



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Federation Chamber

CONSTITUENCY STATEMENTS

Economy

SPEECH

Thursday, 6 June 2013

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Questioner
Speaker Kelly, Craig, MP

Source House
Proof No
Responder
Question No.

Mr CRAIG KELLY (Hughes) (09:54): I was interested to read last night the comments by ex-Labor chief pollster Rod Cameron who said:

The majority of the modern Labor Party—the caucus, the leadership, the machine and, importantly, the union bosses who now dictate policy—has totally lost the plot.

I could go on giving many examples but one I would like to give is the complete delusion being run by this government in their *Australia in the Asian century* white paper that Australia is destined to be the food bowl of Asia. We certainly have the potential to be, but let us have a look at what is happening under the policies of this government. Recently we have seen Windsor Farm Foods in Cowra, the last Australian owned cannery, close. Rosella, the iconic brand and food producer, has closed its doors. Heinz in Victoria, maker of the iconic tomato sauce label, has closed its doors. Golden Circle's beetroot cannery in Queensland has closed its doors. And now we have seen today that Simplot may close the last cannery in New South Wales. This is going on and on. And we have also heard that down in the Goulburn Valley SPC are cutting back their demand from growers and we are going to bulldoze three quarter of a million fruit trees. All of this is happening under the policies of this government.

Honourable member interjecting—

Mr CRAIG KELLY: Three quarters of a million fruit trees may seem to be a joke to you, but what can we do to try to fix these problems? Firstly, we are reaping what we have sown by allowing trade practices laws to evolve into a situation where more than 80 per cent of the market is controlled by the two largest supermarkets. The other problem we must tackle is labelling laws, which allow overseas products to be privately labelled with the country of origin hidden on the back which consumers cannot see. We should have labelling laws the way we do for our seafood and our fruit and vegetables, so that consumers can see on the front of the package whether they are buying Australian produce or produce from another country, so that they can make up their own minds.

Honourable member interjecting—

Mr CRAIG KELLY: Instead, it is only on the back in fine print. Government MPs do not understand the problem we have and this is the tragedy we have with this government. They cannot even admit that we have a serious problem. Under this government, in the last 12 months we have seen 7,000 jobs lost in the food producing sector, 335 small food manufacturers closed down and these blokes just sit and have no idea.

Honourable members interjecting—

Mr CRAIG KELLY: They are here just filling in time through the last 100 days. It is an absolute joke. (*Time expired*)

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Hon. BC Scott): Leader of the National Party, what are you calling for?

Mr Truss: The member should withdraw. He used a word which yesterday was required to be withdrawn in the House.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I thank the member for Wide Bay and Leader of the National Party. I did not hear it over the noise. The member would assist the chamber if he would withdraw unreservedly.

An honourable member: I withdraw unreservedly.