



Speech by

Mr L. SPRINGBORG

MEMBER FOR WARWICK

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BEATTIE LABOR GOVERNMENT

Mr SPRINGBORG (Warwick—NPA) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (6.45 p.m.): In his contribution, the can't do Deputy Premier brought to the attention of this House some of his alleged achievements since he became a Minister. In my contribution tonight I would like to go through some of the lack of achievement on the part of the honourable Minister for Natural Resources and Minister for Environment. As soon as he walked into the Department of Natural Resources he said, "You must now not deliver on Flinders dam, Finch Hatton dam, St Helens Creek dam, and you must go slow on Paradise dam, go slow on the Elliott Channel and go slow on the Nathan dam." That is an example of the lack of achievement which we are seeing from this can't do Government.

The Premier has tried to move in this Parliament a very feeble amendment to the motion. He has tried to bring out a number of things, many of which are achievements of the former Government. However, he cannot put even one single thing in this amendment which indicates in any way positive advancement in the area of water infrastructure. When one considers that this Government has been in power in Queensland for more than eight months now, it is appalling that the Premier is not able to say that it is going anywhere in the area of water infrastructure. Water infrastructure is absolutely crucial to people of Queensland. It is crucial to regional development in this State and it is absolutely crucial to the job creation prospects and also the economic viability of Queensland. We see a situation in which this Government is not prepared to advance any of the great work which had been put in place by the former Government.

I would like to go through some of that. We put in place a Water Infrastructure Task Force and we indicated to it that we would allocate \$1 billion in State money over 15 years, to be supplemented by \$1 billion in private enterprise contributions or promises as well. We did that to make sure that we would put in place water infrastructure which could drive jobs in the regions, which could drive regional development and which could drive economic development. Under this can't do Premier, that has been stopped.

The Deputy Premier might as well save himself millions of dollars next year by abolishing regional infrastructure development in the Department of Natural Resources because it is not doing anything. There is a team of great water engineers—people who are used to getting things done—but they are sitting there, twiddling their thumbs. They are doing absolutely nothing. I would have thought that, as the Minister for State Development, he would at least have been a little bit concerned, or at least concerned enough to go in there and actually pick up some of those projects and drive them forward.

Earlier, the Deputy Premier said something in relation to the Nathan dam which was absolutely wrong. He indicated that the impact assessment process carried out was flawed. It was not. It was one of the most comprehensive impact assessment processes that has ever been carried out with regard to a major piece of infrastructure in this State. It is the same sort of impact assessment process that allowed us to rule out the Comet dam. I indicated when I became the Minister—and Howard Hobbs did exactly the same when he was Minister—that in this State we are very, very keen to go ahead with this sort of infrastructure because we believe that it drives jobs and drives regional economic opportunity, but we would not do so at the expense of the environment.

We used exactly the same process with the Comet dam. After we went through that process and it was presented to me that its environmental consequences could not be sustained, although it

stacked up economically, I said, "No. That is it. We will kill it. We are not going to sacrifice the environment on the altar of economic opportunity in this particular case." Even though it stacked up economically, environmentally we indicated that we would be very, very responsible. But, on the other hand, the Nathan dam did stack up environmentally. It stacked up economically and that is why we were prepared to go ahead with it. We were considering all the impacts—downstream impacts. That was a part of the water management plan and also the water allocation management plan. All of those sorts of things would have made sure that we could address those particular concerns.

When we look around the State we see that what we need for economic development are the sorts of things this Government is going slow on. Given the way everything stacks up, there is absolutely no reason the Paradise dam, near the electorate of the honourable member for Bundaberg, could not have been built or at least started within five years. It is a great project. I am sure the member for Bundaberg appreciates that. She should go straight into the office of the Minister for Natural Resources and give him a good old shove along on that issue. The Nathan dam also stacks up very well. The Elliott Channel in north Queensland is very important to economic development.

We had done the work. We put in place a plan, the money was there and the proper assessment processes were being carried out. We have given this Labor Government a plan for water infrastructure development for the next 12 to 15 years which would drive jobs and regional economic development in Queensland, but it has done nothing. It has sat on its hands. It has sacrificed that work.

Time expired.
