

MATTERS OF PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

Rudd Government

Mr ROBERT (Fadden) (4.37 p.m.)—What an enormous disappointment that just was. I have come in here to give my 100th speech for the year, and I have even brought a cricket bat, courtesy of the member for Swan, signed by Barry Richards, arguably the world's greatest batsman. I fear I now have to ask the member for Grayndler to assume the position, because that was disappointing in the extreme, and perhaps there is a better use for the cricket bat that we could see here today. As we reflect here on the government's performance over the past 12 months, the bat will not rise.

This government hit the ground reviewing. There have been over 160 reviews, summits, commissions, inquiries and conferences. There is no compelling narrative and no central ground; just hollow words from hollow men. There is no political or economic strategy; just the declaration of 12 wars: wars on drugs, cancer, inflation, unemployment, global unemployment, whales, Aboriginal disadvantage, downloads, pokies, alcopops, doping in sport and bankers' salaries—individually worthy issues.

I suggest the PM has actually read his Sun Tzu, because Sun Tzu says, 'All war is based on deception,' and that is what the Prime Minister's wars are. There is no action in these wars. They are hollow wars. He has deployed no troops in these wars. They have not even left the battleground. The troops are sitting there waiting for some direction. But again Sun Tzu may have the answer when he says, 'Though we have heard of stupid waste in war, cleverness has never been seen associated with long delays.' There are long delays in these wars and there is no cleverness.

We have seen the Prime Minister become 'Voyeur 08', because he is watching everything. There is Fuelwatch, GroceryWatch, whale watch, inflation watch and childcare centre watch. He is watching but not doing. Then, of course, we come to the economic responsibility of the Prime Minister and the government. Every government in the developed world was concerned about the subprime fallout late last year. The member for Higgins stood and warned the nation, but what was our trusty Prime Minister doing? In the final report of the Australia 2020 Summit, at page 387, we get a view, because it says:

By 2020 Australia will be well placed to survive as a functioning and safe nation and society because our geography and policies protect us from the global chaos created by the pandemic of 2012, the financial crash of 2013, and the oil war of 2016.

Well, Prime Minister, the crash came in 2008. You were five years too late. When the financial crisis was gaining momentum, you were having a summit with all of your friends. When the final report came out, did you mention the current financial crisis? No, you referred to a hypothetical one in 2013.

You started the year by attacking inflation because you thought it was the achilles heel of the previous government, yet the IMF advice, which every other nation apart from us apparently followed, was to lower taxes, seeing a lowering in interest rates and an increase in spending. But what did this government do? It increased tax by \$19 billion. It decreased spending. The Treasurer, that nervous little man, rolled up and said that the 'inflation genie was out of the bottle' a day before the Reserve Bank met, only backed up by his Prime Minister, who said the 'inflation monster was wreaking havoc across the nation'. Is it any wonder that interest rates were raised the next day?

Growth projections in the budget were over three per cent. In the Mid-Year Economic and Fiscal Outlook they were two per cent. Three weeks later they were less than that and they were 0.1 per cent for the September quarter. We have a naked short selling

ban bungle, with the government changing its view three times. We had a \$10.4 billion stimulus package with no modelling and a bungled bank guarantee that has left 270,000 people in this nation with accounts frozen. We are the only nation on the planet whose response has made the nation worse off because of what the government has done. This is a dismal performance of the government in its first year.

The Prime Minister held aloft a computer as the new toolbox of the 21st century. He is now only delivering it to half as many students at twice the price—and he is an economic conservative! It is shameful. The nation-building funds that he promised totalled \$26.3 billion—every cent from the Howard-Costello years. This government has not even thrown in five cents. If the member for Solomon could just throw over 10c, at least this government would have contributed something to the nation-building funds. But as it is you have contributed nothing. It is a dismal performance. *(Time expired)*