



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

BILLS

**Parliamentary Service Amendment
(Parliamentary Budget Officer) Bill 2011**

Consideration in Detail

SPEECH

Tuesday, 20 September 2011

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SPEECH

Date Tuesday, 20 September 2011
Page 10907
Questioner
Speaker Mr ROBERT

Source House
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Question No.

(Fadden) (NaN.NaN pm)

Mr ROBERT (Fadden) (21:14): I rise to provide comment on the coalition's very sensible second amendment to the Parliamentary Service Amendment (Parliamentary Budget Officer) Bill 2011, the bill where once again the government are asking us to take them on faith. I think that all gathered here agree that we are sick and tired of taking this government on faith. We took them on faith on school computers, which are still not delivered; we took them on faith on overpriced school halls, to find that state schools were ripped off to the tune of 60 per cent of the value of private schools; we took them on faith on Green Loans; we took them on faith on the solar rebates, which have been an unmitigated disaster; we took them on faith on pink batts; and we took them on faith on live cattle exports. The list goes on of where we have taken these people on faith.

The coalition has asked numerous questions this evening from the emasculated member opposite, who refuses to answer even the most simple questions. So I simply say to the parliamentary secretary—the good Commander Bradbury of 'HMAS *Sinking*'—there is time for you to outline exactly the requirements of this highly secretive MOU that the government is putting forward.

The member for Wentworth outlined a perfectly good parliamentary budget office in 2007-2008, an opportunity for costings to be properly understood. It was built on the back of the Charter of Budget Honesty which, as we all know, came in when the Howard government came in because the then finance minister actually stood publicly and said that the budget was in the black and that the finances were under control. The Howard government came in to find a level of astonishing duplicity resulting in a black hole of something like \$8 billion or \$9 billion in Commonwealth finances—hence the Charter of Budget Honesty came in.

And yet in 2007 when this government came to power and they put forward their policy costing to the Treasury, 130 of its over 160 policies were put in for costing on the last possible day imaginable and Treasury threw up its hands. Do not listen to what these people over there say, watch what they do because of the duplicity they showed when coming into office in

2007. They had no intention of having their policies costed; they put them all through on the last day. That is how I remember your government coming to power, Parliamentary Secretary. That is how I remember you treating with contempt the Charter of Budget Honesty. You come into this place with a—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Hon. BC Scott): I remind the member for Fadden that he should not—

Mr ROBERT: I withdraw and am admonished, Mr Deputy Speaker. The parliamentary secretary, Commander Bradbury, comes into this place with the Parliamentary Budget Office—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: No, Member for Fadden—

Mr ROBERT: I withdraw. The parliamentary secretary, the member for Lindsay, comes in supporting a parliamentary budget office, even though in 2007 on coming to the treasury bench the government could not fulfil the requirements of the Charter of Budget Honesty. And here they are, laying down a range of issues with respect to the Parliamentary Budget Office that severely constrain the powers of that office and that require the PBO staff to go and have secret MOUs with a whole range of government departments.

The question for the government is: how hard is it to be open, honest, accountable and transparent? I know you won office in terms of duplicity. I know you won 2010 because of gross duplicity. I know you won the last election because the Prime Minister stood there and said 'There will be no carbon tax under the government I lead.'

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Fadden, I did not win—

Mr ROBERT: Now is the opportunity for you, sir, to come clean with this government—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member for Fadden will resume his seat.

Mr Stephen Jones: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise on a point of order. The point of order is on relevance. The bill before the House is the Parliamentary Service Amendment (Parliamentary Budget Officer) Bill 2011,

not any other legislation that might be before the House.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: There is no point of order. We are talking about a budget bill, and in the budget there are money matters that are wide ranging. I call the member for Fadden and I remind him also to direct his comments through the chair and not at the chair.

Mr ROBERT: We are talking about the second amendment. We will find out tomorrow when the amendment to the Migration Act comes in, and we will see how aligned the convenor of the Left, the member for Throsby, is with his values and principles. We will see, sir, how relevant you—the member for Throsby—are tomorrow when those bills come in. But right now, in terms of this amendment, this is simply saying that the coalition's amendments relating— *(Time expired)*

Ms King: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I ask you to draw the member back to the subject matter of the amendment, not the member for Throsby.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The parliamentary secretary has raised a point, but I think you will find that it has been a very wide ranging debate for the last two nights. And the member for Fadden's time has expired.

(Maranoa) (NaN.NaN pm)

(Fadden) (NaN.NaN pm)

(Fadden) (NaN.NaN pm)

(Fadden) (NaN.NaN pm)

(Throsby) (NaN.NaN pm)

(Fadden) (NaN.NaN pm)

(Ballarat) (NaN.NaN pm)