



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Federation Chamber

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Turnbull Government

SPEECH

Monday, 21 November 2016

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Questioner
Speaker Thistlethwaite, Matt, MP

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Mr THISTLETHWAITE (Kingsford Smith) (11:47): When I first read this motion by the member for North Sydney I thought he must have gotten his speeches mixed up—that he actually submitted his material for the 'open mic night' at the Canberra Comedy Club. This is genuinely good comedy. 'Securing Australia's 25 consecutive years of economic growth': the member for North Sydney claims that this government can make claim to that. Great comedy. 'Establishing a process which makes bank Chief Executive Officers answerable to the public through appearances before Parliament': when I read that I was rolling in the aisles. Then I read on: 'securing the naval shipbuilding industry and jobs for the future'. Are they on drugs over on that side of the parliament! They did their best to absolutely destroy Australia's naval shipbuilding industry, in the wake of destroying Australia's automotive industry.

But when I read on I just became angry, because they make some claims in here that are downright lies. 'Increasing protection for women and children against domestic violence', is one of those. All this government has done for victims of domestic violence and their children is made life harder. That makes me and many others very angry. I will get to that in a moment.

Regarding the claim of 25 years of economic growth I am going to give those opposite a history lesson. They may not know it but it was actually the Hawke and Keating governments that laid the foundations and started the process of the 25 years of economic growth that Australia has seen. They were the ones who opened up our economy, reduced protection, floated the Australian dollar, increased competition into many markets, made our industrial relations system much more competitive through reforms in the accord years and the introduction of enterprise bargaining, and introduced compulsory superannuation so that Australians began saving for their retirement. All of these reforms were Labor government reforms and they are the reforms that laid the foundations for Australia's economic growth.

What did the Liberals do during the Howard years? They did their best to blow it. They introduced middle-class welfare, through baby bonuses and the like, and tax cuts for the most rich in our economy. None of it was saved for infrastructure or anything like that. They introduced middle-class welfare and tax cuts for the rich. What is the current government's economic record? They have increased the budget deficit. They have increased debt. Real incomes in Australia are falling to some of their lowest levels and, as a result, living standards in Australia are falling. Australians are actually worse off than when the Liberal Party was elected. We have got underemployment and youth unemployment in the regions that is out of control and we have got business investment falling. Australians are worse off.

The claim that the bank CEOs were held to account is simply laughable. An invitation to Canberra for a two-hour cup of tea and a rap over the knuckles is no substitute for a royal commission. I think all we need do is ask the thousands of victims of banks over recent years what they think of this claim of holding the CEOs to account. I know what they will do with that—they will laugh.

When I read the claim about increasing protection for women and children against domestic violence I got downright angry because all this government has done is the opposite. This government has cut \$52 million from services that support victims of domestic violence and their families. There have been cuts to community legal centres, cuts to the Aboriginal Legal Service and cuts to legal aid. Community legal centres are having further cuts—30 per cent of their funding will be cut from 1 July 2017. There will be \$88 million cut from the national partnership on homelessness.

Where do those opposite think that victims of domestic violence go when they leave home with nothing more than the clothes on their back and their kids? Where do you think they go? They go to community legal centres. They go to the Aboriginal Legal Service. They go to legal aid. All this mob have done is cut those vital and important services. How dare they come in here and make claims about increasing protection for women and children against domestic violence. Those are downright lies.

The motion goes on to say that they are supporting vocational education and training. I can tell you that in the electorate I represent we have got 1,000 fewer apprentices in training than when this government came to office. That is their record on vocational education and training. Those who are speaking in support of this motion ought to be ashamed of themselves.