



Speech by

Dr DAVID WATSON

MEMBER FOR MOGGILL

Hansard 10 March 1999

BEATTIE LABOR GOVERNMENT

Dr WATSON (Moggill—LP) (Leader of the Liberal Party) (6.10 p.m.): I rise to second the motion. As the Leader of the Opposition has said so forcefully, this Beattie Government is a can't do Government: can't do Expo, can't do a superstadium, can't do the flower festival, can't do anywhere near 5% unemployment. That all makes Peter Beattie the can't do king. The Premier's chronic inability to seize the opportunities presented by big vision and big ticket projects threatens the future growth and prosperity of this State.

Labor is more about making excuses than making opportunities. For the can't do gang, everything is either too hard, too costly, too late, or too challenging. Clearly, the Premier and his team have forgotten the first rule of job creation, and that is confidence. Before we can create jobs, we have to create confidence. However, Labor has not created confidence. In fact, it has created doubt.

The State's biggest employer group, the Queensland Chamber of Commerce and Industry, has grave doubts about the industrial relations package presented by this Government. The QCCI workplace relations manager, Judith Himstedt, says that Labor's proposed IR reforms are "parochial, anti-business and anti-competitive". She describes Labor's moves back to centralised wage fixing, law changes to encourage union membership and a watering down of unfair dismissal laws as "legislation for the last century, not legislation for the 21st century".

How much confidence can the international mining sector have in Queensland right now? Not a lot, when the people who are supposed to make the laws break the laws. The arrest of Jim Pearce on an unlawful picket line sent a clear message to the international investment community that the Queensland Government does not want to do business in the real world. What was Labor's response to the Pearce incident? Instead of condemning him, it canonised him. Last week, we had the disgraceful episode of Labor trying to put Jim Pearce in the same league as Mahatma Gandhi and Nelson Mandela. What do we have this week? We have the laughable episode of Peter Beattie trying to put himself in the same league as Jeff Kennett and Joh Bjelke-Petersen by saying how much he admires their style. Labor has gone from the Jim, Mahatma and Nelson show to the Pete, Jeff and Joh show. What are we going to have next week? The Minister for Emergency Services, who has just disappeared from the Chamber, perhaps likening herself to Paul Keating and Peter Reith, so we get the Peter, Paul and Merri show?

I am reminded of the US presidential debate during which Dan Quayle tried to compare himself with John F. Kennedy. Lloyd Bentsen said to him, "Jack Kennedy was a friend of mine. Senator, you're no Jack Kennedy." I say to Mr Premier: you, sir, are no Jeff and no Joh. Joh Bjelke-Petersen wrote the book on can-do Government and Jeff Kennett has since added lots of chapters.

So far, the only contribution Mr Beattie has made to a can-do Government is Baywatch. As we speak, the Baywatch deal is about as real as Pamela Anderson's figure. Joh Bjelke-Petersen would not have let World Expo 2002 slip through his fingers. He would have hooked up a chain to one of his bulldozers and cleared the site for the Expo himself if that is what it took to get it done. When Joh occupied the office of Premier, he had a plaque on his desk that said, "To avoid criticism, say nothing, do nothing, be nothing". The plaque on the desk of the current Premier ought to read, "Done nothing". What about the other leader with whom the Premier has tried to compare himself? I tell members that one of Jeff Kennett's favourite sayings is, "It's not where you start, it's where you finish."

Eight months ago, Labor started with a great coalition Budget and it started with confidence from the business sector. However, at the rate they are going, they are going to make this State finish nowhere. Peter Beattie is the can't do king and the pragmatic princess will be taking his place a lot sooner than he thinks.
