

THE PARLIAMENT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS

No. 115

WEDNESDAY, 3 MAY 1989

1 The House met, at 10 a.m., pursuant to adjournment. The Acting Speaker (Mr McLeay) took the Chair, and read Prayers.

2 **AUDIT AMENDMENT BILL 1989:** 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 Dr Hewson 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 is of the opinion that:

- (1) in view of the archaic nature of the existing Audit Act, consideration be given to repealing the Act and replacing it with two separate Acts, one relating to financial administration and the other to the activities of the Australian Audit Office; and
- (2) in reviewing the legislation, the Government should, as a matter of priority, consider the broad thrust of the recommendations of the Joint Committee of Public Accounts in its recent report *The Auditor-General: Ally of the People and Parliament—Reform of the Australian Audit Office*”.

Debate continued.

Amendment negatived.

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

The House resolved itself into a committee of the whole.

In the committee

Bill, by leave, taken as a whole.

On the motion of Mr Duncan (Minister for Employment and Education Services), by leave, the following amendments were made together:

Amendments—

Clause 2, page 1, line 12, omit “12 months”, substitute “6 months”.

Clause 12, page 4, omit the clause, substitute the following clause:

Auditor-General to audit and report

“12. Section 51 of the Principal Act is amended:

- (a) by inserting in paragraph (1) (c) ‘subject to section 70F,’ before ‘setting out’;
- (b) by inserting after subsection (1) the following subsection:

‘(1A) Where the Auditor-General is required to sign a report under subsection (1), the Auditor-General may authorise, in writing, an officer to sign the report and, where the officer so signs the report, it shall be taken, for the purposes of this Act, to have been prepared and signed by the Auditor-General under subsection (1).’”.

New clauses—

Page 7, after clause 19 insert the following new clause:

Auditor-General shall report on all cases of non-compliance

"19A. Section 63R of the Principal Act is amended by omitting from subsection (1) 'The Auditor-General' and substituting 'Subject to section 70F, the Auditor-General'."

Page 11, after clause 22 insert the following new clause:

"22A. Before section 71 of the Principal Act the following section is inserted:

Non-reporting of minor technical breaches

'70F. Where:

- (a) in the Auditor-General's opinion, there has been a breach of the Constitution or an enactment; and
- (b) but for this section, the Auditor-General would be required under paragraph 51 (1) (c) or under section 63R to include particulars of the breach in a report on financial statements;

the Auditor-General may decide not to include particulars of the breach in the report if he or she is satisfied that:

- (c) the breach:
 - (i) is merely of a minor and technical nature; and
 - (ii) is not material; and
- (d) not to include particulars of the breach in the report is in accordance with accepted professional standards concerning the conduct of audits.'"

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

Bill, as amended, agreed to.

Bill to be reported with amendments.

The House resumed; Mr Millar reported accordingly.

On the motion of Mr Duncan, by leave, the House adopted the report, and, by leave, the Bill was read a third time.

3 **TAXATION LAWS AMENDMENT (RATES AND REBATES) BILL 1989:** 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 Peacock (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 notes that:

- (1) even after the July 1989 tax cuts, the Hawke/Keating Government will remain the highest taxing Government in the post-war history of Australia;
- (2) the long overdue tax cuts will substantially disappear as the Government's high inflation and high tax policies eat away any benefits they may have offered;
- (3) within one year of the tax cuts a family on average weekly earnings with a dependent spouse and two children will need at least an extra \$56 a week to restore their real disposable income to its March 1983 level; and
- (4) it is vital that economic reforms be implemented to lower inflation and interest rates if Australia is to see a sustainable reduction in the tax burden and in the enormous net foreign debt of \$95 billion".

Debate continued.

Mr Saunderson addressing the House—

It being 12.45 p.m., the debate was interrupted in accordance with sessional order 101A, and the resumption of the debate made an order of the day for a later hour this day.

4 QUESTIONS: Questions without notice being asked—

Paper: Mr Dawkins (Acting Treasurer) presented the following paper:

Australian Bureau of Statistics—Information paper—The Australian consumer price index: Treatment of mortgage interest charges.

Questions without notice continued.

