



Speech by

Lawrence Springborg

MEMBER FOR SOUTHERN DOWNS

Hansard Wednesday, 16 September 2009

MOTION: SALE OF PUBLIC ASSETS, ADVERTISING CAMPAIGN

Mr SPRINGBORG (Southern Downs—LNP) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (6.15 pm): There is one profound difference between that side of the House and this side of the House and that is that we do not have to sell the assets of this state—we do not have to sell the family silver—in order to be able to deliver those things that the people of Queensland should be able to receive. That has been the history of financial management of this state that has stood the test of time of all governments, until this government came along. That is the fundamental difference between us and them.

It was very interesting listening to the member opposite a moment ago talking about these sorts things. The speech by the member opposite is again a part of this concoction, this fabrication of excuses as to why we are enduring this so-called recession and privatisation in Queensland at the moment. Remember last year when we had the storms? The government blamed the storms as to why it is going to have to privatise. This year, the government is blaming the global financial crisis.

With the exception of the honourable member for Everton, what we have seen tonight is very much akin to that very famous *Fawlty Towers* episode. Do members remember the one with the Germans? Basil Fawlty had had a knock to his head and was wearing a bandage around his head. He said, 'Don't mention the war. I mentioned the war once and I think I got away with it.' Tonight, we saw from the member for Everton a person who thought he could mention the war once and can get away with it. He will not get away with it, because the people of Queensland are awake to him.

If you want a gauge of what your colleagues think about your proposition, then you should look at their reaction. There must be a lot of holey and frayed carpet, because that is where the heads of the members opposite have been looking tonight. They have been surveying the floor, because the honourable members opposite do not have a lot of passion for the proposition of privatisation. If there were some semblance of truth in the proposition put forward by the honourable member for Everton, or the Treasurer, or anyone else, then they would save those millions of dollars that they are going to put into advertising this poisonous, deceptive policy of privatisation and put it into neonatal units—those areas where that money would really make a difference. What about the \$100 million that the government has spent on advertising its way out of trouble over the past 12 months alone?

Tonight, we have not heard very much defence from the honourable members opposite at all, have we? The Treasurer did not tell us how this government went broke in a boom. The Treasurer did not tell us about what happened to the \$34.4 billion of windfall revenue that this government raked in between 2000 and 2008 both in grants and moneys from the Commonwealth and also from their own sources of money in Queensland. That \$34.4 billion disappeared into the Labor Party ether in Queensland.

Now the Premier is saying that over the next four years we are going to see \$14 billion wiped off our bottom line because of the GFC. Where is the other \$20 billion? The government should still be \$20 billion ahead. This comes back to gross incompetence in financial management. What we have is a government that has the largest amount of state debt of all of the states in Australia, a government that has more state debt than all of the other states put together.

Tonight we also heard the Treasurer proposing that the government's building scheme is making a difference in this state. What the Treasurer did not tell us was that last week when the state final demand

figures came back Queensland went backwards—negative 2.5 per cent—and other Australian states, which do not have the building program, went forward up to five per cent—

Ms Bligh: And they don't have government owned corporations.

Mr SPRINGBORG: And they do not, in the words of the Treasurer of Victoria, have a resources boom and all of those revenues that the government just threw away during the good times. That is the difference between the Labor Party and this side of parliament.

This government has no mandate for what it is doing. To get a mandate it would have to take it to the people of Queensland. We have seen 30,000 full-time jobs lost since the state election. Already the government is 30,000 behind. So it will need to create 130,000 jobs while Queensland goes backwards. This government has one forward gear and four reverse gears. The other states are going ahead better than this one.

We had an election which was based on betrayal, deception and dishonesty from this government. What we have seen from this government tonight insofar as the yet to be revealed millions of dollars it is going to spend in trying to advertise its way out of trouble to sell this poisonous policy cocktail to the people of Queensland is an indication that the more Queenslanders see of the Premier, the less they actually believe the Premier. What another master stroke of public policy innovation it was to send 'Mr Unpopularity', the Treasurer, the most unpopular member of parliament—40 losing candidates actually received a higher primary vote than him—out there to sell this to the electorate. Do honourable members know what the people of Queensland thought when they saw this man selling it? They thought it was an undertakers convention. Is it any wonder that the government stocks are falling more and more?

Let us look at what Peter Simpson, the ETU State Secretary, actually said this morning in the paper. He said that we have already gone broke and that the people of Queensland know what this privatisation policy is all about. He called it an outrageous waste of taxpayers' dollars. That is the ultimate arbiter.