

1996

THE PARLIAMENT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS

No. 6

WEDNESDAY, 8 MAY 1996

1 The House met, at 9.30 a.m., pursuant to adjournment. The Speaker (the Honourable Bob Halverson) took the Chair, and read Prayers.

2 **TELSTRA (DILUTION OF PUBLIC OWNERSHIP) 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—*And on the amendment moved thereto by Mr Latham, viz.*—That all words after “That” be omitted with a view to substituting the following words: “the House is of the opinion that the Bill should not be proceeded with, for the following reasons:

- (1) it represents the start of a process leading to the full privatisation of Telstra;
- (2) it will lead to a loss of jobs, investment and exports, and the Bill also fails to establish an Australia-first purchasing policy for Telstra;
- (3) the remittance of profits overseas which will follow enactment will damage Australia’s balance of payments;
- (4) it provides inadequate protection of universal service obligations and preservation of services in regional, rural and remote Australia;
- (5) the Government’s failure to bring outer metropolitan telephone zones into the capital city local call zones;
- (6) the Government’s failure to fulfil its commitment to establish an ISDN service throughout Australia plus establish A and B share categories to monitor foreign ownership;
- (7) the failure to preserve ministerial directions and accountability to the Parliament for the delivery of Telstra’s universal service obligations;
- (8) there are much better ways of funding environmental programs than selling Australia’s major public asset;
- (9) it represents an ideological obsession with ownership issues instead of focussing on the competitive features of the telecommunications market;
- (10) at a time of rapid technological change in telecommunications, the public sector should continue to hold a major strategic asset like Telstra to avoid

inequity of access and affordability on the so-termed ‘information superhighway’;

- (11) with the Government’s recent decision to review the 1997 telecommunications regulations it is inappropriate for the Parliament to be considering the sale of Telstra”—

Debate resumed.

It being 2 p.m., the debate was interrupted in accordance with standing order 101A, and the resumption of the debate made an order of the day for a later hour this day.

3 ELECTION PETITION

The Clerk presented a copy of an election petition, dated 7 May 1996, which he had received from the Registrar of the High Court, sitting as the Court of Disputed Returns, under section 369 of the *Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918*, viz.: Petition of Ross Vincent Free in the matter of the *Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918* and in the matter of the election of a member of the House of Representatives for the Division of Lindsay (No. S94 of 1996).

4 QUESTIONS

Questions without notice being asked—

Paper: Mr K. J. Thomson, in accordance with standing order 321, having called for documents quoted from by Mr Anderson (Minister for Primary Industries and Energy)—

Mr Anderson presented the following paper:

Coalition has mandate for reform—News release (NR 22/96) issued by the National Farmers Federation, 3 March 1996.

Questions without notice continued.

Papers: Mr Sharp (Minister for Transport and Regional Development) presented the following papers:

Australian National Railways Commission—Finances and structure—Copies of letters (2) from Mr J. Smorgon, Chairman, Australian National Railways Commission to Mr Sharp, 11 and 15 April 1996.

Questions without notice continued.

5 PAPER

The following paper was presented:

Australian Securities Commission—An investigation into the affairs of Aust-Home Investments Ltd and others—Condensed report, 19 October 1995.

6 DISCUSSION OF MATTER OF PUBLIC IMPORTANCE—PRE-ELECTION PROMISES

The House was informed that Ms Macklin had proposed that a definite matter of public importance be submitted to the House for discussion, namely, “The

refusal of the Government to unequivocally honour its pre-election promises to older Australians”.

The proposed discussion having received the necessary support—

Ms Macklin addressed the House.

Discussion ensued.

Discussion concluded.

7 MINISTERS OF STATE AMENDMENT BILL 1996—REPORT FROM MAIN COMMITTEE

The Second Deputy Speaker reported that the Ministers of State Amendment Bill 1996 had been fully considered by the Main Committee, a Governor-General’s message recommending an appropriation had been reported, and the Bill had been agreed to without amendment, and presented a certified copy of the Bill.

