



Speech by

Hon. R. E. BORBIDGE

MEMBER FOR SURFERS PARADISE

Hansard 18 August 1999

TAB PRIVATISATION

Hon. R. E. BORBIDGE (Surfers Paradise—NPA) (Leader of the Opposition) (6.12 p.m.): In seconding the motion moved by the member for Moggill, I point out that it is interesting that the Premier thinks that somehow this is amusing. He presides over an increasingly questionable and unethical Government whose motto is Government of the mates, by the mates and for the mates. We all know that the rampant cronyism, the unfettered cronyism, that is now under way in Queensland is a total recipe for corruption, for corrupt Governments, for a corrupt Labor Party and for corrupt Ministers. It is wide open for abuse.

The fact is that, of all the major political parties, it is only the Australian Labor Party which is a major investor in terms of the share market—in fact, a \$20m-plus investor in respect of the share market. It made \$17.5m back in 1986 out of the sale of 4KQ. It invested in Jupiters at a time when Jupiters was granted, or was in the process of being granted, a second casino licence here in Brisbane. It had the good commercial sense to invest in Suncorp-Metway, despite the fact that in this place it was opposing it on the so-called grounds of privatisation.

The simple fact is that, after the events of the last three weeks, why would anyone trust this Government? Even tonight the Minister for Transport had to come into this place and admit that he got it wrong in respect of the ministerial approvals for the sale of land in Gladstone in 1994.

Mr HAMILL: I rise to a point of order. The honourable member is misleading the House and making implications in relation to my term as Transport Minister. It is offensive and I ask for it to be withdrawn.

Mr SPEAKER: Did you refer to the—

Mr BORBIDGE: No, not by name. Is it not interesting who is sensitive down the back?

Mr HAMILL: I rise to a point of order. I just do not like people who cannot tell the truth.

Mr BORBIDGE: He looks in the mirror every morning.

The primary concern of the Opposition in this particular exercise is that the State Treasurer of the Labor Party, Mr Bird, remains on the board of the TAB. Of course, the Premier says that he is taking action by way of legislation to prevent Labor companies and Labor members and Labor associates investing in the shares at least in the initial stage. But, of course, there is a game plan to keep Mr Bird there, to make sure that the money train, the investment train and the confidential information that can be used to fund the election campaign of the member for Brisbane Central next time around comes through.

A Government must be seen to be doing the right thing. It is improper and it is wrong for the State treasurer of a political party to be serving on the board of a body that has been privatised as a result of the direct decisions of the Government that that State treasurer serves. It is wrong. It is a conflict of interest that leaves this Government open to suggestions of cronyism, of wrongdoing and of abuse of executive power.

What else could we expect after the disgraceful events of the past three or four weeks involving this Government and the way it looks after its mates? That is its only interest. That is Mr Beattie's only interest as Premier: making sure that he looks after his mates, whether it is the CFMEU, whether it is

the Labor mates, whether it is the Labor companies, or whether it is the people who line up to support him come election time.

Dead cats are falling out of trees all over Brisbane. Day by day people are coming to the Opposition with new stories about how bad this Government and this Premier are.

Time expired.
