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PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



THE SENATE

BUSINESS

Days and Hours of Meeting

SPEECH

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Speaker Joyce, Sen Barnaby

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Senator JOYCE (Queensland—Leader of The Nationals in the Senate) (10:35): Well, this is one of the first forays into government business by the new Manager of Government Business in the Senate, Senator Collins. You probably have not heard about Senator Collins out there—if you are listening to this on the radio—because Senator Collins is new at this job. We have had three leaders of government business here in the last fortnight. We used to have a bloke called Senator Ludwig, but he has now moved down there. He lost his job to a bloke called Senator Arbib and then Senator Arbib became the leader of government business and he moved up to that seat. Then Senator Arbib decided that he wanted to spend more time with the family. It was so obvious that that is what you do after you get a promotion—you resign. He resigned—surprise, surprise, surprise—and he has now gone out there and Senator Collins has now moved up and is in the position.

It is all sort of chaotic down here. It is completely chaotic. And part of this absolute chaos is now seen in the legislative program. We thought that when Senator Bob Carr came from out there and into here that things might settle down. But then Senator Carr's first foray into public life was something about sideshows, circuses and hypnotism. It was a most entertaining piece. He told the Australian people about the benefits of hypnotism—and we knew that now that we had a hypnotist as the foreign affairs minister things were going to be a lot better; that it was going to be vastly better. We had someone who was chaotic and ill-disciplined and now we have a person who extols the art of hypnotism—and he is now the foreign minister.

What we have here is the guillotine—an extension of time and then the guillotine. If you are listening to this: this is what happens when you have control of both houses of parliament. The Greens-Labor Party-Independent alliance—the glee club—run the other place and now the Greens-Labor Party-Independent alliance run this place as well. So you are getting crazy ideas that have been just duck-shoved through. There are only two genuine crossbenchers, Senator Xenophon and Senator Madigan. What you have to understand is the total and utter hypocrisy of people such as the Greens. They were held as being the paragons of virtue who would never, ever interfere with the public's right to the proper display and laying out of the facts, and would never engage in a guillotine. The guillotine brings forward the cessation of the debate and precludes people's right to speak. Now the Greens do that. They have just become a party like any other party, but they are a party that is in coalition with the Labor Party. That is exactly how it works. When you think that you will cast your vote with the Greens because the Greens will be the independent arbiters, they are not. You have to understand their actions. They are just an arm of the Greens-Labor Party-Independent alliance which is the government.

When you get these sorts of chaotic decisions, that is how you get things like the NBN. That is how those things go through. Senator Conroy ran in here a second ago and has run back out again. He ran and caught up to Kevin Rudd, who at that point in time was the Prime Minister of Australia, which was before they got rid of him. Apparently on a plane ride to somewhere they decided to create a new telephone company. It did not cost much—only \$50-plus billion, but what is that amount between mates? That was part of this chaotic process. Now we have the mining resource rent tax which they are going to jam through. It is important that we talk about it and discuss it, because this is part of Australia's major export earner. If we get this wrong, if we create a major problem here, we lose the capacity to pay for everything we do in our nation. That is a slight problem. They also tell you that it is the right thing to do.

We already have a mining resource rent tax that is called the state royalty system. You either believe in state royalties or you do not. At any point in time state governments can increase royalties. However, they want to create another quasi-royalty system to sit on top of the royalty system that is already in place because they believe that Mr Swan is far more righteous than any state Treasurer. Mr Swan would have a far better idea of what to do with the money than any state Treasurer. We see that, when Mr Swan gets the money, Senator Bob Brown gets the money. Last time he got a \$10 billion green fund. What is that going to do? I do not know. Apparently it is true that they are thinking about setting up a new newspaper. That is what they should be doing. They should be in the media sector. Because we have the hate media, we must have the love media. We have to have real balance. The love media is going to be set up by Dr Bob Brown, and they might venture into television stations as

well. Why not? When you have \$10 billion burning a hole in your pocket, of course you should engage in buying up or going into competition against the private sector in whichever way you can with a new manic, socialist, green agenda. So this is what is before us.