Bill agreed to.

On the motion of Mr Ruddock (Minister for Immigration and Multicultural Affairs), by leave, the Bill was read a third time.

8 EXCISE TARIFF AMENDMENT BILL 1996—REPORT FROM MAIN COMMITTEE

The Second Deputy Speaker reported that the Excise Tariff Amendment Bill 1996 had been fully considered by the Main Committee and agreed to without amendment, and presented a certified copy of the Bill.

Bill agreed to.

On the motion of Mr Ruddock (Minister for Immigration and Multicultural Affairs), by leave, the Bill was read a third time.

9 DAIRY PRODUCE LEVY (NO. 1) AMENDMENT BILL 1996—REPORT FROM MAIN COMMITTEE

The Second Deputy Speaker reported that the Dairy Produce Levy (No. 1) Amendment Bill 1996 had been fully considered by the Main Committee and agreed to without amendment, and presented a certified copy of the Bill.

Bill agreed to.

On the motion of Mr Ruddock (Minister for Immigration and Multicultural Affairs), by leave, the Bill was read a third time.

10 DAIRY PRODUCE AMENDMENT BILL 1996—REPORT FROM MAIN COMMITTEE

The Second Deputy Speaker reported that the Dairy Produce Amendment Bill 1996 had been fully considered by the Main Committee, a Governor-General’s message recommending an appropriation had been reported, and the Bill had been agreed to without amendment, and presented a certified copy of the Bill.

Bill agreed to.

On the motion of Mr Ruddock (Minister for Immigration and Multicultural Affairs), by leave, the Bill was read a third time.

11 LOAN BILL 1996

Mr Fahey (Minister for Finance), pursuant to notice, presented a Bill for an Act to authorise the borrowing and spending of money for certain purposes.

Bill read a first time.

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

Paper: Mr Fahey presented an explanatory memorandum to the Bill.

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

12 MESSAGE FROM THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL, PROPOSED EXPENDITURE FOR SERVICE OF THE YEAR 1996-97—INTERIM PROVISION—SUPPLY BILL (NO. 1) 1996-97

Message No. 3, dated 7 May 1996, from His Excellency the Governor-General was announced:

- (a) transmitting to the House of Representatives particulars of proposed expenditure from the Consolidated Revenue Fund for the service of the year ending on 30 June 1997 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 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 1997, and for related purposes.

Mr Fahey (Minister for Finance) 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 1997, and for related purposes.

Bill read a first time.

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

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

13 MESSAGE FROM THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL, CERTAIN PROPOSED EXPENDITURE IN RESPECT OF THE YEAR 1996-97—INTERIM PROVISION—SUPPLY BILL (NO. 2) 1996-97

Message No. 4, dated 7 May 1996, from His Excellency the Governor-General was announced:

- (a) transmitting to the House of Representatives particulars of certain proposed expenditure from the Consolidated Revenue Fund in respect of the year ending on 30 June 1997 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 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 1997, and for related purposes.

Mr Fahey (Minister for Finance) 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 1997, and for related purposes.

Bill read a first time.

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

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

14 MESSAGE FROM THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL, PROPOSED EXPENDITURE IN RELATION TO THE PARLIAMENTARY DEPARTMENTS IN RESPECT OF THE YEAR 1996-97—INTERIM PROVISION—SUPPLY (PARLIAMENTARY DEPARTMENTS) BILL 1996-97

Message No. 5, dated 7 May 1996, 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 relation to the Parliamentary Departments in respect of the year ending on 30 June 1997 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 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 1997, and for related purposes.

Mr Fahey (Minister for Finance) 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 1997, and for related purposes.

Bill read a first time.

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

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

15 HOUSING ASSISTANCE BILL 1996

Mr Ruddock (Minister representing the Minister for Social Security), pursuant to notice, presented a Bill for an Act to assist people to obtain access to housing that is affordable and appropriate to their needs, and for related purposes.

