



Speech by

Mr S. SANTORO

MEMBER FOR CLAYFIELD

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SUN METALS DISPUTE; GORDONSTONE MINE DISPUTE

Mr SANTORO (Clayfield—LP) (6.36 p.m.): This debate is all about union conflict and internecine wars. It is about union domination of the industrial relations system and of the Labor Government. Most particularly, it is about lack of leadership—political and moral— by the Honourable the Premier.

Let us take the issues one by one. We have heard mention of timing. To complete the record, I will state all the relevant details. The Sun Metals agreement was reached on 6 February 1997 under industrial relations legislation which was enacted by the Goss Labor Government and the honourable member for Yeronga as Minister. That Sun Metals site agreement was approved by the State Industrial Relations Commission to run for the anticipated life of the construction project—three years from 6 February 1997; in other words, to 6 February 2000.

For two years while the coalition Government was in power there was not one murmur from the unions. There was no jurisdictional conflict. There were no union wars. There was not one breath of conflict from the unions. As soon as the Labor Party Government came into power, the unions erupted. The reason the unions erupted was that they knew that the coalition Government would have dealt with it. For three and a half weeks the Labor Premier sat on the sidelines and he has been dragged towards a solution, kicking and screaming, only by the fact that we have prodded him with a big hot rod, and I will not mention where. That is what has got the Premier moving. And he has the audacity to say that we would not have provided leadership! We did, and for two years during the life of that agreement, when we were in power, there was no conflict.

The Premier gets up in this House and with mock effrontery says, "You are attacking Bob Hawke." Bob Hawke, the Prime Minister under whom there was record industrial disputation in

this State! He failed the industrial relations test. There was massive industrial relations disputation at that time. Bob Hawke is the person who brought Australia to its economic knees. But in he comes. We are not attacking Bob Hawke, despite that record; we are attacking the Premier.

It is not Bob Hawke who should be conducting the negotiations; it should be the Premier. He is the Premier. He is the negotiator. He is the guy who comes from an impeccable union background. He is the guy who reckons he has the union connections, the persuasive connections, the moral authority. But he brings in a failed Prime Minister under whom there was record industrial disputation and he expects us to believe that he has done the right thing. It is another job for another failed Labor mate. As the Leader of the Opposition said: let him detail for the public record how much he is paying his failed Labor mate.

The Premier compares himself with Bjelke-Petersen. What would Bjelke-Petersen have done? Would he have called Malcolm Fraser in to solve the dispute? Would he have called another failed Prime Minister? He showed what he could do when the industrial thugs played up during the power dispute, and Queensland applauded him year after year. We do not bring in failed leaders; we act according to the law.

For the past couple of days, we have been hearing about the Industrial Relations Commission and how we gutted the power of the Industrial Relations Commission. Yet both the Premier and this Minister say, "There is a compulsory conference. The commission is working. The commission is doing its job." If the commission is working and doing its job, why are they criticising the commission and the powers that we left it? Why do the Minister and the Premier not tell the people that the State

Industrial Relations Commission, on no fewer than five separate occasions, ordered those people back to work?

Why does the Minister not make the public aware that Commissioner Nutter of the State Industrial Commission has issued orders instructing the CFMEU and the BLF to cease and desist from disrupting the Sun Metals corporation site? Why does the Minister not inform the public that the CFMEU and the BLF have thumbed their noses at the commission and refused to accept its recommendation? On five occasions the commission asked those unions to come to the table—to sit down, as they are doing now. The unions know that they have their backs to the wall, but they say, "No, we are not doing it." The commission is failing because the unions are thugs; they are lawless, and they are assisted by honourable members opposite. And until those members start behaving lawfully and responsibly, and until they start exercising political and moral leadership, the people will judge them as the failures, the political thugs and the cowards that they are.

Time expired.
