




Speech By
Ray Stevens

MEMBER FOR MERMAID BEACH

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**PROGRESSIVE COAL ROYALTIES PROTECTION (KEEP THEM IN THE BANK)
BILL**

 **Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (8.25 pm): I have been here for pretty well 17-odd years—a long time. The keep them in the bank bill would be the dumbest, most puerile, most infantile and most childish political bill I have seen introduced in this House for debate. It is a pathetic attempt by the Treasurer to try to jam up a new government after 26 October into coming forward to this House with any changes to the coal royalties regime. It is called the ‘Keep Them in the Bank Bill’. It just sounds like Donald Trump. It should be called ‘I’m going to lose the next election and I need something in the next parliament to go forward with as the opposition leader’. That is why it is a terribly political, nonsense bill.

Of course coal royalties are important for Queensland. Of course we support coal royalties. Of course coal royalties fund hospitals, schools and all those things. Does the government not think that if there is any change to that regime the media will be interested; that it will be a fact of discussion in any new government, particularly if it is an LNP government? Of course it would be. This stupid bill is before the House for one reason only. It is political rubbish, if you like, to try to elevate the issue up to an election issue 47-odd days before the election.

The bill is all about the coal royalty regime; it is not about whether it is going to happen or not, whether it goes down or whether we actually put it up. That might be the point of a lot of discussion. Of course it will be discussed in whatever happens in the next government should we be the next government, but this bill is basically saying, ‘You will be the next government and I want you to come to parliament.’ I am good with that. I am good with transparency. The mob over there might not be good with transparency. They might just put in a new regime without consulting—which I think is exactly what happened—but we are good with consultation. We are good with telling people what we are going to do. We will be honest and transparent, which will be brand new for a government in Queensland, should the people of Queensland agree to giving us that responsibility.

The sovereign risk associated with this coal royalty regime has been horrendous. When we have our second major trading partner in Japan complaining about the sovereign risk of investing in Queensland, which they have done—

Government members interjected.

Mr STEVENS: The members over there might not be aware, mainly because they are basically ill-informed puppets of unions. If they are uninformed about the Japanese protests on the lack of consultation they should give their money back, because they are taking money under false pretences as union puppets. That is where we are with the coal royalties. We differ in that we would talk to the industry. It employs a lot of Australian Workers’ Union people—and I think the Treasurer happens to be in this parliament because of the Australian Workers’ Union people—and we would talk to those people who employ the Australian Workers’ Union people so that we would come to, if not an agreement, an understanding of where we were going with coal royalties.

This bill is nonsense. This bill shows that the Treasurer is out of ideas and has given up in terms of being the government of Queensland. He is the tax hound of Queensland, and these coal royalties prove that. That and every other bill we have basically had is chasing money. If by some miracle they are returned on 26 October, you can imagine the taxes and new charges that will be raining down on the Queensland electorate. The Treasurer in his budget speech said, 'Forget about the last nine years. We would like four more to ruin Queensland—more.' Forget about the last nine years! Hello? Was the Deputy Premier of the last nine years involved in those cabinet decisions? Was the current Deputy Premier and Treasurer not the Treasurer over those last nine years? I think he did a stint in one other portfolio.

We are where we are at in Queensland on the cost-of-living crisis, the health crisis, the youth crime crisis and the housing crisis because they were all sitting around the cabinet table. They are talking about my leader being on a cabinet table 10 years ago, believe it or not, but they are not talking about the last nine years. The Treasurer said, 'Forget the last nine years. Give us another four and we will be good.' It is another promise from the Labor Party that is not going anywhere out there in Queensland politics.

Government members interjected.

Mr STEVENS: There are a lot of interjectors over there. I can hear one squeaking from Townsville that—

Mr Krause: Which one?

Mr STEVENS: I do not know which one it is. It is very forgettable! It is very forgettable, but I think he has enjoyed his time in parliament. I am not sure which one it is, but I can hear a little bit of noise from over there and what you might call a last hurrah, which is a jolly shame for those particular people concerned. Queensland has woken up. They have woken up to the worst government I have ever seen—and I saw Gough Whitlam and thought he was terrible, but this mob outstrips him, for certain.

I can assure members that this stupid bill is not resonating with the people of Queensland. The 'keep them in the bank' bill: what a load of nonsense that is. There are some good people over there—I cannot remember which one it is—but the fact of the matter is that they will cop what Queensland people out there believe, and the Queensland people never get it wrong. Queensland people will recognise these as silly bills. You can try whatever you want—'keep them in the bank' bill or whatever you want to call it—but the people of Queensland know what the government have done in the last nine years and they are not prepared to give them another four years. In fact, on 26 October I am sure that the good people of Queensland will show Labor the door in '24 and we will come back with any matters in relation to coal royalties at any time and, regardless of any interest group, we will do the right thing by Queenslanders. Whatever that means, whether it is the coal royalties, whether it is the hospitals or whether it is the Adult Crime, Adult Time—all of those matters will be dealt with in the interests of Queenslanders.

I am sorry, but I will be saying farewell. This is probably my last speech in the 57th Parliament, as I understand it, and I would like to bid those members who are leaving all the best for their future because this bill will not save their careers. It is a load of rubbish and typical of what they have done for the last nine years. It will not save them on 26 October.