

With regard to the Ministry of Education, the cost associated with relocation of staff from the Rialto building totalled some \$12.3 million. That figure is included in his November 1987 report. He indicates that by changing the cleaning arrangements to contract, the savings each year would be \$51.5 million. There is overpayment of salaries totalling \$1.5 million outlined in his March 1987 report. Moneys lost on the Caulfield Plaza Shopping Centre—owned by the Chisholm Institute of Technology—total \$80.4 million.

I refer to the Department of Industry, Technology and Resources. The Auditor-General in his April 1988 report outlines the Victorian Economic Development Corporation debts as being \$13.2 million. It seems to me that his April 1988 report was the most interesting that he has produced. That report also indicates that \$237.6 million was expended for financing the operating lease of the Monash Medical Centre, which all honourable members assumed to be owned but now find is leased. In respect of the Ministry of Housing and Construction, in the Auditor-General's April 1988 report rental arrears owed are listed as totalling \$14.9 million. He lists the cost of the tenants purchase scheme and lack of adequate monitoring to recover moneys owed as totalling \$1.9 million and the failure to collect loan arrears as totalling \$1.5 million.

The list goes on, but I think the best examples must be the costs set out under the Treasurer's Department of Management and Budget. This is where the money has really been lost, and these matters should be highlighted. First of all, the matters relate to the losses on foreign exchanges. That is where the biggest losses have been. That is what the government has done in the past three years—lost \$543.9 million on foreign exchanges. The figure appears in the Auditor-General's report of November 1987. He also lists losses in the Stock Exchange crash of October 1987 of some \$918.1 million. That appears in his April 1988 report.

As I have said, on top of all that, there are the losses such as those incurred by WorkCare and the Victorian Economic Development Corporation. One can see where the money has been going if one looks at the Budget. There have been massive losses; there is massive incompetence and massive finance irresponsibility. This Budget is nothing more than a fraud, and eventually the people of Victoria will see that that is so and wake up to the government, when the losses come home in their taxes and charges.

**The SPEAKER**—Order! Before calling the honourable member for Sunshine I remind the House that this is his inaugural speech as a member of Parliament. I ask that the usual courtesies be observed.

**Mr BAKER (Sunshine)**—Mr Speaker, I am sure you and other members of this Chamber are aware that I am not new to this place. Through a period of some twenty years I have been, so to speak, hanging about this Chamber in a variety of roles related to the broad theatre of public influence. However, I am very conscious of the fact that being a member of Parliament is entirely different and my first impression, in perhaps a journalistic sense, is that it is a bit like being thrown into the Shakespearean pit without the bottle of gin! It is quite significantly different, and that influence can best be characterised by an old Turkish saying told me recently by an elderly constituent. The saying has it that politics is like a shirt that is on fire—a fire shirt. And that if one chooses to put on the fire shirt one will inevitably, inexorably and certainly get burned. I am prepared for those consequences.

I am pleased that my inaugural speech to the House is on the Budget debate, not because of my immediate past association with that aspect of government and the Department of Management and Budget—which, I might say, is a splendid department staffed by wonderful people and headed by a Minister who is much loved and respected by those staff and the community in general—but rather because the Budget is the

primary technical mechanism through which and by which a government delivers its political philosophy.

In the matter of political philosophy I believe I am, like most members of this House to varying degrees, very much a captive or a victim of my own history. I noticed that the honourable member for Doncaster made much of his own background when he made his first speech to the House recently, and well delivered it was, too. However, I point out that I see my background as being the equal and the opposite, the counterpoint or the antithesis, if one reads Hegel, of that of the honourable member for Doncaster.

I was brought up in an Amalgamated Engineering Union family, and I am proud of that. That sort of environment carried with it a series of attitudes, values, beliefs and a certain style. For example, we believed we were the aristocracy of Labor and we called each other "brother"—there were no "sisters"—rather than "comrade". I am sure the honourable member for Springvale will identify with that because he also comes from an AEU family. There were a series of philosophies, concepts and objectives that were taught almost in the manner of a creed. I suppose one could almost describe them as the tablets in stone. They were never formally writ or set down; rather, they were imparted, implanted, inculcated and infused in the manner of what I understand modern educators now describe as early childhood socialisation. That is the way it was in my family, and I still carry with me those tablets in stone.

