



Speech by

Mrs D. PRATT

MEMBER FOR BARAMBAH

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QUEENSLAND RAIL

Mrs PRATT (Nanango—Ind) (6.49 p.m.): Queensland Rail—apparently along with the big business attitude now prevailing that, unless something makes profits, it does not want to know—has left some businesses in remote areas in great danger of having to close their doors. In what happens to be a totally underhanded and deceitful manner, Queensland Rail has treated loyal but non-metropolitan users by slamming the doors on their only method of transporting small stock on which their businesses rely. Abattoirs at Atherton and Cloncurry are just two of the works now in jeopardy. Being remote, the only way they could access small stock—pigs and calves—in small numbers was through Queensland Rail. It was this livestock trade that kept those businesses viable. Now they will not be able to survive—not for long, anyway—and there will go a few more jobs. Down goes another taxpaying business! Government will have to start taxing the multinationals because there will not be any Australian businesses left to carry the ever-increasing burden.

Queensland Rail must conform to animal welfare policies. That is understood. I wish to goodness that Queensland Rail and the government would understand that the welfare of businesses is far more important. Businesses pay taxes. Unfortunately, pigs and calves do not. Anyone with even the smallest atom of commonsense knows that it is in their best interests to care for the welfare of their animals. Badly kept, travelled or treated stock result in loss of income. No-one objects to certain regulations to ensure that their stock travels comfortably. This was merely a poor excuse from Queensland Rail. I believe its real reason is profit.

I ask this government why those involved with this matter and who attended the meeting held in Brisbane some months ago have not heard anything concerning the matter. Why is everyone hiding behind everyone else? Are my constituents going to hear from the minister very soon and, if so, what undertaking will he give them? I have always believed that if a government has the right to wreck someone's life or livelihood, it has the moral obligation to help those affected to adapt or find another way. Sadly, it is only a moral obligation and not written law. Will someone put up such a bill to make government totally responsible for alleviating the pain it forces on others? Of course not! The government could not afford it.

Well, I have the answer to that. The government should stop making ridiculous laws that no-one polices and no-one seems to be responsible for and let the people get on with living their lives peacefully and profitably. Let us go back to a system of law where wrong is wrong and those who breach such laws are punished, not this crazy system where every time we turn around someone has come up with another law which has nothing to do with wrongdoing but is merely someone's point of view, which they delight in inflicting upon the populace. Is it just to see how far the populace will cringe? Is this why the Australian government has written a law allowing the armed forces to shoot Australian citizens?

Currently a minimum of 15 wagons can be used to carry stock. That ruling has been changed to allow for a minimum of 24 wagons before stock can be transported. That will result in a loss of all that transport. Livestock Toowoomba is also closing its doors—more jobs lost. The Beattie government's jobs, jobs, jobs policy does not apply to rural Queensland.
