



Speech by

**Mr G. HEALY**

**MEMBER FOR TOOWOOMBA NORTH**

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Hansard 18 August 1999

### **TAB PRIVATISATION**

**Mr HEALY** (Toowoomba North—NPA) (6.27 p.m.): The appointment of the ALP Treasurer to the TAB board simply continues the tradition that has been established by the Queensland branch of the Australian Labor Party of fluttering—if not indeed fluttering—around the gambling industry in this State in a way that just keeps getting smellier and smellier. It is a tradition that has to come to an end in the interests of the reputation of this State.

Unless this House is prepared to do it via support for the motion that was moved tonight by the Leader of the Liberal Party, the member for Moggill, then I shudder to think where the Premier's now shattered logic on these matters will take us. I fear for the future reputation of this State nationally and internationally. It is one thing at the political level to see the Premier of this State running around like a chook with its head cut off, as he has been over the past couple of days, but the serial damage that has been done to this State's reputation on this and related matters over the past few years, and indeed over the past couple of days, simply has to stop. We can take the first remedial step right here this evening. Action of that sort is desperately needed.

In recent times we have had all sorts of smelly affairs. Do honourable members remember Ed Casey and Caspalp? The then parliamentary leader of the Labor Party was doing deals with poker machine proponents long before the Labor Party brought them into Queensland and, I might add, against the clear and specific advice of the Criminal Justice Commission.

Then we had Labor Holdings revealed as being a significant shareholder in a major company that was subsequently awarded a casino licence. And that was coupled with considerable and very public controversy about the way in which some of those shares were traded at the time. But what happened? Labor of the day brought down the shutters. No FOIs got through. There was no judicial review. Nothing was done.

Of course, more recently, we have had three Labor mates as part of a company that got the first Internet casino gambling licence in the State. And now we are dealing with the fact that the Treasurer of the ALP in Queensland, Mr John Bird, is going to be at the heart of the TAB float—a key component of the discussions about that float, as the Premier made clear today in his second-reading speech to that legislation. He said that the Ministers will act in close consultation with the TAB's board of directors and management throughout the privatisation process. The Premier has obviously totally lost the plot. As Terry O'Gorman would say, the acting Treasurer—the Premier—is behaving like he has been hit by a rocket. He is behaving as if he has been hit by a rocket in a place conducive to generating considerable confusion. That is what I think.

Yesterday, for example, we were treated to the almost incredible scenario in this place of the acting Treasurer—the Premier—introducing legislation to ban not just ALP parliamentarians but local government councillors, the families of Labor parliamentarians and their staff from holding an interest in Internet gambling licences. It was the Labor equivalent of the Mad Hatter's tea party. The Premier played the Queen of Hearts—lopping off their heads from Winton to Ipswich. I can just imagine the Premier's men coming in of a morning and saying, "Premier, we have a problem", and he would say, "Off with their heads!" And the member for Ipswich was the March Hare, who was, unbelievably, concurrently defending what it was that the Premier was legislating against.

But of course, simultaneously and incredibly, the acting Treasurer has total confidence in the stood aside Treasurer, and the stood aside Treasurer has total confidence in the acting Treasurer, even as the acting Treasurer voted to effectively condemn the actions he had defended during the debate. Meanwhile, we now have the situation in which a dyed in the wool National Party councillor from somewhere way west of the range, who in his wildest dreams could have nothing whatsoever to do with influencing gambling on the Internet and cannot take part in the Gocorp float—

**Mr BEATTIE:** I rise to a point of order. The member is misleading the House. That is not what the legislation and the regulations provide. I know that was inaccurately reported this morning on the ABC, but that is not what the legislation provides. I made it clear to the House last night that that is not what it provides.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! There is no point of order.

**Mr HEALY:** The Treasurer of the Australian Labor Party cannot be at the heart of the TAB action. Maybe we have missed a point here. What is going on in this Parliament?

Time expired.

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