



Speech by

**VAUGHAN JOHNSON**

**MEMBER FOR GREGORY**

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Hansard 17 September 1998

**EMPLOYMENT, QUEENSLAND RAIL**

**Mr JOHNSON** (Gregory—NPA) (10.40 p.m.): Despite the statements of the Minister for Transport, workers at the Townsville South rail yards are still concerned about their futures. So they should be, after the Minister's answer to a question without notice asked by me yesterday.

I note that the recently elected member for Mundingburra has close contacts with the rail unions. In her maiden speech she thanked Warren Williams and the RTBU for giving her a campaign office for three weeks. She also thanked Mr Williams' secretary for her major contribution to the campaign. Warren Williams has plenty to answer for.

I know that the question of employment contracts is not an easy one for Governments of any persuasion, but we must do what we can to ensure that we preserve the skills and the jobs. When I was Minister I made arrangements for a number of projects to be allocated to Townsville South—refurbishment of long distance rolling stock and the production of 300 KOJX livestock wagons and new coal wagons. I seriously question the proposed relocation of the rail workshop facilities at Stuart. This matter may also be subject to an inquiry by the Public Works Committee in order to examine the benefits of this project. The member for Townsville may be able to enlighten us about the real intentions of Labor in shifting these rail yards, but I say "spoil sports", because Labor knows it got it wrong with the proposed closure of the railway workshops north and south.

The rail workers in Townsville remember the 8,000 rail jobs that were lost and the proposed closure of rail yards under the previous Labor Government. They know the impact that the proposal to close or mothball thousands of kilometres of rail line would have. This explains why they are keen to be locked into permanent positions, because they do not trust Labor.

Mr Williams, after taking his VER, helped get Labor elected in exchange for a range of promises for his members. Within three months the workers realised that they had been conned. We now have rolling strikes and a great amount of discontent. Labor no longer represents the workers of this State and cannot be trusted to do so any more.

Time expired.

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