



Speech by

Mr G. HEALY

MEMBER FOR TOOWOOMBA NORTH

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MINISTER FOR EMERGENCY SERVICES

Mr HEALY (Toowoomba North—NPA) (6.52 p.m.): It did not take long for this Minister to get her feet under the ministerial desk and start creating havoc in her portfolio area. It did not take long before the Minister started putting up a few smokescreens to hide her obvious lack of understanding of this portfolio area, particularly in relation to the Queensland Fire and Rescue Authority. It did not take long before we all came to realise Labor's true agenda in relation to the structure of the authority. Anything that the coalition set up has to be gotten rid of. It is pure spite!

Tonight we have heard the Government's true agenda from a series of Labor speakers. It is evidenced tonight by its amendment. Our motion recognises the valuable contribution being made by the board of the Queensland Fire and Rescue Authority. What does Labor do? It deletes any reference to the board. The absolute smokescreen that the Minister has put up is this enormous furphy that the Fire and Rescue Authority is bankrupt.

The people who have been selected on the Queensland Fire and Rescue Authority board, some of whom I know personally, are decent, everyday Australians trying to do a decent job. They have a fair bit of expertise. Honourable members should look at the backgrounds of some of the people on the Fire and Rescue Authority. I think those people should feel a personal blight on their reputations. They have every right to feel betrayed. They feel betrayed because they know that they are being used by this Minister as a scapegoat to hide the Labor agenda in relation to the Queensland Fire and Rescue Authority. They have felt that betrayal since this Minister has launched her personal attacks and set about implementing the good old Labor agenda of political control and jobs for Labor mates, politicising the Queensland Fire and Rescue Authority. The member for Murrumbidgee did it when he was the Opposition spokesman on Emergency Services—trying to politicise emergency services, trying to politicise the Queensland Ambulance Service.

What about the firefighters themselves? How alarmed must they be to hear the rantings and ravings of this Minister? The alarm bells would start ringing when the Minister openly slams the very authority that contains their own representatives.

I refer again to the ministerial statement made by the Minister yesterday. She quoted from the PricewaterhouseCoopers report, which she refuses to release. Then she went off, in one of the little fits that she has, claiming irresponsibility. The Minister will not acknowledge that PricewaterhouseCoopers would not have been aware that the funding for the commitment by the coalition Government had been allocated at the Cabinet Budget Committee.

Time expired.
