



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

PROOF

**GOVERNANCE OF AUSTRALIAN
GOVERNMENT SUPERANNUATION
SCHEMES BILL 2010**

Consideration in Detail

SPEECH

Wednesday, 2 June 2010

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SPEECH

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| <p>Date Wednesday, 2 June 2010 Page 60 Questioner Speaker Robert, Stuart, MP</p> | <p>Source House Proof Yes Responder Question No.</p> |
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Mr ROBERT (Fadden) (5.53 pm)—I rise to speak on the Governance of Australian Government Superannuation Schemes Bill 2010 and cognate bills. I think the nation has had a bit of a gutful of ministers coming in and saying sorry. I know that in my state of Queensland, whenever Labor stuffs something up, which seems to be all too regularly, someone comes out and says: 'I am sorry. I will fix it.' Peter Beattie made a career out of saying: 'You know what? I am sorry I stuffed up, but I will fix it. I will do better next time.' He would do it again and again, and when the Queensland public got tired of him saying, 'I am sorry,' he left parliament, saying, 'I will take no government job,' only to take a \$300,000 tax-free job just six or nine months later. When Labor ministers come out and say, 'I am sorry,' it is simply indicative that they are working on the premise that it is better to seek forgiveness than to ask permission. This government only started consultation with the veterans' community —

Mr Tanner—On a point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker: this is entirely irrelevant to the bill. I am as keen as anybody else to get this concluded. I suggest you call the speaker back to the bill.

Mr ROBERT—Consultation with the veterans and defence communities only started once there was an issue. It only commenced once the coalition and other organisations and groups out there started saying: 'Hang on. There is a problem here. Veterans and military personnel are not being treated in line with the uniqueness of the service they operated. They are not being treated as a group that is distinct and different, with different conditions of service and different expectations upon them. They are just being lumped in with every other superannuant, with a board over the top that gives them 20 per cent representation but gives the ACTU 30 per cent representation.' That is when consultation began.

This Minister for Veterans' Affairs and, indeed, the Minister for Finance and Deregulation knew this would be contentious. They knew there was an opportunity for, and an expectation of, consultation, but they only took it up once the rubber hit the road. Looking at the amendments the finance minister has put before us with respect to consultation, he has now put in that he will consult with the Minister for Defence and with the CDF, but there is no discussion about consultation

with respect to the three ACTU members. There is no consultation process with any parties about those bodies. We reiterate that the inability of the minister for finance to remove anyone without the permission of the CDF or the President of the ACTU remains unacceptable.

We reiterate that standing up and saying that we need to move this forward because it will deliver veterans \$80,000 or \$90,000 more in 34 years time is just completely ludicrous. I ask the minister: is he prepared to table the Treasury financial modelling that backed up his assertions in the House? Is he prepared to release the modelling that shows that there will be these great benefits for military personnel if this bill goes through? Is he prepared to table that modelling so the defence community and the veterans community can look at it with some degree of rigour? Right now the nation has little faith in Treasury forecasting and models. We learnt today, when the Treasurer was bringing out his pie graphs, that they were an invention of his own mind and his own office and not in fact from Treasury. I simply ask the minister for finance: sir, are you willing to table the forecasts and the modelling and the premises behind them?