



Speech by

BILL FELDMAN

MEMBER FOR CABOOLTURE

Hansard 18 November 1998

MINISTER FOR EDUCATION

Mr FELDMAN (Caboolture—ONP) (Leader of the One Nation Party) (6.23 p.m.): I rise in the House to second the amendment to the motion moved by the honourable member for Tablelands. I have experienced the same problems in Caboolture. This issue was highlighted by a question that the member for Maryborough directed to the Minister for Education, and it is the ability for a person in control of a school—the management of the school—to approach a local member over an area of concern. Surely that is their right. We have given principals some autonomy in their own schools so we should allow that autonomy to stretch to the fact that they can approach their local member without fear or trepidation and outline to that member their concerns about their school.

On 15 September in this House, I spoke about the Wamuran State School. I will again highlight the problems at Wamuran. That school has only one permanent building. The rest are demountable buildings which have been placed there over a period. This school is so small that it has only enough room for a 200-metre running track for its sports day. Land has been allocated for the Wamuran State School on Campbells Pocket Road right next to a beautiful sportsground that has been prepared by the council for the community for cricket and other sports. This is a far, far better site for that school than its present location.

The P & C approached me in relation to why the school could not move to that location, with the land already being allocated. They had approached the Minister's office and were told that the school was not going to be relocated as had been promised in the past. The P & C approached me about the issue, and I actually gave a speech in this place in relation to it. The school needs to be moved down to where the land is allocated. With only one permanent building, the message has come back from the Minister's office that they are looking at upgrading the school and spending \$1.2m on the site. It is an atrocious site. It is right on the D'Aguilar Highway. It is not conducive to good education and it is not conducive to good learning because it is noisy, it is close to the highway and it has a lack of facilities. If that money was spent on the new location, the department would come up with a better facility. They would still be able to utilise those demountables by moving them down to that site and make a better school for the students. The school would be out of the way of the traffic on the D'Aguilar Highway, which represents a danger, and it would be in a better location.

The message that I received from the P & C was that if I spoke about this matter again, then perhaps the allocation of funding that is there to upgrade the school in its present location may not be available. I find that to be an atrocious position. It has been alluded to the P & C that it may not get funding. That is almost tantamount to blackmailing the P & C by saying that it will not get funding if I speak again about moving the school to a far, far better location on Campbells Pocket Road. That is just an atrocious situation. If a P & C committee is threatened with losing their principal or not receiving an allocation of funding just because of the mere fact that they talked to their local member, I find that to be totally atrocious. If this school does lose the funding that is allocated and consideration is not given in the future to the relocation of the school, I will be looking at the matter very, very seriously and perhaps going further with what I can do.

This amendment to the motion is about allowing school principals to be able to go to their local member with their concerns, allowing the school not to be threatened, and for the P & C to be able to have these matters spoken about by their local member in the appropriate place, which is this House,

without any fear or trepidation of this coming back upon the school or on the people who have spoken with their local member to have the matter rectified. By doing this, we may perhaps come up with a better alternative—better schools and a better education system for our children. That is what it is all about: getting a better location for schools and better education so our children can grow in the proper manner in these schools and become better members of the community.

Time expired.
