




Speech By
Hon. Jeff Seeney

MEMBER FOR CALLIDE

Record of Proceedings, 22 May 2014

MOTION: MEMBER FOR BUNDAMBA

 **Hon. JW SEENEY** (Callide—LNP) (Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development, Infrastructure and Planning) (12.10 pm): I rise to second the motion that has been moved by the member for Hinchinbrook and Minister for Natural Resources and Mines. I think that the address that the Minister for Natural Resources and Mines gave has very well covered the issue and very well expressed the feelings of so many people not just in this parliament today but right across the resources sector and certainly right across some of the ethnic communities that have a particular sensitivity to the comments that were made by the member for Bundamba.

I think it is important that everybody who is not familiar with the resources sector pay close attention to the comments that were made by the Minister for Natural Resources and Mines with regard to the extent to which the comments that were made by the member for Bundamba are demonstrably untrue in fact. This morning, I heard a number of calls for the member for Bundamba to visit the mining regions of Queensland and visit some of the accommodation camps that are provided there. I would be wasting my time urging the member for Bundamba to do that, but I would suggest that any member of this House who has the opportunity to do that should take up this opportunity, because there are some great examples of accommodation being provided. There are companies that have specialised in providing that sort of accommodation and providing the services that are needed for that accommodation. In particular, I refer to the MAC camps. But they are only one company that I would mention as being great providers of those services.

That accommodation has allowed people from all over Queensland to participate in the resources industry—to have access to a well-paid job in a situation that allows them to better their life elsewhere. That is no more so than in my own electorate. My electorate is made up of not just people who work in the resources industry but a whole range of communities in a whole range of districts that are characterised by what you would probably call subeconomic agricultural enterprises—places where farms struggle because they are too small. The subdivisions were done many years ago. Many of those agricultural people have taken the opportunity to supplement their income for periods of time that suit them by working in the resources industry. They have adopted that lifestyle. Similarly, there are so many families who have made the choice that they are better off living along the coast, the Capricorn Coast particularly—1770, Agnes Water, Airlie Beach, the Whitsundays; places where better opportunities are available for families, for young people, for kids, where employment opportunities are available for partners that are not available in the mining towns. So that is a choice that those families have made.

We have always recognised the sensitivity of the issue for regional communities, for businesses in mining towns that want to see their communities grow. When we came to government we made it very clear that our approach to the issue was to ensure that workers had choice, that families had choice, that communities in those regions were able to develop in a way that provided that choice to people. That is what we have done. We have made sure that there is every opportunity

for regional communities, mining communities, to grow, to offer opportunities for people to live there and for people who choose to live there. It can be a great lifestyle in those small communities.

But we are not going to allow the member for Bundamba and her sponsors in the CFMEU to be successful in what is a political or an industrial campaign that is more about union power and union domination than it is about country towns or mining towns. Traditionally, when I was a teenager the CFMEU ran the mining towns that were part of Central Queensland—towns such as Moura and Blackwater—with an iron fist. They ran the footy club. You could not go in the pub if you were not a member. People were spat on in shopping centres—

Mr Costigan interjected.

Mr SEENEY: Absolutely. Those mining towns were run by the CFMEU to a point at which they dominated people's lives. The whole culture of unionisation extended into people's lives. That is what the CFMEU wants to return to. That is their dream. They yearn for the old days where they can build that sort of heavily unionised community that gives them the power base. But that sort of community and that sort of lifestyle would seriously curtail the number of people who would be able to take up the opportunity to work in the resources industry. When we consider this question and the comments that were made by the member for Bundamba, it is important that we understand where the driving force is. We are about building regional communities—proper communities, communities that can operate and function properly. The member for Bundamba and her CFMEU mates are about centralising union power. They are about building the numbers of people that the union seeks to control. I believe that for some time it certainly has been a feature of the fly-in fly-out debate.

That is not to say that there are not people who are genuinely concerned about how we strike that balance between regional communities and people who fly-in fly-out. It is not to say for a moment that there are not people who are genuinely concerned about some of the problems that that fly-in fly-out lifestyle brings. But it is an individual choice as to how that fly-in fly-out lifestyle is addressed and adopted by each particular worker or each particular family.

The other issue that I would like to raise is one that the member for Hinchinbrook touched on as well and that is the complete and abject failure of the Leader of the Opposition. I will repeat quite genuinely what I said in this place earlier today: that Henry Palaszczuk was one of the most decent blokes I had ever met in this place. We did then and we still do retain a warm friendship. In 2005, he was rightfully offended by a similar transgression, if you like, when Prince Harry was photographed in a Nazi uniform at a fancy dress party. But at least Prince Harry apologised. He realised what offence he had caused and he apologised. But at the time Henry Palaszczuk said that there was absolutely no excuse. I refer to a newspaper article in which he is quoted as saying—

No, absolutely no excuse. He understands perfectly well what the Nazis did ... My father suffered enormously at the hands of the Nazis and the stories he told me were horrific.

It beggars belief that the current Leader of the Opposition does not know those stories, does not know the offence that her father took at those stories. Of course she does. She does not have the leadership skills, she does not have the wherewithal, to ensure that the member for Bundamba is disciplined in the way that Henry Palaszczuk, and every other person who shares the same principles as the former member for Inala, the former primary industries minister as he was in this place, would require her to be.

Mr Stevens: Good, too.

Mr SEENEY: He was indeed, Leader of the House. What has happened this morning is a clear demonstration that the Leader of the Opposition has completely lost any authority. She herself, the Leader of the Opposition, has completely lost credibility. This is an issue not just for the member for Bundamba but for the Labor Party and for the leader of the Labor Party in this place. The Leader of the Opposition has failed that test in the most miserable way.