



Speech by

**SHAUN NELSON**

**MEMBER FOR TABLELANDS**

---

Hansard 16 March 2000

### TEACHERS

**Mr NELSON** (Tablelands—IND) (6.44 p.m.): It has long been my belief that teachers have the second hardest job in the world after police officers. They are given the enormous responsibility of guiding our young people into a difficult world, and quite often they do so under trying circumstances. It is for this that they have my thanks.

It was with some disbelief that I first heard of this current situation in dealing with the Government. As soon as the Herberton State School QTU representative sent me a fax advising me that it wished me to raise the issue, I approached the member for Gladstone to see whether I could speak to her motion.

In researching the subject I was shocked to learn of the blinding hypocrisy that was being displayed on this issue. It is the second time that I have had dealings with the trade union movement—the last time was with the AWU with regard to the downgrading of the Atherton Hospital—and I must say that this is surprising considering I am the most conservative member of this House.

I was informed by the QTU that this whole situation is just a revisit of the actions of the previous Government. As with many other issues in this House, the Beattie Government is just doing the same thing. The only difference is that the Premier, as we have heard already, said that he would have given them something better. To me this is just typical party political vote grabbing: promise them anything, give them nothing. I live for the day when people finally wake up to the fact that at every election the wool is pulled over their eyes.

I am one of the very few people in this House who does not support a GST. I think there are only about 11 of us. We all realise that the GST will increase the cost of living. It has already done so, and it has not even been implemented. The GST is enough of a reason in itself for a pay rise. I know that we got one, so why can the teachers not get a similar pay rise?

The current certified agreement ended on 29 February and, as such, teachers are entitled to a pay rise from 1 March. The non-negotiation stance of the Government means that teachers will not get an increase from 1 March as planned. Teachers will remember that it took four months from when negotiations were supposed to commence last year for the Government and the department to put a position on the table.

I have had quite a few dealings with the Education Minister and I believe that he is being hit up by Cabinet in relation to this. I do not believe that it is the fault of the Minister for Education. I believe that Cabinet has run out of money and it has taken a roll on this. I feel sorry for the Education Minister, because he has been very helpful in my electorate in relation to certain issues such as the Bibbohra State School. He is held in quite high regard by many of the teachers I speak to in my electorate, and that is quite a few. I certainly think the Education Minister is being slammed in Cabinet. It is not his fault; I think he is being held down. I lay most of the blame squarely at the feet of Treasury.

We have heard quoted a lot of statements made previously by members, the member for Cook in particular. I have read through the statements that he made on 18 March 1997. He said—

"The responsibility for this proposed stoppage"—

that is, by the Queensland Teachers Union—

"falls directly at the feet of the Borbidge Government and, in particular, the Minister for Education."

He went on to say that "the Minister's failure to ensure that his department has come to the negotiating table with teachers in good faith throughout the enterprise bargaining process and his failure to recognise the significant educational issues which surround the arguments" had caused the situation at that time.

Members of the Labor Party in this House stand up from time to time and say that they support the workers. Yesterday the member for Woodridge talked about the shearers and the shearers strike. If Premier Beattie went up to Winton 100 years ago he would have been tarred and feathered, because they would consider him a Tory. They would consider the member for Woodridge a Tory. They would consider most of the people on the Government side of this House complete and utter Tories, because they no longer support the labour movement.

Twice I have had to work with the trade union movement. That does not make me happy. I am a conservative; I should not have to work with the trade union movement. But it cannot work with the ALP members it put into this House to support it. The member for Mulgrave, as an ex-teacher, should be hanging his head because he knows deep down, in his heart of hearts, that this is wrong. The teachers were offered 4% by the Borbidge Government and they were offered 3% by the Labor Government.

**A Government member** interjected.

**Mr NELSON:** Stings attached? Don't start that. The simple fact is that the Labor Party has sold out. The people who will remember that are the people who live in the electorates of Mount Ommaney and Archerfield. So will the 500 teachers who live in the electorate of Woodridge. They will remember that and there will be a backlash. Honourable members should mark my words. The teachers in my electorate have already said that they will not vote Labor again after this sell-out.

Labor members will get Jeff-ed at the next election. They know they will. The arrogance of the Premier will build up. The arrogance of the Health Minister and a couple of other Ministers will build up. The arrogance will boil over and Labor members will get popped at the next election. They know it. The by-elections for the seats of Bundamba and Woodridge do not count. They were a sideshow. There was not an effective Opposition at the time.

**Mr Kaiser** interjected.

**Mr NELSON:** I am not a member of a party. The simple fact is that Labor members will get popped at the next election because they are not sticking up for the people they were put in this House to stick up for. The trade union movement has put Labor in this House and it expects payback for it. No-one would know more about that than the member for Woodridge. It expects payback and it will get it.

Time expired.

---