



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Main Committee

APPROPRIATION BILL (NO. 1) 2010-2011

Consideration in Detail

SPEECH

Wednesday, 16 June 2010

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Date Wednesday, 16 June 2010
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Questioner
Speaker Bishop, Julie, MP

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Ms JULIE BISHOP (Curtin) (10.40 am)—In the time available, I want to ask questions on three separate topics. I appreciate that the parliamentary secretary may not have time to answer them now, but could he take these questions on notice. The first topic is the government's decision to institute legal proceedings against Japan over the whaling issue. What effort was made by the government to obtain the support of the United States and New Zealand prior to the government's announcement of its decision to institute legal proceedings ahead of the IWC meeting next week? So what effort was made to obtain the support of the US and New Zealand? Also on that issue, what advice has the government received on the likelihood of success of its legal action and the consequences of failure?

The second topic is the Asia-Pacific community, this proposal that was floated by the Prime Minister a couple of years ago. Will the parliamentary secretary advise which nations have indicated their support for the Prime Minister's proposal of an Asia-Pacific community and what is the nature of that support? In other words: what statements have been made in relation to it? Can the parliamentary secretary advise which nations will be included in the Prime Minister's proposal of an Asia-Pacific community and which nations will not? And will he also provide the cost of lobbying countries in the Asia-Pacific region to support the Prime Minister's proposal to this point?

The third topic is the government's bid for a United Nations Security Council seat. How many countries, and which countries, have committed to support Australia's bid and what is the nature of that support? Are there written or public statements of support, and from which particular regions? Will the parliamentary secretary indicate whether there is a connection between the increases in aid to particular regions and the government's lobbying for support for the seat on the Security Council? The parliamentary secretary would be aware of statements made by countries in the region in relation to aid and the bid for the Security Council. I also refer to the increase in the number of state visits from countries, particularly from Africa and Latin America. Can the parliamentary secretary advise the cost to the Australian taxpayer of those state visits? I appreciate that there are a significant number of questions there, but could the parliamentary secretary answer any he is able to at present and then take the rest on notice.