We also have the private health insurance rebate scheme. The reason this is so important is that we have run out of money and Australia is \$232 billion in gross debt. We only have a limit of a quarter of a trillion. That is our third limit. We had a \$75 billion limit, then we had a \$200 billion limit, and then they snuck in, just as they are doing now, an extension on the overdraft to get us to a quarter of a trillion. If you read the papers, apparently they told Mr Oakeshott that it is only just going to go above \$200 billion. Today it is \$232 billion in gross debt and the cheques start bouncing at \$250 billion, so they are \$18 billion away from bouncing the cheque. So you know how close that is, in the last four weeks they have borrowed \$10 billion. We are not that far away—about eight weeks away under the current form—from bouncing cheques. This is what is happening in our nation as we speak. This is why we are so manically out of control. What are they doing? Whilst this is happening they are jamming these things through so that we cannot go through them with a fine toothcomb and find out what the nation is up to and where it is going.

I looked at some that they are guillotining and one is an approps bill. I wonder how long they will give us for that approps bill. The appropriations, of course, are the expenditure of funds. The only way we can pay back this debt that the Labor Party have left you with is to get it off you—you good people in the public gallery and listening. They are going to have to take it out of your taxes. This is where it all goes; this is where it all happens. We need to do our job so that we can hold them to account, but we cannot hold them to account when the Greens sidle up to the Labor Party and the Independents in the other place and basically shut down the democratic function because they control both houses of parliament. Also, the Greens become completely hypocritical. They divorce themselves from every previous principle they formerly had.

What we have here is a position where both houses of parliament are controlled by the Greens-Labor Party-Independent alliance. We have the completely manic position where we have the third leader of government business in the Senate in a fortnight. We have \$232 billion in gross debt and, with the way we are going, we have about another eight weeks before we start bouncing the cheques. These are obviously the reasons we need to go through and understand piece-by-piece the legislation that is before us.

There is so much in the motion. Why is it? Surely people who vote for the Greens would want our nation to have a proper investigation into the processes that we are about to create laws on. It is absolutely absurd. The motion says that the Indirect Tax Laws Amendment (Assessment) Bill 2012 is commencing no later than 9.30 am on 21 March. Guess when we have to finish it by? And the Greens are voting for this! We are finishing it at 10 am, 30 minutes later. That is what the Australian Greens have done for the democratic process in our nation. They have given you 30 minutes to look at that bill.

We could look at another one. The Crimes Legislation Amendment (Powers and Offences) Bill 2012 is about your liberty and the rights you have walking along the street. You would think that is a pretty important thing. I think we should really investigate that. When you are making a statement about my liberties, about my capacities, I should expect that the Greens and the Labor Party would extol the virtues of a vibrant and transparent debate, but the Crimes Legislation Amendment (Powers and Offences) Bill will commence immediately after the preceding item, which finishes at 10 pm—that is, at night—and will finish at 10.30 pm, at night, an hour and a half before midnight. This is only 30 minutes to talk about the Crimes Legislation Amendment (Powers and Offences) Bill. That is now the Australian Greens making a clear statement about how they feel about the protection of your liberties. They do not care. It is all hypocrisy—total and utter hypocrisy.

Senator Dr Bob Brown, even when dealing with interjections from Senator Back—he called him 'Senator Black'—was starting to show a loss of attachment to exactly what is going on in this place. I can understand when people are getting tired. I really do think it is time for renewal in the Greens. It is time for new leadership. There are a lot of people who have done the hard yards and it is time for them to step up to the mark. If the party has a future, it must accept the reality that it is time to move on. They cannot keep going with Dr Bob Brown. It is out and about and everybody is talking about it.

We are concerned because Senator Dr Bob Brown is now so close to being part of the government—basically he is the vital lieutenant of the Greens-Labor Party-Independents alliance—that the Greens are defrauding the people who voted for them. The mechanism the Greens had was a dissenting vote. They wanted to be the proper arbiter

and control of policy, but they have now divorced themselves from that and become hand-in-glove members of the Greens-Labor Party-Independents alliance, whose leader is Ms Julia Gillard, and basically the deputy leader of the country is Dr Bob Brown.

It is a sad day and it should be noted that this shows the chaotic nature of this government. It shows the hypocrisy that now bedevils the policy platform, the presentation and the philosophy of the Greens. For policy this just becomes another total confusion as Australia goes trundling down this path towards the inevitable bouncing of cheques, unless there is some major turnaround in how the Greens-Labor Party-Independents alliance runs this nation.