

does. The fact is that, under that fundraising code, members of parliament are at arm's length from the process. I remain at arm's length from that process—I always have. I do not make inquiries in relation to donations; I do not make inquiries in relation to outcomes. Occasionally, I might see people paying to go into a function. I might see a raffle—that can happen. But let me say what I said yesterday in relation to this matter, because I do not resile from it at all. I said:

... I have no knowledge. I do not remember every case that has been raised with me, and I think it would be unreasonable to expect that I would, in view of the fact that you are asserting that it is probably more than 1,000. I will look at the background to it and assess what the situation was. Finally, let me say that I attend many functions which people pay to enter and where people are involved in fundraising activities. I have no knowledge of the nature of those fundraising activities, I never seek to inquire, and I certainly have no knowledge of the sorts of claims that are being made by the honourable member.

That situation remains, and it was the answer I gave yesterday. It was a full and complete answer about the state of my knowledge.

**Ms GILLARD (Lalor)** (3.42 p.m.)—This issue goes to the heart of the moral legitimacy—or should I say illegitimacy—of the Howard government. The coalition turned the last election campaign into a referendum on who could best maintain the integrity of our immigration system. They won that election after polluting public opinion with what was nothing short of deliberately manufactured lies, and Minister Ruddock knows that from the 'children overboard' affair. They denigrated and vilified genuine refugees to manipulate public opinion, and now we learn—after that election, after the 'children overboard' affair, after SIEVX—that they have turned the integrity of our immigration system into their own political and financial plaything. They certainly decide who comes into this country and the circumstances in

which they come. They certainly decide that, and it has got a dollar sign attached to it. That is what we know from these events. I am going to take you through these events—

**The SPEAKER**—Member for Lalor!

**Ms GILLARD**—in a way in which Minister Ruddock did not in his incredibly pathetic defence to what are serious allegations. Let us just go through this, Minister. Let us go through it very carefully. Here is a bloke who makes a protection visa application on 1 July 1996. He gets knocked back by the department on 10 March 1997. He gets knocked back by the Refugee Review Tribunal on 2 April 1997. He gets knocked back by the Federal Court in June 1998. An interested Liberal member of parliament, presumably held in some esteem because he is a parliamentary secretary, writes twice and it gets knocked back both times. What is Minister Ruddock's case here? His case is: 'Two things changed my mind. One was a bishop.' I still want to know, Minister—and you did not answer this and you did not make it clear in question time—

**The SPEAKER**—Member for Lalor!

**Ms GILLARD**—and the only thing that would make it clear is tabling the file—when you were first approached by that bishop. Your answer today was '24 September,' and then, 'He wrote on the 27th, but I talk to that bishop all the time.' The way of absolutely proving it—

*Mr Ruddock interjecting—*

**Ms GILLARD**—You have had your go, Minister, and you did not answer this allegation.

**The SPEAKER**—Member for Lalor! I have allowed a large number of 'you's', but it is appropriate to address your remarks through the chair.

**Mrs Crosio**—Mr Speaker—