

1998

THE PARLIAMENT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

**VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS**

No. 8

MONDAY, 30 NOVEMBER 1998



1 The House met, at 12.30 p.m., pursuant to adjournment. The Speaker (the Honourable Neil Andrew) took the Chair, and read Prayers.

**2 AUSTRALIAN PARLIAMENTARY DELEGATION—REPORT—STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS**

Mr Nugent presented the following paper:

Australian Parliamentary Delegation to the 19th ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Organisation (AIPO) Conference, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 24 to 28 August 1998—Report.

Mr Nugent and Mr Sercombe made statements in connection with the report.

**3 INSURANCE INDUSTRY**

Mr Martin, pursuant to notice, moved—That this Parliament calls for the referral of an inquiry into the Australian insurance industry to the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Financial Institutions and Public Administration and the issues to be considered to include:

- (a) the moral and legal responsibility of insurance companies to honour policies in respect of storm damage and flood;
- (b) necessary legislative change to ensure pedantic definitional arguments are not used by companies to negate payments to policy holders;
- (c) the examination of the legislative base in the provision of flood insurance in the USA and UK and its potential relevance to Australia;
- (d) the ways in which insurance companies approached the interpretation of storm and flood damage in recent disasters in Wollongong, Katherine, Coffs Harbour and Townsville; and
- (e) existing Commonwealth and State or Territory government legislative support mechanisms to assist areas and victims affected by such disasters and whether changes are necessary to ensure rapid and effective relief.

Debate ensued.

At 1.45 p.m., the time allotted for the debate having expired, the debate was interrupted in accordance with standing order 106A, Mr Snowden was granted

leave to continue his speech when the debate is resumed, and the resumption of the debate was made an order of the day for the next sitting.

#### **4 MEMBERS' STATEMENTS**

Members' statements were made.

#### **5 QUESTIONS**

Questions without notice were asked.

#### **6 PETITIONS**

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

Mr Anthony, from 865 residents of Banora Point, NSW, praying that new flight paths be selected for Coolangatta Airport.

Ms Burke, from 270 petitioners, praying that youth allowance legislation be reversed.

Mr Cadman, from 481 petitioners, praying that all Commonwealth funding be removed from all Family Planning Australia associations and affiliates.

Mr Causley, from 332 petitioners, praying that all natural therapy products and services be exempt from the proposed GST.

Ms Hall, from 168 electors of the Division of Shortland, praying that a goods and services tax be rejected and certain action be taken to ensure a just, fair and enforceable tax system.

Ms Hall, from 119 electors of the Division of Shortland, praying that any further sale of Telstra be rejected and that Telstra's profits be used for the benefit of all Australians.

Ms Hall, from 107 electors of the Division of Shortland, praying that the National Competition Council's proposals to deregulate Australia's postal services be rejected and that Australia Post's community service obligations be extended.

Mrs Hull, from 310 petitioners, praying that radiotherapy services be established at Wagga Wagga and Albury-Wodonga.

Mr Lindsay, from 33 students of James Cook University, praying that the Youth Allowance payment for students living independently at home be increased to the level previously paid under Austudy.

Mr Lindsay, from 28 petitioners, praying that the Youth Allowance be adjusted to include the two-thirds concession previously available under Austudy.

Mr Pyne, from 50 residents of South Australia, praying that the ability of parents to retain choice in the education of their children be maintained.

Mr M. A. J. Vaile, from 36 electors of the Division of Lyne, praying that SBS television services be extended to the lower mid-north coast, NSW.

Petitions received.

## 7 IRANIAN BAHA'I COMMUNITY

Mrs Gallus, pursuant to notice, moved—That this House:

- (1) strongly condemns the recent grave attacks on the Iranian Baha'i community, including the brutal execution of Mr Ruhullah Rawhani in July in the absence of due legal process, raids on 500 Baha'i homes in an orchestrated nation-wide attempt to prevent Baha'i youth from receiving education, confirmation of death sentences against two Baha'i men and the detention and imprisonment of 16 other Baha'is for practising their faith;
- (2) calls on the Government of Iran to end its oppression of the Baha'i community, ensure the safety and early release of all those Baha'is imprisoned in Iran, immediately take steps to implement UN resolutions defining steps required of the Iranian Government and calling for the emancipation of the Baha'is and respect the principles of the International Covenants on Human Rights to which Iran is a party; and
- (3) expresses its deep disappointment that despite the consideration of this matter by both Houses of the Australian Parliament last year, the Iranian Government, far from taking action to remedy the situation, has intensified its persecution of Baha'is.

