

## PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

### Workplace Factors

[Mr ROBERT](#) (Fadden) (7.10 p.m.)—I rise not to lend my support to this absolute nonsense of a motion to, as per the *Notice Paper*, 'support the establishment of a national commission for workplace innovation and excellence that will, in conjunction with the business community, trade union movement, professional associations and education providers' achieve a whole range of things. When I looked at the history of this motion, I thought I would go to Google just to see how many times the Labor Party had looked at this. You can imagine my surprise when in the history of the planet I only found one hit on Google, which actually came from the member for Bendigo's address-in-reply on 15 May 2008. No-one has spoken about this from either side of politics. The Labor Party did not speak about it. It was not part of their pre-election requirements or commitments. No member has spoken about it. In fact, the only person to raise the idea of a national commission for workplace innovation and excellence—and hundreds of national commissions have already been announced under the Labor government—is the member for Bendigo, once. So this is now the second time in the House that this has been put forward and it certainly does not deserve our support.

If we look a little bit harder, we will start to see the crux of the matter. 'To establish a national commission for workplace innovation and excellence that will, in conjunction with the business community, the trade union movement, professional association and education providers'—this wrecks of an underhanded effort to set up one more commission for the trade unions to get their hands into in an attempt to once again control the economy. It is no wonder when I look at the member for Bendigo's history. He was a union official from 1990 to 1994 and a research adviser to the Victorian state Leader of the Opposition, Mr Brumby MLA, from 1996 to 1998, before he entered parliament—just one more union hack pushing the union line.

But I take offence at 'notes the alarming decline in Australia's productivity and export performance'. I can only assume, when the member for Bendigo speaks about productivity, that he is referring to labour productivity. If I look at labour productivity, in the 13 years of the previous Labor government, it grew by an average of 2.2 per cent. In the 11 years of the Howard government it grew by 2.4 per cent—far from a rapid decline. The last five years have seen labour productivity grow by 2.8 per cent, whereas in the last five years of the Hawke-Keating government labour productivity grew by only 2.3 per cent. Whatever view or whatever slice and dice of the numbers you want to take with respect to productivity, the Howard government outstripped the previous Hawke-Keating government. I notice the member for Calwell chose the years 1995-96 through to 1999 to look at what productivity used to be, without actually looking at the fact that in the year 1999-2000—the GST implementation, of course—productivity was zero.

This nonsense of a motion goes further to note the 'alarming decline' in export performance. I again can only assume the member for Bendigo is speaking about international trade in goods and services. In the 13 years of the previous Labor government, under Hawke and Keating, trade increased by \$71 billion. Yet in the 11 years of the Howard government trade increased by a whopping \$109 billion. In fact, between 2006-07 and the previous year, trade increased by nine per cent. In the previous year, export trade increased by 15 per cent. So in the years from 2004-05 to 2006-07 trade increased by 24 per cent, yet this farcical motion notes the 'alarming decline in export performance over the last five years'.

One really has to question the motion. I look at organisations in my electorate of Fadden, companies like Digga, the largest exporter of gearboxes in the southern hemisphere; VIP Petfoods; and Shower Power, which has a huge percentage of the UK domestic market. What Australia does not need is some farcical national commission for workplace innovation and excellence. It needs flexible workplaces that Labor has just stripped away. It needs 134,000 jobs back which Labor has just stripped away. It needs lower taxes; it needs innovation, not nonsense.