

nuation administrators to make it easier to roll over funds between different superannuation funds. The administrators make it clear in their statement that the agreement flows from the opportunity created by the government decision to appoint Medicare to run the small business clearing house. So this is a good policy—a pro-small business policy. It has important flow-on benefits for efficiency and employment.

I am asked what risks there are to implementing this policy and the risks lie opposite. It might seem hard to believe that the opposition would block a small business measure, but they are planning to do so in the Senate. A pro-small business measure is being stopped by the Leader of the Opposition and members opposite. The business community has the right to ask what they have done to deserve this Leader of the Opposition. One day he is whacking a tax on business and the next day he is standing in the way of a measure to reduce small business compliance costs.

On this issue, the opposition have reached new heights of hypocrisy. Yesterday in this House, my shadow minister, the member for Cowper, criticised the government for taking so long to implement this superannuation clearing house and then said he would oppose it in the other place. They cannot even get their stories straight in one sentence, let alone one speech or one day. They criticise us for taking too long and then say, 'By the way, we're not going to support it.'

This all appears to be part of the Leader of the Opposition's cunning plan. He has got it all worked out. They are going to use their numbers in the Senate to block our implementation of election commitments and then criticise us for not implementing election commitments. He has got it all sorted! He must take the Australian people for mugs. The Leader of the Opposition takes the Australian people for fools.

The former Prime Minister, John Howard, promised to reduce the red-tape burden on small business by 50 per cent, and he failed. He did not achieve that election promise. But it is not too late for the opposition. They can get out of the way and they can support the government in supporting small business. They can get out of the way and let the government implement this election commitment. If they do not, the small business community of Australia is entitled to conclude that the Leader of the Opposition puts his rashness, his obstructionism and his cheap politics in front of the interests of Australian small business.

Building the Education Revolution Program

Mr PYNE (3.37 pm)—My question is to the Minister for Education. I refer the minister to the case of the Tyalgum Public School in New South Wales, which received a library off the back of a semitrailer, under Building the Education Revolution, at a cost of \$850,000. When the library was offloaded it did not fit the foundations that had been laid for it and was, and

remains, unusable. How can the Australian people trust a government that cannot deliver to a school a prefabricated library that fits its foundations to reform Australia's public hospital system?

Ms GILLARD—I thank the shadow minister for education for his question. I would note, of course, that since the launch of the national curriculum the shadow minister for education has not inquired about it. Maybe that is because he is aware that teachers across the country are blogging about the hollowness of his response to the national curriculum—about how truly galling it was to see someone treat a major national reform with such contempt that all he did was have a staff member work out the word 'Indigenous' and then criticise the curriculum.

The SPEAKER—Order! The Deputy Prime Minister will address the question.

Ms GILLARD—In answer to the shadow minister's question, can I say this and say it very clearly to him. I do not think you, Mr Speaker, are going to be surprised when I say this, although maybe the shadow minister is going to be surprised, but I do not myself deliver demountable buildings. I do not myself lay concrete foundations. That is true; he is correct in that. I am not individually building each of the 24,000 projects around the country. What we as a government are doing, through our guidelines and our auditing systems, is monitoring the rollout of Building the Education Revolution. When there are problems—and there was a problem with the construction of the foundation at the school that the shadow minister mentions—then, of course, they are rectified. That problem is being rectified by the contractor who made the error. That is being rectified at no additional cost to the government. That is what one would expect a contractor who has made an error to do. That would happen if one was engaged in Building the Education Revolution, if one was a businessperson engaged in building a commercial building or if one was a householder who was building a home renovation. An error was made and that error is being rectified without an additional cost to the government.

It does seem to me to be really bordering on the pathetic that, on a day in which this nation received unemployment numbers of 5.3 per cent as a result of the economic stimulus that enabled hundreds of thousands of Australians to go home at the end of a working week with a pay packet in their hands, the best the opposition can do is point to one error by one contractor, out of 24,000 projects in more than 9,000 schools, that is not costing one extra dollar. It says everything about the shadow minister for education, everything about the hollowness of this opposition. They do not care about jobs. They do not care about health. They do not care about education. They do not care about cost pressures on families. And of course their greatest achievement

this week is Tony's new tax on everything a family buys.

