



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

BILLS

Appropriation Bill (No. 6) 2013-2014

Consideration in Detail

SPEECH

Monday, 23 June 2014

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SPEECH

Date Monday, 23 June 2014
Page 6966
Questioner
Speaker McCormack, Michael, MP

Source House
Proof No
Responder
Question No.

Mr McCORMACK (Riverina—Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Finance) (18:38): It is all well and good for the Manager of Opposition Business to come in here and point the finger and say that we should admit our mistakes. Sure, a mistake has been made, and I have come into the House and I have said that a mistake has been made. But, irrespective of who made that mistake, I would just like an admission from those opposite on the fact that for six years they made relentless mistakes—endless mistakes. And he claims that \$1 billion has been lost in this process. Well, \$1 billion has not been exactly lost. We are amending Appropriation Bill (No. 6) 2013-2014 on a technicality. But if we are talking about billions of dollars being lost, why is this nation facing \$123 billion worth of deficits? This is \$123 billion in deficits that has been lost, not to mention the \$667 billion lost—lost—by Labor, going forward, if left unchecked by this side. But we will correct that, won't we, Member for Fadden?

Mr Robert: Absolutely.

Mr McCORMACK: We will fix that mistake up. And certainly the Australian people are looking forward to us getting on with the job of doing that.

Bill 6 provides for an appropriation of \$972.365 million for the following activities. The Department of Agriculture will receive \$40 million for drought programs. We are getting on with the job of making sure that those people neglected by Labor are looked after—making sure that those people in the far west of New South Wales and the south-west of Queensland who are facing severe dry conditions are looked after. The Attorney-General's Department will receive \$5 million to fund royal commissions. The Department of Defence will receive \$600 million for the procurement of defence equipment. The member for Fadden, the minister at the table, certainly knows how badly defence was let down when Labor was in government. That is not to mention the DFRDB and the DFRB indexation issues but also defence spending, which fell to its lowest proportion of gross domestic product since 1938 under Labor. And we all know what happened in 1939. So Labor let our defences run short—run low—and it affected every defence base. Certainly, it affected my Kapooka base, the Army Recruit Training Centre at Wagga Wagga, where all of the recruits go through and get trained for their important duties on behalf of this nation.

Bill 6 also provides for \$294 million to the Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development to fund various infrastructure projects, because we know how important infrastructure is to this nation. We understand.

Labor promised a lot but delivered little. Labor said it was going to provide for important infrastructure projects in road and rail and everything else, but then did not have any plan to get on with doing it. The only plan that Labor has is to eradicate the memory of 7 September last year—election day. That is Labor's only plan. We heard the 13 May budget delivered by the member for North Sydney, the Treasurer, but just a couple of days later when the member for Maribyrnong, the Leader of the Opposition, stood to deliver his address in reply to the budget, we did not hear any plan. We just heard relentless negativity from the Leader of the Opposition, who is the chief complainant in this nation—the chief whinger. We did not hear any policies or any grand plan going forward to help the nation pay back the debt and deficit left to us after six years of hard Labor.

Bill 6 of the appropriations also allows nearly \$29 million for programs to the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet to improve education, employment and community safety for Indigenous Australians. And that is so important. Senator Nigel Scullion, Minister for Indigenous Affairs, is a part of cabinet. He has that portfolio as a stand-alone portfolio position—something that this side of politics regards as being crucially important to the welfare of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders in Australia.

A typographical error in Appropriation Bill (No. 6) 2014-15 has been identified which related to a cross-reference within that bill. We are getting on with the job of fixing the economy, fixing the debt and deficit legacy left to

us by Labor, and we will do that because Australians deserve better. They certainly deserved better than what they got in the six years that Labor was in power.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Broadbent): The question is that the amendments moved by the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Finance be agreed to.

Question agreed to.

Bill, as amended, agreed to.