



Speech by

Hon. K. LINGARD

MEMBER FOR BEAUDESERT

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APPRENTICESHIPS AND TRAINEESHIPS

Hon. K. R. LINGARD (Beaudesert—NPA) (12.21 p.m.): The public of Queensland are being deceived by the Beattie ALP government's call of jobs, jobs, jobs. The Queensland public was deceived in the 1998 election by the call for a five per cent unemployment rate, because it is quite obvious that that rate is unachievable, has been unachievable and certainly is not being aimed at by the ALP government. A search of documents shows that the Premier has already admitted that the five per cent unemployment target is not achievable and certainly is not achievable in his term. In the Treasurer's documents we see that the Treasurer is working on an unemployment rate of between eight and nine per cent. The Minister for Employment has already admitted that a five per cent unemployment target is not achievable in this term.

The unfortunate thing is that the rate of unemployment is now nearly nine per cent and the unemployment rate of young people is over 30 per cent and that the programs that are being put in place by the ministers of the ALP government are not working. Figures supplied by DETIR show that 52 per cent of apprentices are not completing their apprenticeships. For a kid to get an apprenticeship, he has to go through a program of finding that particular apprenticeship and he has to go through a program of selection. The 52 per cent of kids who are not completing their apprenticeships are good kids who have achieved an apprenticeship. Yet it is under the programs of the ALP Beattie government that we find that 52 per cent do not complete their apprenticeships.

The DETIR figures show that these kids are not kids who obtain an apprenticeship and then in the first few months of that apprenticeship say, 'That is not something that I want to do.' These kids are cancelling out much later in their programs. Three hundred and fifty kids cancelled out in the last year of their apprenticeship. The government has to look at why this is happening. Why is the government finding apprenticeships for these kids who go through their apprenticeships so far and then do not complete them? The documents state that 10,500 traineeships were approved by this government under the programs that we hear talked about continually by the Minister for Employment. Yet 5,250 of those kids did not get to the end of the first year of those traineeships.

For those 10,500 kids to be placed in a traineeship program, they have to be selected, they have to go to employers, they have to sign up with their parents' consent—they have to go through all of those processes. Yet of those 10,500 kids, 5,250 did not complete their programs. Surely we as parliamentarians have to say to the government, 'Look at all the money that you are putting into these programs—access for youth, working for the dole; all of those sorts of things—yet they are failing.'

As I have said, I believe that it is necessary for a summit to be held where employers, the government and employees sit down and ask, 'What is going wrong?'. I am not necessarily blaming the employers, but there is no doubt that some employers are benefiting from these programs. Some of the employers are taking on young people, getting a year's work out of them and then cancelling their employment. If that is happening too often, we need to stop it.

One of the other difficulties is clearly the type of employees who are involved. I say to the Minister for Education that some of these young people are not job ready. Some of these kids go through school wearing apparel, earrings—all sorts of things—yet when they go out to see an employer, the employer says, 'I do not want that and I will not cop it.' So there is obviously an argument between the employee and the employer. Something is going wrong, and if it is, as I have said this morning, that the training organisations are not being monitored correctly and if it is that these training organisations

are putting young people into jobs and just taking the initial payments and not worrying about going through the training program for a year—which must be difficult for the training organisations—then we need to look at that. Quite honestly, I say to the minister that the role of the Ombudsman has failed.

Time expired.
