



Speech by
Jeff Seeney

MEMBER FOR CALLIDE

Hansard Wednesday, 16 September 2009

MOTION: SALE OF PUBLIC ASSETS, ADVERTISING CAMPAIGN

Mr SEENEY (Callide—LNP) (6.05 pm): In my allotted time in this debate tonight I want to examine the amendment that has been moved by the government to replace the motion that the Leader of the Opposition moved. Obviously I support the motion moved by the Leader of the Opposition, but I want to examine the absurd amendment that has been put forward by the government tonight. The first thing that we note about the amendment that has been put forward by the government is that it does not address the core issue. It does not even mention it. Just as every government backbencher has tried hard not to mention it ever since it was announced, this amendment does not even mention the forced sale of state assets—does not even mention it! It has three dot points. There could have easily been a fourth dot point that said, 'The parliament endorses the government's decision to sell Queensland's assets in a fire sale to get themselves out of financial trouble,' but it is not there! It is not there because those opposite would not have voted for it. They do not want to mention it, just as they have not mentioned it for the last three or four months since it was announced. They do not want the people of Queensland to talk about it. They do not want themselves to have to talk about it. They do not want to have to come into this House and again be forced to vote in favour of the fire sale of Queensland assets—assets like Queensland Rail that we forced them to vote on in the parliament as part of the budget debate.

It is instructive to remember what happened during that debate—that is, every member of the government, every member who sits on the government side of the House, was given the opportunity to defend or to endorse the sale of Queensland's assets. They were given the opportunity in this parliament to communicate with the people of Queensland. What did they do? They moved the gag motion! They moved the guillotine motion! They shut down the debate! We put forward amendments to ensure that every government member had an opportunity to speak about every one of those asset sales and had the opportunity to vote on every one of those asset sales, but they were not prepared to do it. They were not prepared to let this parliament fulfil its role as a place of legitimate debate for the people of Queensland to be informed about those issues. They were not prepared to let the people of Queensland be informed about what their attitude was to the sale of those assets, and now they seek to spend large amounts of money that rightfully belongs to those same people of Queensland to put their own spin on the issue.

It would be instructive to know how many government backbenchers in the material that they sent out in relation to the budget in their electorates actually mentioned the asset sales. How many in all of the glossy brochures that were sent out actually sought to talk about the sale of government assets and sought to justify the sale of government assets? I would wager that it would be exactly the same number who took the opportunity to stand in this parliament and put on record their support and their endorsement and their reason for supporting the fire sale of government assets. It would have been none!

All of the material that was sent out by the government backbenchers and the government media machine since the budget was brought down would have included nothing about the sale of government assets, because they have been ashamed of the decision ever since they made it. They have been ashamed of the fact that they were forced into making that decision by the financial quagmire into which they have engulfed themselves.

It is instructive to note also that the amendment before the House seeks, once again, to blame the global financial crisis for the problem. The government was budgeting for a \$65 billion debt before any of us had even heard of the global financial crisis—\$65 billion in debt and a \$1.5 billion deficit before anybody had ever heard of the global financial crisis. This government went broke in a boom. It is forced to sell Queenslanders' assets to get itself out of financial trouble and it is too embarrassed to talk about it in this parliament. The government was too embarrassed to justify the sale of the assets in any of the material that it sent out following the budget. Now, the government seeks to spend Queenslanders' money to try to advertise itself out of trouble. Of course, it will not work. It will only serve to remind the people of Queensland how deceitful this government has been and how it has betrayed the people of Queensland.