



Speech by

**Dr DAVID WATSON**

**MEMBER FOR MOGGILL**

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Hansard 10 November 1998

#### **PRIVATISATION OF TAB**

**Dr WATSON** (Moggill—LP) (Leader of the Liberal Party) (6.35 p.m.): It gives me pleasure to enter this debate. I think we should understand one thing quite clearly. The privatisation of the TAB failed because the Government offer was not good enough. The Government wanted the privatisation to fail before it had to address the issue at the Labor Party conference.

It was interesting to listen to the speeches of the member for Mansfield and the Treasurer and to interjections from the Premier. The Minister for Racing is going around blaming the gaming machine white paper for the inability to privatise the TAB, supposedly because the TAB does not have the same kind of opportunities in Queensland that the TABs in Victoria and New South Wales have.

I will give the House a couple of facts about the white paper and the process that was gone through. I will tell some people connected with the ALP to go and check the facts. The member for Mansfield, the Treasurer and the Premier should get their facts straight before they come into this place.

There are three facts that absolutely destroy any argument those opposite put up. First, even under the current regime for gaming machines, the previous Minister for Racing, the member for Crows Nest, was able to get an acceptable resolution with the industry. The previous Minister was able to get the industry to agree to a proposal which allowed the privatisation of the TAB. So for those opposite to come in here and say that it cannot be done flies in the face of the empirical facts.

Second, the changes in the gaming machine regulations and the gaming machine regime in Queensland would not have been able to occur if the TAB in Queensland had been given a monopoly or a duopoly. One of the things that came through in my negotiations with the clubs and the hotels was that they would not accept the TAB in Queensland being given a monopoly or a duopoly, as was the case in Victoria. The reason they would not accept it is that they were sick and tired of the TAB treating them the way they were being treated with the TAB operations in their clubs and hotels.

If those opposite do not believe me, they should go and check with the vice-president of the RLCA, Garrie Gibson. He will tell them that the clubs would not buy it. The reason they would not buy it is they did not want to be treated the same way. The clubs and hotels wanted to maintain their control. Those opposite should go and check with Jimmy Stuart, President of the Queensland Hotels Association. He will tell them exactly the same thing.

Thirdly, if those opposite do not believe me—they have the power; they are the Government—they should change the legislation. They should come in here and change the legislation and remove the others from the licences.

**Mr Lucas:** We'll get sued.

**Dr WATSON:** The Government will get sued, all right, but it will have a monopoly. It will be able to get monopoly profits from selling it, and it will be able to pay compensation to the other licensees. So if those opposite do not believe me, they should change the legislation. I will guarantee the Government one thing. The Government will get done over, because the clubs and the hotels would rail against it—and it knows it. I will fight an election at any time. If the Government wants to give the TAB a monopoly, I will fight that election any time. If it did this, the Government would have millions of club patrons around this State who would not want to contribute to the TAB. Neither would the clubs and hotels. They do not want to be subservient to the TAB.

The truth of the matter is simply this: the ASU Left Wing unions rolled the Premier. The first test was to decide whether the Premier of this State ran the Government or whether the unions ran the Government, and the Premier failed dismally. He failed because he thought that he was relying on the numbers man from the Left, the Minister for Tourism, Sport and Racing, but he found out that poor old Bob Gibbs did not have the numbers after all. That is the reality. Janice Mayes from the ASU rolled the Premier, and he knows it.

Time expired.

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