What I want to do today is to run a political audit against the Budget, given that the Budget is the primary mechanism by which the government delivers its political philosophy, and particularly because there have been suggestions that Labor administrations, federally and around the country, have not kept faith with the traditional beliefs that underpin the reasons why people like my family and I overwhelmingly and unquestionably support the Labor movement in the broad, and the Labor Party as its political extension in particular. I shall try to set down those tablets in stone and then check the Cain government and the Jolly Budget against them.

The first tablet I set down is that the Labor Party was the party of the trade union movement, and still is. That is its historical base. That meant the party was very interested in aiming to improve the basic wages and conditions of working men and women in this country. It also meant we were for the right of Labor to organise, and that we were for matters such as freedom of assembly, and strongly so. But it also carried with it some other notions such as the old notion that one does not hear expressed in the same form these days—the right to work. Translated into the modern argot—pronounced according to where one went to school—of the economists, it is now known as job creation and job maintenance.

As a first principle and a first priority, therefore, the Labor Party, and the Labor Party in government in particular, must be about employment and jobs. My comment on the Budget measured against that first and critical tablet in stone is that this government, by any form of economic indicator, or even the most conservative form of assessment or measurement, has performed extremely well. Honourable members have heard those indicators paraded through the Chamber in debate. They are the classic theoretical economic indicators that are used. The first is fixed private capital investment expenditure. Indicators such as factory capacity indicators are also important, especially if they are produced by the Chamber of Manufactures, because that organisation would hardly give the government a free kick. There is not a factory in Victoria making widgets or whatever that is not running seven days a week with umpteen shifts a day, and the reason for that is the policies of this government.

Figures on factory construction were put out recently indicating that, once again, the Cain government and the Treasurer have done an exceptional job. And I was fascinated during the election campaign to hear another indicator used, that of the number of cranes on the skyline. It was an excellent one-liner, but it most passed me by in my student days.

For five years in a row the Treasurer has been saying that Victoria has had the lowest rate of unemployment in the country. Measured against that stone, the Budget is hard to beat. If one wants a job in Australia the best place to be is Victoria. That is irrefutable; this is the place to be.

The second tablet I commend to the attention of the House is that the Labor Party was the party of equity, and particularly the party of equity through redistribution of wealth and taxes. In translation, that meant we were for progressive rather than regressive taxation. It also meant that we were for wealth taxes. I am strongly for wealth taxes, and I have no hesitation in declaring that in my first speech to this Parliament. In the jargon of modern economists I am for the application of marginal utility of money theorem, or deep-pocket taxes; that is, those who have the deepest pockets should pay the most.

My review of the performance of the Cain government in this Budget and the Budgets that it follows measured against this tablet is that it has been achieved despite the limitations and constraints of a dwindling tax base, and a tax base where one does not have many options to be progressive. That is why the government has difficulty with it. Unfortunately, a few people in the Labor Party do not understand how difficult it is to manoeuvre within the existing tax base towards progressive taxation. The major form of taxation review has been payroll tax, and many people within the Labor movement would argue from one perspective that that is a tax on employment.

Normally the government would not consider that tax if it had other options. Nevertheless, it has delivered as much as it could in endeavouring to remove the burden so far as possible on household incomes. It has done that through its education allowance, through its family pledge and through the abolition of the motor car registration charge. One would have to give the government an A when measured against the tax equity tablet.

The third tablet does not necessarily relate to this tier of government, but my colleague, the honourable member for Melbourne, in his excellent speech yesterday referred to the fact that the Labor Party was strongly part of the peace movement. I support his remarks. I was brought up with and still accept that position. It would be an act of heresy to deny or not to support the peace movement. In terms of power the government can affect debate. The Cain government has been honest; it has strongly declared its position against nuclear power because of the dangers of its proliferation.

The fourth tablet in stone is that the Labor Party is a party of ideas and reform, the party of things of the intellect. That is not an easy path. It means that we are internationalists; we are involved in debate on an international scale. The Labor Party is philosophic in the way of considering all wisdom and arguments before formulating its views, in the manner of a good philosopher.

