



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
MATTERS OF PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

Economy

SPEECH

Wednesday, 19 October 2016

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Questioner
Speaker Perrett, Graham, MP

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Mr PERRETT (Moreton—Opposition Whip) (16:05): I give the member for Fisher his due: he certainly is not going to be gagged by the Leader of the House. He was committed to giving that ABCC and registered organisations speech and he gave it, even though the Leader of the House gagged him. Unfortunately, the matter of public importance topic was the collapse of the Turnbull government's economic plan—nothing to do with the registered organisations bill. However, he is a new member of parliament who came in on the double dissolution trigger, which was the registered organisations bill and the ABCC legislation—something not mentioned in any of the campaign material in the lead-up to the election. I saw around my electorate's booths on polling day that those opposite had the big sign saying: 'Plan. That's what we have. We've got a plan. We're going to give \$50 billion, unfunded, to big business.' That was the pivotal point of the LNP plan in Queensland and rolled out—unfunded. Even though we know that about \$9 billion of those tax concessions would go overseas to foreign shareholders, they were still committed to it. Obviously the Labor Party understands that small business plays a pivotal role, and we are happy to concede that businesses with a turnover of \$2 million—that is what we call a small business; we do not call Coles a small business and we do not call Westpac a small business—do need a fair break. We were prepared to do that. As I said, congratulations to the member for Fisher for delivering his speech. He would not be gagged by the Leader of the House.

I remember the election campaign. I heard it over and over again: 'jobs and growth'. Remember that? And what was the platform for jobs and growth? This plan, based on fiscal recklessness. It was based on the idea of giving \$50 billion to big business and that would somehow stimulate the economy. Well, we heard today from the Nick Xenophon team that they are going to reject this. Labor will reject it in the Senate and the Greens will reject it in the Senate, so we will not have their centrepiece plan coming to fruition. This glorious plan is dead in the water. Their plan is up the creek without the proverbial paddle—I will not name the creek. All that we have left is this slogan 'jobs and growth'. I remember what the Labor Party was about in the election. We were prepared to invest in children's education. That is where we were prepared to put taxpayers' hard-earned dollars. I know there were a few false Gonski promises floating around in 2013 and a couple in 2016—

Ms Henderson interjecting—

Mr PERRETT: I take that interjection opposite. They were putting false ads out there—yours were delivered to the ETU, in fact. I seem to recall the corflutes saying that they supported Gonski; then they reneged on the promise. They lied about Gonski. In the hundred days since the election—we know that there are economic headwinds heading our way. We need a strong Prime Minister, someone who can get Australia out of the troubles we are in. Instead, we have this hillbilly-harbourside alliance over there that is producing nothing but no direction for the government and no direction for the nation. We see an unemployment rate of 6.1 per cent, even higher than the 5.1 per cent under the Labor government. We have a national unemployment rate since the Abbott-Turnbull government—or is it the Turnbull-Abbott government or the Abbott-Turnbull-Joyce government—I cannot work out who is in control over there. Is it George? Is it Cory? Is it Eric? It is hard to work out.

Mr Conroy: It is like a boy band.

Mr PERRETT: It is, we know. We have a Prime Minister who is prepared to do anything to come into office. He has the office, but he has no real power. We have George with the power, Cory with the power, Eric with the power—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member for Moreton will refer to members by their titles.

Mr PERRETT: The Prime Minister is now a mere husk. All those dreams he had of doing a work of noble note devoured by that rapacious right that is hovering around in the coalition room. All those dreams for nought. I am going to quote some bloke from about 2,000 years ago, who lived around the Palestinian territories: 'What

shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and suffer the loss of his soul?' Surely that is what we are seeing with this current Prime Minister and his economic plan.