



Speech by

Vaughan Johnson

MEMBER FOR GREGORY

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REVENUE AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Mr JOHNSON (Gregory—NPA) (3.14 pm): I would like to endorse everything my colleague the member for Toowoomba South said here this afternoon on the Revenue and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. I think the Treasurer should be called the 'king hit Treasurer'. The aspect of the legislation that I want to talk about is the increase in stamp duty on motor vehicles because this is an absolute blatant discrimination against people regardless of who they are and where they are.

One aspect of the legislation that the Treasurer has announced as being a good objective is cutbacks in the mortgage duty on homes because the rates will be reduced as of January 2008 by 50 per cent—and we endorse that and support that—and by 2009 they will be further reduced by the other 50 per cent. As the shadow Treasurer said this afternoon, that should have been taken away six years ago as one of the recommendations by the federal government with the introduction of the GST. We know of the billions of dollars that this state is getting out of GST payments but, no, it is not good enough for this Treasurer and the government. The Socialist Left have certainly got a lot to answer for here.

We are in this situation now because of the poor planning and poor policy implementation going back to the early stages of this administration and back to the days when the Goss government was in power. They could not plan the major infrastructure in the state—water, road, rail, the whole bit—and we see the dilemma that this state is in now.

One thing we can say about this legislation is that it is good legislation, all right! The government is doing one good thing with one part of it and a bad thing with the other part of it. What the government is giving back with one hand it is taking with the other. This will be a tax on the young people of Queensland. Most young people who buy their first motor car buy a four-cylinder or a second-hand motor car, and the member for Toowoomba South canvassed that well this afternoon.

I also heard the contribution from the member for Tablelands about the heavier vehicles that are needed in rural and regional areas to travel on that more difficult terrain or the bad roads. The mining industry needs the heavier vehicles, and the member for Toowoomba South made a statement in relation to the new Toyota LandCruiser V8 tray backs. The old six cylinders have been phased out and people can only buy V8s. This will be a real win for the government because at the end of the day it is a good product and it is a product that sells itself. People do not have to go out and sell it; it sells itself. So this will be dollars in the pocket of the government straightaway with the increase in the V8s or cars with more than seven cylinders.

The other thing I want to say this afternoon is that this is a deceitful tax and one the Treasurer should be absolutely ashamed of. I spoke to a trucking operator a couple of nights ago and I said, 'What's this going to be worth to you?' He said, 'I buy eight new Kenworth prime movers every year, and that will put at least another \$40,000 on my bill every year.'

Mr Hayward: Eight prime movers?

Mr JOHNSON: Well, that is the name of the game and he is a damn good operator too.

Mr Gray interjected.

Mr JOHNSON: You would know! The member for Gaven would know!

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr English): Order!

Mr JOHNSON: I will take that interjection. You pay the wage bill, you pay the superannuation bill, you find the dollars at the end of every month, you make the repayments—you know you have never done it. You would not have a clue. These fellows are out there and are subjected to the trauma of your government with the demerit point system that has now been put in place.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Please direct your comments through the chair, member for Gregory.

Mr JOHNSON: I will come back to the bill, but when you get interjections—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I did not ask you to come back to the bill; I asked you to direct your comments through the chair. Please do so.

Mr JOHNSON: I am sorry. I am directing my comments through the chair. I am referring to the demerit point system and the tax on truck drivers. A lot of them are good people who support that side of the House. Those members on that side of the House, those good people who represent rural constituencies know full well what I am saying this afternoon. These people out there have been crucified and persecuted. I spoke to a trucking operator just before I came in here. That operator told me that a bloke was knocked off in Roma last night with a \$900 fine and three demerit points for an issue with logbooks. What sort of revenue is that for you, Treasurer? You look in your paper and grin. You ought to be absolutely ashamed. You are a shareholding minister in this deal.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Member for Gregory, you will direct your comments through the chair, you will come back to the bill and you will call the Deputy Premier the Deputy Premier and give her due consideration.

Mr JOHNSON: I apologise. I will call her the Deputy Premier. I find it offensive and a bit below the belt when the Deputy Premier is grinning and thinks this is a joke. I have more respect for the Deputy—

Ms Nolan interjected.

Government members interjected.

Mr JOHNSON: Just sit back and wear it for a minute.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member for Ipswich and the member for Inala! The member for Gregory, please direct your comments through the chair.

Mr JOHNSON: I can take interjections. I have another 15 minutes of this, Mr Deputy Speaker. I will bore it out all day. The situation is that they think it is a laughing matter. What about those blokes out there who are trying to earn an honest dollar? They have wives and families at home, they have mortgages and responsibilities like everybody else has. They have been driven to destruction by a ridiculous policy which is a tax grab.

