praying that no measures be taken to implement those recommendations of the Royal Commission on Human Relationships that will further undermine and weaken marriage, child-care or the family.

Mr Hodges—from certain citizens praying that pensions be increased twice yearly in line with rises in the consumer price index.

Mr L. R. Johnson—from certain citizens praying that proposed changes to Medi-bank not be implemented and that there be consultation with the trade unions and the community.

Mr L. R. Johnson—from certain citizens praying that the decision not to establish a National Natural Disaster Insurance Scheme be reconsidered.

Mr B. O. Jones—from certain citizens praying that expenditure on post-school education and Government schools be substantially increased and that certain other action be taken in connection with post-school education.

Mr McLean—from certain citizens praying that a referendum be held on the Vietnamese refugee policy.

Sir William McMahon—from certain citizens praying that item 6469 be removed from the standard medical benefits table.

Mr Scholes—from certain citizens praying for the resignation of Members who have not honoured an election undertaking to retain twice-yearly adjustments of social security pensions in accordance with movements in the consumer price index.

Mr Shipton—from certain citizens praying that Radio 3CR Melbourne be required to adhere to the broadcasting standards laid down for all other radio stations and that legislation be enacted against incitement to racial hatred and violence.

Mr Uren—from certain citizens praying that item 6469 on the medical benefits schedule be maintained.

Petitions received.

3 MINISTERIAL ARRANGEMENTS: Mr Fraser (Prime Minister) informed the House that, during the absence abroad of Mr Nixon (Minister for Transport) and Mr Peacock (Minister for Foreign Affairs), Mr Sinclair (Minister for Primary Industry) was acting as Minister for Foreign Affairs and Mr Fife (Minister for Business and Consumer Affairs) was acting as Minister for Transport.

4 QUESTIONS: Questions without notice were asked.

5 PAPERS: The following papers were presented:

By Mr Speaker:

Commonwealth Speakers and Presiding Officers—Report of 5th Conference, Canberra, 28 August to 1 September 1978.

By command of His Excellency the Governor-General:

Industries Assistance Commission—Report—Certain discontinuous yarns of polyester and polyester/viscose (By-law), dated 31 January 1979.

Pursuant to statute:

Advisory Council for Inter-government Relations Act—Advisory Council for Inter-government Relations—2nd Annual Report, for year ended 31 August 1978.

Australian Film and Television School Act—Council of the Australian Film and Television School—Report and financial statements, together with the Auditor-General's Report, for year 1977-78.

Industries Assistance Commission Act—Temporary Assistance Authority—Report—Dental alloys, dated 5 February 1979.

Stevedoring Industry Finance Committee Act—Stevedoring Industry Finance Committee—Report and financial statements, together with the Auditor-General's Report, for period 5 December 1977 to 30 June 1978.

6 COMMONWEALTH DAY—STATEMENT BY MR SPEAKER: Mr Speaker made a statement informing the House of a message he had received from the Honourable Dato' Musa Hitam, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, on the occasion of Commonwealth Day 1979.

7 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:

9 March 1979—Message No. 124—Patents Amendment 1979.

13 March 1979—Message No. 125—

Pay-roll Tax (Territories) Assessment Amendment 1979.

Excise Amendment 1979.

Income Tax Assessment Amendment 1979.

15 March 1979—Message No. 126—Foreign Antitrust Judgments (Restriction of Enforcement) 1979.

19 March 1979—Message No. 127—

Dairy Produce Sales Promotion Amendment 1979.

Defence Force (Retirement and Death Benefits Amendments) 1979.

National Fitness Amendment 1979.

8 ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS—STANDING COMMITTEE—REPORT—STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS: Mr Ruddock (Chairman) presented the following report from the Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs:

Aboriginal health—Report, dated 20 March 1979, together with the transcript of evidence and copies of extracts from the minutes of proceedings of the committee. Ordered—That the report be printed.

Mr Ruddock, Dr Everingham, Mr Johnston and Mr Holding, by leave, made statements in connection with the report.

9 DISCUSSION OF MATTER OF PUBLIC IMPORTANCE—TAXATION POLICIES: Mr Speaker informed the House that Mr Willis had proposed that a definite matter of public importance be submitted to the House for discussion, namely, “The Government’s inequitable taxation policies”.

The proposed discussion having received the necessary support—

Mr Willis addressed the House.

Discussion ensued.

Discussion concluded.