5 PAPERS: The following papers were presented:

Australian Science and Technology Council Act—Australian Science and Technology Council—Report—The core capacity of Australian science and technology, dated April 1989.

Employment, Education and Training Act—National Board of Employment, Education and Training—Reports by the Higher Education Council, including the Board's comments—

Advice on higher education funding for the 1989-91 triennium.

1st Report—Operation of section 14 of the *Higher Education and Funding Act 1988* and the higher education contribution scheme.

Equal Employment Opportunity (Commonwealth Authorities) Act—Australian Institute of Criminology—Equal Employment Opportunity plan.

Rothwells Ltd—Interim report of the National Companies and Securities Commission to the Ministerial Council for Companies and Securities.

6 ROTHWELLS LTD—INTERIM REPORT OF NATIONAL COMPANIES AND SECURITIES COMMISSION—MOTION TO TAKE NOTE OF PAPER: Mr Beazley (Leader of the House) moved—That the House take note of the following paper:

Rothwells Ltd—Interim report of the National Companies and Securities Commission to the Ministerial Council for Companies and Securities.

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

7 ROTHWELLS LTD—INTERIM REPORT OF NATIONAL COMPANIES AND SECURITIES COMMISSION—PUBLICATION OF PAPER: Mr Beazley (Leader of the House), by leave, moved—That this House, in accordance with the provisions of the *Parliamentary Papers Act 1908*, authorises the publication of the interim report of the National Companies and Securities Commission to the Ministerial Council for Companies and Securities relating to Rothwells Limited.

Question—put and passed.

8 DISCUSSION OF MATTER OF PUBLIC IMPORTANCE—CONSUMER PRICE INDEX: The House was informed that Mr Peacock (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) had proposed that a definite matter of public importance be submitted to the House for discussion, namely, "The unprecedented action in changing the measurement of the Consumer Price Index halfway through the regular review period".

The proposed discussion having received the necessary support—

Mr Peacock addressed the House.

Discussion ensued.

Discussion concluded.

9 PAPER: Mr D. M. Cameron, by leave, during a personal explanation, presented the following paper:

Household expenditure survey 1988-89—Copy of letter, dated 2 May 1989, from Prof. D. C. Pearce, Commonwealth Ombudsman to Mr D. M. Cameron, MP, including the Commonwealth Ombudsman's report to the Australian Statistician on the survey, dated 1 May 1989.

- (b) in accordance with the requirements of section 56 of the Constitution, recommending to the House of Representatives that an appropriation of revenue be made for the purposes of a Bill for an Act to make interim provision for the appropriation of money out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund for the service of the year ending on 30 June 1990, and for other purposes.

Mr Duncan (Minister for Employment and Education Services) presented a Bill for an Act to make interim provision for the appropriation of money out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund for the service of the year ending on 30 June 1990, and for other purposes.

Bill read a first time.

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

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

24 MESSAGE FROM THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL, PROPOSED EXPENDITURE IN RESPECT OF THE YEAR 1989-90—INTERIM PROVISION—SUPPLY BILL (NO. 2) 1989-90: Message No. 193, dated 2 May 1989, from His Excellency the Governor-General was announced:

- (a) transmitting to the House of Representatives particulars of proposed expenditure from the Consolidated Revenue Fund in respect of the year ending on 30 June 1990 for which interim provision is necessary; and
- (b) in accordance with the requirements of section 56 of the Constitution, recommending to the House of Representatives that an appropriation of revenue be made for the purposes of a Bill for an Act to make interim provision for the appropriation of money out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund for certain expenditure in respect of the year ending on 30 June 1990, and for other purposes.

Mr Duncan (Minister for Employment and Education Services) presented a Bill for an Act to make interim provision for the appropriation of money out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund for certain expenditure in respect of the year ending on 30 June 1990, and for other purposes.

Bill read a first time.

