



Speech by

Hon. RUSSELL COOPER

MEMBER FOR CROWS NEST

Hansard 18 August 1999

TAB PRIVATISATION

Hon. T. R. COOPER (Crows Nest—NPA) (6.48 p.m.): This Government is stumbling from moral crisis to moral crisis. This has been proven over the past few days and the past few weeks. We have forced the Government to take certain action. The Government has been hurt by it. We know that those opposite do not like it. We know that they are very bitter and very vindictive about being called to account. It is the job of the Opposition and the media to make sure that the Government is called to account. We have seen too many examples of this behaviour by Labor Governments in the other States of this nation. All the signs indicate that it could happen again.

The coalition makes no apology for bringing the Government to account. Labor Holdings is the vehicle that was ready to take advantage of the float of the TAB. The Opposition ensured that the Labor Party was not able to do that. The Labor Party had its State Treasurer in place ready to take action. However, Labor has been stopped in its tracks and those opposite do not like it. They are behaving like someone who has swallowed very bitter medicine. Labor has often demonstrated that it has double standards. Labor's double standards amount to double jeopardy for the people of Queensland. It is the people who always pay the price in the long run.

There are no prizes for guessing that we have this vehicle from Labor Holdings which can be converted into Labor's very own Queensland Inc. We have seen the damage that such activities has caused in other States. With Queensland Inc. v. the Battlers of Queensland Pty Ltd, who wins? There are no prizes for guessing who wins. We have seen what has happened in other States, and the members opposite know the history of what happened in those States—South Australia Incorporated, the State Bank and John Bannon. Members opposite know what John Bannon did to South Australia. Members opposite know what Brian Burke did to Western Australia with WA Inc. Members opposite know what John Cain did to Victoria with Tricontinental and all the other collapses. We saw a trail of wreckage, and who suffered? The people had to pick up the cost that Labor Governments foisted upon them. In New South Wales, we saw a trail of wreckage going right back to John Wren, Jack Lang, Joe Cahill and Neville Wran. All of those people left a trail of wreckage and they set a shocking example.

Our job is to make sure that that does not happen in Queensland today. That is why in many respects we are keeping an eye on members opposite—not just in relation to the TAB float but in relation to every other thing. The members opposite have their vehicles in place and tentacles moving into every nook and cranny of the State and into every business that they can get their hands on. The Opposition is concerned about that. We are going to make sure that we do our job and watch the members opposite. I hope that the media do likewise, because Victoria, New South Wales, South Australia and Western Australia all collapsed at a shocking cost to the people because those States had a weak and compliant media. I am not saying that the same thing has happened in Queensland; I am saying that that was why the Labor Governments in those States were able to get away with what they did and were able to ruin those States.

The Opposition knows the job that it has to do, and it is going to do it. Already, we have been successful in stopping the members opposite in their tracks in relation to their taking a major interest in the TAB float. We want to see a good, healthy TAB float. In that regard, we are going to continue to watch the members opposite. In the southern States, we saw the brazen, power-hungry desire of the Labor Party. We are now seeing all of those signs in Queensland. That is what worries the Opposition: the Labor arrogance—it never, ever goes far away—the brazenness is back. Over the past 12 months,

the cronyism that we have seen from the Labor Party is out of this world. It is something to be seen to be believed. That, too, will be exposed because we believe that we have an obligation to the people of this State to do that. I can imagine the uproar and the outrage that would come from that side of the House had the Opposition engaged in such cronyism and put people such as John Bird into positions. However, Labor just does it with impunity: no-one worries, no-one bothers. Time after time after time they just carry on with it and time after time after time the Opposition will continue to expose them. As I have said, we have seen what happened in the southern States. The Opposition is not going to allow that sort of thing to happen in Queensland, because we know that the people will pay.

Time expired.
