



Speech by

Hon. S. ROBERTSON

MEMBER FOR STRETTON

Hansard 17 October 2001

WATER RESOURCES

Hon. S. ROBERTSON (Stretton—ALP) (Minister for Natural Resources and Minister for Mines) (6.12 p.m.): I move the following amendment—

That all words after 'this House' be omitted and the following words be inserted—

'Commends the Beattie government for its commitment to water reform as the most effective and cost-efficient means of delivering greater certainty of water supply to Queensland communities and industry as well as achieving sustainable environmental outcomes.'

I did have a prepared speech to make tonight, but after listening to the contributions of the mover and seconder of tonight's motion I feel compelled to depart from my prepared speech to perhaps try to introduce both honourable members to water resource planning processes in this state. I am sad to say that in the eight-odd months since those two members have been in this place they have clearly not listened to anything I have said about water reform and listened to nothing my friend the member for Callide has said. I start with the member for Tablelands. It is absolute arrant nonsense and grossly dishonest to suggest that irrigators in the tablelands in the Mareeba-Dimbulah irrigation scheme are paying for Lang Park as a result of having to pay lower bound rates. That is absolute arrant nonsense. The establishment of SunWater and the price paths that have been put in place—

Mr Seeney: What about the fellows in the Burdekin? It is not arrant nonsense.

Mr ROBERTSON: I acknowledge the interjection of my friend the member for Callide. These are the price paths that the National Party sought to implement when it was in government.

Mr Seeney: That is not right.

Mr ROBERTSON: In terms of the phase-in arrangements that this government—

Mr SEENEY: I rise to a point of order.

Mr ROBERTSON: There is no point of order.

Mr SPEAKER: The member can give his point of order.

Mr SEENEY: The minister is maliciously misleading the House. He knows that to be false. It is quite simply wrong. The concept of the price paths were introduced by the previous government.

Mr ROBERTSON: Stop wasting my time.

Mr SEENEY: The quantum of the price increases—

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member is debating the issue.

Mr SEENEY: The quantum of the price increases is the responsibility of the current minister—

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member is now debating the issue. He had the opportunity to speak to the motion if he wished.

Mr ROBERTSON: In fact, I am pleased that the member for Callide has finally interposed in this debate, because something is absent from the speakers list tonight. What is that? The fact that not one member of the National Party has stood up in this place to debate and support this motion. Why is that the case? Because what he just said was completely wrong. The price paths that we put in place recognise the difficulties that many areas of this state are going through. That is why we have five- and

seven-year price paths. If the National Party was still in power today, member for Tablelands, the price paths that they would be paying in five to seven years time would be applying right now.

Mr SEENEY: I rise to a point of order. That is quite untrue. The minister knows it to be untrue. He is misleading the House in an irresponsible way.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member has to have a proper point of order. That is a frivolous point of order.

Mr SEENEY: The minister knows that that is untrue.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! This is a frivolous point of order.

Mr ROBERTSON: The best way that I can respond to the presentation of the member for Tablelands is to invite her to a full briefing provided by SunWater—and this is a genuine offer—in order to explain what the price paths mean, how they were determined, how they will be implemented and issues to do with, if you like, following the money trail around the place. After that briefing she will have the capacity to make up her own mind. In relation to the member for Lockyer, I need to say a number of things. He said that there has been an attempt by this government to stop the building of ring tanks and that, in his view, we should allow continued development of ring tanks to occur. The problem with that is that there is only a finite amount of water that flows on this earth. If we continue to build ring tanks, the one thing that happens is that no water makes it into the rivers at all. That is the challenge we face on the Darling Downs. The level of development is such along the Condamine-Balonne that we have had to put moratoriums in place to retain the health of the river, because the flood harvesters, given the size of their developments, suck that much water—

Mr Horan interjected.

Mr ROBERTSON: Oh, shut up!

Mr Horan: You've got all the figures wrong.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Minister, that is unparliamentary.

Mr ROBERTSON: When your IQ reaches 50, I recommend you sell, because you'll never—

Mr HORAN: I rise to a point of order. There has to be a better way for a minister to speak in this House, because the way that minister speaks reflects the arrogance of the Beattie government.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The minister's time has expired.

Mr ROBERTSON: Thank you for wasting my time.

Mr SPEAKER: I call the honourable member for Burnett.

Mr ROBERTSON: It is a simple proposition.

Mr SPEAKER: Order, Minister! Your time has expired.

Time expired.
