



Speech by

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Hansard 11 April 2000

IMPORTATION OF STEEL PRODUCTS

Mr FELDMAN (Caboolture—CCAQ) (10.24 a.m.) It is with great concern that we read in recent weeks about the massive tonnages of steel products flooding into Australia from overseas, the overwhelming percentage of which is destined for Queensland. Paralleling this influx of imported steel is a devastating loss of hundreds of jobs.

A very pertinent message was displayed on a coffin in last month's protest march organised by the Australian Manufacturing Workers Union. It read simply, "Make it here or the jobs disappear." How appropriate, how accurate, and what a sad indictment on the folly of the economic rationalist policies being pursued by Governments whatever their political persuasion.

Academia's love of this flawed dogma is embraced by both State and Federal Governments, which are supposed to be on opposite sides of the political spectrum. They beat their chests and claim to care about the growing band of Australian workers cast on the unemployment scrap heap. But do they really care? I suggest they care not! Their only concern is for the multinational donors to their campaign funds and their mates in the chardonnay socialist set. In desperation and in a genuine effort to avoid the soul destroying impact on dependents on welfare, the unions have called on the Government for tariff protection. These workers simply want to provide for their families rather than have them dependent upon the charity of others. They have also suggested a reduction in company tax to kickstart manufacturing activity. We in the Country City Alliance, Queensland also suggest that this is not a bad start.

The great champion of the working class, the Leader of the Labor Party in the Federal Opposition, could only offer the statement, "We are a party of ideas, but those policies aren't on the table of ideas at the moment." We have seen that table; it is bare. The cupboard is bare; the fridge is bare—there is not an idea in sight. Here is a great idea knocking on Labor's door and they cannot even recognise it. What are they going to do about it? What is the Federal Government going to do about trying to stop the import of steel and giving workers back the manufacturing in this country that used to be the champion of manufacturing?

Time expired.