Bill read a first time.

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

Paper: Mr Ruddock presented an explanatory memorandum to the Bill.

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

16 HOUSING LOANS INSURANCE CORPORATION (TRANSFER OF ASSETS AND ABOLITION) BILL 1996

Mr Miles (Parliamentary Secretary (Cabinet) to the Prime Minister), for Mr Costello (Treasurer), pursuant to notice, presented a Bill for an Act to provide for the transfer of the assets, and the abolition, of the Housing Loans Insurance Corporation, and for related purposes.

Bill read a first time.

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

Paper: Mr Miles presented an explanatory memorandum to the Bill.

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

17 TELSTRA (DILUTION OF PUBLIC OWNERSHIP) 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—*And on the amendment moved thereto by Mr Latham, viz.*—That all words after “That” be omitted with a view to substituting the following words: “the House is of the opinion that the Bill should not be proceeded with, for the following reasons:

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- (8) there are much better ways of funding environmental programs than selling Australia’s major public asset;
- (9) it represents an ideological obsession with ownership issues instead of focussing on the competitive features of the telecommunications market;
- (10) at a time of rapid technological change in telecommunications, the public sector should continue to hold a major strategic asset like Telstra to avoid

inequity of access and affordability on the so-termed 'information superhighway';

- (11) with the Government's recent decision to review the 1997 telecommunications regulations it is inappropriate for the Parliament to be considering the sale of Telstra"—

Debate resumed.

Mr Hollis addressing the House—

18 ADJOURNMENT

It being 7.30 p.m.—The question was proposed—That the House do now adjourn.

Debate ensued.

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

Overseas students—Supervision and protection of in Australia—Copies of letters from—

Mr Price to Mr Ruddock, Minister for Immigration and Multicultural Affairs, 22 April 1996.

Mr Price, Chairman, Human Rights Sub-Committee, Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade, to Senator the Hon. N. Bolkus, Minister for Immigration and Ethnic Affairs, 10 November 1995.

Senator N. Bolkus to Mr Price, 10 January 1996.

Debate continued.

The House continuing to sit until 8 p.m.—The Speaker adjourned the House until tomorrow at 9.30 a.m.

ATTENDANCE

All Members attended (at some time during the sitting) except Mr R. A. Cameron, Mr Forrest, Mr Hawker, Mr Jones and Mr Neville.

L. M. BARLIN

Clerk of the House of Representatives

1996

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
SUPPLEMENT TO VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS

No. 6

MAIN COMMITTEE**MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS**

WEDNESDAY, 8 MAY 1996

1 The Main Committee met at 10 a.m.

2 MINISTERS OF STATE 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—

Debate resumed.

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

Message from the Governor-General: Message No. 1, dated 2 May 1996, from His Excellency the Governor-General was announced recommending an appropriation for the purposes of the Bill.

Leave granted for the motion for the Bill to be reported to be put forthwith.

Ordered—That the Bill be reported to the House without amendment.

3 EXCISE TARIFF 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—

Debate resumed.

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

Leave granted for the motion for the Bill to be reported to be put forthwith.

Ordered—That the Bill be reported to the House without amendment.

4 DAIRY PRODUCE LEVY (NO. 1) 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—

Debate resumed.

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

Leave granted for the motion for the Bill to be reported to be put forthwith.

Ordered—That the Bill be reported to the House without amendment.

5 DAIRY PRODUCE 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.

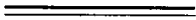
Message from the Governor-General: Message No. 2, dated 2 May 1996, from His Excellency the Governor-General was announced recommending an appropriation for the purposes of the Bill.

Leave granted for the motion for the Bill to be reported to be put forthwith.

Ordered—That the Bill be reported to the House without amendment.

6 ADJOURNMENT

The Main Committee adjourned at 12.25 p.m.



I. C. HARRIS
Clerk of the Main Committee