



Speech by

Hon. J. ELDER

MEMBER FOR CAPALABA

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Overseas Visit

Hon. J. P. ELDER (Capalaba—ALP) (Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development and Minister for Trade) (9.36 a.m.), by leave: I present to the House a report on my recent visit to Singapore and the State of Johor in Malaysia. Many members of this House would realise that some of Queensland's emerging trade partners are having their own internal difficulties at the moment. In my view, it is important to maintain and enhance the links we have now so that when the tide turns our mutual prosperity can be maximised.

I table for the House a full report of the trip, but I would like to point out some of the difficulties that I encountered on this trip, which were similar to the difficulties I encountered on my previous trip, and similar to those encountered by the Premier on his trip overseas. I have to inform the House that in a general sense there remain some concerns over the attitude of the Queensland Government to overseas investment.

When speaking to businesspeople and the media in both Singapore and Malaysia, the spectre of One Nation and its anti-Asian position was high on the agenda. While many businesspeople with investments in Queensland were aware that One Nation did not govern the State, there remained many others who questioned One Nation's position in the Queensland Parliament. And just as the Premier explained in Hong Kong and Japan and as I did on my recent mission to Taiwan and Korea, we had to work hard to get through the message that it was a Labor Government in charge of the State with views receptive to foreign investment. I reiterated the State Government's position that we welcome Asian investment in Queensland. I made the further point that Queensland was a multicultural community with a stable political environment and was safe not only for Asian investors but for their children—a large number of whom attend our education facilities.

The reason for this situation, as we all know, lies in the perception that One Nation is a racist party that does not welcome overseas investment or, indeed, any ties with other countries. When overseas I was very diplomatic about the members of the House. However, I think that the line being pushed by those at the back of the House that somehow they are being misreported or misrepresented does not stack up. What I am saying to those members at the back of the House is that they must do the hard yards. They must unequivocally state that they are in favour of trade with other countries.

Mr NELSON: I rise to a point of order. Mr Speaker, I thought that there was a ruling that the Deputy Premier should refer to us as the One Nation Party, not "those members at the back of the House".

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The Minister will refer to the members of the One Nation Party.

Mr ELDER: The members of One Nation, who sit at the back of the House, more than anything else must demonstrate that they are friendly towards our trading partners. It is up to those One Nation members, who sit at the back of the House and, in particular, the member for Caboolture, to engage our trading partners. I table the report for the information of the House.