



Speech by

Hon. J. ELDER

MEMBER FOR CAPALABA

Hansard 9 November 1999

APEC TECHNOMART

Hon. J. P. ELDER (Capalaba—ALP) (Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development and Minister for Trade) (6.20 p.m.): I rise to second the amendment. I want to clarify something that I said this morning amid the silly attempts by the Leader of the Opposition to rise to points of order. When I said that I first became aware of the financial problems on the night of 28 October, it was my ministerial office that was contacted on that night in October. As I said in my ministerial statement, I first became aware of the financial problems on the morning of 29 October, as per my statement. I would hate to see my words misconstrued and the untruths that would have been garnered from it by the Leader of the Opposition.

Today, a lot has been said about how much the Government has or will pay out as a result of our efforts to save APEC Technomart III. As I have said already this morning, last weekend we stepped into the breach, with limited additional sponsorship, to ensure that APEC Technomart III actually got under way. As part of that exercise, we provided undertakings involving targeted sponsorship to certain essential creditors and suppliers to ensure that their services were provided. Without those assurances the conference would never have commenced.

Let me make this clear: to date, none of that money has been paid out. It is not possible to say exactly how much will ultimately be required to satisfy any obligations. A number of important factors will decide the exact quantum of any payment we make. We need to determine with various entities just what services were provided in relation to the undertakings that we gave and ensure that expenses were properly incurred and verified. We would also like to know what part, if any, of their obligations PacRim Technomart or their provisional liquidator will meet. It could be one cent in the dollar, it could be 99c in the dollar. At the moment, we have our legal advisers examining these and other issues. Again, at this time there are legal proceedings in place, but we are among 17 other sponsors. We will be taking a very keen interest, as they will, in the outcomes of the liquidator.

However, I am having a bit of trouble following the arguments of the member for Surfers Paradise. I cannot work out whether he thinks that we have spent too much money or we have not spent enough money. Last week on radio he said that we had a moral obligation to pay those businesses on the Gold Coast that suffered from the collapse of APEC Technomart. Just why one sponsor out of 18 should be responsible the member for Surfers Paradise did not say. However, in his questioning in this place he has asked why we tried to save the conference. On the one hand, the Government should pay the money out to his constituents; on the other hand, it is monstrous that the Government even considered paying out any money. As usual with the Opposition, it just seems to be an argument of convenience.

As I said this morning, members opposite are saying that, in future, we should not trust the private sector because they cannot run a function. Let me tell members opposite that I will be taking those remarks back to the business community. At the moment, the business community on the Gold Coast has seen through the actions of the member for Surfers Paradise. I have to tell the member that, down there, the contempt for his actions is vivid and real. I have been to numerous business functions, the last one being on Friday afternoon with property developers on the coast. The contempt for the member opposite is vivid and is real because, in their eyes, all the member has attempted to do on the Gold Coast is undermine the Gold Coast and undermine Queensland.

Mr Borbidge: Who said that?

Mr ELDER: I will not give their names to the House, but if the member would like a quiet brief from me, I am prepared to give him the names of the 18 people I met on Friday afternoon. I will name every one of them for the member.

A Government member interjected.

Mr ELDER: The reason why one would never give the member the names is that he would go out and victimise them tomorrow morning. He would ring them and victimise them and victimise their businesses, because that is exactly his form.

Mr BORBIDGE: I rise to a point of order. Unlike the Deputy Premier, I do not make abusive phone calls to my critics.

Mr ELDER: That is hardly the case. It is something that the member does with monotony. It is part of his form. If the member is referring to something that I have done, I challenge him to do the same and announce it. That is just typical of the member's performance—knock and whinge and whine. In relation to this event, the member has done just done that.

Typical of the member's underhanded, sneaky and slimy attempt to undermine Queensland, today the National Party's media adviser to the Leader of the Opposition pulled the Computer World fax off the web. It was him who was slipping around the gallery, in a really sleazy way to undermine Queensland, giving a copy to everyone in the gallery. The Premier is right: the member does everything he can to run down this State and to run a hypocritical argument. His argument was whether we should pay any money, or whether we paid too much. The member never gets it right. That is why he is sitting opposite.

Time expired.