10 PRICES JUSTIFICATION AMENDMENT BILL 1979: 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 Hurford who moved, as an amendment—That all words after “That” be omitted with a view to substituting the following words: “the House declines to give the Bill a second reading as it is of opinion that—

- (1) by abolishing the requirement for notification of prospective price rises it represents the final destruction of the Tribunal’s ability to fulfil its original function of ensuring that unjustified price rises are not imposed on the community;
- (2) it is contrary to the Government’s supposed basic objective of reducing inflation and is especially inappropriate at a time when inflation is gathering pace;
- (3) the introduction of such legislation at a time when the Government is continuously emphasising the need to prevent wage increases, and is currently seeking means to more effectively implement that policy, demonstrates utter insensitivity and naivety in regard to industrial relations and total disregard of equity, and
- (4) by greatly increasing the power of the Minister to direct and restrict the Tribunal, it destroys its independence and renders the Tribunal subject to considerable political influence and control in its day to day operations”.

Debate continued.

Amendment negatived.

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

Mr Fife (Minister for Business and Consumer Affairs), for Mr Sinclair (Leader of the House), pursuant to notice, moved—That this Bill be referred to a legislation committee for report by 29 March 1979.

Question—put and passed.

11 PRICES JUSTIFICATION TRIBUNAL—MINISTERIAL STATEMENT—PAPER NOTED: The order of the day having been read for the resumption of the debate on the motion of Mr Nixon (Minister for Transport)—That the House take note of the paper (*presented on 18 October 1978*), viz.:

Prices Justification Tribunal—Ministerial statement, 18 October 1978—

Question—put and passed.

12 JURISDICTION OF COURTS (MISCELLANEOUS AMENDMENTS) BILL 1979: 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.

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

Leave granted for third reading to be moved forthwith.

On the motion of Mr Viner (Minister representing the Attorney-General), the Bill was read a third time.

13 FAMILY LAW AMENDMENT BILL 1979: 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.

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

Debate ensued.

The House continuing to sit until 11 p.m.—Mr Deputy Speaker adjourned the House until tomorrow at 2.15 p.m.

PAPERS: The following papers were deemed to have been presented on 20 March 1979, pursuant to statute:

Australian Bureau of Statistics Act—Australian Bureau of Statistics—Proposal for collection of information—1979—No. 1—New topic to be included in the population survey, April 1979.

Christmas Island Act—

Ordinance—1979—No. 2—Supreme Court (Amendment).

Regulations—Statutory Rules 1979, No. 36.

Customs Act—Regulations—Statutory Rules 1979, No. 34.

Health Insurance Act—Regulations—Statutory Rules 1979, No. 35.

Industrial Research and Development Incentives Act—Regulations—Statutory Rules 1979, No. 37.

Lands Acquisition Act—Statement of lands acquired by agreement authorised under sub-section 7 (1).

Public Service Act—Regulation—Statutory Rules 1979, No. 33.

Public Service Arbitration Act—Public Service Arbitrator—Determinations accompanied by statements regarding possible inconsistency with the law—1978—

No. 771—Federated Engine Drivers' and Firemen's Association of Australasia.†

No. 772—Amalgamated Metal Workers' and Shipwrights Union and others.†

No. 773—Actors' and Announcers' Equity Association of Australia.

- No. 774—Administrative and Clerical Officers' Association, Commonwealth Public Service.†
No. 775—Amalgamated Metal Workers' and Shipwrights Union and others.
No. 776—Merchant Service Guild of Australia.
No. 777—Line Inspectors Association, Commonwealth of Australia and others.
No. 778—Electrical Trades Union of Australia.
No. 780—Administrative and Clerical Officers' Association, Commonwealth Public Service and others.
No. 781—Hospital Employees Federation of Australia and another.
No. 782—Shop Distributive and Allied Employees Association.
No. 783—Association of Architects, Engineers, Surveyors and Draughtsmen of Australia.
No. 784—Australian Journalists Association.
No. 785—Australian Public Service Artisans' Association.
No. 786—Commonwealth Medical Officers Association.
No. 787—Transport Workers' Union of Australia.

(† Not accompanied by statement)

Seat of Government (Administration) Act—Regulations—1979—

No. 4 (Children's Flammable Nightwear Ordinance).

No. 5 (Health Commission Ordinance).

States Grants (Petroleum Products) Act—Amendment of the schedules to the subsidy schemes in relation to the States of New South Wales, Queensland and South Australia, dated 3 March 1979.

Trade Commissioners Act—Regulation—Statutory Rules 1979, No. 38.

MEMBERS PRESENT: All Members were present (at some time during the sitting) except Mr C. R. Cameron, Mr Chapman, Mr Cotter, Mr Garland, Mr Gillard, Mr Howe, Mr Jarman, Mr Macphee, Mr Nixon, Mr Peacock and Mr Yates.

J. A. PETTIFER,
Clerk of the House of Representatives