



Speech by

BILL FELDMAN

MEMBER FOR CABOOLTURE

Hansard 22 October 1998

PRIVATISATION OF TAB

Mr FELDMAN (Caboolture—ONP) (6.30 p.m.): I rise to second the amendment of the member for Tablelands and, in doing so, I acknowledge his support of the ASU, being an old union man himself from the TWU. I am sure he reflects the feelings of most unionists in this matter.

I agree that in this debate many have lost their way, but selling out a public utility is not the answer. The only short-term lift out is the bandaid solution—a bandaid for spending. It will only be used to fund election promises, and even then it is dubious as to whether or not it will really work out in that way. This is a classic case of killing the goose that lays the golden egg.

An Opposition member: That's original.

Mr FELDMAN: It certainly is. The figures from 1991 to 1997 actually show that TABQ returned \$584m in State taxes and other statutory remittances to Queenslanders. The Queensland racing industry also received \$335m in direct funding. What more could I possibly say? This is income, and income that will be there for the long term. It is not a one-off. It is self-funding and it is a sure-fire investment in Queensland's future. Selling it off is unthinkable. One Nation will never support the sell-off.

We look also at the concept of privatisation. Is it all that it is made out to be? Will it really be of any benefit to Queensland at all? Let me give honourable members an example. When Suncorp-Metway goes through privatisation, it is expected that around 1,500 jobs will be lost. Privatisation will not benefit the unemployed of this State at all. It will not provide a long-term solution for unemployment—not for anyone. I have spoken with Janice Mayne from the ASU, and she has lobbied me heavily in respect to what she believes may be the loss of full-time and part-time jobs in the privatisation/corporatisation of the TABQ, and I cannot support that sort of job loss. Another loser in this debate will be regional Australia. Federal Labor has shown its extreme lack of respect for regional Australia with the recent appointment of the well-known turncoat Mrs Kernot as its spokesperson on this topic. Now the Queensland Government intends to do the same by taking away non-TAB races in the bush. When will it learn?

Let us get this in perspective. We can stop this. I am sure now that the member for Nicklin will support this motion, as will the Independent member for Gladstone. I say to these members, "Here is your chance to really support the non-privatisation/corporatisation of these industries. I am pleading with you on behalf of the people and on behalf of 438,000 Queenslanders who voted for One Nation for support on the amendment to this motion. This is not too much to ask and it is something that I am sure you will be able to support." The plea also goes to our friends from Labor, who are still old Labor, "Think about what you do. Think of your voters and supporters. Think of the platform that you stand on. Just have the integrity to stand up for your principles and not vote along the party line." I say that especially for the benefit of the members for Bundaberg, Rockhampton and Mackay.

In closing, I say that privatisation is a flawed and dangerous concept. The people of Australia are against it and they have shown that with the vote for Telstra. The Labor Party was once against it before its recent backflip. Now the only voice for the destruction of economic rationalism is the One Nation Party. Tonight, if justice is to prevail, I am sure this motion will be passed in the right manner.