Debate ensued.

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

## 8 LABELLING OF AUSTRALIAN GOODS

Mrs Bailey, pursuant to notice, moved—That this House:

- (1) recognises the importance of labelling to both industry and consumers;
- (2) acknowledges that the label 'Product of Australia' is the premium label for Australian goods; and
- (3) calls on the Government to ensure that there is clear definition and understanding of the 'Made in Australia' label by both industry and consumers.

Debate ensued.

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

## 9 GRIEVANCE DEBATE

Pursuant to the provisions of standing order 106, the order of the day having been read—

Question proposed—That grievances be noted.

Debate ensued.

Question—That grievances be noted—put and passed.

**10 PAPER**

The Deputy Speaker presented the following paper:

Association of Former Members of the Parliament of Australia—Report for 1997.

**11 MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE**

A message from the Senate was reported returning the following Bill without amendment:

26 November 1998—Message No. 8—States Grants (General Purposes) Amendment 1998.

**12 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 Address in Reply to the speech of His Excellency the Governor-General be agreed to (*see item number 19, page 13*)—

Debate resumed.

Debate adjourned (Mr Abbott—Minister for Employment Services), and the resumption of the debate made an order of the day for the next sitting.

**13 AGED CARE AMENDMENT (ACCREDITATION AGENCY) 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.

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

Leave granted for third reading to be moved forthwith.

On the motion of Mrs B. K. Bishop (Minister for Aged Care), the Bill was read a third time.

**14 PAYMENT PROCESSING LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (SOCIAL SECURITY AND VETERANS' ENTITLEMENTS) 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 Mr Swan 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 condemns the Government for:

- (1) reducing the period in which many social security recipients will have to advise Centrelink of changes in their circumstances from 14 to 7 days while not adequately addressing Centrelink's inability to deal with the number of people attempting to contact them;
- (2) failing to provide Centrelink with sufficient resources, causing it to cut 5,000 staff positions and further reducing its capacity to provide an adequate service;

- (3) cutting the Social Security Budget by \$2.6 billion dollars over three budgets;
- (4) abolishing the Commonwealth Dental Program, and increasing the cost of pharmaceuticals and hearing services, in direct contradiction of the Prime Minister's pre-1996 election commitment that his Government would not cut social security pensions and entitlements".

Debate continued.

Mr Price addressing the House—

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## 15 ADJOURNMENT

It being 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.—The Speaker adjourned the House until tomorrow at 2 p.m.

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## PAPERS

The following papers were deemed to have been presented on 30 November 1998:

Air Navigation Act—Regulations—Statutory Rules 1998 No. 321.

Airports Act—Regulations—Statutory Rules 1998 No. 320.

Christmas Island Act—Regulations 1998 Nos. 1, 2.

Civil Aviation Act—Civil Aviation Regulations—Exemption 1998 No. CASA 43.

Cocos (Keeling) Islands Act—Regulations 1998 Nos. 1, 2.

Currency Act—Determination 1998 No. 7.

Evidence and Procedure (New Zealand) Act—Regulations—Statutory Rules 1998 No. 317.

National Residue Survey (Customs) Levy Act and National Residue Survey (Excise) Levy Act—Regulations—Statutory Rules 1998 No. 316.

Nuclear Non-Proliferation (Safeguards) Act—Regulations—Statutory Rules 1998 No. 318.

Patents Act—Regulations—Statutory Rules 1998 No. 319.

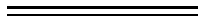
Primary Industries Levies and Charges Collection Act and Horticultural Levy Act—Regulations—Statutory Rules 1998 No. 315.

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**ATTENDANCE**

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

**I. C. HARRIS**

Clerk of the House of Representatives