In last Sunday's *Sunday Mail* Hughie Williams is quoted as saying we are having trouble getting truck drivers in the industry because of the problems with driving hours, the legislation, rest areas and the whole bit. Who created this environment? I heard the member for Pumicestone interject on the member for Toowoomba South before. Her husband is trying to win the seat of Longland from Mal Brough. I tell her what, I hope Mal Brough reads some of the interjections and sees some of what has been said in this House. These are responsible people trying to do the right thing and we have people like the member for Pumicestone, and a few others here, who think it is a joke.

There are a lot of issues dealt with in this legislation that have been created by Labor in the past. It is a conservative government in Canberra that has fixed them and given the Deputy Premier and her government the opportunity to put in place large amounts of money to build infrastructure in this state. I applaud the building of infrastructure, but I do not applaud the building of infrastructure because of the bad policy decisions and bad monetary decisions of this government over the years.

The important fact is that for too long we sat on our hands and did nothing hoping the problem would go away. We did not know how to address the problem. So what are we going to do? We are going to attack the transport industry and motor vehicle industry and all those motor traders out there who are trying to sell new vehicles. At the end of the day, this is an unfair tax.

Deputy Premier, how much will the government pay for government vehicles? Is it going to be paying this? I bet the minister a quid that they will not be. At the end of the day it is about the fair operation of the provision. There are lots of government vehicles out there. There are plenty of V8 Toyota Landcruisers running around my electorate and other parts of the state. I wonder whether they will be driving V8s after this is made law? The rest of us will drive a six or four but that will not be good enough for some of the government departments. I bet they will be in V8s. This is a question I would like to see answered this afternoon.

I turn to the impost on the mining industry. Heavy transport and these vehicles in question are a very important part of the mining industry. The good old mining industry pays \$1.5 billion every year in government royalties. That is good because it is a successful industry. But the one part of the mining industry that is not successful is getting the coal to the ports and the impost there. I know the government has addressed some of this in the budget. Hopefully it will come to fruition before too long.

I would ask the Deputy Premier and Treasurer to go out there and look firsthand at what is happening at some of those ports. QR trains come into them. One train came into Hay Point-Dalrymple Bay the other day with 70 empty wagons. They could not load the wagons at the mine in the scheduled time so they brought 70 of them back empty—they were carting air. This is good productivity on the part of Queensland Rail when trying to build up a stockpile at the ports in question. I think it is about time we saw some realistic management strategies put in place in some of these GOCs and we would not need some of these ridiculous taxes on the ordinary people of Queensland.

The reason for the new tax on the motor vehicle industry is to fund mental health services. Mental health is a real problem out there. There are many people who certainly need treatment in the area of mental health. I say here today, if some of the policies of this government were thought through in a more realistic and proper way and the bullying and intimidation was taken out of some of the government departments and there was a realistic understanding of people's needs and values, I do not think we would have half the mental health problems we have today.

People say to me all the time that they are not game to say anything for fear of reprisal. People who work in government agencies say this. I know plenty of them. They have been out there in the past and have not been able to speak for fear they will not have a job come Monday or Tuesday. I think this is an unfair issue right across the state and one that I call on the leadership in government to take stock of.

There is no doubt that there are people on the government side of the House who know exactly what I am saying this afternoon. Mental health is a contentious issue and a concerning issue. I do not believe that we can address the problem by taxing ordinary Queenslanders out of their homes, out of their jobs and onto the streets every day of the week because we cannot get it right in the planning stages. That is the sad fact of the matter when it comes to putting legislation in place that governs some of these issues.

Yes, the GST has been a fantastic windfall for the states. I think it is a responsible tax. The federal conservative government had the guts to put it in place for the advantage of the states. We see growth in states like Queensland and Western Australia through the boom in the mining industry. But let us be fair and realistic about this and spread it across all areas of the state. I say to the Deputy Premier and Treasurer this afternoon that when we analyse the budget there is not too much for rural and regional Queensland in the way of transport and roads infrastructure and other infrastructure that will carry the goods and services of this state. This is where the dollars are generated in this state. This is where the real people are in this state who provide for the people in the south-east corner, those along the coastal strip.

I support the legislation but I do not support the aspect relating to penalties on the motor vehicle industry, the changes to vehicle registration duty rates. I ask the Deputy Premier to show some compassion and understanding when these taxes are thought through and brought before the House and legislated. Go back to the trucking industry. That is an industry that is already overtaxed. Everywhere people move they are going to pay. There is increased sales tax and increased stamp duty on the transport industry. That is going to be an impost on people who live in rural and regional Queensland. Believe me, that will also be applicable to people who live in the south-east corner.