The SPEAKER—Order! The Deputy Prime Minister will in future refer to members by their titles.

Parliament

Mr HAYES (3.42 pm)—My question is to the Leader of the House. Would the Leader of the House outline the importance of orderly processes in ensuring the timely passage of legislation through the parliament?

Mr ALBANESE—I thank the member for Werriwa for his question, and indeed I am pleased to inform the House that the division that we had just before question time, where once again those opposite opposed the legislation—this time put forward by the Minister for Resources and Energy—was the 44th piece of legislation passed through this House this year already. Indeed, last year this chamber passed 207 pieces of legislation—the highest number of bills this century, setting a new benchmark for this century at its beginning. But it is not surprising because this government has a big agenda for the nation.

However, when bills pass this House we do have a problem getting them adopted by the parliament as a whole. Indeed, some 37 bills have been rejected by the Senate. Thirty-seven pieces of legislation have been either directly rejected or passed with amendments that were unacceptable to the House of Representatives. And that does not include the 18 bills that we had to reintroduce into the House of Representatives and which had to go back a second time to the other place. The fact is that the Leader of the Opposition and the Liberal Party have the most obstructionist attitude in the Senate in three decades. Indeed, it is a fact that last year the Leader of the Opposition and the Liberal Party blocked four times as many bills as in any year for 30 years. That is what is occurring from those opposite.

I went into politics to make a difference. In 2007 the government promoted a program of making a positive agenda. Tories go into politics to block—particularly those opposite. They are only defined by what they oppose. In government, the current Leader of the Opposition ripped a billion dollars out of hospitals, he froze places for GPs, and now that he is in opposition he has been elected on a platform, in his own words, of simply opposing. He told 2GB on 11 January:

Now sure, come election time people are entitled to know what we would do differently but at this stage of the political cycle our job is to ferociously criticise and where necessary oppose the Government. I mean, if in doubt our job is to oppose.

PHI—oppose. Dental reform—oppose. Midwives—oppose. CPRS—oppose. Youth Allowance—oppose. Electoral reform—oppose. Paid paternity leave—oppose. NBN—oppose. Those opposite are simply led by the Dr No of Australian politics; they are simply

defined by what they are opposed to. That shows how petty and how untrustworthy the Leader of the Opposition is—petty, untrustworthy and bloody-minded in his opposition to the reforms of this government.

Mr Hunt—Mr Speaker, I rise on a point of order on relevance. We also oppose pink batts.

The SPEAKER—The member for Flinders will leave the chamber for one hour, under standing order 94(a).

The member for Flinders then left the chamber.

The SPEAKER—The Leader of the House has the call. He will start to bring his answer to a conclusion.

Mr ALBANESE—Thank you, Mr Speaker. They did indeed oppose the economic stimulus plan; they did indeed oppose Building the Education Revolution. They opposed the increased spending for 14 roads; they opposed the rail safety program—they opposed the \$1.2 billion to the ARTC; they opposed support for public housing; they opposed the tripling of the black spots program—

Mr Laming—Mr Speaker, I rise on a point of order on relevance. This question went specifically to the word 'obstruction' and not 'opposition'. Legislation can only be obstructed by senators—

The SPEAKER—Order! The member will resume his seat.

Mr Laming interjecting—

The SPEAKER—The member will resume his seat.

Mr Laming interjecting—

The SPEAKER—The member will resume his seat.

Mr Laming interjecting—

The SPEAKER—The member will resume his seat.

Mr Laming interjecting—

The SPEAKER—I warn the member for Bowman. I call the Leader of the House.

Mr ALBANESE—Obstruction and opposition—they are the same thing, particularly when you look at those opposite. There are currently 51 pieces of legislation that have been carried by this House that are sitting over in the Senate waiting to be dealt with—51 pieces of legislation. This morning, when I debated the Manager of Opposition Business on Sky News and this issue came up, he said on the CPRS, 'Why didn't you negotiate with the Greens?' Well, we negotiated in good faith and did a deal, in good faith, with the other major political party in this country. They walked away from it on the basis that the Leader of the Opposition was elected by his party on a platform of not standing for anything, of not worrying about policy but simply of opposing for opposition's sake.

Mr Rudd—Mr Speaker, I ask that further questions be placed on the *Notice Paper*.