



Speech by

Mr JIM PEARCE

MEMBER FOR FITZROY

Hansard 25 May 1999

GORDONSTONE MINE; RIO TINTO

Mr PEARCE (Fitzroy—ALP) (10.28 a.m.): I wish to bring to the attention of the House an act of vandalism that highlights the immaturity of management at the Gordonstone mine, now owned and operated by Rio Tinto. A two-metre high statue erected by Gordonstone's management in 1997 as a tribute to the work force for breaking world production records for three consecutive months has been pulled down and buried. A sign erected near the statue proudly read "Home of the best miners—Gordonstone".

The statue, in recognition of their efforts in setting new international records, was a fitting tribute to the commitment and expertise of a work force which is now considered by Rio Tinto as unemployable. The statue became an embarrassment to Rio Tinto, which has used every excuse to justify its refusal to employ what was acknowledged by the mine's former owner as the world's most productive work force. The mine now employs scab labour who are prepared to be the leaders in the shameful erosion of hard-won employment conditions and who are willing to expose themselves to a lower standard of health and safety.

Rio Tinto's management has shown just how childish it is. How can workers expect to get a fair go from a company that encourages management to behave in a selfish, bullying way? Rio Tinto is recognised as the best performer on the world stage when it comes to environmental vandalism and abuse of the rights of workers and the people of the countries they rape and pillage. As has been said in central Queensland, they may have buried the statue but they cannot bury the truth and they will not bury the union.