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"A BUDGET FOR BUSINESS"

That's how the Australian Financial Review described this year's federal budget. The mini-budget of last May had already disposed of the remnants of Medibank and drastically cut funds for the States. On wage earners the combined effects will be to reduce their disposable incomes by considerable amounts due to increased personal income tax and greatly heightened health insurance.

There was nothing done to alleviate unemployment; no credible policy to pull us out of recession.

A strong campaign by pensioner organisations forced restoration of twice yearly indexation of pensions. Later in the year the tax surcharge is to be removed also. But all this will do is to hand back what had been taken away, and that without compensation.

The new tax scale was called a "reform" by the Government which assured workers that they would pay higher taxes only as a result of an anticipated 9 per cent rise in wages during the financial year 1979-80.

This falsehood was exposed a few days later by Eric Risstrom, secretary of the Taxpayers Association, who produced a table showing that income earners receiving below \$10,000 a year will be hard hit. For instance, a present income of \$6,000 with dependants will be up for an effective 134 per cent tax increase. The increases will come highest, not only on the proportional increases on lower incomes but more still on those with dependants.

At the other end of the scale a person on \$100,000 a year will pay an increase of only 1 per cent.

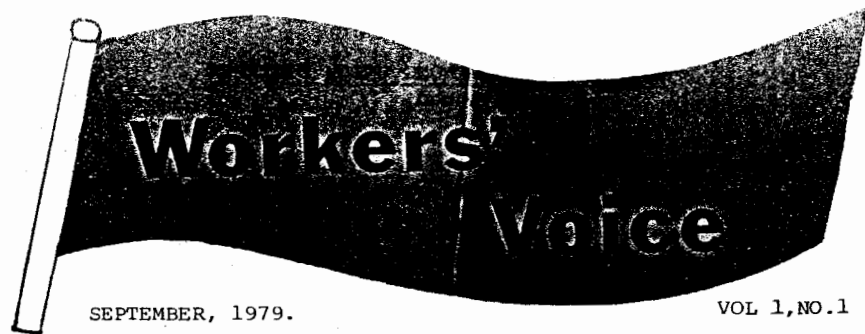
Welfare Down

The indexation of pensions doesn't apply to single people on the dole or sickness benefit.

The unemployed lose again this year. On Treasury's estimates there will be about 70,000 more of them by the time of the next budget.

The dole for single people remains only \$51.45 pw. They no longer have the benefit of the 40 per cent rebate on medical services and funds for hospitals, community health centres and welfare housing were slashed in the mini-budget. Food, rent and health costs will skyrocket for unemployed families.

The government has budgetted for only 20,000 extra unemployed beneficiaries. What's to happen to the other 50,000? Ask Ian Viner.



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WHY WE NEED A STRONG UNION MOVEMENT

"Unions may have been necessary in 1880 but it's a lot different now."
(Bjelke-Petersen, Feb. '78.)

Petersen has little need for a strong union movement but it's different for workers. Since the Fraser Government came to power:-

- *The average worker has lost around \$22 a week in real wages.
- *Unemployment is now officially almost half a million with no relief in sight.
- *At a time we need it most, spending on health, welfare and education has been slashed in every Fraser budget.
- * During the same period, productivity has risen 11 per cent and the profits of the largest companies have skyrocketed.

In spite of Fraser's handouts to industry the economic future is far from bright. Small firms are going to the wall and many more jobs will be lost in manufacturing -- traditionally the largest employer. The government has done nothing about unemployment.

Meanwhile, the Australian economy is being pulled into line with the new international economic order -- one dominated more and more by a handful of multinationals. They are searching for a cheap and passive workforce.

Union Bashing

The Petersens and Courts of this country want to give them one. They have launched a campaign of repression and distortion against workers' organisations. Fraser follows close behind.

*Remember the arrest of Storemen and Packers Union organiser Ted Zaphir. That was over union recruitment and worker solidarity.

* Then Petersen threatened to bring in his "Right to Work" legislation to give full legal backing to scabs.

WHY WE NEED A STRONG UNION MOVEMENT

continued

*Unionists were arrested in Western Australia for attending an "illegal" meeting. The workers were involved in a protracted dispute with mining monopolies. Four of the arrested were key negotiators in the dispute.

Wherever unions have organised to preserve wages, conditions and jobs, and been prepared to take action outside an industrial system rigged against them, they have been confronted by draconian legislation, threats of deregistration and political thuggery.

The latest example is Petersen's Essential Services Bill.

Had Enough

Unionists have had enough. Telecom technicians want a say in the introduction of new technology. More unions are fighting for wage rises outside the guidelines. The national stoppage over the arrest of W.A. unionists forced Court to back down.

More workers are becoming directly involved, including many in poorly unionised areas. Commonwealth public servants have taken their strongest ever stand against the iniquitous CEEP and R and R legislation.

ACTU secretary Peter Nolan said to 8,000 public servants at a recent Brisbane rally: "Fraser is now uniting the entire union movement." This kind of resistance and refusal to back down under pressure has severely shaken the Petersen, Court and Fraser governments.

They have been challenged and forced to expose their true colours.

Petersen was soundly thrashed in the Redcliffe by election. He declined to introduce the Essential Services Bill himself after it had encountered much Cabinet and joint parties opposition. After the reaction to his budget, Fraser abandoned ideas of an early election.

Both governments have developed a sudden fear of the people.

HAYDEN CALLS FOR WEALTH TAX

In the course of the debate on the federal budget Labor Party leader Bill Hayden announced that a future Labor government will impose a tax on net wealth exceeding \$200,000, stamp out tax avoidance and impose a levy on corporations exploiting natural resources.

These proposals tackle an issue Labor usually avoids: the maldistribution of wealth as shown in soaring personal and corporate fortunes.

Ten per cent of Australians own over 55 per cent of Australia's wealth. But 55 per cent of the people own only eight per cent of the wealth.

PROTECT YOUR PENALTY PAYMENTS

On June 13, 1979 Minister for Labour Relations Campbell directed that a full bench of the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Commission hold an inquiry into penalty rates with particular regard to:-

- (1) The nature of penalty payments.
- (2) The extent of payments made to various sectors of the workforce
- (3) The relationship of penalty payments to traditional working hours.
- (4) The effect that changing work patterns might have on various penalty payments.
- (5) Whether there are factors emerging which require a review of penalty payments.

Unions Protest

On Friday, July 27 over 50 officers at a combined unions meeting called by the Trades & Labor Council expressed concern and opposition at the scope and breadth of the inquiry ordered by the State Government.

At a later meeting of the Trades & Labor Council a decision was made to: take the campaign against the hearing to the workshop level; at executive and job level, resolutions of protest to be carried; the protests to be conveyed to the Registrar of the Industrial Commission, employers and the media.

You can imagine how your living standards would be lowered if you lost your penalty payments. It is the intention of the bosses and of the government to see that you do.

So make sure you register your protest in the strongest terms. Protect your hard-won penalties and give another rebuff to the reactionary Bjelke-Petersen Government.

There are similar injustices in incomes. The top ten per cent of income earners get 25 per cent of the national income -- the same as the bottom 50 per cent get.

A tax starting at one per cent on \$200,000 and rising to five per cent on \$1 million and over would raise \$1,000 million in a year and affect only 75,000 people.