



Speech by

Hon. J. ELDER

MEMBER FOR CAPALABA

Hansard 18 August 1999

TAB PRIVATISATION

Hon. J. P. ELDER (Capalaba—ALP) (Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development and Minister for Trade) (6.32 p.m.): The action by this Government in the House today has set a standard of propriety that the coalition has never, ever, ever, ever matched either in Government or in Opposition. And we have done that with the upcoming float of the TAB. No ALP entity in any form can be involved in this float. In other words, we have set a standard. But when it comes to the Leader of the Liberal Party and the Leader of the Opposition, who play politics in here, when it comes to making a decision, and when it comes to making an ethical decision and setting an ethical standard for politicians in this Parliament, where are they? Nowhere! They run from the field. They have an opportunity tonight to set the same standard as that set in Government by the Labor Party, but they have run from the field.

Dr Watson interjected.

Mr ELDER: The member has an opportunity to do the same as we have done, but he will not. He is a wimp. The Minister for Racing was right. The member is a dope, and he is a dope for a whole range of reasons. He comes in here and makes slurs against those on the Labor side of politics. He has two standards: pursue the ALP at any cost, but forget the rest—"Let's not get involved in this ourselves. We might want to benefit from it in the future." Then, when he has had enough of chasing members on this side of the House, he goes out and slurs companies such as Deloitte. He takes a hospital pass from his leader and he runs out and slurs Deloitte, and then Deloitte has to defend itself. It is an ethical international firm with an impeccable reputation worldwide, but the member is out there saying that it is up to its neck in this. He is a disgrace. He will never crawl out from under that rock—not in the eyes of the business community. Members of the business community are outraged by the particular decision that he took to chase Deloitte on this.

Dr Watson interjected.

Mr ELDER: The member can keep that up, because he is losing credibility for the Liberal Party in the business community.

We are setting a standard, but the Liberal Party is not. There are no moral standards for the Liberal Party or the National Party. Over the past two days they have been trying to drag us down to their level. But they will not be able to drag us down to their level. Their level was best set by the Connolly/Ryan inquiry. If one is looking for their level of moral standard and propriety in Government, one has only to look as far as the Connolly/Ryan inquiry.

Mr Cooper: You're really off your tree—totally rattled.

Mr ELDER: It got the member off the hook. He would have been gone. He would have been out of this House, and he would probably have been sitting in a prison somewhere. But he set up an inquiry to roll an inquiry—an inquiry to roll someone who had his number on a jail cell. That is what he did. That was his level of morality in Government, and we are seeing it again.

It was the same in the Bjelke-Petersen era. Members opposite never learnt a lesson from that era. They repeated it when they were last in Government, and they are repeating it now in Opposition. We are into the Borbidge/Watson era, and all we are seeing from them is the same set of standards as that set by Liberal Parties and National Parties for decades. They just do not learn. They have an opportunity to meet our standards.

Dr Watson: You'll never get there. You're all talk, no action.

Mr ELDER: Yesterday, the member opposed the legislation in relation to Gocorp. Why? Because he might benefit from it at some stage, or because some Liberal Party members might benefit from it. Is that why he opposed it?

Mr Cooper interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member for Crows Nest!

Mr ELDER: And he is going to oppose the TAB float in relation to the role of John Bird.

Dr Watson interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member for Moggill will cease interjecting. That is my final warning.

Mr ELDER: The member is going to oppose that. Why? Because he will benefit from it. I would bet that if I go through the members' interests register in two or three years' time, I will find TAB shares all over the place amongst members on that side of the House. I will find them in the entire front bench. They will all have TAB shares.

Mr Beattie: Russell Cooper—he will, won't he?

Mr ELDER: He will be the first in line.

Members opposite have shown no morality on these issues. They have shown no propriety on these issues. They have been unethical from day one. The acting Leader of the Opposition walks in here, drops a bucket of slime and walks out again. The problem with that is that he picks up innocent people on the way through. And when he picks up those innocent people on the way through, they are the ones who, at the end of the day, will pay a price, and that price will be something that he will regret in the long term within the business community in this State.

Time expired.