The Labor Party also, therefore, supports performing and non-performing arts, and is part of the self-improvement movement, which meant attending mechanics institutes two nights a week, and reading. This had some unfortunate manifestations in my childhood because in my experience, when one lives at the wrong end of Kalgoorlie one is not supposed to read books. I remember the kid across the road saying, "My dad said you are all communists and that's because you read too many books". With respect to the honourable member for Brighton, I point out that the name of the kid across the road was Stockdale. The Stockdales were always whingeing because my pigeons used to leave large deposits on their roof. Perhaps the honourable member for Brighton could find some omen in that.

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That tablet is loosely expressed as being the party of ideas and of matters of the intellect. When honourable members peruse the Budget they will note that the government has continued its major expenditure on education, despite the fact that school numbers are dwindling. As well, I had some involvement in the preparation of the film and television strategy that was released in the last few days before the election campaign. I believe the honourable member for Dandenong would testify to the fact that the film and television community are pleased with that strategy.

The government has also taken initiatives on the museum, libraries and the contemporary music industry. That fits in with the package. The economists have difficulty in this area because of the argument that art and culture are not easily expressed as part of the process of exchange. For example, one cannot put a price on variables such as cultural integrity.

In classic economic theory, if one cannot put a price on anything there is a real problem and so you must get into the areas of public good and merit good, which are intellectually intriguing. Classic economists use the term externalities, as a wonderful way to push this area off to one side. I am sure the honourable member for Brighton understands the concept of pushing such matters off to the side to ensure that one deals only with those things for which one can charge.

The final tablet in stone, and the one that I place above all others is that the Labor Party is the citizens' party. That is the direction in which the Labor Party is heading. The union movement is looking in that direction, particularly in southern Europe. It is looking to the future. The Labor Party will become known in the future as the citizens' party because if one examines the history of this country one will become aware that the Labor Party was the one to which the citizens turned in times of great crisis, depression, war, and so forth. The origins of the Labor Party began in the time of exploitation on a massive scale, the refusal of the right for labour organisations to organise themselves. I predict that with the consequences of the greenhouse effect already in the pipeline, again the citizens will turn to the Labor Party as the citizens' party to help them out of the mess. There will be much trouble when that issue, as a matter of survival, starts to bite.

As a component of that tablet in stone the Labor Party was the defender of the exploited against the exploiters. It stood for the underdog, for the disadvantaged, for the aged and the infirm. It stood for people who lacked clout in the palace. It has always done that.

This Budget by any logical analysis would receive a gold star, a chocolate frog, and a lion stamp, in this area, because, for example, it has produced the social justice policy. It deals properly with the concerns I have listed in that area.

Honourable members on the other side of the House should understand that, even though one may perceive minor differences amongst Labor Party members—the Opposition have made great play of that in the debate during the past couple of days—there is not one who would not recognise the tablets in stone that I have listed.

Honourable members opposite must understand that, universally and collectively, members of the Labor Party stand by those principles and those tablets but that at various times some assume higher priority than others. However, for this Budget, the government deserves full marks. Above all the Labor administrations around Australia in recent times, it deserves full marks from its own supporters for sticking to those

tenets in difficult circumstances and difficult times in an effort to meet historic philosophical objectives.

Even so, there is still much to be done in electorates such as mine because, going into the third term of a Labor government, there is a reasonable and strong expectation that in such electorates known in politics as safe seats—a little more safe after the recent election, I might add—there will be a greater delivery of improvements in lifestyle.

I have a computerist friend who has simply explained to me the differences between hardware and software. Apparently hardware refers to the bits one can kick and software is everything else. I think one can apply that definition to the two levels at which government affects electorates such as mine. The first level of government is the abstract, the broad brush, the policy-making and legislative stuff—the legislation that comes before Parliament. That is the software.

In terms of the software for Sunshine, I suppose if one were looking for something symbolic to express the despair of my electorate one could not go past the famous Sunshine Harvester gates. They are still there; and they have padlocks on them. They are the gates outside which workers were locked in 1907 in their fight to have the right to organise and in their fight to win the magnificent minimum award wage that went on to have ramifications for every Australian and the rest of the world.

Those gates are shut and locked once again and the jobs are gone. They have gone in a way that is most hurtful, for they will not come back in that form. From estimates of the labour market catchment area in and around my electorate some 10 000 to 15 000 jobs in the metal trades have disappeared in the last decade. Those jobs will not come back in that form again. My people are suffering from massive structural unemployment. I think the government has done well overall against the first tablet in the stone. But it now needs to move on and devise regional programs to help alleviate the hurt for my people.

