



Speech by

PAUL LUCAS MLA

MEMBER FOR LYTTON

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CENSURE OF BEATTIE GOVERNMENT AND MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT AND MINISTER FOR MAIN ROADS

Mr LUCAS (Lytton—ALP) (6.40 p.m.): I am delighted to speak in this debate to support the amendment moved to the motion by the Honourable Minister for Transport and Minister for Main Roads and to correct some of the rubbish that has poured forth from the mouth of the honourable member for Gregory. The louder and the more agitated the member for Gregory gets, the more confused and irrational he sounds. But he has one big monkey on his back: the industrial relations policy Liberal/National Parties, the GST parties, the parties that gutted the industrial relations system, the parties that do not accept the role of an independent umpire in dispute resolution.

The Minister for Transport in the Borbidge Government—the present shadow Minister—was acknowledged as having one of the best minds of the nineties. The problem for the people of Queensland and the future of Queensland Rail was that it was the 1890s, not the 1990s. The 1890s was the period he wanted to take us to, aided and abetted by the member for Clayfield, when industrial relations were conducted in an atmosphere of distrust and aggression. Those opposite were in Government when the MUA dispute occurred, and nothing was being done in the ports in my electorate, when industrial relations were sorted out by lawyers in the High Court.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr LUCAS: Yes, that is right. There were liars in the High Court: your mates at Patrick Stevedoring. They are the sorts of people those opposite supported in the High Court. One thing about Minister Bredhauer and the Beattie Government is that they realise the fantastic future that rail has in this State. But if we want a future for the rail industry, we need to work at it and we need to have a vision—not the Vaughan Johnson/Bob Menzies style of sit on your hands; not the intellectual bankruptcy of the Johnson ministerial approach of let her rip, bury your head in the sand. How can it be in the best interests of workers and their families and the rail industry in this State if we sit by—

Mr JOHNSON: I rise to a point of order. That is one thing I did not do. I find that remark from the member for Lytton offensive. I stood up for the rail workers and their families. I ask him to withdraw.

Mr SPEAKER: We are not debating the issue. I ask the member for Lytton to withdraw.

Mr LUCAS: I withdraw. The member for Gregory, "Mr Anti-Economic Rationalist", was the man who opened up third-party access on Queensland Rail, and then he complains about Freightcorp! What does he think this dispute is about? Freightcorp has driver-only operations. Those opposite want to give them a competitive advantage; they want them to stop Queensland Rail from competing. That is what they are all about. That is the sort of hypocrite the shadow Minister is. What do we say to those hardworking Queensland Rail employees when his sort of policies put them back in the 1890s, when his sort of policies give them no future? This Minister is about having a vision for the future.

I want to make some comments about the wildcat-type industrial relations atmosphere we have as a result of this dispute. I am the last person in this Chamber to decry the rights of the union movement to take legitimate industrial action. But for what purpose is a strike called at 11 p.m. to start at midnight to close down QR operations throughout Queensland? The member for Gregory, the clairvoyant, the Uri Geller of Longreach, comes in here and says that the Government should have foreseen it. The Rail Tram and Bus Union signed off on the agreement for driver-only operation. They

signed off on it. The member says that we should have known about the strike an hour before it happened. That is the sort of clairvoyant the member is. I tell you now, brother: if you could see it coming, why didn't you move this motion the day before?

The fact is that the union gave as the reason for the industrial action a concern for safety. No-one here would argue about the issue of safety, but the fact is that the Industrial Relations Commission, the independent umpire—we know those opposite do not like them; we know they are into roting it—did not accept their reasons. If the union wished to convince the community on the safety issue, then putting the case to the community rather than holding a wildcat strike would have been the way to proceed.

Then we heard from the member for Merrimac, the friend of the cleaner, "Mr Industrial Relations Settler". He got in there and kicked the hell out of the cleaners and then had the gall to come into the House and tell us what a great industrial relations climate they had under their Government. I do not want to emulate him, and neither does this Government. They offered no solution to the Maritime Union.

Those opposite have spoken about what this Government did when we heard about the strike. At 12.30 this morning Queensland Rail was on the phone to the Brisbane City Council and Brisbane Transport notifying them of the need for the extra capacity. In relation to this Government's record in the rail industry, we need to look at the facts when workers voted. Some 75% of workers voted to support the enterprise bargaining agreement settled between QR and its workers. In contrast, "she'll be right" Vaughan, the Minister in the 1890s—

Time expired.
