



PRIME MINISTER

LABOR KNOCKS, BUT NO ANSWERS

After thirteen long years of ruining Australia in government, Labor in opposition has been reduced to knocking and whingeing.

The Opposition Leader's Budget reply tonight was the proof.

Now that the Coalition Government has set a plan to save and build for Australia's future, Kim Beazley's responsibility was to put aside the predictable rhetorical bluster and tell the Australian people whether he would support the Coalition's solutions.

There was no answer on:

- whether he will support a programme to pay back Keating Labor debt for the sake of our children's future;
- whether he will support the first comprehensive tax break for savings in Australia's history;
- whether he will now belatedly and unreservedly support the greatest investment in improving nation's environmental capital;
- whether he will support the Federation Fund for real jobs and our country's infrastructure; or
- whether he will support the first legislative guarantee to lock in the indexation of pensions to 25 per cent of male total average weekly earnings.

Kim Beazley can't afford to have an each way bet on Budget measures, either deliberately, or through lack of control over his Senate colleagues, as he did with the superannuation surcharge on high income earners.

Mr Beazley has to take a stand.

The old Labor way of high taxation and wasteful spending was decisively rejected in March last year.

By failing to reassure the people that Labor supports efficient government and lower tax, Kim Beazley's Budget response tonight demonstrates again that Labor has failed to listen, let alone learn, mainstream Australia's message at the last election.

15 May 1997