



Speech by

SHAUN NELSON

MEMBER FOR TABLELANDS

Hansard 22 October 1998

PRIVATISATION OF TAB

Mr NELSON (Tablelands—ONP) (6.25 p.m.): I move the following amendment to the amendment moved by the member for Gladstone—

"Add the following words after 'process'—

'and that all steps are taken to ensure that in the future no jobs—full time or part time—are lost in the corporatisation and privatisation process. Furthermore, that in any public float Queenslanders would have a controlling ownership of TABQ.'"

I wrote an incredible speech on the presumption that I would get an absolute flogging for moving this amendment.

Government members interjected.

Mr NELSON: I did. I was incredibly wrong. I am used to taking an absolute pounding when I stand up to speak in this place. However, tonight, after negotiations and the reaching of a couple of agreements, we have managed, I think, to come to a consensus in this House. This comes as an absolute shock to me.

Mr Gibbs interjected.

Mr NELSON: I must say that, yes, the Minister for Tourism, Sport and Racing has treated us rather fairly, and I acknowledge that. However, I will continue with my prepared speech, because I feel that as a member of One Nation and as a person who has to speak out on these subjects I should make some of the points that I wished to make.

Let me make it clear that One Nation in principle is opposed to the privatisation of public assets. Too often Governments sell the farm to pay for all sorts of other bills and debts that outrageous election promises land them with. Corporatisation and privatisation are the processes that destroy jobs and put profits above people. Economic rationalism is the real issue here—the concept of shedding jobs for profits. Of course selling TABQ would generate a profit. Similar to the sale of Telstra, those profits could be large. I wish to highlight that it was the Federal coalition Government that sold off Telstra—something that was opposed very strongly, and rightly so, by Federal Labor.

Similar to the sale of Telstra, I fear that the profits would be used to fund more election promises and used to provide a false Budget surplus, therefore making the Government's job of reducing unemployment to 5% a little more realistic. The facts are completely ignored in most cases in this House. Politics always gets in the way. TABQ generates a massive amount of income for the State. Millions of dollars are already poured into Government coffers from taxes and statutory remittances. In Victoria, non-TAB meetings were radically reduced in number and therefore regional areas were affected the most by privatisation. This fact clearly shows that privatisation is not in the best interests of Queensland—a largely decentralised State with an important regional area. This is the crux of why I am opposed to this proposition. Herein lies the choice: only One Nation will defend the people of Queensland from the horrors of privatisation.

An honourable member: Rubbish!

Mr NELSON: It is not rubbish.

Mr Beattie stated in Parliament on Tuesday that the issue will go to his party's conference in Maryborough in November. Any real member of old Labor and not today's Labor would never support

Mr Beattie's confused and radical shift in direction. I wonder what the hardcore unionists—wharfies, builders, labourers, and members of the Transport Workers Union—would think of today's Labor supporting the concept of privatisation, not to mention the concept of same-sex marriages. And they wonder why they lost six seats to One Nation!

I for one do not lament the fact that the Government will not listen. In doing so, it signed its death warrant. It has not heard the voice of dissent against the concept of economic rationalism. With that realisation, I believe that the old parties are on their last legs.

I could not go to my ancestors knowing that I did not do my best on their behalf. To the members of the major parties in this Chamber I say, "You sold out. You stopped fighting the good fight. You have lost your way and you are hopelessly wandering around without any direction. What are you going to do when there is nothing left to sell? You cannot sell your souls; they have already gone."
