Question Date : 11/05/2000
Member : Mr STIRLING
To : MINISTER for AUSTRALASIA RAILWAY

Status : Questions

Information :
The Chief Minister has been quoted in the *NT News* urging Territory businesses to attend seminars in Adelaide on 24 May to link up with South Australian businesses associated with the railway.

Territory taxpayers are committing $165m to this project that will be entirely located within the Northern Territory. Why is it that the only way Territory businesses have the remotest chance of getting a foot in the door for themselves and their employees is to go to Adelaide to pick up the crumbs from their southern cousins? This is another broken CLP promise, a case of 'to gain from the train, catch a plane'. Where is your job strategy?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, it is typical of a Labor question. It starts off with a false statement. Why is it that the only chance that Territory businesses have to get involved in the project is to go to South Australia? Well, that is not the fact of the matter. The reality is that, and anyone who has followed this project would know this, the contractual arrangements for the construction of the railway involved the work being done by South Australian and Northern Territory companies. Special provisions are required for going away from that particular position. Undoubtedly that situation will arise from time to time. Anyone with an ounce of commonsense would realise that the capacity of Territory businesses to be involved in the project to their optimum potential will involve some companies optimising their own capabilities, and business matching, with companies from South Australia. In that way, it seems that the efforts of the government to match Territory businesses with South Australian businesses to gain the lion's share of the contract work is eminently sensible - and I don't understand why the member for Nhulunbuy doesn't understand that simple fact.