



Speech by

SHAUN NELSON

MEMBER FOR TABLELANDS

Hansard 20 October 1998

WATER STORAGE, IRVINEBANK

Mr NELSON (Tablelands—ONP) (10.23 a.m.): According to a letter from the Minister for Mines and Energy dated 25 August 1998, the State is trying to gain exclusion from the Irvinebank State Treatment Works (Sale and Operation) Act 1990 for the Ibis Dam. It is nothing short of theft. It is unfair, it is underhanded and, in layman's terms, it is wrong.

It appears that the reason for this exemption is to deprive the operators of the Loudon Mill access to the water they need to maintain their operation. Seven years of political interference has shut down the operation and caused substantial financial damage to the whole community. It is also plainly obvious that the dam will be sold to the Mareeba Shire Council for the sum of \$1, without any thought of fair compensation to the operators of the mill.

How can anyone justify this treatment— especially a Government which is all about jobs, jobs, jobs? This act has taken the jobs of independent miners and mill operators and has affected countless other flow-on jobs throughout the tablelands. The whole attitude of the Department of Mines and Energy is not consistent with the jobs orientation of the Beattie Government.

I add that the family at the centre of this saga are immigrants from the former Yugoslavia. They came here to escape communist oppression and for a better way of life. They thought they had found that better life here in Australia, but our benevolent and highly sensitive Government has found it in its heart to oppress these people further. This country is not so equal and not so free. Government members have the hide to call me intolerant!
