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 remains 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 organizations 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 Hassard, secretary of the Transport Workers 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 13 per cent tax increase. The increase 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 Costs

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 $31.45 p.w. They no longer have the benefit of the 40 per cent rebate on medical services and funds for hospitals, community health centers and welfare housing were slashed in the mid-budget. Food, rent and health costs will skyrocket for unemployed families.

The government has budgeted for only 20,000 extra unemployment beneficiaries. That's on top of the other 20,000 NHMRC unemployment.

SEPTMBER, 1979.

BULLETIN OF THE INDUSTRIAL COMMITTEE OF THE COMMUNITY PARTY

WHY WE NEED A STRONG UNION MOVEMENT

"Unions may have been necessary in 1889 but it's a lot different now."

(Kjelle-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 multinational. They are searching for a cheap and passive workforce.

Union Battles

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

Remember the arrest of Storrs and Packard's union organiser Ted Hardie. That was over union recruitment and worker militancy.

Our movement threatened to bring Sir John "Right to Work" legislation to give full legal backing to scabs.
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 union 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-earned penalties and give another rebuff to the reactionary Bjerko-Petersen Government.

**************

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.

1. These proposals tackle an issue Labor usually avoids: the mal-distribution 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.

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 about 15,000 people.