



PRIME MINISTER

FOR MEDIA

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ELECTORATE TALK

The rough and tumble of debate in the Parliament is an accepted part of the democratic way of life. It has been a feature of Parliamentary life in Australia since Federation.

This country has seen great Parliamentarians, on both sides of the House, adept at scoring political points but without stooping to personal smear to make their points.

Peripheral politics unfortunately appears to be a trademark of Labor's current leadership. It is a leadership so devoid of constructive alternative policies that it believes it has no other way to grab a headline, to make an impact. Mr. Hayden's main Parliamentary tactic seems to be the vilification of individual members of the Government. He seizes on opportunities for personal attack in a way which smacks of desperation. He chases headlines at any price.

He showed clearly what he thought of the investigation into Ian Sinclair's family companies by refusing to regard the matter as in any sub-judice. What came to hand he used in the Parliament without weighing the cost to the credibility of Parliament or the implications for justice to an individual.

The results of the N.S.W. Government, and of Mr. Hayden's handling of this particular affair, have gone a long way to creating the circumstances where it could be very difficult indeed to get a fair trial for Ian Sinclair. And in this country, every person deserves a fair trial.

This week, Mr. Hayden attempted to smear Kevin Newman, the Minister for National Development, basing his allegation on nothing more than a Sunday newspaper gossip column. The report was quickly demonstrated to be so inaccurate and misleading as to be ludicrous. It was a false report. Yet, within hours of its publication, Mr. Hayden had put out a press statement describing this item of inaccurate gossip as "the latest outrage". The Sunday paper gossip was repudiated by the Minister, by the Deputy Leader of the Party, Phillip Lynch, by myself, and also by a senior journalist who was in a position to know the facts.

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Mr. Hayden is using these tactics because the policies of the Labor Party are still the old, tired and failed policies of the Whitlam years; policies that wrecked Australia once and would do it again.

We have only to look at the most recent Federal conference of the Labor Party in Adelaide - the supreme policy-making body of the Labor Party - which binds all its members.

The most damning indictment of the Labor Party's lack of policies came when Mr. Hayden did a lunchtime deal with the left on the critical question of economic policy. Quite simply, there is no mention of inflation and the critical importance of combatting inflation in the Labor Party's economic policy and platform.

Let me read it to you and see if you can understand it: "With the understanding and co-operation of the trade union movement, development of economic policy which would encompass wages, incomes, non-wages incomes, the social wage, taxation reform and elimination of tax avoidance, and which will achieve a more equitable distribution of our national wealth and income with the commitment to the maintenance of real wages by quarterly adjustments and the passing on of the benefits of the increases in productivity". That is the end of the quote and it is also the end of the policy.

That is the Labor Party's economic policy. Mr. Wran called it a "hotch potch", and Mr. Hawke, always a little plainer in what he says, called it "a gutless sell-out to the Left". It is a meaningless policy. It is a non-policy. It would be a disaster.

Where does Mr. Hayden get this policy advice? The great "moderate" Victorian Labor man, Bill Hartely, let the secret drop. He said Mr. Hayden's chief economic adviser is Mr. Jim Roulston, a powerful and influential figure with the left-wing controlled Amalgamated Metal Workers and Ship Wrights Union.

The Adelaide Conference also made it plain that, given the chance, Labor would abolish every law that would place any restraint on any trade union. Simply, under Labor, trade unions would be above the law. They would be able to do anything in the name of industrial action.

That Adelaide conference also showed Labor to be anti-investment and anti-development, and consequently anti-jobs. They would renege on uranium contracts. They would have a resource tax and make enterprises unprofitable. They would destroy thousands of jobs in the process. Isn't it an old familiar Labor story? They destroyed development and investment when in office. They have the same policies. They would do it again.

They would strike against international organisations. They have said they would establish a body which would, in effect, do little more than spy on those organisations. What would they do with the information? They would give it to the domestic and international trade unions. Under these circumstances, how much foreign investment would we attract? How many of our great resource projects would go ahead.

They would stop development dead in its tracks. They would not only destroy development, but they would continue with their policy of destroying the Senate - the State's house. They still have a policy of reducing the Senate's power so that it could never protect the States - particularly the smaller States. Under Labor, Victoria and New South Wales alone would carry referendum.

On top of that, Labor would tear up the patiently negotiated agreement with all States - Liberal, National Party and Labor - that resolved finally the vexed question of territorial seas and submerged lands. This question had bedevilled Commonwealth-States relations for years. With the aid of patient, cool work by the Attorney-General, Peter Durack, this Government resolved it to the benefit and satisfaction of everyone.

What would Labor do? They would assert total Commonwealth supremacy off-shore, upsetting all the agreements with all the States, and moving to total Canberra control. It is all Mr. Whitlam all over again.

These are just some of the policies Labor is bound to - the so-called alternative policies as Australia moves into a new decade. They show that Mr. Hayden is an increasing captive of the Left. Is it any wonder that Mr. Hayden plays the man and not the ball. Is it any wonder that he feels at home smearing and vilifying and jumping on the Sunday newspaper gossip column bandwagon.

It is a sad and sorry day for Australia when the Opposition Leader has to rely on the gossip columns of Sunday newspapers to try and assert his leadership.

I believe Australians are sick and tired of gutter politics. They are sick and tired of politics of innuendo and slander. It should be put aside and we should concentrate on policies.