



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



THE SENATE

**APPROPRIATION (NATION BUILDING
AND JOBS) BILL (NO. 1) 2008-2009**

**APPROPRIATION (NATION BUILDING
AND JOBS) BILL (NO. 2) 2008-2009**

**HOUSEHOLD STIMULUS
PACKAGE BILL 2009**

**TAX BONUS FOR WORKING
AUSTRALIANS BILL 2009**

**TAX BONUS FOR WORKING
AUSTRALIANS (CONSEQUENTIAL
AMENDMENTS) BILL 2009**

**COMMONWEALTH INSCRIBED
STOCK AMENDMENT BILL 2009**

In Committee

SPEECH

Thursday, 12 February 2009

BY AUTHORITY OF THE SENATE

SPEECH

Date Thursday, 12 February 2009
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Questioner
Speaker Abetz, Sen Eric

Source Senate
Proof No
Responder
Question No.

Senator ABETZ (Tasmania) (11.21 am)—If Senator McEwen felt so passionately about investing in our schools, I am sure she would have opposed the Labor Party's abolition of our program Investing in Our Schools, but of course at that stage the mantra was 'reckless spending', which I don't think we hear from those opposite anymore. I have a number of questions to the minister. At 11 am I asked the minister whether there were any government amendments. He gave us a long talk about all sorts of things but did not answer the question. A few minutes later, we have before us government amendments.

Senator Ferguson—Are you in the loop, Nick?

Senator ABETZ—Senator Ferguson has beaten me to the punch. Is he actually in the loop? I would have thought the decent thing to say to the Senate was, 'Yes, they are with the printer as we speak and they will be circulated in the chamber very soon.' But we know how this government treats the Senate.

In relation to the amendments that have now been circulated, some substantial savings will be made. Is it anticipated that those savings will be spent in another area and, if so, in what area? Or are they simply to reduce the overall package by \$2 billion, which is where I think it might be nearly up to. I think one lot of amendments will reduce it by \$435 million and the other lot by \$1.34 billion. Those are rough terms. Are those amounts going to be savings or transferred to another area?

My final question in relation to this legislation is this. We were told that the stimulus package, especially this immediate spend of \$950 and \$650 and the various variations, was needed immediately to support up to 90,000 jobs. Clearly, with less money being spent on this allegedly vital immediate stimulus, the number of jobs to be supported must now be revised downward, and considerably so. I would be interested to hear, therefore, the minister's answer on the number of jobs that will now be supported by this package and whether the savings that we have been provided with in the amendments thus far are, in fact, going to be spent somewhere else. If the money is going to be spent somewhere else, is the minister going to share the secret with the Senate as to where that money is going to be spent?