

# Walsh Attack

*ALR's interview with Peter Walsh stirred up some controversy in early April. For a day or two the action was fast and furious. The federal Opposition moved to censure the government, purportedly on the basis of Senator Walsh's comments. Paul Keating professed to think we were dead. And, in a master-stroke of detective work, Treasurer John Dawkins revealed the entire episode to be part of a hitherto well-disguised conspiracy between ALR, the Opposition and Senator Walsh to undermine the Accord. Despite the competition, however, the comic highlight of the week was John Clarke's weekly sketch on Channel Nine's A Current Affair. Here is the transcript.*

Senator Walsh, thanks for coming in.

Mmm?

Thanks for your time.

Oh, it's about five to seven.

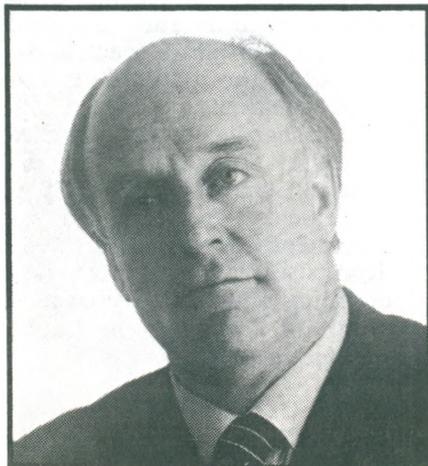
You've been critical of the *One Nation* package.

I have, yes, although I wouldn't say I was completely alone in that.

What are your criticisms?

Well, I made a well-reasoned argument. I would suggest if you're interested in what I think, that you read what I had to say.

I have read it.



Well, why are you asking me what my argument is?

Well, a lot of people aren't aware of what you're saying...

And are you interested in this because of your breathtaking ability to get across macroeconomic issues, or do you just want to stir up as much trouble as possible for the government?

I'm interested in the economic package, obviously.

Well, there's not much point in talking to me, then.

Why?

I'm just interested in stirring up as much trouble as I possibly can for the government.

But you were a member of Cabinet until recently.

Yes, it was a bit difficult during that period, but I've put a few laps on the field since I got out, I'll tell you that for nothing.

Why did you get out?

Good behaviour.

No, what I mean is, wouldn't you have been better placed to improve

economic policy if you'd stayed on as an economic minister?

It's a bit difficult to dump on economic policy if you're running one of the economic ministries.

Why do you want to dump on economic policy? Isn't that the job of the Opposition?

Well, it would be if they showed the slightest inclination to do it, but they don't.

So you're helping them.

Helping the Opposition?

Yes.

I wouldn't give them the time of day. I'm helping the government.

How?

By keeping the Opposition out of the papers.

Yes, but you're doing it by criticising government policy.

Well, someone's got to do it. They don't know what they're doing. The Governor General got thrown out of the local RSL because of his Republican views the other night. I've got a feeling we're out of radio range.

And what have you been doing since you left Cabinet?

Just running the charm school, and a little paper folding. I make these rather beautiful birds out of folded paper. I fold the paper in such a way as to render a rather exquisite bird.

What do you do with them?

When I've finished them?

Yes.

I sit on them.

Senator Walsh, thanks for your time.

Shut up.

JOHN CLARKE's *Great Interviews of the Twentieth Century* is published by Allen and Unwin. This script published courtesy of John Clarke.