

SHADOW TREASURER - TAX CUT CLAIMS

242. Mr P. PAPALIA to the Premier:

I refer to the shadow Treasurer's claims about tax cuts in last week's budget. Can the public effectively rely on the shadow Treasurer when it comes to numbers?

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, members!

Mr A.J. CARPENTER replied:

I thank the member for the question and the opportunity. I welcome the students of Guildford Grammar School to Parliament House for question time.

Mr Speaker, I have been following the commentary from the shadow Treasurer - a very pale shadow Treasurer - for some time and I am still amazed that there has been no correction from him and no recognition from the rest of the nation that he is right.

Mr T. Buswell interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, members!

Mr A.J. CARPENTER: I think it took 20 seconds to write this amazing scoop that the shadow Treasurer in Western Australia, the member for Vasse, has turned on its head the way that people normally analyse and read budget papers. It is perhaps the greatest shift in thinking since Sir Isaac Newton, and we have this unheralded genius sitting here in the Western Australian Parliament. Nicolaus Copernicus was nothing compared with this fellow. We still have not figured out why, under his analysis, he has not pointed out to Peter Costello that there were no tax cuts in the federal budget. There were no tax cuts according to the member for Vasse; there was an \$11 billion tax slug. I am still waiting for some recognition that this was either correct or incorrect. I wonder what would have happened, for example, if Wayne Swan had applied that level of analysis to the federal budget. I reckon Wayne Swan would have been sacked by now. He would have been sacked because the credibility of the federal Labor Party, if it had adopted that -

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: I ask the Premier to take his seat. I call the member for Murdoch and the Leader of the Opposition to order!

Mr A.J. CARPENTER: If the federal Labor Party had adopted the member for Vasse's approach to budget analysis, its position would have been vastly different from what it is now; it would have been a laughing stock with that sort of analysis, and I think Wayne Swan's political career at the federal level would be over. However, in Western Australia something quite remarkable takes place. It is accepted as a reasonable level of analysis and the member for Vasse continues on with his rhetoric in that regard. It is interesting to look at -

Mr T. Buswell: Wait until we come to your office with the land tax bills.

The SPEAKER: Order, member for Vasse!

Mr A.J. CARPENTER: There is probably some sort of name for the condition, Mr Speaker. It is interesting to look at the member for Vasse's own performance.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, members!

Mr A.J. CARPENTER: When the member for Vasse had the opportunity to actually run a budget, he was running the shire of Vasse.

Mr T. Buswell: Busselton.

Mr A.J. CARPENTER: Expenditure on consultants when he was president of the shire of Vasse ballooned by a massive 800 per cent. Local families were slugged with a 15 per cent rate hike and an 800 per cent growth in expenditure on consultants. There is no doubt though -

Mr T. Buswell interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, members!

Mr A.J. CARPENTER: There is no doubt though, with the member for Vasse's level of analysis, that he would have convinced the good burghers of the shire that there was no rate hike at all and that they had actually received a tax cut, even though the numbers seemed to say something quite different.

Mr Speaker, I am waiting for recognition of what has been happening here. It is possible that the member for Vasse simply does not get it. It is possible that he is simply not up to the task and has been making a monumental but innocent error in his analysis; or it is possible that he knows exactly what he is doing, and that his performance as far as honesty goes is consistent with what he did with the member for Kalgoorlie. I buttress the possibility that it might be the latter by quoting the following comment about the member for Vasse that, according to my note, reads -

I believe that he should do the honourable thing and stand down because he has shown that he hasn't been truthful and I think he has shown a flaw in his character and credibility.

I wonder who said that about the member for Vasse. I wonder if it explains why the person who said it got up and left the chamber as soon as I started on the quote. The person who said that about the member for Vasse was none other than his colleague the member for Hillarys. Here he comes; he is back.

That, I think, is probably a more accurate reflection on the motivation that has driven the drivel that has come from the member for Vasse in the past week. I will wait, Mr Speaker -

Mr T. Buswell interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, member for Vasse!

Mr A.J. CARPENTER: I will wait, Mr Speaker, for the level of analysis to be applied to the member for Vasse that has been applied to every other person holding serious office, and for us then to get an informed judgement from objective third parties about his credentials as a shadow Treasurer. He is an embarrassment. He is an embarrassment to his colleagues; he is more than an embarrassment to the member for Hillarys and the member for Kalgoorlie and others, who have made their feelings known; he is an embarrassment to the party; and he is an embarrassment to the Parliament.