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PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
MATTERS OF PUBLIC IMPORTANCE
National Commission of Audit
SPEECH

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Questioner
Speaker Perrett, Graham, MP

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Mr PERRETT (Moreton) (15:34): I actually rise to speak on the MPI, which was about a budget emergency. I got waylaid and got to hear the member for Moncrieff for 10 minutes talk about the usual three speeches he makes; however, it was a bit unfortunate, because obviously there is going to be a ministerial vacancy coming up, and I always go for the Queenslander when it comes to any vacancies! With respect to the member for Kooyong, I always want to plump for the Queenslander, but after that speech getting on his CV I just cannot believe the member for Moncrieff let me down like that. But, nevertheless, best of luck: if that is the start of your job application, you've got a lot of work to do. Opportunity rich, I think we say, Steven!

Mr Ciobo: Look where you're sitting!

Mr PERRETT: Good point! But nevertheless, let's go back to the budget emergency. We heard that speech. This is the no-surprises government, remember? The member for Moncrieff is a member of the no-surprises government and the no-new-taxes government. This MPI is important because obviously we need to see it through that prism. There is no budget emergency. There are impediments coming in the future with an ageing Australian community, but that does not mean an emergency. The fact that I will be looking for a retirement home in 20 or 30 years does not mean that I call the ambulance today. There will be issues in the future. There are obviously some challenges, but a prudent, adult government would recognise that rather than confecting this thing called a 'budget emergency'.

I still see that footage—and I have seen it a lot the past couple of days—of the Prime Minister saying they will be the government of no surprises. It is funny, but every time I see him say that I hear the theme music from *Jaws* because that is what Tony Abbott, the Prime Minister, the member for Warringah reminds me of—no surprises like the movie *Jaws*. That shark is coming, we know; it is coming along tonight. The member for Warringah is really the poor man's political Steven Spielberg with basically the same storyline, and tonight he has created—or tried to create—this budget emergency as if to cloak what they are doing. The member for Moncrieff mentioned things being in a party's DNA in his speech, and we have seen it in the LNP. I have no problem with the member for Moncrieff. He knows sharks very well; he has sharks in his electorate on both sides of the beach. However, sharks do what they do, what they are programmed to do and what is in their DNA, and that is what the LNP are programmed to do as well. They cut health services, they neglect education and they attack pensioners and even people with disabilities. It is sad to say.

I mention this because the member for Moncrieff did mention an IMF report, but he mentioned the most recent one, not the one before that talked about the Howard government, which was basically the front bench opposite repeated. The Howard government was the most profligate government in the history of Australia.

Government members interjecting—

Mr PERRETT: I know you are laughing at the Howard government history, but that is the reality. If we wanted to sell every asset, obviously, we would have been in a much strong position.

Government members interjecting—

Mr PERRETT: You laugh, but look at what actually happened. Let us look at those realities. Under the Rudd-Gillard government we were a lower-taxing government. As a member of the Left, I am a little bit confronted by that, because I think good, responsible governments should be able to tax to provide responsible services. Under the ALP, we taxed at 22.5 per cent, whereas the Howard government taxed across its history at 25 per cent. Many of those opposite on the front bench were part of that drunken sailor collective that did so much damage to Australia.

Admittedly, in hindsight we embraced a lot of tax cuts in 2007 that perhaps we should not have. As a candidate at the time, I thought it was good policy—in hindsight, not so much. The reality is that we have a budget that is manageable and in a good, strong position. *(Time expired)*