Worse than that, when one looks to see where new jobs have gone, one finds that the new high tech jobs—the jobs for people in white and grey coats—have not gone to the western suburbs. Those jobs have gone, in the main, to what the planners call, in their jargon, the Mulgrave and Plenty corridors. The reason is that middle-class executives make decisions to locate their families in more salubrious areas and they then do not want to travel to the western suburbs to work. We need some major economic intervention and social engineering to try to turn that tendency around on behalf of my people.

Worse again, even if we can get some of the new jobs in the Sunshine electorate, the education system is not delivering the required knowledge and technical expertise, and this applies especially for young women in the mathematics and science fields. We need mathematics and science enrichment programs on a grand scale to ensure that young people coming through the school system in my area can compete for those jobs when they become available.

Also in the software area I would raise structural privilege concepts. That is the way I would describe it. We do not have a lot of clout in our area. One will not find Senior Executive Service persons in the Public Service who come from Sunshine; one will not find many people from Sunshine in the judiciary, the magistracy, or on the Bench. The problem with the bureaucracy is a sort of second or third level form of underprivilege and bias. Therefore, when engineers are making decisions about where they locate the nasties, they immediately think of the western suburbs because they do not live there themselves. When they are thinking of locating the goodies, they think of the places where they live and not the western suburbs. And from recent experience, I can say that the bureaucracy is extremely powerful.

In describing the manifestation of this—and I do not mean to be overtly offensive to the honourable member for Kew—the good burghers of Kew were notably silent when some years ago the former Liberal government set up Christmas tree powerlines all through the western suburbs. Some of my constituents had them at their backyards—not the lesser version, the real version. As I said, the good burghers of Kew were noticeably silent then and nobody took any notice of the screams of outrage from my electorate because they had no clout at the palace. I observe that the then Premier was the honourable member for Kew. That is a case study example of structural privilege.

I come then to the hardware—the things one can kick—I am speaking about monuments, obelisks, and cairns. Politicians are supposed to love unveiling them! There are none in my electorate. I have \$100 for any government member who can show me a plaque that has been unveiled in my electorate in the last six and half years of the Labor government. It is disgraceful. I am absolutely ashamed and embarrassed to walk around Braybrook where they voted 80 per cent Labor through the dark years of opposition to find not one visible or tangible sign of reward.

Honourable members should remember that my people deal in the concrete, not the abstract. We on this side of the House should all be collectively ashamed that there is not one visible or tangible monument that I can point to. I am sure that is going to change. It has to change in a big way. Already there are some signs that it is about to change. We are getting a new police station—hooley dooley!—and a community health centre and an elderly citizens' centre. That is not a bad start.

However, I shall be back to the front bench with a shopping list soon. For example, we would like a new railway station. I do not want to indulge in the cargo-cult politics that characterised previous administrations, and characterised them quite seriously. But, it seems to me a bit rough that we cannot get places like Sunshine on the list when they have stuck with us so long.

I am not saying we should be competitive with areas that are on the outer eastern or middle eastern suburban fringe of Melbourne, euphemistically known as marginal seats. I am not saying that because those areas are developing they should not get some attention. What I am saying is that it is time the Kews, the Camberwells, the Tooraks, and the Balwyns dropped off for a while and we hopped on the list for the small accoutrements of power, shall we say. I hope the frontbench will take some notice of that.

I thank the House for the grace and favour with which it has heard me on this my first occasion to address it. I understand that it will never be thus again.

**Mr E. R. SMITH** (Glen Waverley)—I am delighted to join the Budget debate this afternoon to criticise the Budget for what it really is. I congratulate you, Mr Speaker, on your elevation to the position of Speaker. I will be one of those honourable members who will remind you throughout your term of office of the promise you made to the House yesterday of your desire to uphold the traditions of the Westminster system. I am sure that with the spirit with which you accepted the Speaker's role you will uphold that tradition.

I also congratulate the honourable member for Sunshine for his most eloquent speech. It is interesting to note that the House was held spellbound as it heard again probably the honest truth about what socialism is all about. Honourable members again heard about the class struggle, delivered in a most eloquent and magnanimous form by the honourable member for Sunshine.

However, the reality is that we live in a free enterprise system. Although it is entertaining and delightful to hear the honourable member for Sunshine, in his maiden speech, outlining again the fight of the workers and the class struggle—he did it