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

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

25 MESSAGE FROM THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL, PROPOSED EXPENDITURE IN RELATION TO THE PARLIAMENTARY DEPARTMENTS IN RESPECT OF THE YEAR 1989-90—INTERIM PROVISION—SUPPLY (PARLIAMENTARY DEPARTMENTS) BILL 1989-90: Message No. 194, dated 2 May 1989, from His Excellency the Governor-General was announced:

- (a) transmitting to the House of Representatives particulars of proposed expenditure from the Consolidated Revenue Fund in respect of the year ending on 30 June 1990, in relation to the Parliamentary Departments, for which interim provision is necessary; and
- (b) in accordance with the requirements of section 56 of the Constitution, recommending to the House of Representatives that an appropriation of revenue be made for the purposes of a Bill for an Act to make interim provision for the appropriation of money out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund for certain expenditure, in relation to the Parliamentary Departments, in respect of the year ending on 30 June 1990, and for other purposes.

Mr Duncan (Minister for Employment and Education Services) presented a Bill for an Act to make interim provision for the appropriation of money out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund for certain expenditure in relation to the Parliamentary Departments in respect of the year ending on 30 June 1990, and for other purposes.

Bill read a first time.

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

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

- 26 **TAXATION LAWS AMENDMENT (RATES AND REBATES) BILL 1989:** 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 Peacock (Deputy Leader of the Opposition), 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 notes that:
- (1) even after the July 1989 tax cuts, the Hawke/Keating Government will remain the highest taxing Government in the post-war history of Australia;
 - (2) the long overdue tax cuts will substantially disappear as the Government’s high inflation and high tax policies eat away any benefits they may have offered;
 - (3) within one year of the tax cuts a family on average weekly earnings with a dependent spouse and two children will need at least an extra \$56 a week to restore their real disposable income to its March 1983 level; and
 - (4) it is vital that economic reforms be implemented to lower inflation and interest rates if Australia is to see a sustainable reduction in the tax burden and in the enormous net foreign debt of \$95 billion”—

Debate resumed.

Amendment negatived.

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

Leave granted for third reading to be moved forthwith.

On the motion of Mr Kerin (Minister for Primary Industries and Energy), the Bill was read a third time.

- 27 **POSTPONEMENT OF ORDER OF THE DAY:** Ordered—That order of the day No. 3, government business, be postponed until a later hour this day.

- 28 **WHEAT MARKETING BILL 1989:** 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.

Mr Cunningham addressing the House—

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

Mr Kerin (Minister for Primary Industries and Energy) requiring the question to be put forthwith without debate—

Question—put and negatived.

Debate continued.

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

- 29 **ADJOURNMENT:** Mr Kerin (Minister for Primary Industries and Energy) moved—That the House do now adjourn.

Question—put and passed.

And then the House, at 11.29 p.m., adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m.

PAPERS: The following papers were deemed to have been presented on 3 May 1989: Australian Bureau of Statistics Act—Australian Bureau of Statistics—Proposals for collection of information—1989—No. 8—Topics to be included as supplements

to the monthly Labour Force Survey: weekly earnings of employees, and employment benefits.

Defence Act—Determinations under section 58B—1989—

No. 39—Legal Officer's Professional Fee.

No. 40—Rates of Travelling Allowance—Bangladesh, and other allowances.

No. 41—Rates of Travelling Allowance—Saudi Arabia, and other allowances.

No. 42—Rates of Travelling Allowance—Syria, and other allowances.

No. 43—Rates of Travelling Allowance—USA—Chicago, and other allowances.

No. 44—Rates of Travelling Allowance—Western Samoa, and other allowances.

No. 47—Rates of Travelling Allowance—Kiribati, and other allowances.

No. 48—Rates of Travelling Allowance—Turkey, and other allowances.

Fisheries Act—Plan of Management—No. 23—Southern Shark Fishery (Amendment).

Navigation Act—Navigation (Orders) Regulations—Order—1989—No. 1—Marine, Part 51.

Seat of Government (Administration) Act—

Agents Ordinance—Declaration pursuant to subsection 3 (2)—1989—No. 2.

Determinations—Listing fees for purposes of the following ordinances—

Cemeteries, dated 30 March 1989.

Instruments, dated 21 March 1989.

MEMBERS PRESENT: All Members were present (at some time during the sitting) except Mr Bilney, Mr Campbell, Mr Carlton, Mrs Child, Ms Fatin, Mr Gayler, Mr Keating, Mr Macphee, Mr Shipton, Mr Spender and Dr Theophanous.

A. R. BROWNING
Clerk of the House of Representatives