



Speech by

Mr. R. CONNOR

MEMBER FOR NERANG

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APEC TECHNOMART

Mr CONNOR (Nerang—LP) (6.25 p.m.): It is quite obvious that the Government has not realised just how much damage this Technomart fiasco has caused Queensland. There is a giant wave of technology and investment emanating from the United States. Last week, that wave went past Queensland, and we missed it. The number of jobs that were potentially able to be created as a result of the type of investment that went with that wave is too numerous to count.

However, I will give members some idea of just how many jobs might have been created. I refer to a very recent document released by the United States Department of Labor titled Futurework. It states that, in the US—

"The twenty-first century workplace is already here.

e are living in a new economy— powered by technology, fuelled by information, and driven by knowledge.

...

The American economy is the strongest in a generation—perhaps in history. Unemployment is at a 30-year low"—

and that is 4%. That would be good for Queensland. The article states further—

"We have created more than 19 million jobs"—

and that has occurred in the past five years or so. That figure is more than the population of Australia.

It should be put on record that I was at the Technomart conference on the Monday and the Tuesday. On the Tuesday night, there was a reception held by the mayor, which was attended by dignitaries from all over the world—so much so that whenever the mayor spoke, he had to stop at the end of each sentence to allow for translations to occur. I can tell members that at that reception, which occurred just after the fiasco was revealed, the comments of those people were "it was absolute disaster"—a direct quote—and "heads should roll".

Could members imagine anyone stupid enough to try to run another one of these technology conferences in Queensland in the next few years? There is no way in the world that we would get people to attend another one. People paid \$1,295 to attend that conference. That amount did not include their accommodation or air fare. Where is the compensation going to come from to pay the costs of all of those hundreds of delegates from all over the world? Not only that, those people are going to go back to their home countries and what do members think they are going to tell other people in the industry? The vice-president of Microsoft was there. What do members think he is going to say about Queensland when he gets home and he tells other people in the industry at Silicon Valley and the like what happened? If he was asked whether he would invest in Queensland he would answer, "No, they can't even put on a conference."

Could members imagine what the Government would have done to Expo? Thank God they did not get that! What an absolute disaster that would be! The Government cannot run a one-week conference; how could it run Expo 2002?

Mr ELDER: I rise to a point of order. Again, the member is misleading the House. This was a private sector conference, not a Government conference.

Mr CONNOR: In dollar terms, the Government was the major sponsor. Their crest was in the senior position—

Mr ELDER: I rise to a point of order. The member is again misleading the Parliament. The Federal Government was the principal sponsor. John Howard's photo and the Australian crest were well above ours.

Mr BEANLAND: I rise to a point of order. That was a frivolous interjection.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I am controlling the Chair.

Mr ELDER: It was not a frivolous point of order at all. The accusation was that it was the State Government, when it was the Federal Government.

Mr BEANLAND: I rise to a point of order. This is a frivolous member making a frivolous point of order.

Mr CONNOR: In the last four years, the IT section of the US economy, which represents just 8% of the US economy, has created 35% of the growth. That is what is driving the US economy and the US stock market. That is the wave of investment that just bypassed Queensland. A University of Texas study of the same period, 1995 to 1998, found that the net economy in the US grew by 174.5% each year. That is the sort of growth that Australia had the potential of achieving, but we cannot even grow by 4%.

Time expired.
